



Twelve Gardens of Stewardship

Online Curriculum Example from 'Learning to Give'

Garden of The Arts

Lesson: 'Selfless Self Portraits'

(Grade levels 3 – 5)

Overview:

This lesson exposes students to art history and encourages art appreciation. A focus is also placed on students discovering and developing their own artistic talent. The philanthropic perspective of this lesson demonstrates that the students' talents can be used to bless others.

Purpose:

In this lesson, the students will learn a little history of the painter Vincent Van Gogh and how he was driven by a need to give of himself to others through art. Students will study Van Gogh's techniques and draw their own portraits. Each student will make a gift of the portrait to someone. (Option: Teacher may also incorporate the history, philosophy and art of Impressionist Paul Gauguin.)

Duration:

Two Forty-Five Minute Class Periods

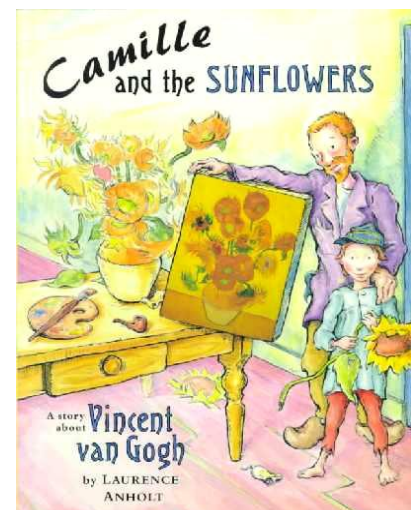
Objectives:

The learners will:

- demonstrate the use of line, shape, color and value.
- create unity and balance in a portrait.
- study the portraits and philosophy of Van Gogh.
- explore how Van Gogh practiced philanthropy related to his own interests.
- give a gift of art to someone.

Materials:

- Book about Van Gogh (See **Bibliographical References.**)
- Mirrors, one per student
- Preliminary sketch paper and final drawing paper
- Pencils and crayons
- Multicultural crayons
- Rulers, erasers, yarn (hair colors) and white school glue



- Classical music, such as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, to play in the background

Instructional Procedure(s):

Anticipatory Set:

Read Camille and the Sunflowers: A Story about Vincent Van Gogh (see Bibliographical References). Discuss how people reacted to Van Gogh. Tell them that Van Gogh was very selfless and was dedicated to the idea of helping others. He felt that he could give to people who were poor and hard-working by sharing his art with them and painting them. Explore how Van Gogh practiced philanthropy related to his own interest. Ask the students if they think that giving a gift of art that is carefully made is an act of philanthropy or love. Discuss their thoughts and inspire them to think of to whom they would like to give a gift of art. How is that providing a service?

- Through exploring a variety of resources about Vincent Van Gogh and (optionally) Paul Gauguin, teach the students about the philosophies of the men. There are many issues related to their selflessness, their sense of community and their lack of financial success due to personal choices. Choose what interests you to share with the students.
- Show the students several examples of the self-portraits and portraits of Vincent Van Gogh and Paul Gauguin. Explore and discuss how Van Gogh and Gauguin interpreted faces in self-portraits.
- Hand out mirrors to each student. Tell them to follow your directions to study and understand how their unique faces are structured. You will ask them questions about what they see, but the questions are mostly for them to reflect on, not answer aloud.
 - Give yourself a big toothy smile. Notice how your face changes when you are smiling. What does it do to your cheeks? Are you missing any teeth? Open your mouth as wide as you can. What can you see? Now give yourself a smile with your mouth closed. How does that change your face? Squint your eyes and make them as small as you can (while still looking in the mirror). Move your eyebrows up and down. Make a mad face. How does that change your face? Now, give yourself an annoyed look.
 - Look at your ears and how they hug the side of your face. Look at your chin; it's directly below your nose. Look at your neck. Your neck is almost as wide as your face. It's not like a stick. Look at your hair and how it frames your face. Is your hair short or long? Is your hair straight or curly? Do you have bangs? Can you see your ears? Look at your eyes. How many colors can you see in your eyes? Look at the placement of your eyes. They are not at the top of your head; they are almost in the middle of your head. How far apart are they? Can you see the whole circle of your iris or does your eyelid cover part of it? Look at your mouth; you have a top lip and a bottom lip. Look at your nose and how it comes out from your face. If you walked into a wall your nose would hit first because it sticks out. Wiggle your nose.
 - Puff your cheeks really big. How do you look with your cheeks puffed? Slowly move your face from side to side. Look at the shape of your face. Is it long, round, oval, or square? Look at your face for as long as you want to. When you are finished, set down your mirrors.

- Model some elements of a self-portrait for the students, using shape and line. Then they begin their preliminary sketch with pencil.
- After a preliminary sketch, give each student a final paper. They begin with a pencil sketch and then fill in the face with color. Discuss how to create the appropriate colors and values using at least four colors. Discuss and show examples of how Van Gogh and Gauguin explored color in their portraits. Discuss how to show texture through color, shape, value and line.
- The final stage of the portrait is gluing yarn hair to frame the face. Students cut one or two colors of yarn and glue with white school glue.
- Review the meaning of philanthropy. When students give their artwork to someone else, they are giving of their talent. They are giving something that took a lot of time and careful work. That is the opportunity cost to them. Students give their artwork to someone who will appreciate it. (They may give their work to an art exhibit at the school or other public place where many other people can appreciate their work.)

Assessment:

- Students demonstrate an effective use of the elements and principles of art studied to communicate their ideas through their self-portrait.
- Students write in their journals about to whom they will give their artwork. If possible, have them write about the experience of giving the portrait. How did the recipient respond and how did the artist feel?

Bibliographical References:

Anholt, Laurence. *Camille and the Sunflowers: A Story about Vincent Van Gogh*. Barrons Juveniles, 1994. ISBN: 0812064097

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NOTE:

The Learning to Give website supplements this history lesson with an additional philanthropic focus on Habit For Humanity.

The Stewardship website, Learning to Give, offers a wide variety of lesson plans which may be used to incorporate the Twelve Gardens of Stewardship into your curriculum. Though philanthropy is the filter for many of these lesson plans, you will find a large number of appropriate choices and useful ideas to adapt to your needs. Visit LearningToGive.org.