

Art Project Ideas

Introduction

We all learn in different ways. Some of us learn by reading. Others prefer to listen. Some people are experiential learners who use the process of trial and error to deepen their understanding of reality. Regardless, studies have shown that by using different *means* of learning, students are able to gain a fuller grasp of their subject.

I started using art projects as a learning tool years ago when I was teaching the Gospel of Mark to college students. I was delighted to see the penny drop for a student who kept falling asleep in class when we were doing inductive study. The act of creating an object that meant something to them unlocked some part of their brain that had been closed before. Even though I discovered the following art projects while teaching a third grade Sunday school class, I have discovered they work for all ages, including InterVarsity staff.

I led spiritual formation retreats for the San Diego staff team for ten years three times per year. The final evening of our 48 hours together always included an art project, which many staff experienced as the highlight of the event. Some of the artwork created during those times still sits on the shelf or desk of the staff artist years later. I learned, however, that the most important part of an art project session is not the product produced but the creative process involved in making the art object. The process slows people down and gets them using a different part of their brains.

Instructions

After you have taken time to study the Biblical passage (e.g. individually, with a group, or with a manuscript), reflect on how the passage speaks to you. Use the material provided to make an object that will help remind you of your insight. Do not compare your work to that of others! This is not a competition. The process is more important than the outcome, so take your time and enjoy yourself.

Art Material

I put together a box of art material for use at spiritual formation retreats. Items in the box included: construction paper, watercolor paper pads, cardboard, Elmer's Glue, Hot Glue gun with glue sticks, scissors, exacto knives, blue painters tape, crayons, colored pencils, water color trays, tubes of acrylic paint, popsicles sticks, pastels, craft idea books, wire of all sorts, wire cutter.

Art Ideas

Rubber Stamps—I provided pre-cut blocks of wood 3 x 3 inches. I also purchased foam sheets from Michaels. People cut shapes from the foam, glued them to the wood (mirror image). When dried they printed them onto cardstock using ink or acrylic paint. Rubber stamps are a form of block printing. The image created on the block is called a “character.” The character makes an impression on the paper which is called “type.” Myers-Briggs typology



was created from this printing concept.

Mobiles—Using water color paper or cardstock, people drew, painted, or cut shapes. The shapes were mounted with glue to cardboard or mat board then hung with fishing line from sticks. Mobiles are a good object lesson about the work of the spirit as spirit in Greek and Hebrew is breath or wind.



Sculpture—one of the first images of God is that of a sculptor. You can make sculptures from clay, Popsicle sticks, paper, cardboard, wire, rocks, drift wood, etc. Here are some I have done.



Poetry—groups have had fun writing poetry together or individually. Here is a sample done by staff in San Diego.

*Obadiah was a man from Samaria
And he lived in the Jezreel area.
He had many faces,
Fell into the King's graces
Until Elijah pops into the scene
Now he better watch out for the Queen!*