

Lesson Unit: Finger Painting and Feather Painting with Nature

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Grade: Pre-K

Time Required: Three, 45-minute Sessions

Overview

This unit teaches young children to recreate the look and feel of objects in nature and to explore finger painting and painting with feathers.

Learning Objectives

- To use the sense of touch to enjoy a “painting” or art substance
- To become familiar with the concept of mirror images or reversals
- To create a print from a design
- To explore painting with feathers

Session One: Cloud prints, sensory art, and mirror images

Materials

- *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles Shaw
- 2 pieces of blue construction paper per child
- Unscented shaving cream

Directions

1. Share the story *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles Shaw.
 - See if the children can guess the objects and recognize that all the images are simply clouds. (Most children will not realize this unless they have read the book previously.)
 - Talk about the shapes of clouds and how they are all different.
2. Have the children make their own clouds.
 - Ask children to squirt shaving cream on a smooth flat surface, such as a table or desk. Children should be able to explore freely, making designs, shapes, animals, and more.
 - Remind children not to ingest the shaving cream.
 - Tell the children they will be making a cloud print.
 - Have each child put a piece of blue construction paper on top of his/her art, pressing and rubbing over the back surface of the construction paper to make a print. They should then carefully peel it off, turn it over, and let it dry.
3. Explore mirror images.
 - Explain what a mirror image is.
 - Demonstrate how the children can make a mirror image and then allow them to try with the second piece of construction paper.
 - Have them fold it in half and open it again.

- Instruct them to place a small blob of shaving cream around the center of the paper, on or near the fold.
- Tell them to re-fold the paper and gently rub the top of the paper with open, flat hands to spread the shaving cream inside.
- When they open it up, they will have a mirror image.

4. If time permits, share Eric Carle's *Little Cloud*, a perfect accompaniment to this exercise.

Take Home Assignment

Provide book titles for families to share cloud stories and recipes for making clouds at home:

- Soap Flake Clouds – Add one cup of Ivory Snow Flakes to two cups of warm water in a bowl. Beat with an electric mixer until stiff.
- Puffy Shaving Cream Paint – Mix one cup of shaving cream with one cup of white glue in a bowl. This makes a puffy paint that works well on cardboard or construction paper.

Session Two: Sensory art and exploring mud

Materials

- *Mud* by Mary Lyn Ray
- 1/2 cup corn starch
- 1/3 cup water
- Brown powdered tempera
- Tray with sides to pour mixture into

Directions

1. Share a book about nature called *Mud*, which explains how the frozen earth in the winter melts and turns into magnificent mud in the springtime.
 - Mix the above ingredients together (older children can help) in the tray, and let the children touch and play with the “mud.”
 - Have them describe how it feels and compare it to real mud.
 - Help the children think of nonsense rhyming words (e.g., ooey, gooey) or alliterative words (e.g., slippy, slimy) to describe the mud. (See *Piggy in the Puddle*, under Resources for more examples.)
 - After children have played with the brown goop, save it for the next day and notice how the mixture separates and dries. The bottom layer will feel hard to the touch until it is mixed together with water again.
 - Share several other books listed below about mud and muck.
2. Provide book titles for families to share mud stories and recipes for making mud at home:
 - Shiny Mud – Mix together sweetened condensed milk with chocolate instant pudding powder. When it dries, it will be shiny.
 - Gritty Mud – Mix together 1/2 cup of flour, 1/2 cup of salt or sand, 1/2 cup of water, and some brown tempera paint in a bowl. This paint will feel gritty due to the salt and will dry hard.
 - Real Mud Paint – Mix sifted soil with a small amount of water in a cup to a paint consistency. Stir with a brush or stick. Or, children may use mud from a puddle, with discretion.

Session Three: Feather art

Materials

- *Feathers for Lunch* by Lois Ehlert
- Construction paper
- Feathers
- Feather dusters (optional)
- Tempera paint in containers

Directions

1. Share *Feathers for Lunch* by Lois Ehlert, in which a cat escapes from a house through a door mistakenly left open and tries to catch just one of the twelve birds he encounters, but ends up with only feathers for lunch.
2. Paint with feathers.
 - Let children design their own art by using the feather as a brush. Make sure you tell them to use one feather for each color of paint and allow the colors to “bleed” together on the paper.
 - If possible, provide some inexpensive feather dusters for them to explore further.
 - Remind them to keep the feathers away from their mouths, and to wash their hands afterwards.
 - If time permits, have children glue craft feathers onto a cardboard or manila folder cut into the shape of a bird or a chick.
 - Share another story about a chick/chicken from the list below.

Follow Up

Modifications

In lieu of the above idea, have the children form bird or chick masks to wear during a retelling of one or more of the stories below:

- Let the children cover half paper plates with feathers, with eyeholes cut out by an adult. These masks allow the children to breathe and talk easily.
- Children may fasten ties made of yarn, string or elastic with an adult's help, and may add beaks.
- Again, warn children against putting any of the painting materials or feathers in their mouth.

Assessment

- Children should be able to construct a mirror image by folding paper that contains a thick liquid.
- Children should understand how to make a print from a painted surface.
- Children should understand how to paint with a feather.
- Children should be able to: explain that clouds have many shapes; identify some cloud shapes from Shaw's book; and give two or more words that describe the “feel” of mud.

Resources

Books Used in this Lesson

- Ehlert, Lois. *Feathers for Lunch*. Harcourt, 1990.
- Ray, Mary Lyn. *Mud*. Harcourt, 1996.
- Shaw, Charles. *It Looked Like Spilt Milk*. HarperCollins, 1947.

Additional Children's Books

- Alborough, Jez. *Duck in a Truck*. HarperCollins, 2000.
- Carle, Eric. *Little Cloud*. Philomel, 1996.
- Grindley, Sally. *Where Are My Chicks?* Phyllis Fogelman Books, 2002. Jill Newton, Illustrator.
- Lawrence, John. *This Little Chick*. Candlewick, 2002.
- Plourde, Lynn. *Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Mud*. Blue Sky, 1997.
- Pomerantz, Charlotte. *Piggy in the Puddle*. Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- Shannon, George. *Tippy-Toe Chick Go*. Greenwillow, 2003. Laura Dronzek, Illustrator.
- Edwards, Pamela Duncan. *Clara Caterpillar*. HarperCollins, 2001. Henry Cole, Illustrator.
- Emberley, Ed. *Go Away Big Green Monster!* Little, Brown, 1992.
- Taback, Simms. *The House That Jack Built*. Putnam, 2002.
- Taback, Simms. *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*. Viking, 1999.

Instructional Books

- Brashears, Deya. *Dribble Drabble: Art Experiences for Young Children*. Gryphon, 1985.
- Brashears, Deya. *More Dribble Drabble: Art Experiences for Young Children*. Circle Time Publishing, 1992.
- Charner, Kathy, Editor. *The Giant Encyclopedia of Art & Craft Activities for Children 3 to 6*. Gryphon, 2000.
- Engel, Brenda S. *Considering Children's Art: Why and How to Value Their Works*. NAEYC, 1995.
- Hamilton, Leslie. *Child's Play: Easy Art for Preschoolers*. Contemporary Books, 1999.
- Hodges, Susan. *Toddler Art*. Totline Publications, 1998.
- Kelly, Elizabeth. *Art for the Very Young*. Instructional Fair/T.S. Denison, 1998.
- Kohl, Mary Ann. *First Art: Art Experiences for Toddlers and Twos*. Gryphon, 1994.
- Kohl, Mary Ann. *Mudworks: Creative Clay, Dough, and Modeling Experiences*. Bright Ring, 1992.
- Kohl, Mary Ann. *Preschool Art: It's the Process Not the Product*. Gryphon, 1994.
- Kohl, Mary Ann. *Scribble Art: Independent Creative Art Experiences for Children*. Bright Ring, 1994.
- Lasky, Lila and Rose Mukerji-Bergeson. *Art: Basic for Young Children*. NAEYC, 1980.
- Roche, Denis. *Art Around the World: Loo-Loo, Boo, and More Art You Can Do*. Houghton Mifflin, 1998.
- Roche, Denis. *Loo-Loo, Boo, and Art You Can Do.*: Houghton Mifflin, 1996.
- Warren, Jean. *1-2-3 Art: Open-Ended Art Activities for Working with Young Children*. Totline Publications, 1985.
- Wilmes, Liz, and Dick Wilmes. *Exploring Art*. Building Blocks, 1986.
- Wilmes, Liz, and Dick Wilmes. *Paint Without Brushes*. Building Blocks, 1993.

* Some of the above description for this activity is from *Picture Books Plus: 100 Extension Activities in Art, Drama, Music, Math and Science*, written by Sue McCleaf Nespeca and Joan B. Reeve. ©2003 by the American Library Association.