

Arts Learning Lab @Home



CURRICULUM COMPANION

Yrneh Gabon

Tomorrow's People

Overview

Artist Yrneh Gabon's workshop leads students through a reading that encourages the practice of compassion and generosity. Students learn about challenges others may be facing during these difficult times and reflect on ways they may lend a helping hand to the people in their own lives.

Objectives

1. Students analyze story plot and message.
2. Students discuss key concepts of "Sophie's Masterpiece."
3. In relation to "Sophie's Masterpiece", students create a work of art that reflects their understanding of compassion and generosity.

Relevant California Art Standards and grade specific sub standards

7.1 Perceive and analyze artistic work.

K.VA:Re7.1 Identify uses of art within one's personal environment.

1.VA Re7.1 Select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences of one's self and others.

7.2 Visual imagery influences understanding of and responses to the world.

K.VA:Re7.2 Describe what an image represents.

3.VA:Re7.2 Determine messages communicated by an image.

5.VA:Re7.2 Identify and analyze cultural associations suggested by visual imagery.

11 Relate artistic ideas and work with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

6.VA:Cn11 Analyze how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources and cultural uses.

Materials

- Piece of white paper
- Piece of black paper
- Art supplies (crayons, colored pencils, markers etc.)

Vocabulary

- Social Artist
- Community Engagement
- Generosity
- Compassion

Workshop Description

Introduction

Yrneh Gabon guides students through a reading of "Sophie's Masterpiece" by Eileen Spinelli.

Step 1

Sophie is an artist that wants to spin beautiful artwork with her web and hopes to one day make a masterpiece. As a spider, Sophie has a hard time finding a welcoming place to live and spin webs. The people in Beekman's Boarding house push and chase Sophie all over the place. Until one day Sophie finds the safe and warm place she has been looking for all along. It is there in the confines of a sewing basket that Sophie meets a young woman that greets her with a kind smile. The woman does not chase Sophie away but instead sits next to her sewing clothes for her expecting baby. Sophie is so inspired by the generosity of her new found friend that she decides she will weave a blanket for the young woman's baby. Sitting on the window seal she pulls inspiration for the masterpiece of her life weaving in sparks of star light, smells of pine and patterns of beautiful snowflakes. When the young woman spots the blanket on the window sill, she picks it up and places it with love and wonderment around her baby.

Step 2

Following the reading of 'Sophie's Masterpiece' take a moment to ask students discussion questions. Review with students the importance of compassion and generosity during our changing times.

Discussion Questions

- What experiences have you had that might have made you feel like Sophie?
- Can you describe a time when someone showed you generosity?
- How do you express compassion to others like Sophie?
- What are ways you can show appreciation for the people in your home and community?
- How did Sophie's blanket look, and what visual elements did she include?

Suggested follow up activities

This workshop develops empathetic awareness through engagement with art leading to an appreciation of self in relation to others. Yrneh Gabon's reading of "Sophie's Masterpiece" modeled one way art can be used to show appreciation, compassion, and generosity. Ask your students to think of a special person in their life that has been kind and generous. How was this person helpful during difficult times? Have students use color pencils, markers and crayons, or any other material to create their own masterpiece just like Sophie. The patterns, textures, and images they create should be made with their special person in mind. When finished have students share their work with their selected person so that they can feel the generosity of being part of a community.

Sophie was a spider that weaved beautiful webs. Students can weave their own webs using a white crayon or chalk on black paper. First use a graphite pencil to lightly sketch a spider web pattern on your black paper. This initial drawing will act as your guide. Then use the white crayon or chalk to draw over the graphite lines creating your own vibrant web like Sophie.

Related resources

Spinelli, Eileen. *Sophie's Masterpiece: A Spider's Tale*. Illustrated by Jane Dyer. New York, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2001.

Access and Equity

Parents and teachers should consider their role in modifying their students' lesson instructions by:

- Stopping and pausing frequently to check for understanding, make predictions about story plot, and ask discussion questions.
- Use gestures to animate descriptive language and action words during Yrneh Gabon's reading.
- Offer a variety of materials for your student to use to complete follow up activities.

Bio

Yrneh Gabon is an interdisciplinary artist and human rights activist. Born in Jamaica and based in California, Gabon is a current artist in residence with 18th Street Arts Center. Gabon works in new genres, performance, and social practice art. As a social artist, Gabon engages the communities he works in with wide ranging issues from ableism, climate change to racial discrimination. Growing up in a culture that values community well being, he believes that engagement through art is a truly empowering practice.

About the Arts Learning Lab and 18th Street Arts Center

Arts Learning Lab @ Home is a series of live online arts classes for kids and families schooling from home. These hands-on artmaking workshops (which will be posted as on-demand videos after each workshop) are led by professional artists in residence at 18th Street as well as members of our national and international artist community. The workshops are taught in both English and Spanish for those teachers that are bilingual, and will be live translated in both English and Spanish. The workshops cover a range of fun, hands-on, and participatory ideas that connect with larger social issues.

You can visit more lessons at <http://18thstreet.org/allathome>

Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2018-2019, 18th Street Arts Center is one of the top 20 artist residency programs in the US, and the largest in Southern California. Conceived as a radical think tank in the shape of an artist community, 18th Street supports artists from around the globe to imagine, research, and develop significant, meaningful new artworks and share them with the public to foster radical imagination, empathy, and positive social change.