

Mrs. Irre's April Class Notes

Dear Parents,

Remember when I wrote to you about Practical Life in the primary classroom? Art was mentioned as part of practical life because of all the fine-motor movements necessary for completing art projects. Cutting, holding a paintbrush, setting up and cleaning up from projects, are all part of art lessons. Thanks to Ms. Irwin we always have the most wonderful art opportunities in the class. There are always seasonal and topic-related items to cut, cut-outs to glue, pictures to paint, and prints to print. From the youngest to the oldest children they get all kinds of opportunities as daily choices in the classroom. I bet at any time you peeked in our classrooms you would see someone engaged in some form of art. These experiences are invaluable to your children regardless of the products they end up creating. Many of you have probably seen lovely art coming home in the form of geometric designs or colored, painted, or cut-out maps if your child is one of the older of the students. Each day the children inspire me.

This past week we had a focused unit on art during our after-lunch and playtime group. (I have had parents question the vast amounts of drawings the kids bring home. Please note that each afternoon as I read or present a lesson to your children as a group, they spend time drawing while they listen. It is a wonderful way for children to keep themselves still and focused as they listen.) With the help of an inspirational Montessori workshop, I utilized the ideas of an artist who developed a unit for the primary Montessori classroom. Also, with the help of the Samuels' Library actually ordering some of the books for their shelves, I gathered some fantastic resources.

In one of the photos you will see a student holding the book titled *A Perfect Square*, by Michael Hall. In this book the author uses one square for each project for each day of the week. One day he cuts the square into pieces and punches holes all over. When he glues the pieces into a collage, it makes

a beautiful fountain that bubbles and gurgles. One day he tears the paper, then another day shreds a square into strips. Each square makes a lovely collage according to what the creator decides the story is. Provided with myriad prints and textures of squares, each of the afternoon children were offered the tools used by the author and created gorgeous collages, each with a unique story behind their creation. (Who knows? Some of the older kids may use a story movable alphabet to put their story to writing. . .).

In one photo you see a boy by the window focusing intently on his pencil as he traces squares. In the book *An Eye for Color*, by Natasha Wing, she describes the story of Joseph Albers, an artist that used the perfectly geometrical square to do an intense study of color. Many of the children have begun their rendition of squares inspired by Joseph Alber's story. I made one myself and am adding to it as I show the children the process. It is so satisfying and fun!

In the book *Beautiful Oops!*, by Barney Salzberg he encourages all mistakes in art to be looked at as opportunities for further creation. In the book *Sky Color*, by Peter Hamilton Reynolds a little girl explores the possibility that all of us can be artists when she is asked to paint the sky on the class mural at school. When you are asked, "What color is the sky?", do you answer blue like the rest of us? Read this book and it will open your eyes to so much more. The Dot, also by Peter Reynolds, holds the same theme that art can be created in so many ways.

Lastly, the book *Mouse Paint*, by Ellen Stoll Walsh, explores the combining of colors. In one of the pictures you will see a color wheel. Utilizing an eye dropper, the children put matching dots of color on each tiny circle. When completed, they place an absorbent paper towel over the colored droplets and it forms a beautiful wheel of color. The source for this material is greatextensions.com.

Each day in our classroom is full of creativity and enjoyment. As we are finishing up this project in art, we will be starting a science unit on simple machines. We just finished up the introduction of

magnetism. This time of year is so rewarding as all children are learning more about letters and phonics, beginning to utilize the counting materials in the classroom or counting into the thousands, and using materials to begin the memorization of math facts, zipping their own jackets or tying bows on the tying frame, and eating outside on the days it is warm enough. It is a busy atmosphere of learning.

It would be lovely to add these art books to our MLMS library. If you are so inclined and would like to make a donation of a book, please let me know which title so I can cross it off the list. And thank you for your swift response to my flower request.

Sincerely,
Carrie

A Perfect Square, by Michael Hall
An Eye for Color, by Natasha Wing
Beautiful Oops!, by Barney Salzberg
Sky Color, by Peter Hamilton Reynolds
Mouse Paint, by Ellen Stoll Walsh

Watercolors, tracing the parts-of the horse puzzle, using scissors to perfect the grip, molding geometric solids from clay (rectangular prism!)...

Hi folks,
This is a reminder that we will be starting a book club this coming Thursday from 3:15 to 4:15. Some of you have contacted me already regarding aftercare for your children.

It will not be a formal meeting, I am picturing an easy-going discussion group, so if you cannot be there right at 3:15 it is fine to come as soon as you are able. The early timing was necessary due to the need for aftercare for some. If you cannot attend each week, that is also okay. Come when you can, just remember we will need notice if we

have extra children. Here is a breakdown of the reading assignments:

The Soul of Discipline, by Kim John Payne

March 31, 2022:
Introduction, and
Chapter 1: Disobedient or Disoriented?

April 7, 2022:
Chapter 2:
The Three Phases of Discipline

April 14, 2022
Spring Break so we'll double up the following week.

April 21, 2022
Chapter 3:
The Governor: The Five Essentials to Healthy Boundaries and Compliance
Chapter 4:
Practical Strategies for Building Healthy Compliance

April 28, 2022
Chapter 5:
Directions and Instructions vs. Suggestions and Requests

Hope you can join in!!

