

# **RIVER COMMUNITY CHURCH ROTATION MODEL LESSON PLAN CREATION**

*This lesson was written by Amy Crane for River Community Church in Prairieville, Louisiana.*

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## **ART WORKSHOP**

Scripture: Genesis 1:1 - 2:3

Memory Verse: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Psalm 24:1).

### **PURPOSE:**

The children will hear/experience the Creation story by being creators. They will look at the work of Michelangelo on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling and will experiment with painting while lying on their backs and by painting frescoes. They will consider what it means to be created in God's image and how they can use their creativity to bring glory to God.

Objectives for rotation  
(see listing in Parents' Flyer above)

### **Additional objectives for the Art workshop**

The students will

- think about the process of creating: imagination is a gift from God.
- explore what it means to be created in the image of God.
- know that we can use our creativity to bring glory to God.

### **Teacher preparation in advance:**

- Read the scripture passages and lesson plan and attend the Bible Study, ....
- Learn the memory verse.

- The design of this workshop is very intentional. The activities and discussion questions for this workshop were designed to meet the goals of the entire rotation and the educational objectives of the Rotation Model (tm). While we feel it is important to follow the serendipitous leading of the Holy Spirit, please do not change the lesson plan without consulting a Curriculum Planning and Writing Team member.
- Check out the room before your first Sunday workshop so that you know where everything is located.
- Learn a bit about Michelangelo, the fresco process and the Sistine Chapel Ceiling paintings. (See some of the resources recommended below or check the Internet or your public library for information.)
- Make a plaster plaque so you will know how to handle the plaster and how the process works. Paint a picture and have fun experimenting with the technique. However, do not show the children your sample, as it some will attempt to copy it rather than creating their own artwork. (Assistant should also practice making the plaques.)

### **Room set-up:**

Tables covered with newspaper for fresco painting.

Shorter (preschool-sized) table with a large piece of paper taped to the bottom of it for “ceiling” painting. Lots of newspaper covering the floor under the table.

### **Supply List**

- whiteboard or flipchart with markers
- books with Sistine Chapel creation paintings or posters (the Gabriella Di Cagno book, Masters of Art: Michelangelo, has excellent drawings of the scaffolding as well as a picture of the ceiling that isn't too “graphic”). Posters are available at various sites online.
- large sheet of paper for mural
- masking tape
- tempera paints in spill-proof jars and brushes
- painting smocks or old long-sleeved men's shirts, goggles, bandanas to cover hair
- lots of newspaper to cover the floor
- paper towels and wet wipes for clean-up
- assistant(s) to help with “ceiling” painting and plaque preparation
- watercolor paints and paintbrushes, cups of water and paper towels

- plaster, container to mix it in, stirrer, water, craft stick to smooth the plaster surface
- mold (deep paper plate - we used Chinet luncheon sized plates) for each child
- paper clips
- watercolor paper
- step stool or ladder (for hanging “ceiling” painting on the ceiling)
- Memento (optional): stickers of paintbrushes or artist's supplies

## **PRESENTATION:**

### **OPEN:**

#### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Greet the children and introduce yourself. Wear your name-tag. (Remember you are interacting with a different group of students each week who may not know you.) Make sure the children are wearing name-tags. If not, ask the shepherd to supply a temporary badge.

We had an opening prayer during the gathering time, but you may open with prayer if you feel led to do so.

Explain the purpose of this workshop: Today you will hear and experience the Creation story by being creators. First we will look at the work of the Renaissance artist Michelangelo on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling. Then you each will have the opportunity to experiment with some of Michelangelo's techniques: painting while lying on your backs and painting frescoes in fresh plaster.

#### **Scripture/Bible Story:**

Read the scripture: Genesis 1:1 - 2:3. (Encourage the children to use their Bibles to look up the passage. Talk about how ‘Genesis’ means beginnings and it is the first book in the Bible.)

### **DIG:**

#### **Application:**

[Assistant should be mixing plaster and preparing plaques while the Workshop Leader is introducing Michelangelo and his work. Pour plaster into the plates or mold. Insert paper at the edge clips for hanging. After the plaster has set up briefly (it should be damp but not wet), gently remove the mold and turn it over. Work carefully so that the plaque does not break; move it as little as possible. NOTE: We found the plaques were too fragile and difficult to work with if removed from the mold. Instead, leave the

plaster in the plate and smooth it with a craft stick and paint it there. The children can carry the plaques home in the plates and un-mold them once they are cool and dry. We also found that making the plaster a bit “wet” helps so that you have enough time to pour and smooth it. Process adapted from Discovering Great Artists.]

Say, “Before we look at and talk about the art, I want to remind you that people were not created with clothes on. Nudity is sometimes needed in art and can be beautiful. God created man and woman in His image, and the human body is beautiful and can do marvelous things and there is nothing unlovely or evil or silly about our bodies. I will not tolerate snickering, laughing, or jokes. Anyone who does so will show that they really don’t understand the Creation story and the artwork. If it becomes a problem, I will ask that person to leave the workshop. Understand?”

Talk about Michelangelo and his work. (Part III, Lesson 5 in Art in Story provides a good summary.) Show posters or pictures from books as appropriate. Make sure you talk about

- how the Pope asked (demanded) Michelangelo to do this job.
- that the ceiling previously was blue with stars painted on it (and the walls were done by someone else).
- that Michelangelo primarily saw himself as a sculptor (point out the sculptural quality of the figures in the ceiling).
- that the ceiling painting contains nine scenes from Genesis (Creation through the flood) surrounded by seven Biblical prophets, five pagan sibyls (prophetesses from other religions who, according to legend, foretold the birth of Christ) and ancestors of Christ. Point out that the ceiling was painted with architectural columns and things to unify and enclose the paintings.
- the ceiling was finished in 1512, which was 20 years after Columbus’ first voyage to America.

Compare the size of the Sistine Chapel painting to something the children can relate to. It is approximately 43 by 118 feet and is 70 feet above the floor; the scaffolding was 66 feet high. In comparison, our big Sunday School room is \_\_\_\_\_ feet, the sanctuary is \_\_\_\_\_ feet and the ceiling is \_\_\_ feet at its highest point. Michelangelo worked long hours for four years, and painted the ceiling all by himself! (It was common to have apprentices fill in big areas and background, but he was too much of a perfectionist and fired his helpers shortly after beginning.)

Talk about the fresco process. Paint is applied to wet plaster (so only sections can be done at a time) and once it is painted, it becomes part of the wall, so the work could not be rethought and corrected. (Paint was sometimes applied after the fresco dried, but it deteriorated quite rapidly.)

Michelangelo had to lie on his back -- or some say he stood with his head tilted way back and his hands above his head -- to paint the ceiling. Either way, it was back-breaking work for four years. We are going to let each of you try painting while lying on your back for a few moments. Please listen carefully so you know what to do when it's your turn:

A large piece of paper has been taped to the bottom of this table. My assistant will help a few of you at a time get covered in painting clothes and goggles so you don't wear any paint home. Then you can slide under the table and spend a few minutes painting. We will all be working on the same mural. Paint something that God created. The assistant will help you dip your paintbrushes. Don't spend much time on it, because we want everyone to have a chance to experience a bit of what Michelangelo did for four years.

Do you think our finished product will be as fine and perfect as his? [show the ceiling painting again] Probably not, but we all paint with different styles. Just do the best you can, upside-down. [The assistant should change the newspaper under the table after each child so that one child does not lie down in another child's "drips."]

While you are waiting for your turn to "ceiling" paint, you can work on a fresco. Paint in this damp plaster using watercolors; don't use too much water or press too hard. Again, paint something God created, or a scene of things God created. Michelangelo did people so well, let's paint something else. It is believed Michelangelo added animals and plants after the plaster dried as part of the retouching and they are no longer on the painting. Maybe your fresco can show some of them. When it is your turn to paint on the ceiling, do that, and then you can return to your fresco. You have until 10:45 to paint. Please put your name on the edge of your paper plate before you start painting.

While the children are working, talk about

- their favorite animals and plants.
- some amazing things that God created (have they ever seen an itty-bitsy newborn kitten or watched a tadpole grow into a frog?).
- other ways to be creative (writing poetry, dancing, playing music, inventing new ways to do things, singing, making up jokes, acting in plays, ...).
- powerful things God created: waterfalls, tornadoes, thunder.

- what artists do when they make mistakes. [throw it out, adjust what they were doing, cover it up]

Make sure you give the children a five minute warning so they can finish what they are working on. Children who finish their frescos quickly can either have another turn on the “ceiling” or paint on watercolor paper.

Depending on how wet the “ceiling” painting is, hang it on the classroom ceiling for all to enjoy (with masking tape) or tell the children you will hang it on another ceiling for next week. They will need to wait until the frescos dry to take them home next week, so make sure their names are on them.

### **REFLECT:**

#### **Pulling it all together (closing discussion):**

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- What did God create? (God created all that is, seen and unseen.)
- What does it mean that we are made in God’s image? (It means we are made to reflect God’s goodness, wisdom, and love.)
- I wonder what it feels like to create? What did we create today? Is our imagination part of being created in God’s image?

#### **Review the memory verse.**

Suggestion: You may wish to give the children a sticker or some memento to paste in their journal as a reminder of the story or activity. Some sort of paintbrush or artist supply stickers would be especially appropriate.

#### **Journal Time:**

[If the tables are covered with drying fresco plaques, you may want to have the children sit on the floor or another area for journaling.]

What do you think about Michelangelo’s feat in painting the entire ceiling of the Sistine Chapel by himself? Should he have asked for help? Is it good to dedicate every waking minute to a task? Why do you think he gave so much of himself to this project? [the Pope told him to, glory for himself, glory for God...]

Give each child a sheet with the memory verse pre-printed on it. Read the memory verse together. Tell them: Write about or draw something you did for the glory of God, or something you could do for the glory of God. Or draw a picture praising God and giving Him the glory.

This is meant to be a time of reflection and introspection. Writing about faith helps clarify lessons. In addition to the suggested activity, children may draw pictures relating to today's activities or memory verse, list highlights of the day's activities, or rephrase the memory verse.

You may want to provide an extra activity or worksheet for children who finish their journals quickly, such as coloring sheets, crossword puzzles, word searches, games. See the Workshop Leader's Background Notes and rotation.org for ideas.

**Closing prayer:**

Dear God, thank You for giving each of us the gift of imagination and creativity. Thank You for the stories and word pictures we find in the Bible. Help us to hold Your words close in our hearts and to understand how they call us to serve and glorify You. Amen.

**Tidy and Dismissal:** Ask children to help tidy the room. Give any specific instructions for clearing the workshop room.

If the plaques are cool and dry, they can go home, otherwise remind the children they can get them next week.

**Additional Suggestions:**

Depending on the space, the size of your class, and the amount of time, you may want to do only the ceiling painting or only the fresco painting. If you have lots of space and short tables, everyone can do ceiling painting at the same time.

You will need to decide how best to adjust the lesson for older and younger students. Keep the children active and involved in activity. Do what works for you and the children. Some ideas:

Younger Children:

- For classes composed primarily of pre-readers, show the children how to find the passage in the Bible (for example, "The book of Genesis is at the very beginning of the Bible. The word 'genesis' means 'beginning.'") and then have them do it. After everyone has found the passage, have them close their Bibles and listen while you read.
- For the 'ceiling' painting, the assistant should dip the paintbrushes in the color desired and hand the paintbrush (with the excess paint scraped off) to the child under the table.
- Focus on learning only the second half of the memory verse: "For you created everything, and it is for your pleasure that they exist and

were created.” Revelation 4:11b If you find in later weeks of the rotation that most everyone knows the second part of the verse well, then focus on the entire verse.

## Resources

De Vecchi, Pierluigi, editor. *The Sistine Chapel: A Glorious Restoration*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1992. (A spectacular art book with big clear plates of the paintings; check to see if your public library has this or another art book rather than purchasing this expensive book.)

Di Cagno, Gabriella. *Masters of Art: Michelangelo*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1996.

Fischetto, Laura. *Michael the Angel*. New York: Doubleday, 1993. (This picturebook biography focuses on Michelangelo’s work as a sculptor, but would be a good choice for Shepherd Time.)

Kohl, MaryAnne F. and Kim Solga. *Discovering Great Artists: Hands-On Art for Children in the Styles of the Great Masters*. Bellingham, Washington: Bright Ring Publishing, Inc., 1997. (Source of both painting activities.)

Saccardi, Marianne. *Art in Story: Teaching Art History to Elementary School Children*. North Haven, Connecticut: Linnet Professional Publications, 1997.

Stanley, Diane. *Michelangelo*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000. (An excellent juvenile biography that will give you an overview of Michelangelo’s life and work.)

A sampling of websites with information on Michelangelo and his work (there are many more):

<http://www.michelangelo.com/buonarroti.html>

<http://hometown.aol.com/dtrofatter/michel.htm>

<http://www.christusrex.org/www1/sistine/0-Tour.html> (Sistine Chapel tour)

[http://mv.vatican.va/StartNew\\_EN.html](http://mv.vatican.va/StartNew_EN.html) (Vatican Museum site with good detailed descriptions)

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### **For the Coordinator: FIELD TEST NOTES (from River Community Church)**

This is what needs to be done: Please arrive by 8:30 to help set up before the 9:00 service. Wrap newsprint around the middle of the short table at the front of the room. The children will lay on their backs on the floor and paint on the paper that is on the underside of the table. Last week I wrapped it around and taped the ends together on the top of the table so it was secure. There are containers of red, blue, yellow, and orange paint on the third shelf of the cabinet and the brushes are sitting on the shelf in front of the containers. There are also safety glasses and painting shirts on the bottom shelf for the children to wear when they are participating in this activity. You also need to spread some paper on the floor under the table for the children to lay on. The roll of paper is in the corner to the right of the cabinet.

Cover the other two tables with newspaper. There is some on the bottom shelf of the cabinet. Set out the watercolor paints on the tables with brushes for each jar of water. These paints and brushes are on the second shelf of the cabinet. On the fourth shelf of the cabinet are all the supplies for mixing plaster of paris.

Before class starts you will need to fill the pink square bucket about half full of water. There is a deep sink in the janitor's closet at the end of the hall closet to the sanctuary. When it is time to mix plaster you will put two ziplock bags of dry plaster in one of the round ice cream buckets. You will find a round lid from a dry lemonade mix in one of the ice cream buckets. Use this to measure water. Add three lids full of water to the dry plaster. Use the wood paint sticks to stir until smooth. When it is smooth, pour the plaster into the pink plates. This is enough plaster for 3-4 plates. It takes about 5 minutes for the plaster to set so the children will have a good surface to paint on. When you are through mixing plaster, let the residual plaster dry on the bucket.

To clean up, crack the dry plaster off the sides of the bucket and throw the plaster in the garbage. If you rinse the wet plaster down the drain, it will stop up the plumbing.

When Judy starts her lesson, with the children looking up the Bible passage, it is time to start mixing plaster of paris.

If the children finish early, there are water colors and paper for them to paint on. You can take 4-6 of the water colors and pop them out of the palette. Put one color in a small white cup and add 1 Tablespoon of water. This will give brighter colors when they paint on the paper. All of these supplies are on the third shelf of the cabinet.

When the lesson is over, put everything back in the cabinet, except the plaster paintings and water colors. Leave them to dry on one of the tables. We are going to have an "art show" when the rotation is over in the gathering area on a Sunday morning.

PS Insert floral "s" hook for hanging.