

JOURNEY IN... YEAR TWO COMMUNITY ART

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- An important unit in human community is the family.
- Unitarian Universalism celebrates and affirms many different types of families.
- Love is what bonds a group of people together as a family.

Lesson Materials

- Color images of human figures from Klee and Matisse, one copy per child
- Drawing paper and/or construction paper
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Oil Pastels
- Matisseque figure stencils
- Rulers
- Cheap hairspray or art fixative (do not spray in classroom while kids are present, due to concerns about propellants and asthma)
- White or black poster-board for mats (optional)

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

A child and parent were walking along a road when they came across a large stone. The child said to the parent, "Do you think if I use all my strength, I can move this rock?" The parent answered, "If you use all your strength, I am sure you can do it." The child began to push the rock with every ounce of energy available. The child pushed and pushed, but the rock did not move. Discouraged, the little one said to the parent, "You were wrong. I can't do it." The parent placed an arm around the child's shoulder and said, "No, love. You didn't use all your strength – you didn't ask me to help."

- adapted from D. Wolpe's

Teaching Your Children About God

The family. We were a strange little band of characters trudging through life sharing diseases and toothpaste, coveting one another's desserts, hiding shampoo, borrowing money, locking each other out of our rooms, inflicting pain and kissing to heal it in the same instant, loving, laughing, defending, and trying to figure out the common thread that bound us all together.

-Erma Bombeck

You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them.

-Desmond Tutu

Family life is full of major and minor crises ~ the ups and downs of health, success and failure in career, marriage, and divorce ~ and all kinds of characters. It is tied to places and events and histories. With all of these felt details, life etches itself into memory and personality. It's difficult to imagine anything more nourishing to the soul.

- Thomas Moore

**YOUR FIELD
EXPERIENCES:
FEEDBACK AND
NOTES**

GATHERING AND FOCUSING

🕒 2-3 minutes

Share some time talking about family portraits

- Has your family had a picture taken together recently? When was the last time you all sat for a family portrait? What did you wear? What was the background? Has your family changed much since that photo?

**PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE
MODERN ART FAMILY PORTRAITS**

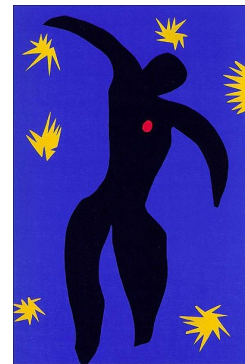
🕒 10-15 minutes

Show the class some of the paintings by Klee and Matisse.

- Look at these artists' drawings and paintings of people? Are they realistic? Describe the figures a little...
- Have you seen work by these artists before? What makes their art unique?

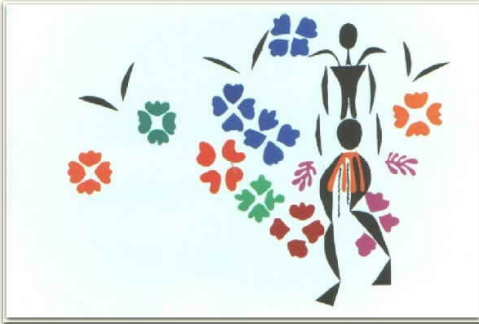


- What's the hardest part about drawing people?
- Can you create a drawing or painting of someone without making it look exactly like them?
- Who would be in a "family portrait" of your family?



Let's have some fun creating modern family portraits. Ideally, we'd love to have the kids pair up with a buddy and interview their partner about his or her family. There are notetaking sheets for that purpose. Having kids draw someone else's family will open them to another child's experience of family life; the fact that we're shooting for representative images as opposed to realistic ones will take some of the pressure off. It's nice, too, to be able to give a piece of our art to someone else - it creates a new bond between families.

(Note: If in the younger classes you are met with resistance to the idea of drawing someone else's family and not having a chance to draw your own, feel free to allow artists to do portraits of their own families.)



Before starting the drawing process, give kids an overview of drawing with oil pastels:

- o They can stain clothes. Please wear an art shirt.
- o You don't have to press hard. The color is rich and the texture is smooth.
- o You can layer one color over another for a nice effect.
- o Oil pastels can be scraped off for an interesting effect.

With older kids willing to draw other people's families rather than their own:

Begin with an interview period. Set a timeframe for each member of the pair—perhaps 3 minutes. The notetaking sheet will cue them to questions they can ask:

- Who's in your family? How old are they? What color hair, skin, eyes do they have? What's their favorite color? Anything about them that should be in the portrait? Is there a background setting that would be just right for your family?



With younger kids or groups intent on drawing their own families:

We can get right to creating our art work.

- **Inspiration from Matisse:**

Ask questions:

- In Matisse's work, are the colors the real colors of things in the world? Of people? Why?
- Look at the people? Do they have faces? Fingers and toes? Why?
- How do you think Matisse made this picture?

Simplify the idea of a person into their geometric size and shape. Think of one thing that makes that person unique. Cut each family figure out of construction paper. Choose colors that fit the person's personality. Add one detail so that each member of the family can be recognized: a hat, a tool, a physical characteristic. Make the family members proportionate to each other: kids smaller, adults bigger, cats even smaller than kids. Glue the figures and background together to make a collage.

- **Inspiration from Klee**

- Does this look exactly like a real person? How? What's different?
- How about the colors? Are they realistic?
- What do you notice about these lines through the picture?

Make the "broken glass" effect by picking one spot on the page. From that spot, use a straight edge to make several (8-10) lines in pencil, radiating out from that spot like sun rays. Alternately, use a straight edge to make a grid of lines that cross vertically and horizontally. Next, sketch in the forms of each member of the family, drawing right over top of the "broken glass" or "grid" lines with pencil. If the child is happy with his drawing, use marker to draw over all the lines in the image. Fill each space made by the lines with colors that fit the figure using the oil pastels, *making an effort to not let any two*

spaces have the same exact color in them. Refer to the sample images to show what this looks like.

Invite the artists to ask follow-up questions about the family to figure out where they'd like to place the figures in each portrait. Remind everyone that there aren't any rules about how this should look and that the unique perspective of each artist makes the portrait a treasure. They can relax and enjoy the process.

Fixative is a good idea, but shouldn't be sprayed in the classroom. Mats cut out of black or white poster board are a nice touch, as well, but not necessary. We'll hang some portraits in our basement hallways!

Set a timer so that you're sure to leave enough time to share and then clean up.

Wondering Together

- I wonder what you especially like about how your portrait turned out.
- I wonder what clues might help your family members to recognize themselves.
- I wonder how many different family structures we can see just in our workshop here.
- I wonder how your family is similar to your art buddy's family.
- I wonder what you've learned about what makes a group of people a family.

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, assume a comfortable meditative position or take each other's hands. Speak these words, or words like them, the children repeating each line after you, the teacher.

May all families grow strong,
May our church be a place that welcomes all families
May all families grow strong.

