

JOURNEY IN... YEAR ONE THE DIVINE WITHIN ART

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- All human beings are a union of flesh and spirit. There are many words and metaphors that help us talk about the soul as *enfleshed* or flesh as *ensouled*.
- Within every human being, there is something of the Divine. All bodies and minds house a holy spark.

Lesson Materials

- Powerpoint Amish and Muslim art (LCD projector/screen/laptop)
- Smocks
- Paintbrushes
- Watercolor sets
- Paper
- (Clay for backup activity)

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

⌚ Ahead of time

Our body is precious. It is a vehicle for awakening.

- Buddha

The first step on a spiritual path today is a return to a sense of one's own body.

- Martha Heyneman

Nobody knows what the soul is.

It comes and goes

like the wind over the water ~
sometimes, for days,
you don't think of it.

- from "Maybe" by Mary Oliver

GATHERING AND FOCUSING

⌚ 5 minutes

- How does an artist make something look like it's alive?
- Has anyone ever drawn a picture of you? What part of you did they draw or paint? Did it really look like you?
- When someone uses the word spirit, what do you think of?
- What would it look like if someone told an artist to paint a picture of your spirit?

Show Power Point of Muslim and Amish art.

- Our Amish friends and neighbors do not draw faces on their artistic representations of people. Our face is what shows our spirit moving inside us – through glances, tears and smiles. The Amish believe that giving drawings or dolls faces is like trying to give them a spirit of their own, which we can't do.
- Our Muslim neighbors do not draw or paint living things at all,

because they believe that only Allah the Creator can form living things with spirits. All Muslim art is of things that they feel don't have spirits: flowers, shapes, and lines.

- I wonder how you feel about drawing things you think have spirits? Can you show the spirit? Is it okay to try?

PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE: ARTISTS' SPIRITS, ARTISTS' BODIES

⌚ 25 minutes

One of the ways that the human spirit expresses itself is through art. Some people think that they can't draw or paint because they're not good at it. Other people say that EVERYONE is an artist. Today, we'll celebrate the artists in our world whose spirits shine through their art, even though their bodies present challenges to the way humans usually paint or draw.

Show Power Point slide show of Artists with Different Abilities. Each slide includes some questions for discussion.

Wondering Together:

- I wonder whose art you liked most of all?
- I wonder whose human spirit amazed you most of all?
- I wonder which of these methods of making art you might like to try?

Art Activity

We'll all paint a picture of the human body using one of two methods employed by artists with disabilities: painting with our toes OR painting with our teeth.

- The subject of our art should be a human body or part of a human body.
- Provide each child with a paintbrush and a large piece of paper.
- Ask each child to choose ONE method: painting by holding the brush in their toes OR in their teeth. The tables in the classroom can be angled upward like easels for the teeth-artists. Toe-artists should work on the floor.
- Make sure each artist signs his or her painting using their chosen method.
- Share the finished watercolors with the class. Leave them to dry in the racks,,

Wondering Together

- I wonder why you chose toes/teeth?
- I wonder how you felt while you were painting?
- I wonder how different it would be if you knew you would need to paint like this for the rest of your life?
- I wonder if you would get better with practice?
- I wonder if this experience has anything to do with your human spirit?

BACKUP ACTIVITY:

If you have extra time or a technological failure, you can invite the class to collaboratively create a human body out of clay. Give one child responsibility for the feet, another for the arms, another the hands, the legs, etc. Assemble the body together. Ask why we can form the shape of a human body but we can't make it into a living human being...?

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

⌚ 2 minutes

Teach the children the greeting word, *namaste* (pronounced evenly: nah-mah-stay). This Pali word translates as, “The Divine within me sees and greets the Divine within you.” Generally, the word is spoken with a gesture which the Thai culture names *wai*: the hands, pressed together, are held just above the heart and the head is bowed to meet the tips of the fingers.

Give the children time to say goodbye to each other and their Guide with this beautiful gesture.