



***CELEBRATE THE FINE ARTS
IN OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
MONTH***

Glorifying God through Creativity

2017

Archdiocese of San Antonio Department of Catholic Schools

A message from the Director of Enrichment Programs

The purpose of observing the month of March as a celebration of Fine Arts in our Catholic Schools is to emphasize the value of music, theatre, art and dance education for all children and to encourage support for quality programs in our schools. Nationally, each area of the arts has numerous organizations that advocate on behalf of and provide support to school programs and instructors. Along with the organizations themselves, conventions and workshops are held throughout the year to foster a community of like-minded individuals using their God-given talents to cultivate a creative outlet for students.

To help promote the benefits of arts education, I have compiled a variety of activities schools can participate in on their campuses and beyond. It is the hope of the Enrichment Programs Office that school leaders and instructors take time to spotlight the creative work by the students throughout the year, but especially during the designated month of March and honor the individual instructors who passionately work in the field. Use this time to recruit and promote the respective art. The Fine Arts are able to engage, educate and enlighten an audience by means of truth and beauty. ~ Veronica Montalvo

*For the gifts and the calling of God
are irrevocable. ~ Romans 11:29*

Once God places a gifting and calling on someone's life there is no straying from the path that God sets out. Gifts are used to bring honor and glory to God and one way that takes place is through art as a form of worship.

Art is an interesting topic in the Bible. Although the word "art" is not easily found in the Bible, we know that it exists based on God's creating quality. God is very creative and has gifted His children in similar ways. If God has called you to art, go for it. Write, record, paint and build as God has gifted you all for His glory.



The Importance of Fine Arts Education

Education in the arts is an integral part of the development of each human being. Those who have studied learning processes throughout the ages, beginning with Plato, have emphasized the importance of the arts in the education process. Arts education refers to education in the disciplines of music, dance, theatre, and visual arts. Study in the arts is integral to our society. They are a part of the cultural heritage of every American. The arts are what make us most human, most complete as people. The arts cannot be learned through occasional or random exposure any more than math or science can. Education and engagement in the fine arts must be an essential part of the school curriculum and an important component in the educational program of every student in Catholic schools.

Sufficient data exists to overwhelmingly support the belief that study and participation in the fine arts is a key component in improving learning throughout all academic areas. Evidence of its effectiveness in reducing student dropout, raising student attendance, developing better team players, fostering a love for learning, improving greater student dignity, enhancing student creativity, and producing a more prepared citizen for the workplace for tomorrow can be found documented in studies held in many varied settings, from school campuses, to corporate America.

Evidence from brain research is only one of many reasons education and engagement in fine arts is beneficial to the educational process. The arts develop neural systems that produce a broad spectrum of benefits ranging from fine motor skills to creativity and improved emotional balance. One must realize that these systems often take months and even years to fine-tune. In a study conducted by Judith Burton, Columbia University, research evidenced that subjects such as mathematics, science, and language require complex cognitive and creative capacities “typical of arts learning” (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 1999). “The arts enhance the process of learning. The systems they nourish, which include our integrated sensory, attentional, cognitive, emotional, and motor capacities, are, in fact, the driving forces behind all other learning” (Jensen, 2001).

The fine arts also provide learners with non-academic benefits such as promoting self-esteem, motivation, aesthetic awareness, cultural exposure, creativity, improved emotional expression, as well as social harmony and appreciation of diversity.

The following are findings reported in *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (Fiske, 1999) that should be noted by every parent, teacher, and administrator:

- The arts reach students not normally reached, in ways and methods not normally used.
- It changes the learning environment to one of discovery.
- Students connect with each other better
- The arts provide challenges to students of all levels.
- Students learn to become sustained, self-directed learners.
- The study of the fine arts positively impacts the learning of students of lower socioeconomic status as much or more than those of a higher socioeconomic status.

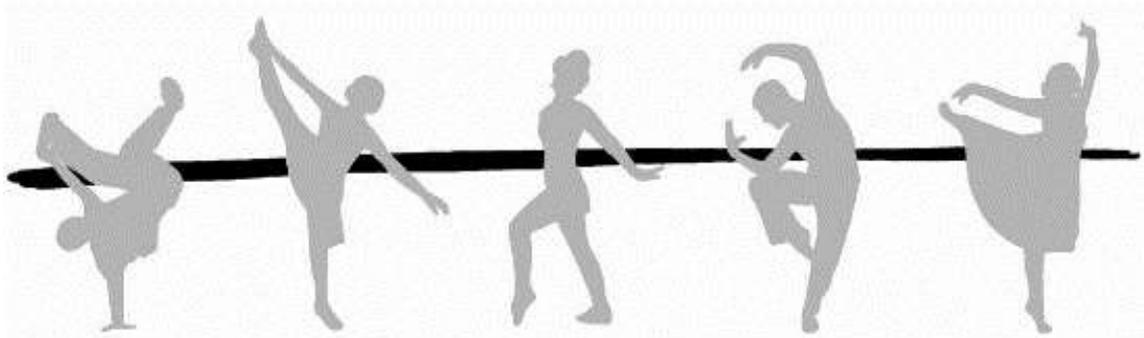
Is the study of fine arts important? They engage many areas of the brain and also have far-reaching effects on the learner’s mind (Jensen, 2001). The arts promote the understanding and sharing of culture. They promote social skills that enhance the awareness and respect of others. The fine arts enhance perceptual and cognitive skills. The Burton study of more than 2000 children found that those in the arts curriculum were far superior in creative thinking, self-concept, problem-solving, self-expression, risk-taking, and cooperation than those who were not (Burton et al., 1999). The arts have the capacity to engage everyone. There are no barriers of race, religion, culture, geography, or socioeconomic levels.

Workplace demands are for students to understand how to solve problems, what makes arguments plausible, how to build teams and coalitions, and how to incorporate the concept of fairness into the everyday decisions. Students need to be thinkers, possess people skills, be problem-solvers, demonstrate creativity, and work as a member of a team.

We need to offer more in-depth learning about the things that matter the most: order, integrity, thinking skills, a sense of wonder, truth, flexibility, fairness, dignity, contribution, justice, creativity and cooperation. The arts provide all of these.

Perhaps the most fundamental element to education one should consider is the manner in which we perceive and make sense of the world in which we live. An effective education in the fine arts helps students to see what they look at, hear what they listen to, and feel what they touch. Engagement in the fine arts helps students to stretch their minds beyond the boundaries of the printed text or the rules of what is provable. The arts free the mind from rigid certainty. Imagine the benefits of seeking, finding, and developing multiple solutions to the myriad of problems facing our world today! These processes, taught through the study of the arts, help to develop the tolerance for coping with the ambiguities and uncertainties present in the everyday affairs of human existence. There is a universal need for words, music, dance, and visual art to give expression to the innate urgings of the human spirit. (Eisner, 1987) The premier organizations in the corporate world today recognize that the human intellect “draws

Modified from <http://www.katyisd.org/dept/finearts/Pages/The-Importance-of-Fine-Arts-Education-.aspx>



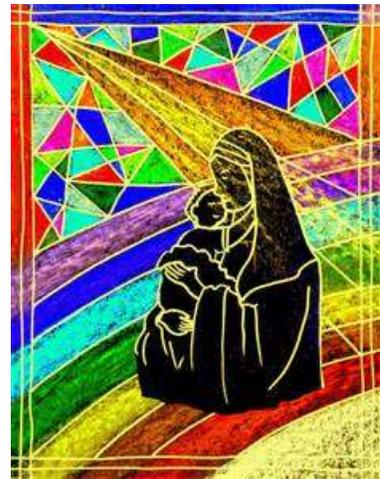
Ideas for Celebrating DANCE

1. Hold a school performance showcase.
2. Learn about the different forms of dance throughout the ages.
3. Have a cultural dance day and teach students different folk dances from around the world.
4. Watch a full ballet on video.
5. Have students tell a story through song and movement – no words!
6. Have a dance walk! Play different songs and have students walk around the room changing the form and speed of their “walk” depending on the song.
7. Learn about famous dancers.
8. Library can make a display of books about dancers and dance companies.
9. Choreograph a song you will sing at church.
10. In groups, elect a Psalm and put expressive movements to it.
11. Invite a local dance company to come and perform at your school.

Ideas for Celebrating ART



12. Create works of art using scripture as inspiration.
13. Participate in local competitions with shows at libraries, banks, universities, community centers, museums, retirement homes, book store, and shopping malls.
14. Send art work to seminarians, priests, and religious.
15. Have an opening reception. Get publicity for your event.
16. Send flyers with student art work.
17. Make paper stained glass art and display on school windows.
18. Give out prints of students work in the community.
19. Have an art day on your campus.
20. Create a calendar of student art work.
21. Make paper ties for the staff at your school.
22. Make clay whistles and whistle for art.
23. Create rosary bracelets and necklaces.
24. Learn about art during a time period you are studying in history class.
25. Talent shows; show off that student work.
26. March for art; have a parade of art work.
27. Dress as your favorite artist.
28. Display artist biographies and art books in the library.
29. Create a silkscreen self portrait of each student.
30. Invite guest artists to demonstrate to your students. Invite other classes and administrators to join you.
31. Have an evening in Paris; decorate the halls, have the band/orchestra play; Culinary Arts serves cheese; have a raffle for student art work and a “follies” show.
32. Create art gifts for school council members and superintendent.
33. Serve art cake to your staff. Do an artist cake.
34. Create a traveling art journal.
35. Do a school-wide collage or build an art installation.
36. Create a spring collage.
37. Have a Family Art Night.
38. Have students create cards and have a card exchange.
39. Do sidewalk chalk art.
40. Make torn paper collages.
41. Have each student create a personal symbol.
42. Fold origami mobiles.
43. Make every teacher in your school a room sign.
44. Show your diversity; have art work reflect various cultures.
45. Make banners and hang them in business offices.
46. Have a student artist of the day for every day in March.
47. Learn about in art in history.
48. Have an art day with all levels of art students. Let them interact with each other.
49. Auction art work to fund art programs.
50. Announce Fine Arts Month on your school marquee.
51. Highlight the Art teacher and students in your school’s newsletter.
52. Create posters from student art work.



Ideas for Celebrating MUSIC



1. Celebrate by singing Catholic hymns during the entire month of March!
2. View online choral, orchestra and band music performances.
3. Create a video for local advocacy. Record your students performing and include an introduction from your principal demonstrating their support for music education.
4. Make a “Music Month” calendar, and suggest that students dress for different musical eras. Play appropriate music as students arrive in the morning and at lunchtime.
5. Add a musical touch to the morning announcements. Try having a “mystery tune” each day, or a music trivia question, and award prizes for the winner.
6. Have teachers play music as students walk into their classroom.
7. Make posters with musical themes and display around your school.
8. Incorporate physical education and choreograph a catchy Christian song that everyone sings to!
9. Have a talent show emphasizing music. Tell a story, a joke, or read poetry about music, and be sure to include traditional acts of singing, playing instruments, etc. Invite the parents, and choose a winning act from each class to perform in a winners’ assembly.
10. Collaborate with the art teacher and have students design posters, banners, and buttons.
11. Ask students to draw their favorite musical instrument, have them design an instrument of the future, or bring in homemade instruments for “show and tell”.
12. Collaborate with your school’s history or social studies departments to create cross-curricular activities based on the theme of the concert or the pieces being performed.
13. Ask students to cut pictures of music and musicians out of magazines and create a musical wall collage for your classroom(s).
14. Have students list ways in which music is a part of their everyday lives. Have them compare lists with friends and family members.
15. Invite teachers in your school to sing along with your students at a concert.
16. Take a field trip to hear a local college group, community chorus or orchestra, or invite a group to perform at your school. Teach students about concert etiquette.
17. Take students to a local senior center or hospital and invite everyone to participate in the sing-along.
18. Students share “What Music Means to Me” through a writing assignment. The papers were placed around the school for all to read.
19. “Family Activity Night” with a dinner, reading activities, and a music concert presented by each grade level.
20. Each week feature a new composer, and clues were provided every day that became more specific throughout the week.
21. Hold a “Talent Sharing Day” with students playing their instruments and singing for each other during class time.
22. Students sing and play their band instruments during the morning announcements throughout March, and some of the young musicians perform at the PTC meeting.
23. Write an opera or musical based on Bible stories and perform them in class or in other classrooms.
24. Have a scavenger hunt! What does the Bible say about music? Find scripture with references to singing or playing instruments?
25. What did Biblical instruments look like? Go on an online web quest.



Ideas for Celebrating THEATRE



1. Collect and distribute quotes and facts about the importance of theatre in the lives of young people.
2. Tour a performance to elementary schools, retirement communities, and community centers.
3. Post daily or weekly theatre trivia in your classroom, school, or business.
4. Take a group to see a show and write a review.
5. Host a networking reception, lesson plan, or theatre games exchange for local theatre artists and educators.
6. Invite a theatre professional to speak or give a demonstration at your school.
7. Ask theatre alumni to return to class as guest speakers.
8. Wear a show shirt to school.
9. Open theatre classes or regular rehearsals to your school's students.
10. Have students write an original play based on a Bible story.
11. Watch a Bible musical in your class.
12. Dramatize the gospel at your school liturgy.
13. Have students perform monologues based on people from the Bible.
14. Engage in a writing exercise and assign students to write a journal entry from the perspective of one of the apostles or other people who witnessed Jesus' ministry.
15. Do improvisation skits with "What Would Jesus Do?" scenarios in contemporary life.
16. Read a play based on a saint.
17. Create a costume for a Biblical person.
18. Design a theatrical set for the passion play or Nativity.
19. Lead students in a narrative pantomime using a Bible story with students acting out the actions in the book.
20. Web quest to learn about Catholic actors and performers.
21. View a movie based on the life of a Saint.
22. Research Christian plays available for production at your school.
23. Participate in Reader's Theatre using a contemporary version of the play "Everyman."



