A Palette of Fun with Arts and Crafts

Supporting School-Age Accreditation and Quality Programming

Arts and crafts can be woven into many parts of the School-Age program as either short or long term projects. Conduct the project at an age-appropriate level for each participant so that everyone has fun and improves their skill levels. Art projects should always be available to children as a choice activity. Provide direction as needed – but encourage children to express their own ideas.

Opportunities for Youth Leadership and Development and Cross-age Teaching

As already suggested, grades 4-6 children can help K-3 children with many of the projects. They will do best with a little adult direction and training. Before they work with younger children, help them learn how to organize their time, work as a team, and give and take directions. These experiences will help them enhance life skills and develop critical thinking skills.

Ideas! Ideas! Ideas!

Brainstorming with children, youth and parents is a great way to generate a list of ideas for field trips, speakers, and websites. Here are some examples:

- Visit local art galleries and museums.
- Invite artists, art teachers, decorators, folk artists, or animators to talk about their careers and how a person can become an artist.
- Watch an animated movie, a puppet show, or a play; then talk about how art is important to the production.

See the Resource Guide, pages 132-133, for suggestions of additional materials. Enter some contests or the county fair or hold an art exhibit. Let everyone be proud of the children and all their great work as they learn about art and develop life skills.

Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development

Through 4-H, youth know they are cared about and feel a sense of BELONGING; they exercise INDEPENDENCE by making decisions and making action to influence people and events; they develop a sense of MASTERY by learning skills needed in making positive career and life choices; and they experience GENEROSITY by helping others through community service. These elements support the Army Youth Development Components of Belonging, Success, Service and Independence.

Providing Quality Middle School and Teen Programming

Although this was not created to be an MST curriculum, many of the projects would be interesting and challenging for youth beyond the 6th grade. Let the youth experiment and see how they can expand the activities.

THE Army 4-H Express Guide to A Palette of Fun with Arts and Crafts

A great way to engage children in creative activities is to put out a variety of materials and let them make something original. Get children excited about arts and crafts and watch them learn while having fun.

Using 4-H Projects to Enhance School-Age & Youth Programs
**Life Skills**

The goal of *A Palette of Fun with Arts and Crafts* is to discover ways to introduce children to a variety of art activities, teaching the principles of design and how to develop skills for a lifetime. The skills include thinking, learning to learn, relating and communicating, giving to the group effort, and satisfying life. The skills include thinking, learning to learn, relating and communicating, giving to the group effort, and satisfying life. These skills are identified as "Skills that help an individual to become successful in living a productive and satisfying life" and are identified as Life Skills (Hendricks, 1996).

**Project Goals**

The project activity guides are designed to help children develop the following life skills:

- **Thinking, Learning to Learn**: Children should be encouraged to explore new ways of expressing themselves.
- **Relating and Communicating**: Children should be able to share materials and ideas as well as work as a team.
- **Giving to the Group Effort**: Children should be able to work together towards a common goal.
- **Satisfying Life**: Children should be able to develop skills for a lifetime.

**Related 4-H Projects**

Youth and adults who enjoy arts and crafts may consider related projects such as Sewing, Visual Arts, Public Speaking, and Woodworking.

**Community Service**

Creating and sharing arts and crafts relates to many community service and service-learning projects. Service should be a part of all 4-H projects as well as all Army activities. Find a project that is interesting to the children and has value for the community. Here’s a starting point:

- Display children’s work, and change it regularly so they can take some of it home.
- If possible, send items to parents who are deployed.
- Encourage children to use projects as gifts for family and friends.
- Enter projects in the county fair or other art contests.
- Have some children teach others how to do an art project.

**Experiential Learning**

Experiential Learning engages children and youth while they learn, share, and grow through their 4-H experiences. With an adult as the coach, the first step is “doing” or exploring. Next, youth share what they did and discuss the experience with their peers. After they’ve identified the skills and knowledge gained, help them determine how to apply these to other situations in their lives.

**Integrating Technology**

As technology possibilities continue to grow there are many ways to combine technology with arts and crafts. Some suggestions include: exploring paint or drawing programs in the technology lab; taking digital pictures of art projects; and creating a collection for each child. On the first page of each unit in the guide, a Technology reference section suggests websites and software related to the unit.

**Musical Fingers, Unit 3, Painting, page 43 combines painting and music to make paint. Have three to six selections of recorded music and a playback system— or a live musician— in a room large enough to dry paintings. Give each child a piece of paper to go with each piece of music. Kids listen with their eyes closed, and then paint whatever goes with the rhythm. Conduct a reflection discussion and have children help with clean-up.**

**Four Fun Activities**

1. **Musical Fingers, Unit 3, Painting, page 43 combines painting and music to make paint. Have three to six selections of recorded music and a playback system— or a live musician— in a room large enough to dry paintings. Give each child a piece of paper to go with each piece of music. Kids listen with their eyes closed, and then paint whatever goes with the rhythm. Conduct a reflection discussion and have children help with clean-up.**

2. **See how creative children can be as they modify each other's work in Pass the Sculpture, Please, Unit 4, Sculpting, page 60. Of course everyone should understand they’re going to make changes to each other's sculptures, and that changes should enhance while keeping the original intent. Talk about using dough recipes are good for sculpting 3-D Construction. Each unit also contains a family activity which can be used at a family night or can be done at home.**

3. **Children love to watch and hear trains go by. Balloon Train, Unit 7, 3-D Construction, page 116 encourages children and adults to become a train. Each child and adult creates two sides of a circus train car and tapes them to a balloon. Then everyone lines up and makes a train, with each person’s balloon held against his or her stomach, and against the back of the person in front. See how far the “train” can walk without touching balloons. Add train sounds to make it more creative. Ask the reflect and apply questions.**

4. **This activity starts at the program but may continue at home as children and their family members make other sculptures. Use the “art you can eat” bread, pretzel, and glass cookie recipes, from Delicious and Edible Art, Unit 4, Sculpting, A Family Adventure, page 74. Have children choose one recipe to make. All the dough recipes are good for sculpting and must be baked, so at least a toaster oven is needed.**

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“Skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life” are identified as Life Skills (Hendricks, 1996). Life Skills in this project include decision-making, communicating, leading self and others, planning, and organizing. Although each activity specifically targets only one life skill, youth have the opportunity to practice several.

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Creating and sharing arts and crafts relates to many community service and service-learning projects. Service should be a part of all 4-H projects as well as all Army activities. Find a project that is interesting to the children and has value for the community. Here’s a starting point:

- Display children’s work, and change it regularly so they can take some of it home.
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- Enter projects in the county fair or other art contests.
- Have some children teach others how to do an art project.

**Project Activity Guides and Target Age Groups**

There’s only one guide for this project. It’s a helper’s guide for children’s art activities, grades K-6, with 45 separate projects. These are divided into seven units: Cutting and Pasting; Drawing; Painting; Sculpting; Printing; Fiber; and 3-D Construction. Each unit also contains a family activity which can be used at a family night or can be done at home.

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