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# A Handbook for School Murals

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A HANDBOOK  
FOR SCHOOL MURALS

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of Graduate Study  
Central Washington College of Education

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

by

Sister Mary Aquinata O'Sullivan, O.P.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

#### I. THE BACKGROUND

Art education should hold an important place in child development. Children should acquire the ideas, the attitudes, and the habits which they need for life in society. They must come to understand social living and what it demands on the part of the individual. There is an increasing awareness of the value of art education in fostering these understandings.

Concerning the recognition of the needs of the pupils through the art program, Dr. George W. Johnson has said, "The aim of Catholic elementary education is to provide the child with those experiences which are calculated to develop in him such knowledge, appreciations, and habits, as would yield a character equal to the contingencies of fundamental Christian living in American democratic society."<sup>1</sup>

It has been the desire of many elementary classroom teachers to inculcate the Christian Social Living in the art activity of making murals. There is a definite need on the part of the teacher for information, suggestions, and helps in conducting a school mural program.

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<sup>1</sup>Cephas, Sister Mary, C. PP. S., Guiding Growth in Art Education, A Course of Study, Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Superintendent of Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio, February, 1949, p. 2.

The need for a handbook. It is difficult for a classroom teacher to plan and carry out a mural program with very little help or none. There are articles and suggestions for making individual murals. Nothing has been available that would serve as a practical guide for the teacher who plans to carry out a mural program. A teacher is often in need of the advice and suggestions that would be given by a supervisor or consultant. In many schools this help is not available. The teacher who desires to help meet the needs of her pupils is often handicapped by this lack of assistance. It is with this desire to help meet the needs of the elementary classroom teacher in conducting an art program that the work of compiling this handbook is undertaken.

## II. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The problem to which consideration is being given involves six purposes:

1. To conduct a research study concerning existing conditions of elementary school art education and its shortcomings in order to meet the demands of education for the development of the individual.

2. To meet the needs of the teacher through workshops and in-service art activities. These needs were determined through requests and consultation with teachers in the field of art education.

3. To collect and evaluate children's murals contributed by 24 elementary schools. Each mural was accompanied by a questionnaire filled out by the pupil or teacher. These questionnaires were



used over a period of two years.

4. To show the growth and development of a single class participating in a mural program for a school year.

5. To offer to the teacher an illustrated handbook on conducting and evaluating a school mural program.

6. To present an annotated collection of children's murals. These are photographed in the handbook.

The author's hope is that the classroom teacher will find the answer to many of her problems by using this handbook, the culminating product of eight years of work with the elementary classroom teacher in planning her art program to fit the needs of the child. According to Sister Mary Joanne, "Art is not for the few . . . Art is a virtue of the intellect . . . art belongs to all of us because every man is an artist."<sup>2</sup> More simply said by Father Farrell: "Art is the knowledge of the right way to make things."<sup>3</sup> With these points in mind the teacher should be able to benefit from the use of the handbook.

The content. The first section of this handbook deals with the purpose, material, skills, and ideas that are to be developed in a classroom mural project.

Art is essentially a service. This is clear in the function

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<sup>2</sup>Christie, Sister M. Joanne, S. N. D., Art Today in Catholic Education, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D. C., 1954, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Farrell, Walter, O. P., S. T. M., and Healy, Martin J., S. T. D., My Way of Life, Confraternity of the Precious Blood, New York, 1952, p. 230.

of murals down through the centuries to our present day. The purpose of art is not essentially a mastery of techniques and skills, but a service to God and man. It is also the purpose of these mural projects to give the child opportunities to practice the Christian Social Virtues.

The second section of this handbook deals with the problem of the child and his stages of development. Many teachers persist in looking for a book which will give them a definite pattern or a rigid course of study to be followed in the elementary school art program. The child should be the first concern in an art activity. The child, his needs, and his abilities which are to be developed should be the primary purpose, the reason for the art project. If the program is to be geared to the needs of the child, then the first duty of the art instructor is to know the child and his needs.

Scope of the material. The material presented in this handbook takes into consideration the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical, perceptual, social, aesthetic, and creative growth of the child. With these the psychological development of the child is closely bound. However, the psychological stages, physiological development, and chronological age seldom coincide perfectly to make a harmonious structural pattern. In order to help the teacher understand the child, the handbook considers under separate headings each stage of child development in reference to age and grade level.

Limitations. This handbook does not pretend to be a complete

syllabus for teaching art in the classroom. It is prepared with the desire that it may become a functional tool in the hands of the teacher. The material is arranged in a manner that will facilitate publication at a later date. Pictures are used for practical illustration. To help the teacher who is interested and is in need of additional references there are valuable helps offered in the books and materials listed in the bibliography.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE HANDBOOK

Education that is Christian in fact as well as in name must include the training in the Arts. Which classroom project will serve to instill in our pupils the virtues of Christian Social Living? Murals in public places play an important part in everyday life. Our children should appreciate these works through an understanding of the purpose of the mural, the materials used, ideas portrayed and the artist's background. Children can make murals for their schools. Like the mural painter, they must regard the - - -

Purpose - - Why is this mural being made?

Material - - What suitable materials are available for this particular mural that needs to be made?

Skill - - Besides the hands, what are the proper tools to reshape this material into its new form?

Idea - - What is this new form (mural) to be like?<sup>1</sup>

Realising the values of a mural classroom project, the third grade made murals. Events throughout the year from the first day of making acquaintances to the final closing exercises were recorded in a mural. These murals were kept and evaluated according to the amount of growth and learning that accompanied each work.

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<sup>1</sup> Sister Joanne Christie, S.N.D., Art Today in Catholic Elementary Schools, (Catholic University of America Press: Washington, D.C.), p. 4.

At the end of the year (September to June) all the murals were displayed in sequence at a teacher meeting. Many teachers became more interested in mural display. The following year many schools were represented in the mural display. Murals were loaned to schools and became an incentive to other teachers and pupils to enjoy the experience of making a mural. Each mural that was sent in for general exhibition was accompanied by a form paper which gave information and comments offered by teacher and pupil. Summer workshops and in-service classes have made a contribution to more and better mural activities, however, there seems to be still another need, the teacher needs something she can take home with her to study and to guide her. It is with this desire to help the teacher experience the satisfaction and joy which should be hers and her pupils' in creating a mural, that this Handbook is offered.

## *murals have value*

in the School Art Program. A curriculum cannot be cut into isolated parts, but at many places is woven into experiences through which a child learns, and to which he brings his ideas and his experiences. In the project of making a classroom mural, the child becomes a thinker, a planner, a creator, and an achiever. It is impossible for a child to develop character by passive listening alone; his must be an active part, a meeting of many situations in social living which call for decision and action. Mural making is not to be considered as busy work or as an end in itself. With proper Christ-like attitudes and an understanding of teacher and pupil the aim of education will be fulfilled.

To help the growing child to enlarge and deepen its vision and therefore its love, and at the same time to help it to become a maker... maker of its own life as a whole human being with body, mind, heart, and will, and of its home, and of the larger family of the school, and eventually of the world-family.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gerald Vann, O.P., The Heart of Man, (New York, Longmans, Green and company, 1945), p.114.

# *we learn to*

tell in pictures the things we have learned in order to share our knowledge with others.

draw things freely and large enough to fill entire area.

work with our fellow classmates as part of the group

make a drawing of what we see in our minds so that others can recognize it.

put people in our drawings so that they are sufficiently recognizable to tell the story well.

show sequence of actions either by making a series of pictures or representing several distinct actions in the same mural.

draw important things large and to place them in an orderly way on the mural.

experiment fearlessly with color combinations of our own.

use or suggest the texture of objects in our drawings when this would be helpful in making the idea clearer.

express our ideas without being self-conscious about it.

see the good qualities in the work of other children.

improve our work by self and group criticism.

work together on cooperative projects.

respect the **rights** of others.

### WHAT IS A MURAL?

A mural is a large drawing or painting meant to decorate considerable wall space and to serve as a human document. In education it answers the purpose of a unifying and culminating experience, a document of pleasant learning experience together with a meaningful application to everyday life. We use the word "mural" in an adapted sense, as a picture painted or drawn on a large scale by a group of children working together. Individuals will often have the desire to make a mural of their own. This could be a good free time activity.



"I want to make a mural all my own!"





"Look ! Here I am an Indian chief and my tribe is around me."

Children project themselves into their work.

PLANNING

# knowledge of subject

is increased through

- \* reading
- \* excursions
- \* observations

The information gained reinforces the interests and helps the child to portray his story.





## *children's interests*

vary with

- \* locality
- \* environment
- \* community activities
- \* units studied



We read about birds.

## *previous learnings*

should be utilized in his present undertaking. This shows growth in development.



These are pictures of what we read.

Our mural shows life on a game farm.





We have a committee meeting after the class has decided what kind of a mural we will make.

We planned to tell our story in sequence therefore we must know what part each one will do..

Through our committees we learn to work and plan together.



Committee responsibilities are held as a privilege and some of the values to be derived are:

- \* Children learn to work well with others,
- \* develop good work habits--to work cheerfully and with perseverance
- \* practice economy in the use of time and materials
- \* develop qualities of initiative, resourcefulness, leadership, self-confidence, and cooperation in group work
- \* help plan and carry out group activities to evaluate ideas, plans, and accomplishments.

# committees

conduct group discussions for making plans.

be responsible to see that plans are carried out.

arrange the furniture to provide working space.

measure paper for mural and have it ready for use.

mix paint and have it in sufficient number of containers.

arrange paint with a paint brush in each container on covered table accessible to work.

put paper or cloth on the tables or floors to protect them from paint or chalk dust.

distribute and collect cloths for cleaning water or paint.

clean brushes and paint containers and replace in storage cabinets or on work table.

distribute and collect crayons and chalk.

help to display murals.

write stories or poems about the mural.

show and explain the mural to visitors or other classes in the school.

write letters thanking people for courtesies while on special trips to get mural material.





## TRY

to stimulate the child's imagination. Put the paper for the mural on an unused blackboard or wall sometime before the planning. Soon the area will be filled with imaginative pictures before the actual work starts.

**MATERIALS**

# CRAYONS

are easily used. Encourage the exploration of their possibilities by:



removing paper from broken crayons and using the sides.

pressing hard to give more color.

using over various surfaces to give texture.

making clear sharp lines with paints.

putting niches in sides of crayon to make a pattern of lines.

# chalk

appeals to children because  
it gives quick, vivid effects.

Explore its possibilities  
by using:

- \* dots
- \* lines
- \* flat areas
- \* blended colors
- \* strong, firm strokes



Chalk can be very messy unless handled properly.  
Wet one end of paper towels to clean fingers.  
Use aprons and newspapers to protect working area.  
Spill the excess chalk from the picture--don't blow.

offers opportunities to:

- \* coordinate eye and hand.
- \* develop technique and use of color.
- \* communicate ideas, events and impressions in a creative way.
- \* experiment with a variety of brushes, paints and materials.



**EXPERIMENT WITH COMBINED MATERIALS**

- \* cut paper and crayon
- \* water color and chalk
- \* paint and yarn
- \* crayons and paint



We decide where to put our mural and then measure our paper to fit.

Many types of paper are usable:

\* unglazed wrapping paper

\* butcher paper

\* newsprint

\* wallpaper

\* building paper

\* construction paper

**PROCEDURE**

## PROCEDURE

varies with:

- \* classroom set up
- \* age level
- \* size of group
- \* working space
- \* materials used
- \* time allotted



"This is our Parish. I am making my house."

The procedure must be well planned and a working knowledge of the use of materials must be understood by the group. Discipline problems are eliminated when each child assumes a share of responsibility and becomes an integral part of the general particular plan.

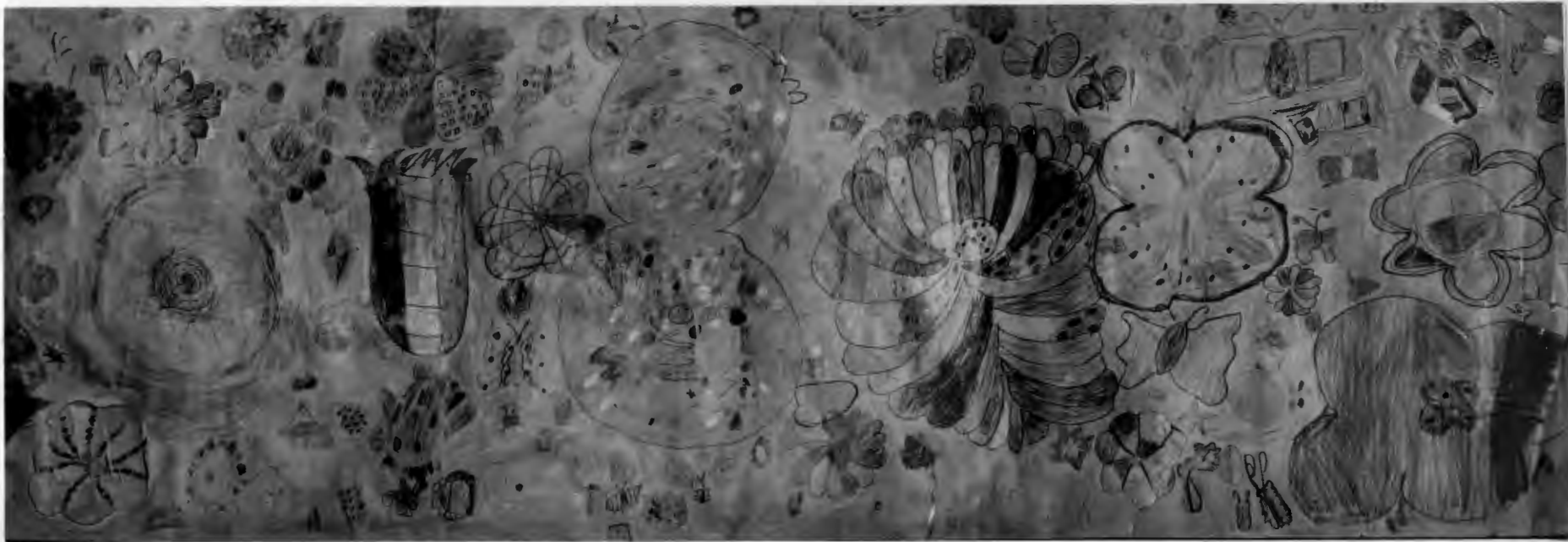


# methods to try...

make an outline of the story and the ideas it will contain. Let each child make suggestions and then select the part that he would like to do. Note that his choice is closely allied to his knowledge.



make a scribble mural that opens new ideas. often the paper is filled with large free scribbles the children let their imagination dictate the subject matter and design.



We put the paper on the floor and worked from both sides.

Everyone could not work at the same time on this mural.

Some children made flower designs on small paper, cut them out and pasted them on the large mural.

This way we were all working on the same project -- a mural for the lunchroom.

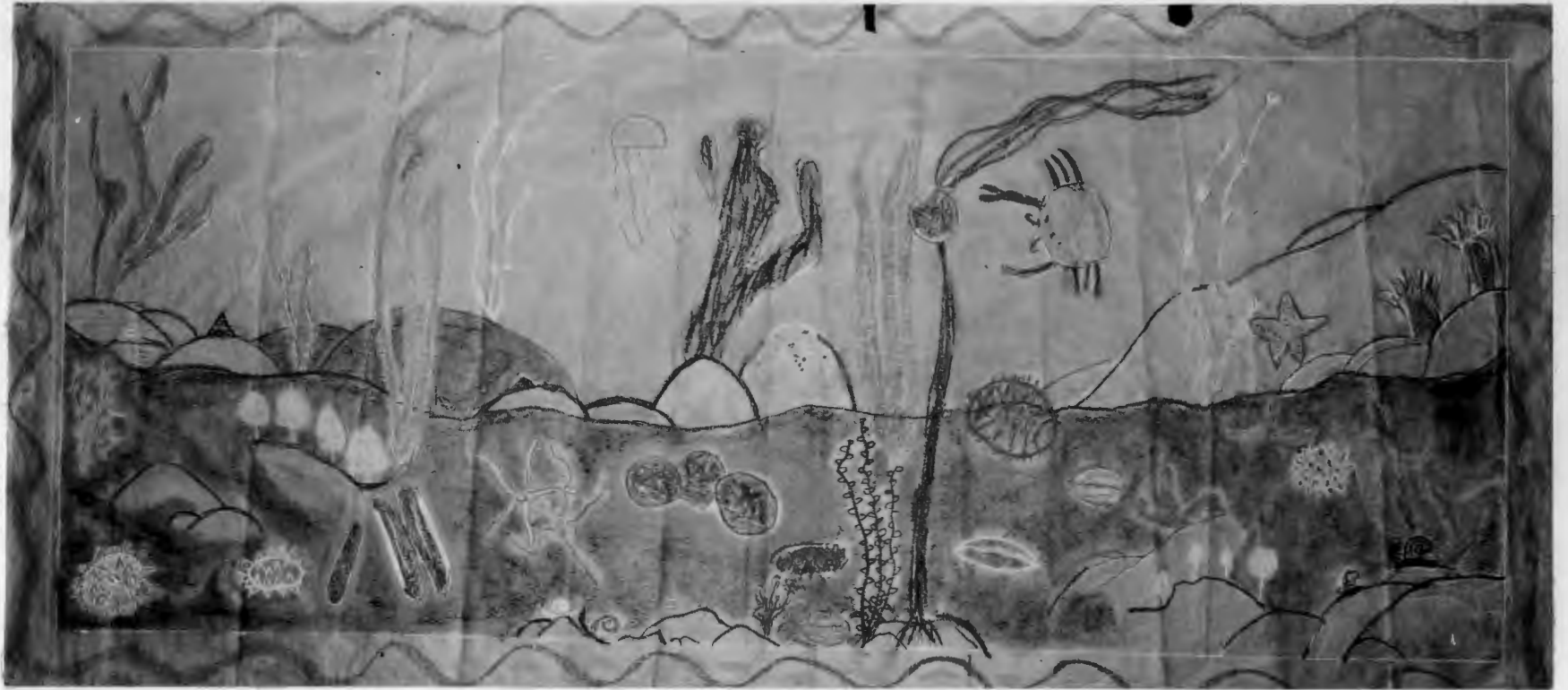
to vary  
the procedure we:



make small drawings of what  
the children would like to put  
on the mural. This helps to  
clarify the plan.



decide each child's responsibility through a class discussion.



The established line through the mural adds unity to the design of the whole.

Would the children like to use their knowledge of borders and put one on the mural?



"We used designs to tell our story. We like to use these designs because they remind us of Indian writing."

Children in the upper grades are timid and concerned about drawing things to "look real". Try using the seven symbols of design. A Method of Design, Best and Maugard, gives a means to create design.

This method removes technical obstacles which a child meets in naturalistic drawings. Do not let the child fall into the production of imitation peasant art.



We made our first Indians very large.

This gave the other boys and girls a small space to work in.

The space kept getting smaller until we were finished.

Not everyone likes to be the first to work on a big piece of paper.



We learn to work together through the handling of our materials.

When the handling of art materials becomes a problem, valuable time is lost and the spirit of a wholesome attitude toward an art problem is often destroyed.

MURALS  
OTHERS HAVE  
MADE



## MURAL SUBJECTS OTHERS HAVE USED

A mural painting program can be satisfactory through an adequate amount of planning to include all phases of child development and variety of interests. The same material, purpose, interests may be utilized on each grade level. As a child's experiences, skills, and knowledge increase, his works build accumulatively. The following is a collection of murals made in various schools. They are classified according to titles and placed under general headings.



School activities hold great interest for children. They enjoy sharing their interests not only with one another but also with different classes and schools.

Mural subjects others have used:

Sports at School

Fun at School

Silhouettes on the School Grounds

Our Classroom

Our Safety Patrol

Picnic Day

A Daffodil Parade

Our Band Plays

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES



Nature study is an integral part of the curriculum. A child becomes more alert to the wonders of nature all about him through observation and experiment, reading, listening and discussing.

Mural subjects others have used:

Woodland scenes

Land and Water Birds

Wonders of the Sea

Spring Through a Microscope

Fish in Design

Butterflies in Spring

Spring Flowers

Signs of Spring



Holidays are of interest to every child. They are enthusiastic about bringing the holiday atmosphere to their schoolroom.

Mural subjects others have used:

Columbus and the Indians

Our Halloween Party

The First Thanksgiving

Nativity Scenes

Christmas Customs in Other Lands

Easter Is Coming

Holy Week Processions

Washington's Birthday Party



A wealth of understanding of the child and his interest can be easily acquired through his figure drawings.  
A child will depict himself in reality or fantastic imagery.

Mural subjects others have used:

Our Classroom

Let's Get Acquainted

Meet the Second Grade

Our Indian Tribe

Crusaders

Mary Mount Cadets

Fun on the Playgrounds

Christmas Angels

FIGURE DRAWING



Scenes from literature and from the lives of the saints challenge a child to illustrate while his growing love on the fanciful level leads him to create imaginative pictures and designs.

Mural subjects others have used:

Once Upon a Time

The Queer Ways of Brother Simon

Meet Blessed Martin

Paul Bunyan

Unusual Jungle Stories

Book Week

Poetry Illustrations

Our Lady of Fatima

L I T E R A T U R E



In social studies children learn how people live and work together. The activities of men at work, of families living, working and praying together at home, of children at school, at church, and in the neighborhood; and bustling scenes at the airport, the dock, the railroad station; the colorful display of shop and market — all of these stimulate the child to set down his views of community life in crayon and brush.

Mural subjects others have used:

History of Early California

Life in China

Transportation

County Fair

Excursion to the Aquarium

Circus Comes to Town



The second grade told their story of transportation. "We made a big train."

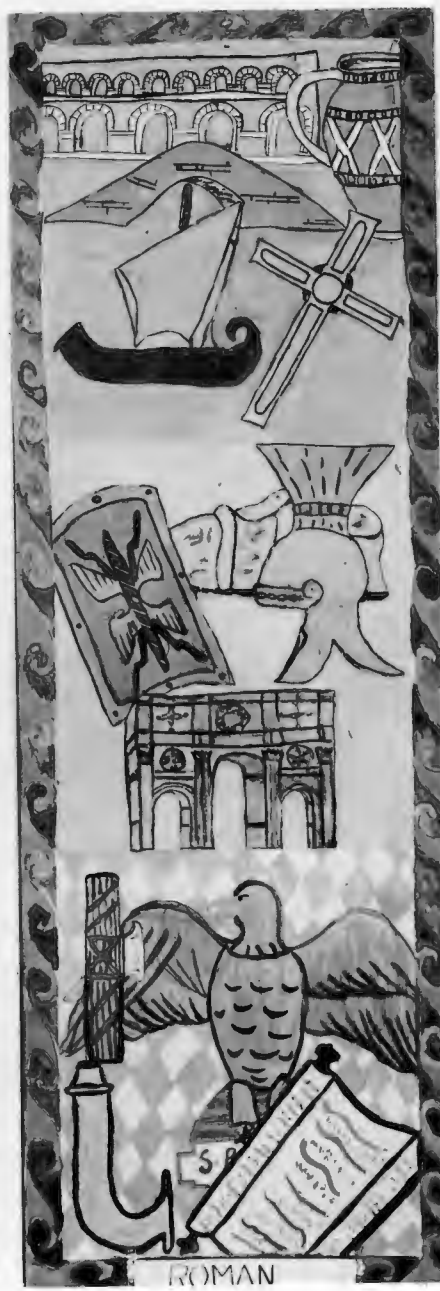


This is a picture of our new school. We painted the school on a separate piece of paper first, then we cut it out and pasted it on the mural.



We made a mural of our city. Others can learn about our community by studying our mural.





Murals add interest to history

*develop  
appreciation*



**FIGURE  
DRAWING**



Children in the intermediate grades seem to lose the innate simplicity that characterized their earlier work. They are more conscious of their companions and their attitudes toward their work. Pretty portrayal is the goal if self is the subject. If the portrayal is far too difficult and the child feels that he cannot achieve this he will go to the other extreme and make ridiculous figures.

Portraits at this age level show the observation that children give to the eye lashes, eye brows, bowed lips etc.

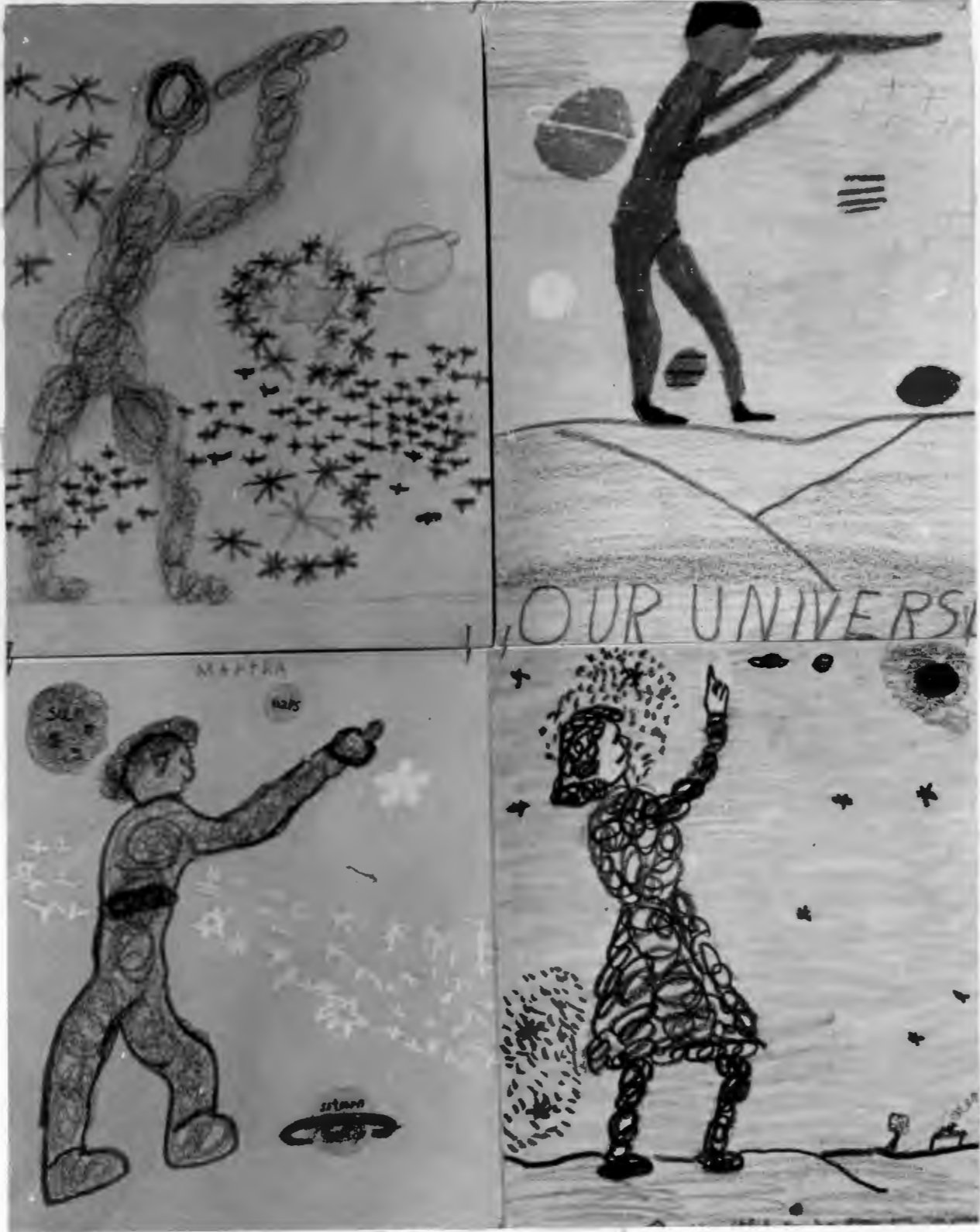




Meet the First Grade.

"I'm Mary Ann, I painted a picture of myself. I like to paint in kindergarten."

Figures in the primary grades are inspirational in their freshness and sincerity. If the child needs help, help him solve his problem. Lead the child to become conscious of proportions, directions through discussion and observation. Do not give fine points or rules. Beware of adult standards!



There are many approaches to figure drawing.



We learn to play many games during our noon hour.

Murals with figures hold the greatest interest for children because in drawing figures they project themselves into their work.

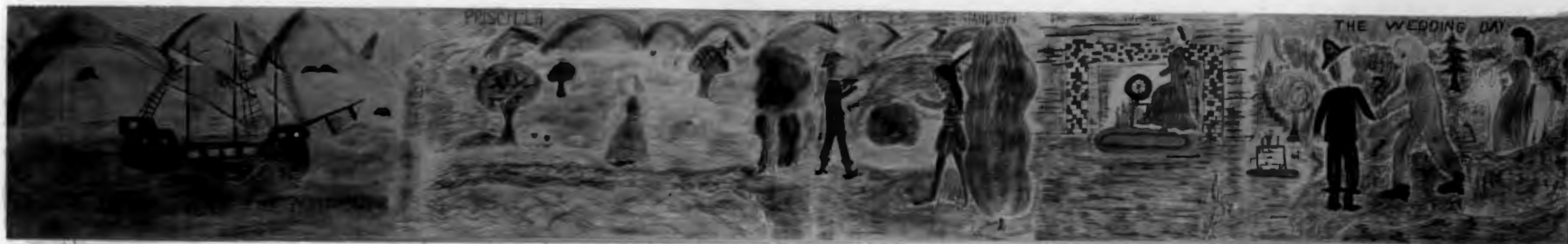
Encourage the children to draw large and feel the action of the figure. Do not insist but encourage! Children will advance with confidence and skill.

Have classmates act as models. Use easy and familiar poses for short intervals. Children will forget themselves and become interested in their subject. Proportions may be mentioned. Have the children measure themselves.



This mural was made with the definite idea of figure drawing. It does not hold the interest as a mural--compare with the one above.





In the upper grades children are timid about drawing figures because "They can't get them to look right." Consequently their drawings are small and inconspicuous, until they acquire skill and confidence to draw bold and free -- uninhibited.

With utter lack of confidence a child will search for something to copy or trace.

Each child must be helped. Start where he is. He will have many learnings, trial and error, before he can with skill of performance and emotional stability draw a figure to be viewed by a group. This performance is parallel to a poor reader achieving his status in the class by reading for an audience.

**OTHER LEARNINGS**

Murals and all-over patterns had something in common for these boys.



We are making silk screen prints.

Children are always interested in new and intriguing medium.



We are soldering together pieces of glass, broken bottles etc. to make a stained glass medallion.

The seventh grade became design conscious and applied their interests to a variety of media and techniques.



We are making rubber stamp designs.

COMMON ERRORS

THESE MURALS LACK CHARACTER BECAUSE:

- \* The designs are small and too detailed
- \* Color is pale and spotty
- \* Objects are unrelated in design and color



TRY TO

- \* view the work from a distance or squint your eyes.
- \* use some bright and some dull colors, choose one or two colors to dominate.
- \* weave objects together by repeating color, line and texture.



- \* children have failed to be true to their own ideas and creative abilities.
- \* lines separated one child's work from another's



- \* impress the child with the fact that his best work is his own--not the copy of another's work.
- \* discourage lines that separate their work. They must think of the mural as a cooperative, unified piece of work.
- \* from the artistic point of view the mural was not a success. Don't forget that there are many more valuable learnings to be obtained by working cooperatively on a classroom mural project.

\* work is timid, afraid  
to use figures.

\* materials have not been  
used honestly.



\* let figures help to tell the story.  
Figures make murals more interesting,  
set the scale of other drawings, e.g.,  
small figures make objects appear large  
and large figures make objects appear  
small.

\* use materials to give that quality of  
work that they alone have the ability  
to give, e.g., chalk must look chalky  
not like paint.

\* interest was lacking and it became  
a chore to finish.



\* give encouragement to face difficulty.  
Maybe knowledge and inspiration was  
lacking. Was the idea forced? Turn  
the paper over for a new start.



HOW A MURAL  
WAS DEVELOPED THROUGH  
A SCIENCE EXPERIENCE

## SCIENCE UNDERSTANDINGS

The third grade boys and girls were very excited one noon hour when they found some germinating maple seeds on the school grounds. The children made a selection of seeds in various stages of development and brought them into the classroom. Some of the seeds were planted in trays containing soil, and others were put into water containers. Here the children planned to watch the seeds mature and grow.

Keen interest in the growing maple seeds stimulated questions about seed germination in general. The following day the children brought to school a variety of seeds ranging from sprouting potatoes to poppy seeds.



The preceding autumn the children were interested in seeds and seed dispersal. They were aware that there were many types of seeds and that each species had its own method of dispersal and preparation for growth when the warm spring days came.

Their enthusiasm about the germinating seeds increased. The children were looking for answers to their questions. How does a seed grow? Why do seeds sprout and grow differently? How does the little plant make its way off of the seed? Why do the roots grow down and the leaves push upward to the sunlight? What food must a plant have in order to grow?

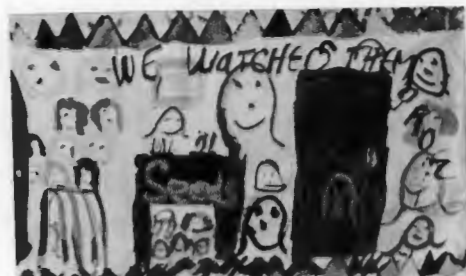
The children decided that a very good way to learn about seed growth was to watch the process with different kinds of seeds. They made a selection of seeds to plant. Seeds were planted in different compositions of soil; some were placed in the warm sunshine, others were kept in a dark cool place. Some were watered regularly; others were not.



A record was kept of the type of seed patiently planted; when it was planted and under what conditions. A problem confronted the children. How were they to observe the growing process, the leaves, stem, and root system? Since it is impossible to observe seeds underground, we learned how to sprout seeds on blotting paper and under glass. Here the children could watch the leaves, stem and root system mature.

On some of the smaller seeds the root system was so small that it was difficult to see. The children found a microscope and a magnifying glass very helpful in observing the root system and the growth of the seeds. Drawings were made of observations and were kept as an illustrated record of the growing process.

Individual research was done by the children. They became concerned when a certain species of seeds failed to grow. The children referred to their science books and questioned seed dealers to obtain information. They learned that seeds must have proper care and growing conditions in order to germinate.



Some of the children kept individual trays of seeds to observe their growth. The children were anxious to help plant seeds at their homes and they were especially pleased if they could have their own garden to plant and care for.

Interesting stories and poems about seeds and spring were written and illustrated. The children were anxious to make a mural to show the other classes in school what they had learned about seeds and had seen through the microscope.





#### HOW A MURAL DEVELOPED FROM SCIENCE UNDERSTANDINGS

The third grade obtained a wealth of information about seeds and plant growth through the previously described unit on seeds. They were anxious to make a mural for their classroom and to share their information with others.

After the mural was decided upon, a large piece of white butcher paper was measured and placed on the wall. This served as a means of stimulating the imagination regarding the content and design of the mural before the plans were made.

The class had an oral discussion and decided to make small "plan drawings" to show what they would like the mural to contain. They referred to the drawings of their observations through the microscope.

Another class discussion was held after the plans were finished. The children decided to use the plans that showed the development of plants and seeds. They would show the form and color of the roots, leaves, and buds which they had examined through the microscope.

The children who drew the accepted plans made up the general-planning committees, whose duty it was to see that the plans were carried out.

The entire class, led by the committee members, discussed color, texture, size, shape, and methods of handling materials before any work was done on the mural.

Some of the points considered were:

- We should make some things large and others small.
- Use some light colors and some dark colors.
- Use any color you like. Just because you think a seed is brown, you don't have to paint it brown.
- Use many different textures — dots, lines etc.
- To add interest use a variety of shapes with one form overlapping another.

It is generally difficult for a child to visualize one article overlapping another. The children's attention was called to a scarf designed with superimposed fans. They were fascinated with the appealing color and design. They were anxious to try overlapping objects on their seed mural. A child was thrilled when she achieved this affect by painting sprouting potatoes, each overlapping the other.

The plans for content of the mural and the working procedures were completed. The committees were chosen to direct the plans, prepare the materials, and to clean the materials and put them away after the work period.

The children, with definite ideas to paint and an understanding that their work must be large, were given the first opportunity to paint on the mural. If the first paintings were large and well placed the entire mural became fairly well balanced. Also it was broken into interesting areas which invited the participation of children too timid to initiate large, bold work.

After the children worked for about fifteen minutes, they left their painting and had a class discussion. The committee members brought to the attention of the large group points that should be noticed.

- Mary is working large and is using good texture.
- Someone has forgotten and painted over a wet color.
- Who forgot to wipe the brush on the side of the paint can and made drips?
- A good combination of light and dark colors are used.
- Someone is working too small.

After such a discussion, the children returned to their work fired with new enthusiasm.

Each child participated in the group discussion, and likewise each child had an opportunity to make his contribution to the painting of the mural.

The problems presented by a large class working on a mural project can be readily solved if the class and materials are well organized. If all the children are to paint at the same time, they may be grouped according to number, interests, or plans. Each group would work on an individual mural or section. Paper for the murals may be put on the walls or blackboards, tables or floor.

If all the children are to make a contribution to a particular mural but cannot work at the same time, they may be engaged in other activities relative to the project. While waiting their turn to paint, these children may finish small "plan drawings" and from them make posters for the bulletin board, individual paintings, or murals. By developing the small "plan drawings", for example, two girls made a mural telling the story of the Unit on Seeds.

These small drawings told the story of our project in sequence. After their plans were well organized, the girls selected the paper and painted the mural according to their plans.

The type of mural they made was called a comic strip mural because it told a story in sequence and in two strips one placed above the other. Lettering was used throughout this mural with due regard for design.



The children used lettering as a part of the design. A felt nib brush pen was used.

PSYCHOLOGICAL STAGES  
OF DEVELOPMENT

*psychological stages* of development as evidenced by the child give the teacher an insight of the general characteristics of children on each grade level. If these developments are properly understood it will aid the teacher in planning, presenting and evaluating the child's work.

All children do not mature at the same rate. In order to evaluate and understand the role of art experiences for the total growth of the child it is necessary to analyze his growth in creative experiences and his developmental stages.

An art experience should provide opportunities for children to develop habits consistent with their physical and intellectual maturity.

The psychological stages of development have been divided into:

Lower Grades, ages 5-8: Symbolic age

Middle Grades, ages 7-10: Schematic Stage

Upper Grades, ages 11-13: Gang age and Pre-adolescent





SYMBOLIC AGE — the child is interested in the activity of painting, not the final product.



Halloween faces.

THE KINDERGARTEN MADE MURALS



We made an Easter mural.

# *in the primary grades*



he knows things only as they are in themselves.

he establishes a certain relationship to reality.

he uses symbols to represent his forms.

he represents his experiences in relation to environment by using space.

he makes important things big and less important things are small or eliminated.

Psychologically, he

- \* is self centered and egotistical.
- \* has short interest span.
- \* is more concerned about adult approval than approval of classmates.
- \* enjoys routine because he feels secure and confident with what is familiar.
- \* is more interested in the activity, the process of making, rather than in the finished product.

Physically, he

- \* has little coordination of hands and eyes.
- \* develops large muscles first, while little development of hand and finger muscles is noticed.
- \* is energetic and restless.



We wanted to make a mural after we decorated paper plates with these designs.

## THE CHILD:



- \* is very flexible and amenable to suggestion.
- \* reacts to situation in an emotional way.
- \* is mentally alert.
- \* discovers the relationship between drawing, thinking and reality.
- \* usually has a strong urge to communicate his ideas.
- \* tends to be realistic and objective.
- \* is easily fascinated by details on subjects which interest him.
- \* sees value in cooperating, works well in groups.
- \* has better rhythmic sense in motion.



he achieves a certain concept of form which becomes his basic drawing vocabulary

his active knowledge of an article is shown by his schema, which is repeated.

he introduces into his picture a base line, he places everything on one line.

he discovers a relationship between the color and the object drawn.

# in the middle grades

12

his visual experiences are becoming more acute.

he becomes aware of the difference between boy and girl.

he attempts to draw what he sees just as he sees it.

cooperating with others is difficult, and yet a child demands stimulation, which is best achieved through group work.

he is progressively more self-conscious than the lower grades.

he is greatly interested in team work.

he most readily learns by doing through immediate and real situations.

he notices the differences that exist between an object and his drawing of it. Confidence in his creative power is often shaken.

his individual skills are more pronounced.

he shows considerable self-assurance and assumes responsibility.

girls mature faster than boys. The girls may be one or two years ahead of the boys.



We made a mural of our ideas on the Christian Social Principles.



This is a mural of a story in our reader.



## *in the upper grades*

he develops a conscious understanding of repetition.

he uses color to express a mood.

he may work for a realistic effect.

he is a spectator and his final product emphasizes naturalistic color.

he may draw what he feels about a particular subject.

he ignores three dimensional space.

he often exaggerates or minimizes in order to emphasize only what is emotionally significant.

his final product is an expression in which he himself is involved.



At this age the child attempts to represent reality as a visual concept.

His tendency to realism is a result of a growing awareness of self.





The sixth grade embroidered a large burlap hanging.

## AGE OF REASONING

introduces the pre-adolescent and adolescent periods.

The ego-centric stage is gradually overcome.

There is an understandable change from imaginative activity to strong critical awareness.

Because the child is self-conscious, he hesitates to undertake a new activity.

Although a child is physically developed, he is emotionally immature.

His need for group approval is strong.

Attention is shifted to the final product, and there is greater perception for accurate proportions.

Unconsciously employed by the child in response to an innate demand are two distinct creative types. . .

1. Visual: He is directly influenced by what he sees. He takes the place of a spectator. The final product gives a realistic effect.
2. Haptic: He works on what he feels about his subject. His final product is an expression. He exaggerates or minimizes to emphasize only what is emotionally significant. The color he employs does not happen to be related to nature. He is not dependent upon powers of seeing and observing.

The child must be made to feel the acceptability of his type of expression. A method of art education is good only if it brings out the innate qualities of these individual types.

# *we acquire information*



Before we could make a mural about government we had to collect information from many sources.



# *evaluate by asking*

Does the child draw the main idea big?

By the end of the second grade, does the child's work show a growing awareness of himself and his environment?

By the third grade, does the child gradually abandon the symbols he used earlier, in favor of drawing objects more naturalistically?

Does he vary his representation of man and other subjects?

Does the child show cooperation in working on a group project?

Does the child retain his own individuality when working with others, not imitating the work of the rest of the group?

Does the child show an appreciation and respect for the work of others?

Does the child keep the space pleasingly well filled?

Does the child cooperate with others with appreciation for their share in the work?

Does the child accept criticism with humility and gratitude?

Does the child plan his work carefully so that he avoids accidents or serious mistakes?

Does the child use the knowledge of purpose, materials and process in bringing into being his own ideas?

SUPPLEMENT

Take an inventory of the materials that you have on hand.

They may be the following:

chalk            ---            crayons  
 show card or tempera  
 rubber base paints  
 brown wrapping paper  
 white butcher paper  
 newsprint  
 colored construction paper  
 paint brushes    ---    scissors

If you are to supplement your supply of:

**CRAYONS:**    Select the boxes of eight colors.  
 Choose crayons that do not have too much wax.  
 Look for a reliable trade-mark.

**CHALK:**        Be sure that you have good vivid colors.  
 Select boxes of assorted colors.  
 Use individual boxes or large assorted boxes.

**PAINT:**        Have jars of show-card or dry tempera in the following colors:  
 red, blue, yellow, green, brown, orange, black, and white.

Let the children have the experience of mixing and combining colors. If the paint is to be kept for some time it is well to add a few drops of glycerine to prevent odor.

**BRUSHES:**    Supply the class with a variety of brushes.  
 Select large brushes for effective work.  
 If good brushes will not fit your budget use small enamel brushes.

**PAPER:**        Purchase by the roll unglazed wrapping paper or butcher paper.  
 Rolls of newsprint can be purchased from newspaper offices.  
 Experiment with the many interesting colors and variety of textures in wrapping and building paper.

## CARE OF MATERIALS

## Ideas for distributing and collecting materials

Small wooden boxes or blocks of wood with holes bored in them make excellent containers for:

brushes  
pencils  
scissors.

Heavy cartons cut down serve to store small paper and drawings.

Paint cans or cigar boxes the color of the chalk or crayons that they will contain.

Cigar boxes assembled in a rack serve as an excellent file for:

pins  
tacks  
paper clips  
tape.

Chip board or heavy cardboard joined together with oilcloth or burlap makes files for storing pictures and paintings.



"We put our murals on this rack. They are handy when we want to look at them again or show them to others. We have murals from other schools, too."



# exhibits

WHY ..... to stimulate interest.  
to increase ability to judge and evaluate.  
to serve as a decoration or added interest.  
to a room, hall, library, or lunchroom.

WHERE ..... on allotted display areas.  
on unused blackboards.  
on walls in halls, lunchrooms, library  
and offices.  
on an area facing the light is best.

HOW .....use staples on walls of plaster, wood or  
brick. Remove with staple puller.  
use masking tape or scotch tape on blackboards.  
to display a small area of the mural, roll the  
ends and pin them to the board like a scroll.

CARE OF MURALS:label each end with title, grade, media,  
school, teacher, date.  
reinforce ends if necessary.  
remove all excess tape.  
roll and fasten with clips or rubber bands.

## SUMMARY

This research has investigated the value of a specific facet of art education, namely, the making of classroom murals in the elementary school.

The average classroom teacher with very little art foundation was aware of the value of classroom mural projects but needed assistance in carrying out the program. The printed material relating to the subject was very meager and scattered throughout many books. If the teacher had the ideas and help compiled into a handbook for her use, it would be a tremendous help for her and an impetus to the school art program.

This handbook is not a set of art rules, projects, and "how to do it" patterns, but rather a result of years of work assisting teachers and evaluating the results of the mural program in the elementary school. The handbook is intended to be a means of inspiration, suggestion, and help for the elementary teacher with a classroom art project.

The problem. The problem under consideration involves six purposes:

1. To conduct a research study concerning existing conditions of elementary school art education and its shortcomings in order to meet the demands of education for the development of the individual.

2. To meet the needs of the teacher through workshops and in-service art activities. These needs were determined through requests and consultation with teachers in the field of art education.

3. To collect and evaluate children's murals contributed by 24 elementary schools. Each mural was accompanied by a questionnaire filled out by the pupil or teacher. These questionnaires were used over a period of two years.

4. To show the growth and development of a single class participating in a mural program for a school year.

5. To offer to the teacher an illustrated handbook on conducting and evaluating a school mural program.

6. To present an annotated collection of children's murals. These are photographed in the handbook.

Teachers were requested to contribute murals made in their classrooms. These murals were accompanied by questionnaires sent for the purpose of evaluating the methods, procedures, and learnings of the project. Murals were obtained from the following schools:

St. Vincent, San Diego, California

St. Francis, Bakersfield, California

St. Hyacinth, San Jacinto, California

St. Clare, All Saints, Portland, Oregon

St. Aloysius, Spokane, Washington

St. Edward, Mount Virgin, Assumption, Our Lady of the Lake,

Holy Rosary, Seattle, Washington

St. Patrick, Holy Cross, Sacred Heart, Holy Rosary, Marymount,

Tacoma, Washington

Assumption, Bellingham, Washington

St. Mary, Centralia, Washington

Lourdes Academy, College Elementary School, Ellensburg,  
Washington

St. Paul, Yakima, Washington

Public schools of Richland, Washington

Campus School, Catholic University, Washington, D. C.

Corpus Christi School, New York City, New York

First section. The teacher's first concern is why murals should be used in an art program. The first part of the handbook presents the reasons for making murals. The entire process of mural making is developed with the aid of illustrations. It is developed under the following headings:

Philosophy

Planning

Materials

Procedure

Murals others have made

Figure drawing

Other learnings

Common errors

Second section. Murals can be and have been utilized as a culminating activity. This fact is evidenced in the unit developed in a third grade class.

A Third grade science unit

How a mural was developed from a science experience

Third section. A teacher must be aware of the stages of development in her pupils before the needs of the pupils can be met through an art program. To aid the teacher in these needs the handbook has been divided into the following:

Primary grades

Intermediate grades

Upper grades

Fourth section. A supplement is included to meet the needs of the teacher in regard to handling and caring for materials. These are important in a classroom situation.

Materials

How to care for materials

Exhibits

Storage

Fifth section. The fifth section is the bibliography.

The classroom teacher will find the answer to many of her problems in this handbook. It is a culminating product of eight years of work with the elementary classroom teacher in planning her art program to fit the needs of the child.

How the handbook was compiled. The contents and form of the handbook here determined after consulting teachers about their needs for conducting a mural program. The compiled material was used for workshops and in-service classes. The material and questionnaires contributed by

the participating schools were evaluated for use in the handbook.

It was the original plan to have a traveling exhibit of murals. In this way the teacher would be able to profit from the work that others have done in the field of making murals in their classrooms. It is obvious that many problems would be involved in such an exhibit and it would not be to the best advantage of the teacher if the exhibit were not readily available, or if the necessary display area were not available. After these problems were taken into consideration, the murals were photographed and incorporated into the handbook. Here the teacher has available at all times the benefits derived from evaluating the works of others.

Suggestions for binding. A handbook, as the name suggests, belongs in the possession of the one who wishes to use it. The author has planned this handbook for making classroom murals so that it would be available for the elementary classroom teacher. The material will be rearranged to make a double page spread, and then reproduced into an attractive spiral-bound handbook. This will place the information at the disposal of the teachers.

Conclusions. The purposes that have prompted the making of school murals are varied. Fundamentally, the teacher and students are faced with the same problems in an art project. These needs were taken into consideration in the compiling of the handbook.

One of the greatest benefits to be derived from making murals is strengthening of the Christian Social Virtues. Children learn to be

valuable members of society through the practice of virtue in a classroom situation.

There are many skills to be acquired by the child in the elementary school. These are not actually skills of what should be done, but skills in how to do better what he is physically able to do, and the ability to give expression in art to the emotional, aesthetic, social, and creative state in which he finds himself at the time.

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