



SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

ART IMAGE EARLY YEARS CHILDREN TOGETHER

**Teacher's Guide by
Christine Thompson**

Activity four: MARY CASSATT, *The Sisters*

ARTWORK:

CASSATT, Mary, *The Sisters* (Catalog #106)

OBJECTIVES

Children will:

- Consider relationships between friends and siblings.
- Search for clues to the meaning of the painting.

CONCEPTS

- Viewpoint
- Close, far away
- Mood, relationship

MATERIALS

- Reproduction of Mary Cassatt's *The Sisters*
- Drawing paper, 9" x 12" (22.8 x 30.5 cm), one sheet per child
- Oil pastels
- Mirrors (optional)

PREPARATION

For several weeks prior to introducing this activity, photograph children in pairs on the playground or in the classroom. As an alternative, you might collect photographs of pairs of children from magazines, or ask that each parent send a photograph of their child with a friend or sibling. Display the photographs in a place where children can return too view them repeatedly.

For Orders/Customer Service: PHONE 1-800-361-2598 / FAX 1-800-559-2598

Art Image Publications - A Division of GB Publishing Inc.
P.O. Box 160, Derby Line, VT 05830

THINGS TO TALK ABOUT

Ask children to interpret the painting by telling a story about the two girls and their relationship:

- Who could these children be?
- Do you think they are sisters? Good friends? Could they be both sisters and friends?
- Do they look alike?
- Where are they?
- What could they be looking at?
- Do they seem to be quiet? Tired? Thinking?
- Do they seem to be happy? How can you tell?

Invite children to offer their theories about the identity and situation of the two children in Cassatt's painting, and to elaborate on the story initiated by your questions.

If possible, move the reproduction and the children to a grassy area to continue the discussion. Describe the pose of the children in the painting: select two children to replicate it.

- These girls are sitting very close together. This little girl has her arm around the other girl's shoulder, and their heads are resting together.
- Does that look right ?

Invite children who are not posing to decide where Mary Cassatt was when she painted the sisters from the angle shown in the painting. Ask them to see if the models look as they do in the painting when they stand above them, sit on the ground next to them, move closer, or far away.

THINGS TO DO

Ask the children to look at the display of photographs which show children working and playing together:

- How are the children in these pictures showing that they like each other and enjoy doing things together?
- Which pictures show children close together?
- Which children are farther apart?
- How do you show your friends that you like them?

Encourage pairs or groups of children to pose together before a full length mirror. Invite children to draw something they like to do with a special friend or brother or sister. Urge older children to include the toys and equipment they like to share with friends and important features of the places where they play in their drawings.

MORE THINGS TO DO

SHARE STORIES ABOUT FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

Make a chart showing how many children in the class have older brothers, older sisters, younger brothers or younger sisters, and how many are the only child in their family. Encourage the « only » children to enter the discussion by talking about neighborhood friends, cousins, and so on with whom they like to spend time.

Ask children who have siblings to share their experiences with others. What is the best thing about having a brother or sister ? What is the worst part ?

For Orders/Customer Service: PHONE 1-800-361-2598 / FAX 1-800-559-2598

Art Image Publications - A Division of GB Publishing Inc.
P.O. Box 160, Derby Line, VT 05830

Ask children to draw their families. Record labels and comments. Display the drawings, or begin to compile a classroom family album, with a section devoted to each child.

INTRODUCE COLOR FAMILIES

Invite the children to consider the ways that we can tell that two people are members of the same family. They may live in the same house, or have the same last name, but some families live in many different places and have several different last names. Often, members of the same family have hair or eyes of the same color, noses and mouths that look alike: They resemble one another. Produce a box of wax crayons or oil pastels or an assortment of colored plastic shapes, game tokens, golf tees, etc. Ask children if some colors look alike, even though each may be slightly different. Challenge each child to find two colors that seem similar. (The four year old's choices may be random.)

Provide colors and papers in warm colors – reds, oranges and yellows – at the easels, drawing table, and collage center. Alternate with cool colors – blues, greens, purples.

Invite children to make « secret drawings » by drawing with a single color of wax crayon or oil pastel on paper of the same color- white on white, yellow on yellow, blue on blue, and so on. Provide a watery mixture of a darker tempera color and large brushes. Invite children to wash paint across the paper in broad, even strokes to reveal the secret drawing. (Secret drawings are fun to exchange with other children who must apply paint in order to « read » the message.)

EXPERIMENT WITH BRUSHSTROKES

Gather children around the reproduction. Ask if they think the artist, Mary Cassatt, painted slowly or quickly, carefully or loosely, when she made this painting of the two sisters. How can they tell ?

With a clean, dry paintbrush, follow the brushstrokes in one section of the painting. Allow children to take turns reconstructing Mary Cassatt's brushstrokes with their own dry paintbrushes.

Hang large expanse of mural paper on a wall where children can stand to paint. Protect floors and clothing, and limit the number of children who may work at the mural at any one time. Provide a single, light color of paint in stable containers such as paint pans. Collect or create a variety of brushes that will make large strokes: Try feather dusters, toothbrushes, hairbrushes, foam varnish brushes, straw clothes brushes, foam toilet brushers, etc. Encourage children to see what kind of marks these tools will make when they make tiny marks, or large sweeping gestures, or move their arms quickly or slowly. Introduce a second color of paint when children have almost covered the available space with the first color. Add progressively smaller painting tools, ending with cotton balls, cotton swabs, bits of sponge, and so on. Allow time for children to share this experience.

For Orders/Customer Service: PHONE 1-800-361-2598 / FAX 1-800-559-2598

Art Image Publications - A Division of GB Publishing Inc.
P.O. Box 160, Derby Line, VT 05830

MIX COLORS

Show children how to layer, smudge, and blend colored chalks or oil pastels to create new colors. (Demonstrate how to use a finger, cotton swab, or tightly-rolled bit of paper towelling to spread colors across the surface of the paper, or to mix one area of color into another.) Provide 6" (15.2 cm) squares of white or black paper for explorations. Encourage children to name the new colors they create by mixing and blending, and invite them to recall the colors they used to make these new shades.

Provide white paint to mix with pure colors at the easel, or blend white tempera into all left-over easel paints before children arrive.

EXPLORE THE WORLD FROM MANY VIEW-POINTS

Distribute cardboard tubes, empty photographic slide mounts, or file cards with rectangular « windows » removed from the center. Encourage children to use these devices to explore the classroom or playground, to look at the same objects close up and far away, from above and below.

Select a few large, relatively simple toys: plastic dinosaur or animal figures, trucks, action figures or dolls. Place one or two objects in the drawing center. Invite children to look closely at each object from different perspectives: How does this toy look when you look down at it, when you look at its side, its back, its front ? Challenge interested children to draw one or all of these views.

RESOURCES

Books to share with children

Caseley, J. (1990). *The Cousins*. New York: Greenwillow Books.

Howard, Elizabeth Fitzgerald (1991). *Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later)*. Paintings by James E. Ransome. New York: Clarion Books.

Johnson, A. (1990). *Do Like Kyla*. Paintings by James E. Ransome. New York: Orchard Books.

QUESTIONS ?

Call Rachel Ross, Art Education Consultant, at 1 800 361-2598 or write to rachel.ross@artimagepublications.com.

For Orders/Customer Service: PHONE 1-800-361-2598 / FAX 1-800-559-2598

Art Image Publications - A Division of GB Publishing Inc.
P.O. Box 160, Derby Line, VT 05830