



CONCORDIA CURRICULUM GUIDE



GRADE
8

Visual Arts



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P R E F A C E

Ministry of Christian Schools

Parental expectations of Christian schools include

- excellent discipline;
- high academic standards;
- low teacher-student ratios;
- dedicated, conscientious teachers.

Many Christian schools offer these advantages. But the real distinction is that Christian schools proclaim Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Teaching Jesus Christ, then, is “the real difference” between Christian and public schools. In Christian schools, teachers and students witness personally and publicly to their faith in Jesus Christ. Students study the Bible and worship God daily. Teachers relate Jesus Christ to all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers and students share Christian love and forgiveness.

Those who teach in Christian schools are privileged with the opportunity to

- teach the Word of God in its truth and purity;
- acknowledge the Bible as God’s infallible Word and the Confessions as the true exposition of the Word;
- identify God’s Word, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper as the means through which God creates and sustains faith;
- emphasize Law and Gospel as the key teaching of Scripture;
- seek to apply Law and Gospel properly in daily relationships with students, parents, and other teachers;
- teach all of what Scripture teaches (including Christian doctrines) to all students, no matter what backgrounds they have;
- share with students what Jesus the Savior means to them personally;
- equip students to proclaim the Good News to others;

- encourage students to find the support and encouragement found only in the Body of Christ, of which Jesus Himself is the head.

In Christian schools, Christ permeates all subjects and activities. Religion is not limited to one hour or one class. Teachers seek opportunities to witness in every class and to relate God’s Word to all aspects of life. Through this process, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, students grow in faith and in a sanctified life and view all of life, not just Sunday, as a time to serve and worship God.

In summary, it is intrinsic to ministry in a Christian school that all energies expended in the educational process lead each child to a closer relationship with the Savior and with other members of the Christian community.

How to Use This Guide

The Concordia Curriculum Guide series is designed to guide you as you plan and prepare to teach. The introductory chapters provide foundational information relevant to the teaching of the visual arts to students in a Christian school. But the majority of the pages in this volume focus on visual arts standards and performance expectations together with ideas and activities for integrating them with various aspects of the Christian faith. This volume does not provide a curriculum plan or lesson plan for any particular period or day. Instead, it provides a wealth of ideas from which you can choose and a springboard to new ideas you may create. You may use this curriculum guide with any textbook series.

The visual arts standards included in this book are informed by the standards developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations and are provided as a compilation of the visual arts standards and performance expectations adopted by the individual states. In order to offer a well-coordinated curriculum design, the visual arts objectives for this grade level relate to and connect with the standards provided at other grade levels.

The standards, then, can serve you and your whole faculty in several ways. They can help you

1. plan your teaching in an organized way;
2. coordinate your teaching of a subject with the teaching in other grades in your school;
3. select textbooks and other learning or teaching materials;
4. evaluate your current instruction, materials, and objectives;
5. implement procedures for school accreditation;
6. nurture the Christian faith of your students as you teach the visual arts.

We assume that teachers will use materials in addition to those included in the guide, but since many materials do not integrate the Christian faith, we have provided suggestions for specific methods to use as you teach day by day. Everyone has a different teaching style. No one will be able to use all the ideas in this volume. As you think about practices that will work for you and would be helpful in your classroom, consider these possible ways to find and use ideas from this volume:

- Read the entire volume before school starts. Highlight the ideas you think you can use.
- Write ideas in your textbooks. List the page numbers from this volume that contain suggestions you would like to use in connection with a lesson or unit.
- Throughout the year, designate periods of time, perhaps at faculty meetings, to discuss portions of this volume as you seek to improve your integration of the faith in the visual arts. Brainstorm, develop, and implement your ideas. Then follow up with other meetings to share your successes and challenges. Together, find ways to effectively use the suggestions in this volume.
- Plan ways to adapt ideas not closely related to specific lessons or units in your secular text-

books. Inside your plan book, clip a paper with a list of suggestions from the volume that you would like to use, or list each idea on a file card and keep the cards handy for quick review. Use those ideas between units or when extra time is available.

- Evaluate each suggestion after you have tried it. Label it as “use again” or “need to revise.” Always adapt the suggestions to fit your situation.
- Think about integrating the faith each time you plan a lesson. Set a goal for yourself (e.g., two ideas from this volume each week), and pray that God will help you to achieve it. You will find the index at the back of this volume especially helpful in finding faith-connecting activities relative to specific topics.
- If the ideas in the Concordia Curriculum Guide series seem overwhelming, begin by concentrating on only one subject per month, or attempt to use the suggested ideas in only two to four subjects the first year. Add two to four subjects per year after that.

Probably the most effective teaching occurs when teachers take advantage of natural opportunities that arise to integrate the faith into their teaching. In those situations, you will often use your own ideas instead of preparing a lesson plan based on teaching suggestions in this guide. Use the white space on the pages of this book to record your own ideas and activities for integrating the Christian faith. We hope this volume will be an incentive to you to create your own effective ways to integrate the Christian faith into the entire school day.

We believe that Christian schools are essential because we believe that our relationship with Jesus Christ permeates every part of our lives. That is why our Christian faith permeates our teaching. That is why we teach in a Christian school.

CHAPTER 1

Creativity—A Vital Christian Activity

Paul Berkbigler

Paul Berkbigler studied illustration and graphic design at the Concordia University Nebraska Art Department in Seward, Nebraska, and received his master's degree in interactive and graphic design from Tyler School of Art, a school of Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, graduating in May of 2004. Paul returned to Concordia University Nebraska in 2005, bringing six years of experience as a practicing illustrator and designer with him to the department of art, where he continues teaching graphic design and visual communication today. He brings interests in writing, philosophy and theory, literature, critique, theater, dramatic performance, musical composition and vocal performance, painting, printmaking, intermedia works, design, and illustration to his work inside and outside the classroom.

Our Creator Inspires Us to Create

As an artist and art educator, I'm convinced that I will never grow out of a tendency that drove me as a child: spending hours at play imagining things and then making efforts to put what I'd imagined out into the world. God offers daily reminders that this portion of my identity shows no signs of going away—I know it to be at the heart of the nature God has created in me.

The act of play is intrinsically connected with acts of creation, of idea generation and implementation. Play is an incredible way to spark and encourage learning because of the way pleasure is linked to invention, experimentation, observation, analysis, and implementation. It's little surprise that creating art has such a kinship with play itself. Both are activities that engage all of the senses, spark all corners of the brain, and generate a sense of significance that can sometimes seem lacking in the more repetitive aspects of living. In making art, people often feel more fully alert and alive than at other points in the day. Creative activities engage large quantities of our mental synapses and link our many faculties together, generating a distinctive pleasure even in the midst of fairly challenging and tiring work.

So what is it that pulls us back, time and again, to the activities of play and art in our lives? We respond deeply to the sense of purpose in having

an internal something spark us to take external action at making our ideas physically manifest. In the best examples of this phenomenon, many of us will describe our motivation as coming from something that's beyond what we feel is within us. Much of the world is content to chalk this up to something humanly manufactured. We know, as Christians, this feeling actually points directly to our Author and Generator—an originator not manufactured by any amount of human imagination and of a magnitude reflected only partially by human creativity.

We ignore both the history and spirit of God whenever we exclude creativity from our lives. His Word is filled with His examples of creation and with moments of creation that He inspires and commands. God offers us a rich pattern for living with significance by demonstrating how creativity refreshes and renews both a creator and the world surrounding that creation. Creativity is a vital Christian activity because it demonstrates the creative nature of God. He demonstrates His esteem for creative activity throughout the Bible.

Divine Expression

In the middle portions of Exodus, we can see the incredible listing of items that God requests the Israelites manufacture as part of the tabernacle—the sacred creative space that God tells them He will dwell in within their community. God is

detailed but also incredibly expressive and creative in describing the items He requests to furnish this space. He not only asks for things that are made out of rich, natural materials but also for those materials to be handled with care and inventiveness, fashioned in such a way that they will be visually and conceptually engaging to the community that they'll be used in.

God encourages the Israelite community to use craftsmanship as a form of worship by detailing the furnishings that the Israelites are going to create for the tabernacle. (See Exodus 35:30–35.) Using our gifts and making gifts are shown as simultaneous ways to praise Him and benefit the entire community.

That God takes the time and effort to communicate these requests in such detail demonstrates the great level of value He places on using something tangible to suggest highly intangible things: His existence, His nature, His care for His people, His tenets, and His presence. He recognizes and reinforces the tangibility of His created people, but He also reflects His creative nature by encouraging His people to participate in it for the good of their community and for His glory.

Creativity with Functionality

Human history is filled with evidence of artistic activity—some of it devoted to principally functional purposes (items created for daily use, things made as furnishings for the places we live, tools developed for any number of tasks, garments made for our protection and care) and some of it devoted entirely to more abstract, conceptual ends (imagery that stirs up memories, objects that stand for the beliefs and goals of a society, items that are meant to communicate authority or dedication to ideals, things created to demonstrate history both within a culture and to the other communities surrounding that culture). Given the all-involving nature of creation, it's not surprising that art itself has developed and thrived even as people have. In almost every culture throughout the world, we can find evidence of a single aspect of human existence: the

desire to create and to make the stuff of our imagination into the stuff of our everyday lives.

Within the recent history of art itself, almost every human activity possible has been explored as a means for engaging in art. This idea about art has been met with great controversy and doubt. It seems we want to believe only in a superhuman perspective of artistic activity—“This can't be art if I'm the one who can do it, right?”

It seems an absolute slap in the face of the very Creator who describes us as “fearfully and wonderfully made!” Why would our Creator not want our lives to have the capacity of being artful and art-filled even in the very basics of human living? Engaging our creativity builds connections with God's creative personality and offers meaning and purpose in life.

Balancing the audacious idea that “nothing that I can accomplish could rise to the level of art” with the encouraging and affirming idea that “anything I can accomplish could rise to the level of art” is something that I powerfully believe is part of understanding God's nature as expressed in our nature. While we recognize how far from holy we are when left to our own devices, we can also witness God's holiness expressed through us when we are most connected to Him in prayer and in living as His people, re-created in Christ Jesus.

Art—Specific and Symbolic Implementation

Art is useful—sometimes in very direct, functional ways but often simultaneously in more abstract, suggestive, and symbolic ways. God observes in Genesis 6:11–13 that the world has become so corrupt that it needs a major cleanup. God suggests His dedication to Noah verbally and tangibly, promising Noah that he will survive the flood and live in covenant with God. He asks Noah specifically to create an ark in order to survive the coming flood, offering detailed and highly visual instructions. In the process of building the boat that God designs with Noah,

God simultaneously creates a giant symbol of His protecting love, which is displayed to everyone living around Noah and his family. (See also 1 Peter 3:18–22, in which Scripture relates God’s saving of Noah from the flood waters to the saving waters of Baptism.)

God uses symbolism and metaphor throughout His communication with His people—this marks His speaking with us verbally and visually. When we think about all of the images God uses in His Word to suggest bigger ideas and bigger expressions of Himself, the list gets staggeringly long. Think about the ark, the dove at the end of the flood, God’s coming in the burning bush, the plagues, His coming in the pillar of flame and pillar of cloud, the ark of the covenant, and the many parables Christ offers. Any of them speak to the value that God places on demonstrating His Word and His thoughts through tangible means. In the tangible means of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, God goes beyond symbolism and specifically offers His grace and forgiveness in Christ Jesus.

Creativity Reflects Creation

Art is a diverse human activity that engages creativity deeply, awakening seeing, sensing, and thinking. It vigorously activates thinking in order to solve problems and accomplish communication. Creative activities energize learning in all subjects by involving existing knowledge and pushing artists to gain more in the process of making work. The ideas of skill, craft, innovation, experimentation, expression, symbolism, communication, inspiration, and transcendence are all regularly linked with artistic activity because they connect so naturally with both the action and the outcome of creation.

If we feel more alive and engaged when we’re creating, it’s because creativity reflects creation itself. We recognize the wonder of what we observe around us and want to be part of that, so we engage in making to reflect, respond to, and contribute to the archive of creation. We experience something very, very powerful in the act of making things: a taste of what God experiences

in the totality of creativity that He can engage in. We enlist our minds and our bodies as fully as possible to make the leap from mental figments to tangible fragments and accomplish a physical completeness by our repeated efforts to make these leaps.

Art—A Way of Approaching Life

These are all reasons that creativity *has* to be part of the way we teach one another and learn from one another. It’s knit into the very fabric of the way we were made. While we often consider dividing the activity of art into its own smaller section of time in our curriculum and our days, it does our creative spirit a disservice when we attempt to compartmentalize our focus and our activity by simply having “art time” designated once in a week. Art is more about a way of approaching everything in life than it is an activity designated by tools, by location, or by time. We can engage art and creativity in respect to any topic covered across the curriculum. The more opportunities for art’s application in any of the other studies students engage in, the more likely it is students will grow comfortable with exercising their creative natures.

Corita Kent, a famed church worker and artist who lived and worked in the Immaculate Heart community in Los Angeles during the 1960s and 1970s, often said, “We have no art here. We only do the best we can.” This suggests that the idea of art being something exclusive and separate from normal activity is really a travesty. She especially pointed to this phrase as indication of the key place that art can serve in society. She makes clear the thought that art is the most normal and natural of all activities—something everyone can and should participate in to gain the sense of fulfilled purpose that art brings with it.

We can take serious and devoted joy in the living of art. We can extend serious and devoted joy to others who make first, second, third, and fifteenth attempts at living that life as well. We can extend both compliment and analysis to those who are coming alongside us to see what godly creativity is all about.