

Introducing....

Fine Art Pages

from ClassicalComposersMonthly.com

I don't think I'm alone as a homeschool mother who dreams of sharing fine art with her children.....and then not getting it done. I mean, by the time the money is spent on math books and science supplies and penmanship workbooks and great books to read, it feels hard to part with any more money for art books. Or if you *do* get the art books, you have probably noticed that the kids don't really gravitate toward them. Nobody's reading them! Nobody's looking at the pictures! It feels like nobody cares! And after a long day of schooling the kiddos, do you really want to tack art onto the schedule as well?

I know, ladies. I know.

One day I came up with an idea. What if I could introduce fine art to my children simply, painlessly, inexpensively, without taking up hardly any time, and in a way that would prevent the children from resistance because they wouldn't even realize anything was going on? YES!

So here it is, so simple that I'm kicking myself for not thinking of this sooner: **Fine Art Pages.**

Print these out (either at home, or hire an office or copy shop to do it for you), either on regular paper or card stock. Use page protectors or don't--your choice. Then stick up some art on the walls where every family member will see them and have some time to notice them.

Where?

The bathroom, next to the toilet. (yes, I'm serious)

The bathroom, on the mirror or next to it, where people will see the art while they brush their teeth.

On the wall next to each person's bed (if they are old enough to be trusted), where they can see the art while they lay down and wake up each day.

On the wall by the kitchen sink, where people will see the art when they wash dishes or wash their hands or get a drink of water or help make dinner.

Do you see where I'm going with this? Basically, anyplace that you notice the eye will rest is a potentially great spot for one of these art pages to go.

Use some poster putty and stick that piece of art on the wall. You don't even have to tell anybody what you're doing. Just stick it up and walk away. Because they will notice it.

You may find that your family would enjoy some fun incentives for paying attention to the art around the house. If you have a reward system, or if you want to create one, now is a great time! Let the kids know that random opportunities will come up for them to tell what they know about the art, such as the name of the piece, the artist, materials used, and so on. And then....wait.

At lunch one day you might ask, "Who knows the title of the piece of art in the upstairs bathroom?" and then reward the ones that know and reinforce it for the rest. In the car you might ask, "Who painted the picture of the Mona Lisa that is on the back door?" Since you, too, will be exposed to the art while you go about your daily life, this should become an easy and natural part of your awareness. You'll find that you're getting an easy art education as well, and then you have something fresh and interesting to talk about with your children!

For children that are not yet reading, you can, of course, make a point of telling them the name of the artist and title of each piece of art. From there you can ask questions like, "What colors and shapes do you see? What do you notice about this painting? How does this painting make you feel? What kind of mood does this painting make you think of?"

Really, pre-readers are in a wonderful position to show the rest of us how to take in and appreciate art, so capitalize on that! This is an area that your 3 year old could excel in just as much as your 14-year old.

It isn't necessary (or recommended) to hound the children about their impressions, insights, or observations of the art. Ask a few questions. See what happens. Let the art speak for itself. This is one area where you can tell a little and then get out of the way. Sure, you could learn all sorts of details about symbolism and techniques, and there may be enough interest that

your crew wants that from time to time. But if they just want to look at it and say nothing, that's ok. Later on it may come up, or you may find that your child has a strong affinity for a particular piece that inspires them to write or decorate or create something. Great! But, don't push it. This isn't on you, mom. Simply put the art out there, put in a little effort to encourage the children to observe, and then leave it alone. Isn't that nice? One thing in your homeschool that doesn't have to run on quite so much Mom Power.

You may find that you like to swap out the art weekly or less often. There's no one perfect way to do it, which is great for all of us that might just get 3 art pages up and then not change them for a month or two. It is ok. Because however you do it, using these Fine Art Pages is going to introduce your children to art like never before. They are going to grow up knowing the names of some famous works on art and know which artist created them. If you only manage to get 5 pages up per school year, by the time 10 years have gone by, guess what? Every person in your family can identify *50* famous works of art, and has probably come to understand and appreciate that art in ways others do not.

How cool is that?!

And let's say you just go with the art-by-the-potty method and you have two bathrooms in your home, and you swap out the art weekly, then guess what? In just one year your family has been really well-exposed to over 100 pieces of art! So, how about that?!

My hope here is that you will see how nicely this approach will fit into your home, no matter what educational approach you use. Anybody can do this in just a couple minutes and then let the art speak for itself.

Best wishes to you as you share more beauty, art, and culture with your children in a natural, painless way!

~Erica Johns

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homeschooling mother of six

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Starry Night

Painted by: Vincent van Gogh

In: Saint Remy, France

When: 1889

Materials and Technique: oil paint on canvas

You can see it at: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

Interesting Fact: Vincent van Gogh only sold one painting in his entire lifetime.