

Week 4 Outline (Aesthetics: Art/Beauty)

Breathing: To begin class, sit in a circle with the children and have everyone introduce themselves. Then, move into a breathing exercise.

- One breathing exercise can be a whale breath. Breathe in for five seconds and then breathe out with your hands coming from the top of your head, like a whale shooting out water.
- (Optionally: give the children a choice between an animal breath and or a regular one)

Rules: Next, go over the class rules. They are:

- Only one person can speak at a time
- Listen when others are speaking
- Think before you speak
- Give reasons for your answers

The kids should all know these as well, but go over them as much as they are interested.

Cats Activity: For this activity, kids will look at photographs and drawings of cats to help discuss what is real and what is imaginary. First, show them a photograph of a cat. Have them discuss whether it is real or not. How do they know if it's real? Is it because you can see the details of the cat? Could you draw a cat that is similarly detailed?

Next, show a drawing of a cat cooking. Ask them if this is a drawing of a real cat. How can they tell? Is it because the cat is cooking? Can they really do that?

Finally, show them the drawings of two cats. Say that one cat is real and one is imaginary and you know because the artist told you so. Ask the kids if they would think one is real and one is imaginary if I hadn't said so. This shows that we can't always tell what is real just from a drawing. Sometimes we need more context and to ask the artist.

Then, have the kids draw something real or imaginary and don't say which one it is. The other kids have to guess if it's real or imaginary.

Aesthetics: Ask the kids who has heard of aesthetics? Explain that it is principles concerned with the nature of art and beauty. What do the kids think about a whole subject devoted to talking about art?

Next, show two photos, one of a Kore statue and one of *Winged Victory of Samothrace*. Ask them to try to point out the differences. Give them the context that the Kore is from 500 BCE, the Archaic Greek period, and *Winged Victory* is from 200 BCE, the Hellenistic period. The differences can range but some examples are:

Kore of the Acropolis

- Kore means maiden
 - Made as offerings to deities
- Stylized and simplified
 - Resembles a real person with different proportions
 - Wide, unrealistic eyes
- Stiff, still fabric

Winged Victory of Samothrace

- Statue of Nike
 - The goddess of victory
 - Placed on the bow of a ship
- Realistic
 - Looks like the proportions of a real person's body (with wings attached)
- Movement in the fabric and pose

Come to a conclusion together about how Greek art developed towards realism, or trying to make things look like they do in real life. Then, ask the kids which statue they prefer and why.

Next, have the kids draw something in a stylized manner. Talk about different styles of drawing they have seen, whether this be anime, cartoons, or comics. What makes these different styles stand out? Then, show them some reference images to work off of, or come up with an idea of their own.

Plato and Aristotle on Aesthetics: Now, discuss Plato and Aristotle's differing views about art. Ask the kids if they remember talking about Plato and Socrates, and how Socrates was a teacher and mentor for Plato. Very similarly, Plato served as a teacher for the philosopher Aristotle.

Plato's view of art was somewhat negative. He saw it more as a craft that was made for a purpose, rather than something made for its own sake. Plato thought the artist only makes an imitation of what is real. Ask if someone can explain what imitation means. It is like a copy of something, but usually suggests that it is not as good as the original. Furthermore, if the kids remember hearing about "Allegory of the Cave" explain that the shadows from that story are like the imitations that Plato disliked. He also said plays appeal to our emotions rather than reason, which he also disapproved of.

Aristotle agreed with Plato about the fact that art is an imitation of nature. However, he saw the value of art. For Aristotle, art can be more than imitations, it can be representations. Ask the kids what they think the difference between an imitation and representation is. Encourage the distinction as representations going beyond being a copy. They can represent something else, or serve as a symbol. Furthermore, an artist chooses what to paint and not paint, there is something purposeful and skilled about this. They control the message they are portraying. He also said that in plays, the emotional elements help us learn. By seeing how heroes act, we can learn to emulate them.

Ask the kids which philosopher's view of art they agree with more and why?

In pairs, have the kids write a short skit that teaches a lesson about stealing and then share. Tell them to use art to help them represent a situation to teach a lesson. Or, give them the option to do the same thing but with an artistic medium. Draw a picture that teaches a lesson.

Conclusion: Finally, give the children their evaluation sheet. Have them respond with a smile, frown, or medium face for each question and prompt them to write a response for the last question.