LESSON/ACTIVITY: Let the Light In!

by Kiley Grantges

LEVEL: Kindergarten and up

SUGGESTED TIME: Discussion time plus two hours for artwork

OBJECTIVE(S):

Students will
1. demonstrate understanding of the message and theme of the book *Grandfather Gandhi*
2. demonstrate understanding of how lines, shapes, and colors create emotion in an artwork
3. create an artwork using lines and colors that express anger; create an artwork using lines and colors that express calm and peace, thus reinforcing the advice given to Arun Gandhi by his grandfather to “Live your life as light, not lightning.”
4. communicate ideas about emotion in an artwork

MATERIALS/TOOLS:

construction paper in warm colors (red, orange, pink, yellow; 12 x 18 inches)
crayons (red, orange, and black)
tempera paint (red, orange, yellow, white)

PREPARATION:

Read *Grandfather Gandhi*. Observe and study the artwork throughout the book. Begin to focus on the pages in which emotion is being expressed and illustrated. Discuss the ways in which Evan Turk illustrates emotion throughout the book. Ask students how he is illustrating these emotions. Focus on the page wherein Arun is writing in his anger journal; what kinds of lines do you see representing his anger? Why and how do these kinds of lines represent anger? What kinds of colors did Evan Turk use to illustrate these lines? Why?

Next, focus on the path that Grandfather and Arun are walking. What is the mood and emotion of this illustration? What kinds of lines are illustrated on the path they are walking? What kinds of colors did Evan Turk use to illustrate this picture? How does the mood of this illustration compare to the other one?

In order to reinforce the teaching of how different lines and colors can express emotion in art you might also use a variety of abstract artworks to compare and contrast with students. Such as *Untitled, 1957*, by Franz Kline; *Number 8*, by Jackson Pollock; *Untitled (Orange & Yellow)* and *Untitled No. 16* by Mark Rothko. Observe each of these artworks...
and discuss how each is different and how each artwork feels. What kinds of lines, shapes, and colors do you see in each?

What should become clear through the observance and discussion of both Evan Turk’s illustrations and those of the abstract artists is that art makes us feel different emotions and can express these emotions through the lines, shapes, and colors used by the artist. How anger can be expressed using wild, zig-zagging, swirling, overlapping lines and dark colors such as red and black; how calm can be expressed using more gently waving lines and lines in horizontal directions; how happiness can be expressed in bubbly, curly lines and colors such as yellows and pinks.

Tell students that today they will be creating a collaborative artwork inspired by the emotions felt throughout the Grandfather Gandhi book. In this art project, students will illustrate their emotions and create a collaborative artwork in the shape of the sun inspired by the advice given to Arun Gandhi by his grandfather, to “Live your life as light, not lightning.”

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Give each student the red paper and have them choose colors of crayons that represent anger to them. Begin by having students think of a real event in their life in which they have felt true anger. Students should visualize the event and draw it using lines and colors which represent anger to them onto the red paper. (Will you use colors such as red or black? Will you draw wild, zig-zagging, overlapping lines to represent this anger?)

2. Next, give students the orange paper. On this paper they will paint how it feels when they begin to calm down from these angry feelings and emotions. (Will you use colors such as orange and red? Will you draw lines that contain less movement? Lines that represent a greater sense of calm to you? Wavy lines or a more gentle form of zig-zag lines?)

3. Next, give students the yellow paper. On this paper they will paint how it might feel to “live their life as light, not lightning.” Students should visualize a feeling of greater calm and paint it using lines and colors which represent calm and peace to them onto the yellow paper. Students may also choose a light pink paper and paper if they want. (Will you use colors such as yellow, or even pink? Will you draw lines that are horizontal or gently waving to represent this sense of calm and peace?)

4. Once complete, students will cut up their papers into geometric shapes and glue them together to create a collaborative artwork in the shape of the sun. Wherein the red starts first, the oranges and pinks radiate outwards from the red, and the yellow shapes radiate outwards from the oranges and pinks. The completed artwork will, in a sense, be a visualization of students transforming their artwork filled with angrier emotions into ones filled with more calm and peace; turning their lightning into light!
**VOCABULARY:**

Line (straight, horizontal, wavy, curly, zig-zag)

Shape (geometric shapes)

Color (warm, cool, primary, secondary)

Movement (using lines to create movement and express emotion in an artwork)

**RESOURCES:**

*Grandfather Gandhi* by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus, illustrated by Evan Turk.

*Untitled, 1957*, by Franz Kline; *Number 8*, by Jackson Pollock; *Untitled (Orange & Yellow)* and *Untitled No. 16* by Mark Rothko

**POINTER/ PITFALLS:**

Students might be tempted to draw pictures of realistic events wherein they felt angry or calm. Encourage students to illustrate these emotions using lines and color only.

**VARIATIONS:**

The final artwork can also be an individual project, instead of a collaborative one. Their final drawings and paintings can also be cut into symmetrical geometric shapes. The final artwork can also be arranged into a sun of a more circular shape. (We displayed ours at the top corner of a bulletin board.)