



# Community Expressive Arts

## Planning A Community Art Exhibit



### BACKGROUND:

Build community support for 4-H while generating pride and enthusiasm among your group of Cloverbuds by putting together an art exhibit of their own work. Ask a local bank, library, office building, or nursing home if they would be willing to support the youngest members of 4-H by hosting an art exhibit. Emphasize that the exhibit does not need to be elaborate; ten to thirty pieces of children's art could easily decorate a lobby or hallway. Suggest that the exhibit could be displayed for a week or even a month. After getting permission to use a building for the display, discuss the following to make this an enjoyable, productive, and "hassle-free" event:

- set up dates for the exhibit
- set specific time to set up and take down
- ask if an opening night event would be possible
- check fire codes or other building regulations
- look at spaces to be used and agree on the method of mounting.

### LIFE SKILL AREAS

Children will learn social skills by working together in planning and setting up the exhibit. Decision making skills will be used by deciding what to include and how to present it. Fine motor skills will be developed by creating artwork, invitations, mounting, and labeling. Large motor skills will be exercised by hanging artwork and setting up the exhibit.

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand the planning involved in a community project.
- To appreciate and value artwork we create.
- To understand the concept of "giving to the community."


### GROUP SIZE

6 to 8 children per adult volunteer.

### TIME FRAME

This lesson is designed for a group meeting between 30 and 60 minutes.

*Note to the Leader:* This lesson will work best towards the end of the year, after the children have made a variety of artwork at the meetings over time. Activities included here may take more than one meeting to plan and complete.



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## GETTING STARTED

**ACTIVITY:** *Looking Professional: Mounting Artwork* (10-12 minutes)

**Materials:** artwork completed by the children during the year, large black construction paper, scissors, rubber cement, yardstick or ruler. Let the children have fun mounting their own masterpieces! The construction paper should "frame" the artwork with a 1 1/2 to 2 inch border all around. Have mats pre-cut or assist the children with measuring and cutting. Use rubber cement to glue the artwork to the "mat." If the glue smears or gets on the artwork or mat, you can repair it by letting it dry thoroughly and rubbing it off with a clean finger.

**Application:** Encourage the children to look at framed artwork at home, school, doctor's offices, or other public areas. How are the pictures presented? Do they always have a mat? Are they always framed under glass?

**ACTIVITY:** *Who Did This? Labeling Artwork* (7-9 minutes)

**Materials:** white, unlined 3" x 5" index cards, pencil with eraser, black fine tip marker, masking tape. Have the children make labels for their artwork. Since most younger children are not printing clearly yet and because printing can be tedious and frustrating, assist them by having an adult neatly and very lightly print the following information on an index card:

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's age \_\_\_\_\_

School / Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Cloverbud Group Information \_\_\_\_\_

Let the children outline your printing with the black marker. When it is dry, use the eraser to remove any pencil marks that remain. Help them roll masking tape and attach the card to the lower right hand corner of the artwork.

**Application:** Ask the children to see if they can find the artist's signature on paintings and pictures they see.

**ACTIVITY:** *Adding to the Collection: Family Portraits* (7-9 minutes)

**Materials:** white 8 1/2" x 11" paper, markers or crayons.

Family portraits are always favorites at museums and art galleries. Encourage the children to draw a portrait of their family. Suggest the following guidelines:

- include everyone in your family, even your pets
- fill the entire page; make the figures big
- use color, color, and more color!
- don't forget the details (does your mother wear glasses or, does your brother have freckles?)

If your group is typical, you will see a range of "skills" in their drawings. Praise all of them. Point out things you like in each one and describe what you see. Make sure you acknowledge how hard they have worked!

**Application:** Ask the children to look for family portraits at home. Is there one of their family? Do their parents have any old family portraits?



## DIGGING DEEPER

**ACTIVITY:** *You're Invited* (12-15 minutes)

**Materials:** construction paper, pre-printed, cut and duplicated event information (see below), stamp pads, art gum erasers, and glue. Make simple invitations to the Gallery Opening by using art gum erasers to print designs on the construction paper. The erasers can be cut into shapes or simply used as they are and make repetitive designs in different colors. Fold the paper in half, print on the outside, and glue the event information on the inside.

The information should include:

- What - A Cloverbud Art Exhibit

Come join us and see original artwork, talk to the artists, and enjoy light refreshments.

- Where
- Date
- Time
- RSVP (optional)

Let the children make several invitations to give to family and friends. Don't forget to invite the "benefactors" who have offered the space in their building!

**Application:** Have the children look at invitations they have received. How are they similar to the ones they have made?

## LOOKING WITHIN

**ACTIVITY:** *Setting Up the Exhibit*

**Materials:** artwork, masking tape, step ladder.

**Note to the Volunteer:** Check with the building owners or managers to determine whether or not there are fire code or other restrictions to mounting items on the wall. Spend an afternoon or evening decorating the halls and walls of your gallery! Use rolled masking tape or gummed putty (available at office supply stores) to "hang" your pictures. Make sure each picture has a name label on it. The children may choose to group similar art works together or space them randomly. Try laying them out on the floor first to get an idea of what they will look like on

the wall. After mounting the pictures on the wall, have the children stand back and look at them. Are they straight? Do they look balanced? Are they anchored firmly enough?

**ACTIVITY:** *The Opening: By Invitation Only*

**Materials:** simple refreshments, punch, cookies, napkins.

**Note to the Volunteer:** Check with the host of the exhibit to see if an "opening night" event is possible. Plan an opening night party! Invite parents and friends to see the artwork, meet the artists, and have some refreshments. Use this event as an opportunity to publicly thank the people or organization who are letting you use their building.

## Reaching Conclusions

**ACTIVITY:** *Evaluating Ourselves*

**Materials:** none.

After the art exhibit has ended, have the children evaluate the experience:

- Do you think the art exhibit was successful?
- Why or why not?
- Would you do anything differently?
- Did you learn anything from it? What?
- Would you do it again?

*Adapted from materials developed by Ohio State University Extension and Penn State University Cooperative Extension.*