

Inspiration:

Introducing Visual Art

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Introduction

Using Art in Youth Work provides opportunities to encourage creativity and self-expression. It presents new challenges and can expose people to new and exciting art forms. It can be a great way to teach participants to de stress and can be used to deal with issues or topical subjects. It's also a huge amount of fun!!

Here, we have put together a sample workshop based on some fun ways to begin and to encourage creativity in a low pressure way. The workshop can be adapted easily to suit a particular theme or issue that you wish to address with the group.

This workshop is a sample one, including icebreakers to get the group going and ignite the brain cells. It can also be built upon or developed into a more indepth activity (which is described in a separate workshop)

Simple tips before you start any art project

- Have all of your materials (however simple) ready and to hand.
- Have a clear session plan and alternatives if the group get through what you have planned faster.
- Allow for space for the group to make it their own.



Art workshop

Materials:

A4 paper

A3 paper

2b pencils

colouring pencils/markers

Materials: We would highly recommend buying good quality materials. We have found that it is much better have a small amount of good art supplies, including paper, than lots of low quality supplies.

What You Do:

- Call out directions for the group (from the options below).
- Young people will draw what they hear.
- Young people should be encouraged to listen carefully to the directions.
- Young people should not look at one-another's work while doing this exercise.
- Youth Worker can use the following directions or they can make up their own:

Option 1: Abstract Drawing

1. Draw four straight lines from one edge of your paper to the other.
2. Draw two more straight lines from one edge of you paper to the other and make the lines cross over the lines you have already drawn.
3. Draw five circles - any size - anywhere on your paper.
4. Draw two curved lines beginning at the edge of the paper and ending up somewhere in the middle of the paper.
5. Fill in three of the five circles.
6. Fill in four areas of your paper however you would like.

- Once the drawings are complete, students should sign their work and bring them all together.
- A discussion should take place about the work.
- Do the drawings look the same? Different? How are they similar? How are they different? Why?
- Talk to them about how individual all of the work is, the importance of this individuality and how we all have very different ways of interpreting the world.



- Come up with as many different sets of directions as you can. You will be amazed at the unique qualities of all of the drawings.

Option 2: Crazy Creature

This is our own adaptation of the above session, the reason we chose to do this is that we notice how difficult it can be for young people to think of what they would like to draw. They very often draw something that relates to home, a band, their name or TV & computer games. This session gives them an opportunity to create something quite unusual without having to come up with it completely on their own.

1. Draw a round body
2. Draw a long neck
3. Draw two oval heads
4. Give your creature 3 arms
5. Draw hands at the end of the arms
6. Draw spikes on it
7. Give it 3 eyes on one head and one eye on the other
8. Draw a tail on it
9. Give it four legs

10. Put scales on one part of your creature
11. Add fluff to a part of it

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We are Sarah Thornberry, a Project Development Worker with Blue Skies Initiative and Archways - an illustrator and graduate of NCAD and Jess Tobin a Youth Worker with St John Bosco Youth Centre - an illustrator, street artist and graduate of NCAD. We are also sisters.

For approximately 18 years (on and off) fulltime for 10 years we have been using art in our work with both young people and adults. Through our work we have been able to see the benefits of using visual art and there are so many! The wonderful thing about art and creativity is that it can be tailored to a group or person, but most importantly for us it is what creating art can offer both intrinsically and extrinsically.

