

Sunny Days



Donna Wesson

In these days of recycling and “going green,” I was looking for things my students could do to incorporate these ideas into their artwork. Plastic grocery bags just didn’t inspire me and those little plastic rings that hold a six-pack of soft drinks together only reminded me of holiday wreaths.

With spring upon us and Earth Day fast approaching, I thought something bright, sunny, and outside would be appropriate. I happened upon an old satellite dish that was in my garage storage area. It occurred to me that if

it were painted yellow, it would look like a sun. I showed it to my students; one thought led to another, and the sun face idea was born.

Our social studies teacher had been covering other cultures and I requested her help in reviewing some sun faces from Hispanic, Chinese, African, and Native American cultures. Our science classes had already studied the solar system, so we had a few suns and planets hanging in our

halls. Our librarian helped us find all kinds of books and websites about the sun in art.

Finding a Source

One problem that I encountered was collecting enough dishes for each student to have one. I had recently been to a garage sale close to our local satellite service provider and remembered seeing dishes behind their place of business. I called and asked if I



could have some of them. They were more than ready to dispose of them and provided us with enough for each student in my small art class to have one.

Our school has an outdoor classroom that we call Project Grow. There is a wooden arbor there that is supported on 6 x 6" (15 x 15 cm) posts. These were perfect for displaying our sunny satellite faces. If you do not have such an arbor, any wooden structure would do for mounting, or you might just want to leave the arm on yours and "plant" it someplace like a garden to brighten the landscape.

Procedures

We discussed how the sun, as the largest object in our solar system, is a tremendous influence on our daily lives. We compared suns depicted in different cultures, noticing their likenesses and differences.

We removed the arm from the dishes and cleaned them. We spray-painted a base coat of white, yellow, or light blue enamel onto each dish.

When that coat was dry, we painted the backgrounds with white or light shades of yellow and orange house paint.

While the dishes were drying we drew designs for bright and whimsical sun faces on art paper. We cut these out to make sure the design would fit on the dish. We cut out a circle pattern that was the same size as the face of the design and outlined it in the center of the dish. Students drew the face pattern onto the dish.

Some students added rays by cutting out their original design and tracing it around the face. Others chose to draw the rays freehand. After the designs were drawn, students painted their suns with house paints using "sun" colors—bright oranges, yellows, and reds. We completed details on the face and rays using permanent marker for the eyes, lashes, brows, etc., and finally the completed the design with sealant (outdoors). Now all our suns light up our outdoor Project Grow! ☺

In these days of "recycling" and "going green," I was looking for things my students could do to incorporate these ideas into their artwork.

Materials

- old satellite dishes
- quart cans of house paint in "sun" colors
- brushes
- 18 x 24" (45 x 60 cm) art paper
- spray sealant
- black permanent marker
- tools as needed
- 2 or 3" (5 or 7.5 cm) wood screws to secure to wooden structure

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NATIONAL STANDARD

Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.

WEB LINK

www.darkroastedblend.com/2007/07/fun-with-satellite-dishes.html