

The Importance of Arts Education

(Even if your kids aren't "Artsy")

I can imagine what you are thinking after reading the title of this article: "Oh great, another guilt trip article from a homeschool leader on what I'm leaving out of my children's education and how it will negatively impact my family for the next five generations. I can hardly wait to read this one! Who really cares about the arts anyway?"

We have science, math, history, English, foreign language, Bible study, sports, chores, character studies, community service, missions trips, church functions, political campaigns, and growing our garden to worry about, who has time for the arts? They just aren't that important, and if we leave them out no one is going to notice. All of that stuff is just a distraction to real learning anyway and we've got to be serious here. After all, I'm trying to get my child into a good college and I just can't spare the time from serious academic pursuits for something as non-essential as the arts. Well, I'm not here to guilt you into yet another activity, but I am here to challenge your thinking on the importance of arts education and possibly to shake up your educational paradigm a little bit.

As far as I can see, our educational system in this country has everything backwards, but then you knew that and that's why you homeschool right? So why do we take a system that is broken and bring it into our homes as if it weren't? Our current educational system has the academics as the core of learning and creativity emanates from the academics. Preeminence is given to the "important" subjects like math, science and history, then, if there is time and money left over, they add arts education. But, according to God's word, the first thing we learn is that "In the beginning, God created..." If we are to teach according to Scriptural principle, then creativity is to take the first place, to be the core of learning, and everything else will follow after that. It is God's way and recent research proves this point.

- In 1993, SAT takers who had four year's study in the arts scored 53 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 37 points higher on the math portion than did the students who had no arts coursework.

- In a study comparing children ages 2-10, half of the group were given computer classes and the other half were given music lessons. Those who had the music lessons increased their intelligence 35% over those who had no music training.

- A Rockefeller Foundation study reveals that college music majors have the highest rate of admittance to medical school, 66.7 percent of those applying. The acceptance rate for biochemistry majors is only 59.2%

These are but a few of the most recent findings, all suggesting that the paradigm of our current education system is wrong. To increase SAT scores, you don't get rid of the arts programs to make more time to study; you INCREASE the arts programs to improve scores.

So why should we as homeschoolers add the arts to our children's education?

- First, we are God's image bearers and created to reflect God's character to a dying world. We cannot just choose to reflect the parts of His character that we like and forget the rest, but we must reflect all of it, even the parts we may not understand or feel comfortable with. If we were truly created to be reflections of God the Creator, then we were ALL created to be creative. This element of God's character was not reserved only for the "chosen few" who have decided to make the arts their career choice. As image-bearers, we all have a responsibility to create that which is good and that which portrays truth, thus bringing God greater glory through our creative gifts. What better way to make this happen than to begin adding the arts as an integral part of your child's education?

- Next, God has chosen some to be artists by profession. Even though we were all created to be creative, some have greater giftings in these areas than others. In Exodus 35 and 36 we learn that God called specific people to work in the arts, but how will we know if our children are called to this profession if we never expose them to the arts in the first place? In my experience at The Master's Academy of Fine Arts, we have many students who graduate and go on in the arts who were never interested in them in the least until they came to The Master's Academy and were exposed to them in all areas. You may have a diamond in the rough that God has chosen for a special purpose. Will you deny what God has put in your child because you see it as frivolous or of little value?

Finally, artists are makers of culture who express their worldviews in ways that shape the worldviews of others. As Doug Phillips of The Vision Forum says “ It is not our job to accept reality, it is our job to define it.” Up until this point, we have lived in a reality defined by the worldviews of artists who desire to see the destruction of family, and the values of traditional society. We can no longer allow this to go on and expect to have a civil nation. We must seek to alter the reality of the current arts establishments by producing something of meaning and value, and that will only occur when we apply ourselves to educating our children in the arts.

Putting our culture back together must involve reclaiming and restoring the arts from a Christian perspective. The best way to do that is to begin to see the importance of educating our children in the arts….even if they aren’t artsy!

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