

Claude Monet's Water Lilies (1 hour plan)

Introduce the artist: Claude Monet (1840-1926) was an Impressionist painter— his paintings recorded impressions of what he saw using dabs of color. In fact, his “Impression, Sunrise” was what gave the Impressionist movement its name. (Please access his page on our website: www.masterpieceofthemonth.org during class to show more variety of his work.)

On the website, show Monet in his garden at Giverny. In his later years, he spent lots of time gardening and painting in his garden. He was inspired by how the colors changed depending on the time of day, so he painted the same subject over and over. He painted around 250 paintings of Water Lilies!

Introduce the masterpiece: Show our print of Monet’s Water Lilies. Let the kids call out every color they see... there are lots of them!

Project: Create our own Lily Ponds, with a water background and flowers. Lay down a bit of newspaper to work on. Give each child three **coffee filters** and water color paints (don’t use black and brown). Let them dab soft splashes of color on these “water lilies.”

Now take heavy white **paper** to let the kids create the water background (card stock works great). Start by using **crayons** of different colors to show the flow of the water—use any colors except brown or black. Then let them paint over that with blue **watercolor paint**. Encourage them not to over work it.

Discussion (and link to ecology): While letting your “ponds” dry, talk about the fact that Monet not only appreciated the beauty of nature, he also respected it. He knew the water lilies were just part of the **ecology** of his ponds. He educated himself on how to choose appropriate plants to support all the kinds of life in the pond: turtles, frogs, insects, and tiny plants. For the same reason, we must **protect our own waterways**. Kids can go with an adult to pick up litter. Adults should avoid chemicals on their lawns and should not flush old medications down the toilet (everything ends up in our waterways). We all depend on our water systems!

Reading (if time allows or if needed while drying): The Lyon Art closet has a book called Katie Meets The Impressionists, where Katie meets Monet’s son Jean in his garden. Check for Once Upon A Lily Pad, which is set in Monet’s garden and also brings in all the life that the pond supports. The Lyon library has several books about ponds, plus more books about Monet.

Assembling your lily ponds: Let the kids crumple up there dry “flowers”, and then find the middle of the flower to stick down with glue onto their water backgrounds. They should open up the lily just a bit, and then sign their water background.

Personal Connection: (While both of these things dry) Claude Monet loved gardening, and painted many flowers. Do you have a hobby that might inspire you to paint or draw? Maybe you love something so much you’d like to paint it. (Food? Pet?)