

# MICHELANGELO

## LESSON 1

### 1. Introduction to Michelangelo's work

#### VIDS:

- a. Art Videos for Kids Michelangelo Getting to Know... Michelangelo (SD) (2 min)
- b. Michelangelo s bio part 1 of 4 (SD) (10 min)

### 2. Biography

- a. Read a biography (Read "Getting to Know the World's Greatest Artists" by Mike Venezia)
- b. Narrate a biography (Add Famous Artist of the Month)
- c. Add a timeline entry
- d. Add to Famous Artists Lapbook
- e. Complete an *Artist of Influence* Sheet

### 3. Art Activity:

- a. Soap Sculpture Lesson

## LESSON 2

### 1. Remember to display some different artworks of Michelangelo

### 2. Look At *Madonna of the Stairs*

Use *Looking at a work of art* Sheet

The ***Madonna of the Stairs*** (or ***Madonna of the Steps***) is a relief sculpture by Michelangelo in the Casa Buonarroti, Florence. It was sculpted in around 1491, when Michelangelo was about seventeen. This and the [\*Battle of the Centaurs\*](#) were Michelangelo's first two sculptures

**Relief**, or *relievo rilievo*, is a sculptural technique. The term *relief* is from the Latin verb *levo*, to raise. To create a sculpture in relief is to give the impression that the sculpted material has been raised above the background plane. What is actually performed when a relief is cut in from a flat surface of stone or wood is a lowering of the field, leaving the unsculpted parts seemingly raised. The technique involves considerable chiselling away of the background, which is a time-consuming exercise with little artistic effect if the lowered background is left plain, as is often the case. On the other hand, a relief saves forming the rear of a subject, and is less fragile and more securely fixed than a sculpture in the round, especially one of a standing figure where the ankles are a potential weak point, especially in stone. In other materials such as metal, clay, plaster stucco, ceramics or papier-mache the form can be just added to or raised up from the background, and monumental bronze reliefs are made by casting.

### 3. VIDS:

- a. Michelangelo s bio part 2 of 4 (SD) (10 min)

### 4. Art Activity – Relief Sculpture:

- a. Use plaster of Paris and carve a picture with carving utensils
- b. Paint the picture

## LESSON 3

1. **Art Activity:**
  - a. Portraits in Clay
2. **VIDS:** Michelangelo's bio part 3 of 4 (SD) (10 min)

## LESSON 4

1. **VIDS:** BBC Michelangelo A Film 1 (10 min)
2. **Art Activity:**
  - a. Plaster of Paris Fresco Lesson

## LESSON 5

1. **VIDS:** BBC Michelangelo A Film 2 (10 min)
2. **Art Activity:**
  - b. The Sistine Chapel Ceiling Lesson

## LESSON 6

1. **Art Activity:**
  - a. Creation of Adam Lesson
2. **VIDS:**
  - a. Michelangelo Sidewalk Chalk Art - Sistine Chapel Street Painting (SD) (3min)
  - b. BBC Michelangelo A Film 3 (10 min)
  - c. BBC Michelangelo A Film 4 (10 min)

# SOAP SCULPTURE

Michelangelo will always be considered one of history's most prominent artists. The sculptor and painter developed his reputation during the Italian renaissance, and his legacy and prominence has only continued to grow over the years. Explaining the art of Michelangelo to young art students will help them develop an appreciation for the arts and for history in general. Because he was so diverse himself, there are ways to develop hands-on lessons to teach about the artist.

Show pictures of statues including The Pieta statue and The Statue of David that were made famous by Michelangelo

## **Discuss:**

Take a few minutes to discuss The Pieta. Focus on Michelangelo's use of stone.

Note how smooth the sculpture looks. The fabric of the clothing doesn't look anything like marble, but like actual fabric.

Ask your students what it might feel like to touch this sculpture.

Talk about the detail in this work. I think it important to mention that Michelangelo was only 24 when this piece was completed!

1. Ask your student what they see, have them describe the artwork.
2. Tell things they like or dislike about the work.
3. How do they think the artist was feeling when they created it?
4. How it makes your student feel looking at it?
5. Does the use of color help convey mood?
6. Is there something unusual or unique about it?
7. Ask them what they think is going on in the piece, is there a story that can be told about it?
8. What kind of style and medium did the artist use in this work?

## **Discuss:**

Take a few minutes to discuss the Statue of David pieces.

Focus on Michelangelo's use of stone, again notice detail.

1. Ask your student what they see, have them describe the artwork.
2. Tell things they like or dislike about the work.
3. How do they think the artist was feeling when they created it?
4. How it makes your student feel looking at it?
5. Does the use of color help convey mood?
6. Is there something unusual or unique about it?
7. Ask students if they would want to be in the painting, or not, and why?
8. Ask them what they think is going on in the piece, is there a story that can be told about it?
9. What kind of style and medium did the artist use in this work?

## **Objectives**

Students will be introduced to the art of Renaissance artist Michelangelo, and will create a subtractive process sculpture.

## **Materials**

Ivory Soap  
Butter Knife  
Tooth Pick

## Lesson

1. Today you will learn basic sculpting techniques and terms as you carve your own soap sculpture. Michelangelo carved many *subtractive process* sculptures from large blocks of marble. Whether you start with marble, or a bar of soap, the technique is the same - remove (take away) the stuff that's not the thing you are sculpting.
2. Draw a goldfish on the side of your bar of soap.
3. Carefully cut away the soap until you reach the lines you made to define your goldfish
4. Begin to shape your goldfish by rounding the top and bottom, and by flattening the tail. Finally add the eyes.
5. Wet your fingers with water and then rub them over the surface of your goldfish to smooth your sculpture out a bit



# PLASTER OF PARIS FRESCO

## 1. Introduction:

While the art of fresco painting reached its peak during the Italian Renaissance, examples of painting on wet plaster date back to 1500 B.C., and fresco paintings in caves were done more than 15,000 years ago (Look in Ancient History Book for examples of ancient frescoes).

To achieve a *buon* or "true" fresco, artists use pure pigments and water to paint on wet plaster. Through this technique, the painting becomes part of the plaster wall or ceiling. An artist needs to work quickly and carefully while painting a true fresco because it cannot be changed once it dries. Several layers of plaster are applied to the wall or ceiling before the final painting layer is done. To make a fresco *secco*, an artist applies pigments to dry plaster. Egg, oil, or glue binds the pigments to the dry plaster. A fresco *secco* allows the artist to take his time and easily fix errors, but it is less durable than a *buon* fresco. In both techniques, the pigments are applied in layers.

Frescoes were used for many large-scale works during the Renaissance, such as the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Since plaster dries quickly, it was important for artists to work on a *buon* fresco in small sections. To make it easier, artists planned drawings of their work, called cartoons. After poking holes along the outline of a cartoon, an artist would hold it up to the wet plaster and apply a colored dust, such as charcoal, through the holes. This transferred the outline of the drawing on to the wet plaster. Alternately, he could use a metal point to lightly indent the outline of the cartoon into the wet plaster. Frescoes do not require walls or ceilings; they can also be done on panels and tiles.

Show students pictures of Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel and Raphael's frescoes in the Palace of the Vatican. Discuss the similarities and differences in the works.

## 2. Buon Fresco Project

- a. Follow the package directions to make Plaster of Paris.
- b. Fill a foam plate for each student with Plaster of Paris.
- c. Near the top of the plate, insert a 1" piece of straw. Gently press it in to the foam, but do not puncture the plate. As the plaster sets, this will create a hole in the plaster for hanging.
- d. Let the plaster set until it is almost hardened but still wet. Distribute a plate of plaster to each student along with paint, water, and paintbrushes.
- e. Have each student paint the Plaster of Paris. Encourage them to be creative with their paintings. Remind them that the hole in the plaster is the top of the painting.
- f. When students are done painting, set the frescoes aside to dry.
- g. When the frescoes are dry, remove the straw and the foam surrounding each painting.
- h. String ribbon or twine through the hole at the top of each fresco. Display the frescoes around your classroom.

## 3. Fresco Secco Project

- a. Follow the package directions to make Plaster of Paris.
- b. Fill a foam plate for each student with Plaster of Paris.
- c. Near the top of the plate, insert a 1-inch piece of straw. Gently press it in to the foam, but do not puncture the plate. As the plaster sets, this will create a hole in the plaster for hanging.
- d. Let the plaster set until it is dry.
- e. Remove the straws from the dried plaster.
- f. Distribute a plate of dried plaster to each student along with paint, water, and paintbrushes.
- g. Have each student paint the Plaster of Paris. Encourage them to be creative with their paintings. Remind them that the hole in the plaster is the top of the painting.
- h. When students are done painting, set the frescoes aside to dry.
- i. When the frescoes are dry, remove the foam surrounding each painting.
- j. String ribbon or twine through the hole at the top of each fresco. Display the frescoes around your classroom.

\*Foam plates are easy molds for this project because they are inexpensive and provide each student with a large surface area for painting. They are also easy to cut away from the plaster. You could also use foam trays, plastic plates, disposable pie tins, plastic soap or candy molds (available at most craft and hobby stores), or improvise your own mold with cardboard.

**Extra:**

Mix tempera powder with the egg yolk to make your paint.

Paint with the egg mixture directly into the plaster.

Show the children how to work quickly because the plaster will begin to dry rapidly and become hard to work with.

# THE SISTINE CHAPEL CEILING

## 1. Before Class:

Tape a coloring page from the Sistine Chapel to the bottom of the table.

## 2. Look at the paintings on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling for a couple of minutes

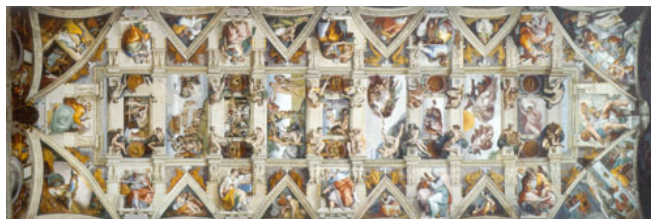
## 3. Discuss the picture

Use the *Looking at a work of art* Sheet

## 4. Introduction:

### Why Did Michelangelo Paint These?

Pope Julius II (also known as Giulio II and "*papa terribile*"), requested that Michelangelo paint the chapel ceiling. Julius was determined that Rome should be rebuilt to its former glory, and had embarked on a vigorous campaign to get the job done. That such splendor would (a) add luster to the name of Julius II and (b) serve to supercede anything that Pope Alexander VI (a Borgia, and Julius' rival) had accomplished, were not unimportant considerations.



### How Big Is the Ceiling?

It's about 40 meters (131 feet) long by 13 meters (43 feet) wide. These numbers are rounded off just a tad, but don't detract from the fact that Michelangelo painted well over *5,000 square feet* of frescoes.

### What Do the Frescoes Depict?

A lot! The main panels down the center depict scenes from the Book of Genesis, from the Creation, to the Fall, to shortly after Noah's deluge. Adjacent to each of these scenes, on either side, are immense portraits of prophets and sibyls who foretold the coming of the Messiah. Along the bottoms of these run spandrels and lunettes containing the ancestors of Jesus and stories of tragedy in ancient Israel. Scattered throughout are smaller figures, cherubs and *ignudi* (nudes). All told there are more than 300 painted figures on the ceiling. By the way, have you noticed the wealth of architectural members and moldings which dissect the ceiling? Most of those are actually two-dimensional, skillfully painted in by Michelangelo to demarcate separate compositions.

### Say, Wasn't Michelangelo a Sculptor? Why Was He Painting?

Michelangelo *was* a sculptor. He referred to himself as such, and vastly preferred working with marble to almost anything else that life offered. Prior to the ceiling frescoes, the only painting he'd done was during his brief stint as a student in Ghirlandaio's workshop.

Julius, however, was adamant that Michelangelo - and no other - should paint the chapel ceiling. What Julius wanted, he usually got. Besides that, he'd been stalling Michelangelo on a prior, wildly lucrative commission (sculpting 40 massive figures for his tomb), and kept dangling that juicy prize as a reward for completion of the ceiling job.

### How Long Did it Take Michelangelo to Paint These?

It took him a bit over four years, from July of 1508 to October of 1512. Michelangelo got off to a slow start, not having painted frescoes before. He intended to (and did) work in *buon fresco*, the most difficult method, and one which only true masters undertook. In addition to having to learn everything about the medium itself and making initial blunders in that area, he also had to learn some wickedly hard techniques in perspective. (Consider that his figures look "correct" on curved surfaces, viewed from nearly 60 feet below.)

However, ultimately it wasn't Michelangelo's fault that the ceiling took four years. (Once he got the hang of things, he painted like a man on fire!) The work suffered numerous setbacks, such as mold and miserable, damp weather that disallowed plaster curing. A primary cause of downtime occurred when

Julius was off waging a war, or ill to the point that Last Rites were administered. The ceiling project, and any hope Michelangelo had of being paid, were both frequently in jeopardy while Julius was absent or near death. Small wonder that the artist complained so often and bitterly about the project, really.

#### **Did Michelangelo Really Paint Lying on His Back?**

No. Charlton Heston did in the movie, but the real Michelangelo didn't lay on his back to paint the ceiling. He conceived and had constructed a unique scaffolding system. It was sturdy enough to hold workers and materials, but began high up the walls of the chapel in order that Mass might still be celebrated below.

The scaffolding curved at its top, mimicking the curvature of the ceiling's vault. Michelangelo often had to bend backwards and paint over his head - an awkward position which must've made his neck and back ache, his arms burn painfully and, according to him, permanently screwed up his vision. But he wasn't lying flat on his back.

#### **Did He Actually Paint These Frescoes All by Himself?**

Michelangelo gets, and deserves, credit for the entire project. The complete design was his. The sketches and cartoons for the frescoes were all of his hand, and Michelangelo executed the vast bulk of the actual painting by himself.

But! The vision of him toiling away, a solitary figure in a vacant chapel, isn't accurate. He needed many assistants, if only to mix his paints, scramble up and down ladders, and prepare the day's plaster (a nasty business). *Occasionally*, a talented assistant might be entrusted with a patch of sky, a bit of landscape, or a figure so small and minor it is barely discernable from below. All of these were worked from his cartoons, though. And clever, temperamental Michelangelo hired and fired these assistants on such a regular basis that none of them could claim credit for any part of the ceiling.

#### **5. Art Activity**

Then tell him that there are pictures under the table and he should get on the floor and color them (with crayons.)

He will be able to see how difficult and taxing it would be to paint a ceiling.





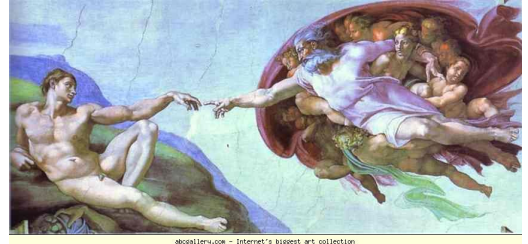
# CREATION OF ADAM

## Objectives

Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures. Students will be introduced to the art of Renaissance artist Michelangelo, and will recreate an excerpt of his *Creation of Adam* from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

## Materials

Butcher Paper or Card Stock  
Tempera Paint  
Pencil  
Tape



## Lesson

1. We will be learning about the art of Renaissance artist Michelangelo. This artist created some of the most memorable works of art from the Renaissance era, and is known particularly for his ability to draw, paint, and sculpt the human form.

**Renaissance** – a period of European history between the close of the Middle Ages and the rise of the modern world – from the 14<sup>th</sup> century through the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; it was a time of cultural rebirth, a revival of classical art, architecture, literature, and learning that originated in Italy and later spread throughout Europe.



2. Show images of the Sistine Chapel, and an image of *Creation of Adam*. Then show him the *excerpt* from the *Creation of Adam*
3. Our art project will be to recreate an excerpt of Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*.
4. Follow the Instructions *How to Draw The Creation of Adam*. Use the complete paper to draw.
5. Again, in order to get a sense for how Michelangelo worked while painting the Sistine Chapel, we will be taping our drawings to the bottom of our table and painting them as if the drawings were on the ceiling of the chapel.

Begin by mixing your skin color. Use lots of red and a little yellow. You can even add a little blue to give the paint a grayish tone. Begin painting.