

# WONDERING CREATIVELY

Stephanie Burke, Art and Soul

## Lesson Overview:

Virtually every one of us is creative as a child, but as we grow older we often lose a sense of that wonder and freedom that comes with creativity. We begin to judge our creative efforts, seeing them more as artistic competition rather than a Divine Invitation to experience AND express the Holy in a new way. In this session we will re-imagine the concept of creativity, and through hands-on explorations, rediscover God's creative presence and vision for our lives.

## Learning Outcomes:

1. Participants will rediscover/redefine the presence/wonder of creativity in their life.
2. Participants will identify/explore steps to re-embrace creativity in their lives.

## Materials:

- Opening video invitation
- PowerPoint images
- Bulletin Board Paper
- Markers/Crayons
- Hand out sheets
- Blocks of clay AND/OR Live Worship Art Video Clip

## Lesson:

1. **STEP UP:** *(video enhanced opening lecture/invitation)*

### THE DIVINE INVITATION

As children, we were inherently creative. Crayons, chalk, yarn, Legos, dolls, dress up clothes... virtually everything placed in front of us nourished and fed our

creative nature. Everyone played in the sandbox, every child dug deep into the Play dough. But as we grow older, we start to divide people into two camps: Those who are creative... and the *rest* of us.

It's easy to spot the Creatives. They're the artists, the musicians, writers, actors, sculptors, dancers, chefs. The Non-Creatives are everyone else - accountants, electricians, scientists, stay-at-home parents, auto mechanics, clerks, telemarketers, I.T. specialists, waiters, pilots, dentists... When does this magic division happen? At what age do we suddenly see "creativity" as a talent we either fully do or do NOT have?

Creativity is an experience - a life-long invitation to join hands with the Holy Spirit to experience the divine. When we open ourselves to our creativity, we open ourselves to our Creator. Julia Cameron, author of *THE ARTIST'S WAY*, named a literary work of genius, offers these principles.

(POWERPOINT IMAGE 1)

1. Creativity is the natural order of life. The very existence of the universe and everything in it is the result of pure creativity.

2. There is an underlying, in-dwelling creative force infusing all of life - including ourselves.

3. We are, ourselves, creations. And we are meant to continue creativity by being creative ourselves.

4. Creativity is God's gift to us. Using our creativity is our gift back to God.

5. Our creative dreams and yearnings come from a divine source. AS WE MOVE CLOSER TO OUR CREATIVE DREAMS, WE MOVE CLOSER TO OUR DIVINE CREATOR.

God is an artist. So are we. Because we are made in the image of God, our creativity and faith are intertwined. To embrace and enjoy a creative life, we need to be free to experience Holy inspiration and release our inhibitions and fears.

## **2. JUMP IN:**

### **TAKING STOCK**

On paper tacked around the walls or laid out on floor/tables and using the markers or crayons, draw a simple example of something creative you enjoyed as a child. Was it writing? Painting? Dancing? Drawing? How did it make you feel then? Envision yourself doing it now as an adult. If you still enjoy this activity, how does it feel? If you don't, why not? What would happen if you began again? List any fears, joys, inhibitions, etc...

To understand our relationship to God's creativity, let's start at the very beginning - **CREATION**. (*If group is large, divide into small groups of 6-8*)

### THE CREATION

\*Read Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:19-20. (*PP Image 2*)

\*How were we created?

\* What was the foundation/model for humanity's creation?

\*Describe the events of Genesis 2:19 as if you were in Adam's place.

\*What do you think naming the animals required of Adam?

\*When have you felt you were in close communion with God?

\*How, or is, creativity part of your relationship with God?

Creativity is part of our nature; we have been gifted with the ability to create, with the divine gift of imagination. When we use our imagination we put into play our experiences, personality, abilities and talents - all the divine ingredients that go into making each of us. ***Our creativity is a link to the living God; a Holy invitation to experience the very presence of the Divine on this side of heaven.***

### HEART'S ROOM

**(guided meditation - from The Creative Life)**

*(PP Image 3)*

*"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,*

*I will come in and eat with him and he with me."* Revelation 3:20

After you read this verse, close your eyes, relax into your chair and breath deep. As you breathe in, feel your breath going into your shoulders and arms... allowing tension to be released. Breathe in again, and think of the verse. Imagine that the door is the door to the room of your heart. Now picture your heart's door.

- What does it look like? Is it made of wood? Does it have a latch? Is it a screen porch door? Maybe a metal door with a peephole?
- What does it feel like to the touch?
- What does it feel like to approach the door from the outside?
- Now open the door and describe the room. What are the colors and textures?
- Is Jesus there? If so, is he comfortable? How has he made himself at home?

(Write down any thoughts and feelings from the meditation on the hand out sheet)

If Jesus lives in our hearts, then the creative spark is there! With Christ living in our hearts we have divine access to abundant creativity. We do not create out of nothing as God does. Our creative dreams and longings do come from a divine source, not from the human ego. Instead we are grafted into him and our creativity comes from him and produces eternal fruit.

### **3. DIVE DEEP**

Originality, creativity and imagination can be intimidating words. Webster's defines creativity as "having or showing the power to produce original work." If to be creative, I have to live up to "having the power to produce original work", then it can be easy to feel like a completely unimaginative and talentless hack. But what if we open ourselves to thinking of creativity as *ACCESS* to a new thought or idea that leads to an new expression? And if that thought comes from the Holy Spirit, then the expression reveals the Lord in a new way. That expression also includes an action by us that reveals something about us, about our experience or feelings. In this new expression, we join hands with the Holy Spirit to bring something new into the world; a new glimpse into the Living Divine that may have not only an eternal impact on us but on someone else as well.

## CREATIVE TIMELINE

In light of this different definition of creativity, consider the times in your life in which God gave you a new thought or new direction and you acted on it. When was a time someone affirmed your creativity? When were you proud of an idea you had? Did you *act* on the idea? Using the worksheet, make a timeline of your creative moments.

- ❖ Do you see creative threads through your timeline?
- ❖ Where have those threads led you?
- ❖ What do those creative moments tell you about God? About you?
- ❖ How has God worked creatively in your life?
- ❖ How is God reaching out to you now to be creative *NOW*?
- ❖ What simple, first step can you take to accept this invitation?
- ❖ Can you think of any resources God has put in place for you? (*i.e. classes, mentors, other students of the arts, etc...*)

*(choose one, or both, of the following before closing)*

## LIVING VESSEL/CLAY EXPERIENCE

Each participant gets a small piece of clay. Play calm and soothing music of your choice as the meditation is led, asking God to use us as creative vessels, to fill us with Divine Imagination while participants work their clay into whatever shape of bowl/vessel they choose. Participants will take these home to serve as a reminder to stay open and expectant of God's creative work for and in their life.

## LIVE WORSHIP ART VIDEO

Show the following video of a live worship painting as an invitation to look for God in new and creative ways/recognize God is in our lives in ways we don't often see at first.

<http://www.artandsoul.pro>

**CLOSING** : *(from THE ARTIST'S WAY) read together*

*(PP IMAGES 4+)*

*O Great Creator,*

*We gather together in your name*

*That we may be of greater service to you and to each other*

*We offer ourselves to you as instruments.*

*We surrender to you our old fears*

*We open ourselves to your creativity in our lives.*

*Trusting you will lead us.*

*We know you created us - that creativity is your nature and our own.*

*We ask you to unfold in our lives*

*According to your plan, not our low self-worth.*

*Help us to believe that it is not too late*

*That we are not too small or too flawed*

*To be healed~*

*By you and through each other.*

*Help us to create as an act of worship to you.*

*~Julia Cameron*

### **AUTHOR'S BIO:**

Having worked as a youth director, curriculum writer, drama director and Disney pirate, Stephanie Burke now travels bringing large-scale live art to churches, corporations and other events across the country. With past clients including politicians, priests, prisoners and prostitutes, her work hangs in both private and public collections, including one small Baltimore drug rehab house. She lives in a paint-splattered house in Charlotte, N.C. with her understanding husband and two surprisingly well adjusted offspring.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

Julia Cameron, *The Artist's Way* (Penguin Putnam Inc.)

Julia Cameron, *Heart Steps: Prayers and Declarations for a Creative Life* (Penguin Putnam Inc.)

Alice Bass, *The Creative Life: A Workbook for Unearthing the Christian Imagination* (Intervarsity Press)

Troy Brosink, *Drawn In: A Creative Process for Artists, Activists, and Jesus Followers* (Paraclete)

Madeline L'Engle, *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art* (Harold Shaw Publishers)



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