

WHAT NORTHSIDE TEACHES STUDENTS ABOUT THE FINE ARTS

The fine arts include a wide variety of fields which students explore and in which they may choose to participate. A major area is vocal and instrumental music, performed as solos, small ensembles, and larger groups. This is such an important area that we have devoted a separate paper to music. The fine arts also include speech: dramatic interpretation, declamation, duet acting, humorous interpretation, oral interpretation of poetry, religious reading, choric speaking, original persuasive oratory, expository preaching, evangelistic preaching, topical preaching, and Bible teaching. Forensics (debate, in several formats) is a very specialized form of speech competition. Drama is a powerful component of a complete fine arts program. The fine arts likewise include all kinds of drawing and painting, such as monochromatic and polychromatic drawing, oil painting, watercolor, mixed media, and acrylics. Photography competition continues to expand: black and white, both roll film and digital. Crafts, such as textiles, woodworking, and pottery, round out this wonderfully rich area of student interest.

Life skills

The fine arts provide personal enjoyment for a lifetime. Many adults play instruments and sing in choirs for personal enjoyment and ministry. These skills make it possible to much more fully enjoy the performances and ministries of others, being aware of the intense and lengthy private practice that precedes and underlies excellent public presentation. Since God is a God of music and speech and beauty in colorful composition, pursuit of the fine arts aids the Christian in becoming more like his God.

Ministry skills

The fine arts have direct application to many ministry skills. In ministry we often think of music, but reviewing the speech areas listed above will demonstrate their immediate usefulness in the local church. Since few adults have opportunity or time to initiate developing these arts, it is crucial to introduce young people to them. We therefore give music and art instruction to every elementary student from first through sixth grade. We have seen many of our young people (some of whom are adults with children of their own) actively putting to use the fine arts instruction we have provided in Northside Christian School.

Personal skills

First, becoming proficient in any of the fine arts requires self-discipline, a vital ingredient for success in any area of life and service. Young people have to set priorities and forego other enjoyable activities if they are to become skilled in their area of choice. Second, they must learn to submit to the authority of the teacher, since often his instruction will not seem logical or will not produce immediate results. Third, they must learn the life skill of delayed gratification. Doing it right in private for many years is prerequisite for finally doing it right in public. Practicing for hours is the indispensable requirement for performing for a moment. Fourth, in any group practices and performances, they must learn to play or sing or act or speak within the boundaries of what is best for the group. This is fundamental to becoming a good spouse, a good parent, or a good church member.

Northside Christian School, with much prayer and deliberate care, employs faculty and selects curricular materials with the specific purpose of teaching the fine arts from this Biblical perspective.