



## Creating Contemporary Illuminated Choir Pages Inspired by the Renaissance

**Grade level:** 6-8

### **Background:**

During the Renaissance, when Luca della Robbia's Cantoria would have hung in Florence Cathedral, intricate hand-made illuminated choir books were featured inside of churches. The pages from the choir books featured hand-painted, highly detailed images that reflected the content of the songs, and they were referred to as "illuminated" because they were embellished with gold and silver. In this lesson, students will learn about the history of illuminated manuscripts, and will create their own illuminated choir book page inspired by a song of their choice.

### **Essential Questions:**

1. How were illuminated manuscripts relevant as an artistic form during the Renaissance?
2. How can I incorporate the art historical tradition of illuminated manuscripts to be relevant to my contemporary life?

### **Objective:**

Students will create a well-crafted illuminated choir book page on 11x14 art board in which they illustrate the lyrics to a song of their choice.

### **Terms:**

- Illuminated manuscript (The word *manuscript* is derived from the Latin words *manus* (hand) and *scriptus*, from the verb *scriber* (to write). The word *illumination* comes from the Latin verb *illuminare* (to light up), which, in this context, describes the glow created by the radiant colors of the illustrations, especially gold and silver.

### **Materials:**

- Sketchbook
- Pencils
- 11x14 art board
- Lyrics to a song (printed out or written)
- Glue
- Collage materials

- Colored pencils, paint, or markers
- Silver and gold puff paint (or paint pens)

**Lesson:**

Day 1-2:

- Introduce the students to images of illuminated choir books, and have them investigate them visually. (There is one featured in the *Joyful Noise* exhibition you may want to have them see at the museum, *Francesco di Antonio del Chierico (Italian, 1433-1484)*)
- Take time to discuss the history of illuminated manuscripts. (There are several links to historical resource sites provided).
- Ask the students to think about a song that they like, and have them bring in the lyrics to that song for the next class meeting (printed or written).

Day 3-4:

- The students will be creating their own illuminated choir book pages for the song lyrics that they chose.
- First, the students will take a few minutes to think about their lyrics, and use their sketchbook to brainstorm imagery that they think illustrates their songs.
- When the students are ready to make their page, they can glue their lyrics onto their board and proceed to design their borders. (They may want to draw, paint, or collage).
- When the designs are finished, the students can use silver or gold puff paint or paint pens to “illuminate” their pages.

**Assessment:**

Formative assessment will occur through classroom discussion and verbal feedback during studio time. Summative assessment can be recorded by rubric that can be adjusted according to teacher discretion.

Since this lesson is heavily centered on art history, you may want to include a quiz with questions about the history of illuminated manuscripts.

| Needs Improvement   | Good   | Exemplary   |
|---|--|---|
| Student does not take part in discussion/ is overly distracting or misbehaved | Student is active during discussion/contributes at least one comment | Student contributes thoughtfully and productively in discussion |
| Student chooses not to complete the artwork and                               | Student completes all the criteria of the artwork                    | Student produces a well-crafted and creatively                  |

|                               |            |                   |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| makes no effort to make it up | assignment | developed artwork |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------------|

**Modifications/Extensions:**

To delve deeper into the project, you could have the students write a critical thinking response in their sketchbooks after they finish their project. Some questions to consider might be: “Why do you think your song is worthy of being illuminated?” “Does your song reflect you as an individual? If so, how?” “Explain how your visual illustrations relate to the song you chose.” “Compare and contrast the illuminated manuscripts that our class made to those in the Renaissance. How does time period affect the art we make?”

Another way to integrate a writing element into this lesson would be to have the students write their own poems to make into an illuminated manuscript rather than having them choose a song. While the incorporation of a song reflects the importance of music in this particular topic, there are other ways in which music could be emphasized.

**Standards:**

**ELACC6RL4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

**ELACC6SL1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**ELACC6SL2:** Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

**ELACC7RL4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

**ELACC7SL1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues,

building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**ELACC7SL5:** Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.

**ELACC8RL4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

**ELACC8SL1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**ELACC8SL5:** Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

**VA6MC.1** Engages in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas.

**VA6MC.3** Interprets how artists communicate meaning in their work.

**VA6MC.4** Engages in dialogue about his or her artwork and the artwork of others.

**VA6CU.1** Discovers how the creative process relates to art history.

**VA6CU.2** Investigates and discovers personal relationship to community, culture, and the world through making and studying art.

**VA6PR.1** Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes.

**VA6PR.2** Creates artwork reflecting a range of concepts, ideas, and subject matter.

**VA6PR.3** Incorporates an understanding of the language of art (elements and principles of design) to develop and organize own ideas, resolve specific visual arts problems, and create works of art.

**VA6C.1** Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.

**VA6C.2** Develops fluency in visual communication.

**VA7MC.3** Interprets how artists create and communicate meaning in and through their work.

**VA7MC.4** Participates in dialogue about his or her artwork and the artwork of others.

**VA7CU.1** Discovers how the creative process relates to art history.

**VA7CU.2** Investigates and discovers personal relationship to community, culture, and world through creating and studying art.

**VA7PR.1** Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes with care and craftsmanship.

**VA7PR.2** Creates artwork reflecting a range of concepts, ideas, and subject matter.

**VA7PR.3** Uses the elements and principles of design along with a variety of media, techniques and skills to produce two-dimensional and three-dimensional works of art.

**VA7PR.4** Keeps a visual/verbal sketchbook journal, consistently throughout the course, to collect, develop, and preserve ideas in order to produce works of art.

**VA7AR.3** Reflects and expands the use of visual language throughout the artistic process.

**VA7C.1** Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.

**VA7C.2** Develops fluency in visual communication.

**VA8MC.1** Engages in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas.

**VA8MC.2** Identifies and works to solve problems through authentic engagement (thinking, planning, and experimenting) with art methods and materials, exploring the nature of creativity.

**VA8MC.3** Demonstrates how artists create and communicate meaning in artworks.

**VA8CU.1** Discovers how the creative process relates to art history.

**VA8CU.2** Investigates and discovers personal relationship to community, culture, and world through making and studying art.

**VA8PR.1** Engages in art making process with care and craftsmanship.

**VA8PR.2** Creates artwork reflecting a range of concepts, ideas, subject matter.

**VA8PR.4** Keeps a visual/verbal sketchbook journal, consistently throughout the course, to collect, develop and preserve ideas in order to produce works of art.

**VA8AR.2** Reflects and expands the use of visual language throughout the artistic process.

**VA8C.1** Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.

**VA8C.2** Develops fluency in visual communication.