

# The Masterpiece

## TEACHING GUIDE





## UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF

# The Masterpiece

As with most children's books, the primary goal of *The Masterpiece* is to create a fun and engaging story that kids will love to hear and want to read.

But more than that, this story was written as a tool to help elementary school teachers introduce and discuss the subject of autism to their students in a way that is both understandable and relatable.

Ultimately, our goal is to encourage awareness, create understanding, and promote kindness toward all individuals.



The "One Big Canvas" book series is an initiative of the REED Foundation for Autism. The series will feature a growing number of titles, characters, and storylines centered on understanding, accepting, and demonstrating kindness to all.

[ReedFoundationForAutism.org/OneBigCanvas](http://ReedFoundationForAutism.org/OneBigCanvas)

# Vocabulary

Print and copy this page, and pass it out to each student before a reading of the book. When the vocabulary word is used, ask the students to circle the option that they believe is the correct definition.

## 1. Littered

Messy  
or  
Clean

## 2. Masterpiece

A great work of art  
or  
A sandwich

## 3. Continuous

Stopping quickly  
or  
Repeating

## 4. Vibrant

Bright and colorful  
or  
Dull and boring

## 5. Mood

A feeling or emotion  
or  
Colors

## 6. Theme

Numbers  
or  
A subject or topic

## 7. Tone

Attitude  
or  
Volume

## 8. Startling

Surprising  
or  
Whispering

## 9. Prepared

Hungry  
or  
Ready for something

## 10. Meshed

Working together  
or  
Sleeping late



# How to Run a Class Discussion

*The Masterpiece* seeks to introduce the subject of autism to children in a fun, creative way that makes it easier for them to recognize and understand. At the same time, the story weaves in a variety of themes to promote the importance of showing patience and kindness to all of their peers.

Use the following discussion topics to further your conversations and reinforce the lessons promoted in the story:

## TEACHING POINTS:

### WHAT IS AUTISM?

Autism is a “developmental disorder,” which means that it’s a condition that exists in the brain. People with autism may learn and understand things differently. They may react to things in ways we may not expect. But they are still capable of learning new things, having fun, feeling happy and sad, and being our friends.

### IS AUTISM THE SAME IN EVERYONE WHO HAS AUTISM?

No - autism can be very different in each person who has it. Some of our friends with autism are sensitive to light or sound. Some prefer not to look you in the eyes. Some talk a lot, and others won’t talk at all.

## CONVERSATIONS AND QUESTIONS:

When some of the brushes didn’t cooperate, do you think it’s because they are misbehaving or is there another reason entirely?

Why do you think the other brushes all painted circles along with Byron?

Was it okay that the other brushes all seemed a little scared when Lee started screaming?

How do you think Estelle felt after the other brushes offered her some paint?

*Note to Teachers: Try to incorporate words and concepts like “kindness”, “friendship”, “acceptance” and “understanding” into the conversation with students.*







# Create Your Own Masterpiece

Draw and color a picture of a way that you could be a good friend to all of your classmates.



# Classroom Activities

## COMMUNITY CANVAS

Use this activity to show how a masterpiece can be created when everyone in a community or classroom works together.

1. Set up a large sheet of paper or a canvas in your class.
2. Provide a variety of tools to choose from, including paints, markers, crayons, etc.
3. Send kids to the canvas either one at a time or in small groups.
4. Allow students to choose which art tools they would like to use, and give them a set amount of time to work on the canvas.
5. When finished, discuss the completed work, pointing out how different colors, styles and tools have come together to create a cohesive finished work. Make an analogy between this and their everyday life - how all kids in a class, no matter their size, shape, color, or capabilities, add to the fabric of their community.

## KINDNESS ROCKS

Do this fun activity to combine the artistic background from the story with creative ways kids can communicate and be kind to each other.

1. Collect light colored river rocks, at least one per student. Local garden stores or craft stores should be able to supply.
2. Give each student one rock, various colors of acrylic paints, brushes, smocks, and other related supplies.
3. With creative designs, have each student write a short, positive message on their rock, like "You're smart", or "You matter."
4. When all the rocks are done and dry, put them in a large, opaque bag, and mix them around. Let each student reach in, one at a time, and pick out a rock (if they choose their own, have them put the rock back and pick again).





# Official Masterpiece Crew Member

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Your Name

is a friend  
to everyone

