

Do the Art That's in Your Heart!

Curriculum / Program Guidelines

Dear Leaders and Participants,

Welcome! We are glad that you have discovered our *Do the Art That's in Your Heart* curriculum / program guidelines! This program has been designed to help you identify and do the art that's in your heart – in other words, to help you discover the things that you enjoy doing and develop your abilities in these areas! This program will also help you identify numerous benefits connected with doing what you love to do, and help you overcome any barriers or challenges that you may encounter when you do (or try to do) the art that's in your heart. May you experience much joy and success during this program – enjoy the adventure!

Do the Art That's in Your Heart team

SESSION 1: IDENTIFYING THE ART THAT'S IN YOUR HEART

Introduction. Welcome the students, and explain that the overall purpose of this program is to help people identify the “art that’s in their heart” (the activities that they enjoy doing); recognize the benefits of doing what they love to do; and realize how to overcome any challenges connected with doing the art that’s in their heart. Depending on the class size, you might want to have the students introduce themselves to the whole group and share a couple of their favorite things (e.g., favorite color, favorite movie, favorite thing to do on weekends, etc.); if the class size is large, you may choose to have the students introduce themselves to the people sitting in their immediate vicinity. Be sure to introduce yourself as well!

Defining what it means to “Do the Art That’s in Your Heart!” Explain to the students that we are going to discuss what it means to “do the art that’s in your heart.” Share that while there are many definitions of art, for our purposes let’s think of “art” as an object or activity that is pleasing and attractive or that somehow makes a positive contribution to the people who experience it and/or the person(s) who made it; generally, creating art also involves some degree of skill (which can be developed over time). And if something is “in your heart,” you care about it; it is near and dear to you, or special to you; it’s part of you. So if we put it all together, the “art that’s in your heart” are the activities and things that you love to do, and that somehow make the world a better or more beautiful place when you do them.

The art that’s in your heart can be big or small in nature – it can be anything from baking cookies or making greeting cards to playing a certain sport or running a business. It could even be as simple as smiling at people and waving hello when you see them!

Identifying the “art that’s in our heart” (individual activity). Have the students write “Do The Art That’s In Your Heart!” at the top of a piece of paper or on some kind of (electronic) document. Ask the students, “What kinds of activities do you like to do? What kinds of things make you happy?” Students may mention specific activities that they like to do such as painting, drawing, playing sports, reading, writing stories, exploring the Internet, traveling, talking with friends, listening to music, encouraging others, planning parties and activities, developing possible

business ideas, and so on. Have them write their responses on a piece of paper or on an electronic device.

Note: Sometimes students may think of something that they enjoy or that makes them happy such as “puppies” or “flowers” – encourage them to think of the action that they enjoy connected with the object, such as “playing with puppies” or “growing flowers.” It’s fine if the students mention something general like “looking at”, “thinking about”, or “being around” the particular object/activity that they mentioned – just try to help the students be a little more specific when possible about what they enjoy doing.

Sharing. Invite the students to share some of their responses with a fellow classmate, or with the class as a whole. Congratulate the students on identifying the art that’s in their heart!

Home Assignment. Tell the students that they are going to do the art that’s in their heart for homework (homefun)! Invite the students to pick one of the items on their list, and do that activity before the next class session (or other appropriate time frame). Have the students write 1-2 paragraphs describing what they did for the art that’s in their heart activity, and also explain how it made them feel to do the art that’s in their heart (e.g., satisfied, happy, motivated).

SESSION 2: BENEFITS OF DOING THE ART THAT'S IN YOUR HEART

Review. Welcome the students back, and have them take out the short writing response that they completed yesterday, describing the art that's in their heart that they did and how it made them feel to do the art that's in their heart. Invite the students to share what they wrote with a partner or small group.

New focus. Tell the students that today we are going to add to their "Do the Art That's in Your Heart" lists, and talk about the benefits of doing the art that's in their heart.

Adding to the "Do the Art That's in Your Heart" lists, and discussing the importance of joy. First, have the students take out the "Do the Art That's In Your Heart" list that they created yesterday, and ask them if there's anything else that they would like to add to the list. Encourage the students to think about other activities that they liked to do when they were younger, but maybe haven't done for a while. Also, ask them if there any activities that they would like to try that they haven't tried yet – add these to the list!

Explain to the students that it's important to recognize the things that bring us joy in our lives. When we experience joy, we feel better, physically and emotionally. We have more energy, and can work harder and longer at what we're doing. Joy is contagious – other people want to be around us when we are joyful, and we can make friends more easily. We can overcome the challenges of life more readily and experience less stress when we look at life through a joyful perspective.

Also explain to the students that it's important to have a number of different ways that we can bring joy into our lives. When we have a more complete idea of all the activities that bring us joy, then we can always find a way to connect with joy, even if our life circumstances change. For example, let's suppose that you really enjoy hiking in nature, but perhaps the weather is bad for a long time, or maybe you need to help take care of an elderly family member or babysit a younger sibling for a long period, and aren't able to go hiking. We can become frustrated or even depressed if we are not able to do something that we really enjoy for a long time, but if we are aware of other activities that we like to do, then we can spend our time doing those activities instead. Let's go back to the hiking example – if the weather is bad for a really long time, but you are aware

that you also enjoy cooking and writing stories, then you can spend your time on those indoor activities, and make sure that you keep bringing joy into your life!

Discussing other benefits connected with doing the art that's in our hearts.

While joy is a major benefit that we experience when we do the art that's in our heart, there are many other benefits that we can experience when we do things that we like to do. Ask the students, "In addition to joy, what are some of the other benefits that you experience when you do the art that's in your heart? What are some of the other positive things that happen when you do the art that's in your heart?" Students may have realized that doing the art that's in their hearts provides benefits such as:

- helps them make friends since it gives them a chance to connect with other people who like to do the same things that they do;
- provides a way for them to earn positive feedback/ receive compliments from other people;
- helps them develop self-esteem and self-confidence as their talents and abilities increase over time;
- creates positive memories that they can draw on in the future when they need to think about something positive;
- relieves stress and takes their minds off the pressures of daily living;
- develop skills and abilities that might help them earn income;
- and much, much more!

Write the students' answers on a board or on a large piece of paper – you may want to type the students' responses later and give them to the students as a handout during the next class session to remind them of the benefits of doing the art that's in their heart. Congratulate the students for contributing some great ideas!

Home Assignment. Have the students look at the list that they made of the different kinds of art that are in their heart, and select a different activity from the one that they chose yesterday. Then have the students do that activity tonight (or sometime before the next class session) for homework/homefun! Invite the students to write 1-2 paragraphs describing what kind of activity that they did, and how they benefited from the experience!

SESSION 3: OVERCOMING CHALLENGES CONNECTED WITH DOING THE ART THAT'S IN YOUR HEART

Review. Have the students take out the short writing response that they did yesterday, describing another type of art that's in their heart that they did and the benefits that they experienced by doing it. Invite the students to share their responses with a partner or in a small group.

New focus. Explain to the students that today we will be focusing on identifying and overcoming any challenges that they might experience when they try to do the art that's in their heart!

Identifying challenges connected with doing the art that's in our heart. Have the students take out their lists of the different kinds of art that are in their heart. Ask the students, "Have you ever encountered any challenges when you have tried to do the art that's in your heart? Or maybe there's a new activity that you would like to try – are there any challenges that you have been experiencing that are making it difficult for you to get started?" For example, perhaps the students have encountered some difficulties in the following areas:

- Finding enough time to do the art that's in their heart
- Finding a quiet place to concentrate
- Becoming frustrated because they didn't quite have the skill level to do what they wanted to do or didn't know exactly how to do what they were trying to do
- Didn't have enough money for supplies, equipment, lessons
- Lack of self-confidence; negative self-talk
- Lack of patience and/or perseverance; frustration
- Afraid that other people might make fun of them for trying a new activity, especially if they didn't do it well at first
- Finding other people who are interested in the same kind of activity to do the activity with
- Lack of transportation
- Availability of and/or access to the activity or its location

Write the challenges that the students have encountered on a board or a large piece of paper. Encourage the students to mention challenges of all sizes,

whether large or small; remind the students that other people have probably faced the same difficulties, and it's helpful to share the challenges that we are facing so that all of us can gain new insights and strategies for addressing these situations.

Brainstorming solutions for challenges. Select one of the challenges that many of the students seem to be facing, then write the words "Possible SOLUTIONS for [type of challenge]" on the board. Encourage the students to brainstorm a number of different ways that they can address the challenge that they are encountering. For example, perhaps the students are having difficulty finding enough time to do the art that's in their heart. Possible solutions might include: waking up earlier in the morning; spending less time doing certain activities like playing video games or talking on the phone; don't procrastinate; see if there are any other activities that they are involved in that it would be possible to stop doing (e.g., maybe they are involved in an afterschool club, sports activity, or other program that they don't enjoy doing any more); keep a time journal for a week and see if there are any areas where they are wasting time or could use their time more efficiently; and so on. Encourage the students to be creative in coming up with possible solutions!

If time allows, select a different challenge that many students seem to be facing, and brainstorm another set of practical and creative solutions!

Home Assignment. Tell the students to pick another challenge that they have been encountering when they do (or try to do) the art that's in their heart, and brainstorm a list of possible solutions for their particular situation!

SESSION 4: DEVELOPING GOALS CONNECTED WITH DOING THE ART THAT'S IN YOUR HEART

Review. Have the students take out their homework assignment from yesterday, in which they selected a challenge that they encounter when they do (or try to do) the art that's in their heart, and brainstormed possible solutions. Invite the students to share what they wrote with a partner or in a small group.

New focus. Tell the students that today we are going to put everything together that we've been learning, and focus on creating goals related to doing the art that's in their heart!

Creating goals connected with doing the art that's in our heart. Have the students select one of the activities on their "Do the Art That's In Your Heart" list that they want to spend more time doing or improve their skills in. Then have the students fill out the "Do the Art That's in Your Heart" Goal Sheet (included in this curriculum). Basically, the steps on the goal sheet include the following:

- Develop a specific, simple goal related to the art that's in their heart that they would like to achieve within a certain time frame (e.g., practice playing the guitar 20 minutes a day, two times per week for the next two weeks; or simply, find a place to sign up for dance lessons by the end of the month). Note: Students may find that they need to revise their goal along the way to make it more practical and achievable; there is a space on the form for revisions.
- Make a list of the benefits that they experience when they do this art that's in their heart – this will help provide motivation to keep going when they need encouragement!
- Describe a few challenges that they might experience when they do (or try to do) the art that's in their heart, along with strategies to overcome those challenges.
- Write down the date that they completed their goal [this section will be completed in the future after the students have achieved their goal].

Home Assignment. Tell the students that although this lesson may be the last lesson of the *Do the Art That's in Your Heart* curriculum, our desire is that the students will continue moving forward into a lifelong journey of doing the art

that's in their heart! Remind the students to hold on to the "Do The Art That's in Their Heart" goal sheet, and write down the date that they achieved their goal once they have accomplished it; encourage them to celebrate their success!

Tell the students that once they have celebrated accomplishing their first goal, they should take some time to think about their next goal. The students can choose to continue developing the same art that's in their heart that they selected for their first goal, or they may want to focus on developing another kind of art that's in their heart. Invite them to fill out another "Do the Art That's in Your Heart" goal sheet (distribute additional blank copies, or have them download the goal sheet, which is available online). Encourage the students to keep repeating the process in the future, and continue to participate in activities that they enjoy!

Also, encourage the students to consider finding an encouragement buddy or forming an encouragement support group. Explain to the students that it is important to be connected with other people who are also doing the art that's in their heart; these people don't necessarily need to be doing the same kinds of activities that the students are doing, but they should be spending time doing the activities that they enjoy. Encouragement groups or buddies can meet in person or over the phone on a regular basis (perhaps once a week, month, or quarter) to encourage each other to continue doing the art that's in their heart! The students can also spend time during these conversations brainstorming solutions to any challenges that they may be encountering when it comes to doing the art that's in their heart. Remind the students to share and celebrate their successes and the goals that they have accomplished!

Congratulations! Congratulate the students on finishing the *Do the Art That's in Your Heart* curriculum / program, and remind them to visit our website for additional information and inspiration: JumpIntoTheArts.com

**“Do the Art That’s in Your Heart”
Goal Sheet**

You are about to begin a wonderful adventure! Answer the questions below in the space provided, or on a separate piece of paper.

1. What is the art that’s in your heart? (Name something that you like to do that you will focus on participating in for a period of time].

2. What goal(s) do you have related to the art that’s in your heart? Describe a specific realistic goal that you have (keep it simple), and any particular time frames connected with this goal. For example, if the art in your heart is playing the guitar, you may want to watch a 30-minute guitar lesson online once a week and spend an additional 60 minutes practicing each week, for the next four weeks. Or maybe the art in your heart is watercolor painting – you may already know how to paint, but you need to buy new supplies; in that case, your goal could be to save up enough money and buy basic watercolor painting supplies by the end of the month.

2a. [Optional] Sometimes it is helpful or necessary to revise a goal along the way so that it is more practical for us to achieve. In that case, what is your revised goal? Write it in the space below, or on another “Do The Art That’s in Your Heart” goal sheet.

3. What are some of the benefits or positive things that you experience when you do this art that’s in your heart? This information can be very helpful to remember when you are tired or need motivation to continue doing the art that’s in your heart!

4. What are some possible challenges that you might encounter when you do the art that’s in your heart, and how will you overcome these challenges? Try to think of at least 2-3 strategies to overcome each challenge that you face.

5. Date that you accomplished your goal: _____ . Congratulations!

Spend some time thinking about your next goal, then fill out another “Do the Art that’s in Your Heart” goal sheet. You are making terrific progress!

For more information and inspiration connected with
doing the art that's in your heart, visit our website:

JumpIntoTheArts.com