



Dear Mom and Dad,

Today the Art Parents came in to introduce Claude Monet (1840-1926). He was an Impressionist painter, which means that he recorded impressions of what he saw using dabs of color. You can check out his page on the art enrichment website: [www.masterpieceofthemonth.org](http://www.masterpieceofthemonth.org).

If you go to a museum you may see that most of his paintings are scenes of water or nature. He liked the way the outdoors looked in different seasons, in different light. He liked the way colors reflected in the water so much that he fixed up a boat as a floating studio.

Monet's favorite model was named Camille. Claude and Camille fell in love, got married, and had a son named Jean. When Claude was 68, he began to go blind. This didn't stop him from painting. He continued to paint until he died in 1926 at the age of 86.

Monet had friends who were also painters. They were interested in how pretty objects looked when the sunlight reflected on them. A newspaperman called these artists "Impressionists." He came up with the name from Monet's painting *Impression: Sunrise*. The newspaperman did not like Impressionism. He thought it looked unfinished.

Often, Monet painted many pictures of the same things. He wanted to know how something would look in the different times of the day or different seasons of the year. He tried to make colors, shadows, and light in his paintings as real as possible. The exciting brush strokes and colors in Monet's paintings give the feeling of being right there at the moment he made the painting.

Monet loved his garden at Giverny, France. He spent the last ten years of his life painting scenes of his water garden there. He made over 250 paintings of his water garden— some over 40 feet wide!

Monet not only appreciated the beauty of nature, he also respected it. He educated himself on how to choose appropriate plants to support all the kinds of life in the pond: turtles, frogs, insects, and tiny plants.

For the same reason, we learned that we must protect our own waterways. Kids can go with an adult to pick up litter. Adults should avoid chemicals on their lawns and should not flush medications down the toilet (everything ends up in our waterways). We all depend on our water systems!