

Pierre August Renoir

1. Discuss: (5 min) Do you like to draw trees or flowers, or oceans or mountains? Lots of artists have dedicated their art to trying to capture the wonders of nature. What's your favorite thing to draw from nature?

2. Read: (10 min) Facts about Renoir, or a book from the school library that you think is appropriate.

3. Show the art piece: (5 min) "Girl With A Watering Can." Why do you think Renoir chose this subject for his painting? I think he wanted to save forever the feeling of this beautiful morning among the flowers. Look how he just used little daubs of paint. This style of painting is called Impressionism, because the artist is just trying to capture the "impression" of that moment in time. (Often you can go online in the classroom. Show them www.masterpieceofthemoth.org under Renoir for other Impressionist paintings to illustrate the "moments in time" idea).

The Impressionists often used nature in their paintings, and you can imagine why. Have you ever gotten to dig on the beach, climb a big hill, or play in the sunlight of the first warm day of Spring? Then you can appreciate how Renoir wanted to capture those wonderful moments in nature. The glint of sunlight on the water, all the details on one little flower—isn't our environment beautiful? That's why we're all working hard to protect the environment. We need it to live. But also, we want to preserve all its beauty.

4. Art Project: (30 min) Let's try to help nature a little. In my hand is something that has the potential to be taller than this school, and could be the home to lots of other creatures. That's right, it's a seed for a tree (or whatever you want to use.) Plant the seeds—either in little cups, or egg carton sections. Follow directions on the seed packet. You can leave them to grow at school if possible, or send them home in baggies.

If time allows: Follow the Impressionist's example, and paint or draw your impression of a tree or landscape. Maybe capture a moment in time, like climbing the tree or a bird building a nest? Remember, it doesn't have to look perfect, it's just an Impression.

Conclusion: (5 min) When you go outside today, take a second to appreciate the world around you, and think of ways you can help keep it clean and beautiful.