Art and Activity Ideas

This painting shows us Van Gogh’s bedroom. The room is simply furnished, except for the artist’s own paintings hanging on the walls. By depicting a personal space, Van Gogh essentially created a portrait of himself.

My Room

- Describe Van Gogh's bedroom. What objects are in the room? How many beds, chairs, tables, doors, and paintings are in the room? What do these objects tell us about Van Gogh?

- As a homework assignment, have your students sketch their bedrooms.

- How does the room make you feel? What objects are kept there? What does your bedroom say about you?

- Make a shoebox diorama of your bedroom. Include items that show your interests and hobbies. Display the boxes around the classroom and try to match each with its maker.

- In the museum, students can draw pictures of their bedroom.

Illinois State Goals: 4, 25, 26 (see p. 43)

Exploring Paint

- Van Gogh is famous for thickly applying colorful paint to his canvases. The thick brushstrokes appear to recreate materials and textures in a realistic manner.

- Have students explore how it feels to use paint of various thicknesses. Students can use tempera paint straight out of the bottle, mixed with water, and mixed with flour.

- Have students also experiment using an assortment of tools to apply the paint. Try various paintbrushes, plastic utensils, hands, and plastic bags with the corner cut off. Which tools work best with each of these paints?

- Using their favorite thickness of paint, have students paint a picture.

- Encourage students to decorate their bedroom walls at home with their paintings like Van Gogh did.

Illinois State Goals: 11, 25, 26
What's in your bedroom?