

## INTRODUCING ART

### LEONARDO DA VINCI

1. Leonardo was born in Italy in 1452. As a child he lived in the castle of Vinci and that is why his last name is Vinci.
2. His father was a lawyer and his mother a peasant girl. Leonardo was a handsome boy with long curls that fell below his waist. He had an excellent memory and enjoyed learning. He asked many questions that his teachers were unable to answer.
3. He was a happy, generous and well-liked person.
4. Because Leonardo loved to draw, his father apprenticed him to the master painter Verrocchio. One day he was asked to paint an angel head on one of the master's paintings. A judge pronounced the angel as the most beautiful part of the picture. This made Verrocchio angry. It is said he burned his brushes, his palette and paints, and said he would never paint again.
5. Leonardo was an artist, an engineer, a scientist-inventor, an architect, and a musician. He invented such things as a flying machine and a war tank.
6. His most famous painting "The Last Supper" is a fresco which has been painted on the walls of a church dining hall. Leonardo tried to use a new way to paint a fresco which did not work. Moisture formed between the wall and the paint causing the paint to peel from the wall. It is presently being restored.
7. Leonardo perfected the use of linear perspective in his painting of "The Last Supper". Notice all lines in the painting meet at the Christ figure's head. This is called one-point perspective.
8. Although Leonardo and Michelangelo lived at the same period of time, they were not friends and often became jealous of each other's abilities.

### Title: "The Mona Lisa"

1. The "Mona Lisa" is a portrait of a lady which Leonardo painted during his stay in Florence. A song has been written about the lady in this painting. She is considered a mysterious woman. Display the painting on a wall. Have the children walk by her looking only at her eyes. Ask them what they notice about the eyes. Hint: The eyes seem to follow you about the room no matter where you stand. If you can get a copy of the song to play, ask the children if the words to the song are appropriate for the painting. Why?
2. Mona Lisa is smiling. Mona Lisa means my Lisa in English. She was the wife of a Florentine gentleman. While she sat for the painting Leonardo had flowers strewn about, animals for her to pet, beautiful music for her to listen to, and clowns to make her laugh. He never sold the painting but took it to France with him during his last 3 years of life. Why do you think this painting meant so much to Leonardo. What do you think her smile is about? A joke Leonardo just told as she sat for him? A secret thought of something nice that happened to her - or will happen to her? A friend that she has thought of? Ask the children to volunteer reasons why she is smiling.
3. What is character? Hint: Two ways to think of character. Is she a character? What type of character does she have? What do you think Mona Lisa's character is like? Would she be a good friend?
4. Bring in a variety of items the children might think Mona Lisa would like for presents. Have each child pick something to give her and tell why they think Mona Lisa would like it or not like it.
5. What colors are used in this painting? What are the focal point colors? What colors are repeated? Mona Lisa is seated in a marble chair, the cloth around her body is arranged in graceful folds. Her hair is very natural. Leonardo was known for his expertise in painting hair. Ask the children about her hair. Mention the "texture" of the hair. Is it real texture or visual texture?
6. What are Mona Lisa's hands like. Ask the children to fold their hands as Mona Lisa has her hands. What kind of work does she do? Mention that people who do hard manual labor with their hands often have rough looking skin. Does Mona Lisa work hard? Why? Why not?
7. Leonardo da Vinci spent four years working on this very small portrait, twice the amount of time he worked on "The Last Supper", which is very very big covering an entire wall. Why do you think he spent so long on this little painting which measures 18 7/8" x 12 7/8".
9. Francis I, King of France invited him to live at his castle when Leonardo was very old. Leonardo sold the painting to him for \$9000, a very high price for those days. It hangs in The Louvre today.