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The INK GARDEN of BROTHER THEOPHANE

Activity & Discussion Guide

Developed by Charlesbridge
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Brother Theophane isn't like the other monks. He can't help but stare out the window and daydream. Banished from the copying room for his playfulness and curiosity, Theophane discovers a way to make colorful inks that capture the glory of nature. Soon his simple, brown world becomes one of beauty—and books become works of art.

Medieval Science & Math—Make Your Own Ink

Ingredients

- ½ cup ripe berries (the color of your ink will depend on what berries you use. Blueberries will give you a beautiful purple ink).
- ½ teaspoon vinegar
- ½ teaspoon salt

You will need

- Wooden spoon
- Strainer
- Baby food jar
- Bowl

1. Fill the strainer with the berries and hold it over a bowl.
2. Using the rounded back of a wooden spoon, crush the berries against the strainer so that the berry juice strains into the bowl.
3. Add the salt and vinegar to the berry juice. The vinegar helps the ink to retain its color and the salt keeps it from getting moldy.
4. If the berry ink is too thick, add a tablespoon of water.
5. Store in baby food jar.
6. Only make a small amount of berry ink at a time. When not in use, keep it tightly covered.







This recipe can be found at www.easyfunschool.com. Find recipes for other inks using natural ingredients at www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/activities/3205_vinland.html and www.pioneerthinking.com.

Use your homemade inks to color the picture of Brother Theophane on the other side of this page.








Discuss *The Ink Garden of Brother Theophane*

-  Before reading the book, show students the cover of the book. Ask them what they think this book is about. Who is the man on the cover? What is he doing?
-  Read the first page of the story out loud. Ask students where and when the story takes place. Who do they think the holy men are and what do they do? Can students make inferences from the illustrations?
-  From what students have heard on the first page, ask them what they know about Brother Theophane.
-  After reading the whole story together, ask students if they like Brother Theophane. By a show of hands, ask students if they think they are like Brother Theophane, or more like the other monks.
-  Ask students why they think Brother Theophane was kicked out of the monks' copying room. Was he bad?
-  Ask students if they ever feel like doodling pictures or writing in the margins of their homework. What do they draw or write? What inspires them?

Activities for *The Ink Garden of Brother Theophane*

-  While Brother Theophane was supposed to be copying books, he was distracted by the views outside his window. He was inspired by nature to embellish his work. Assign a copying project to students and ask them to illuminate their work with drawings and poems about something that inspires them: nature, friends, dreams, etc.
-  *The Ink Garden of Brother Theophane* takes place in the mountains of Mourne in Northern Ireland. Show students a map of Ireland and ask them to locate the mountains. Assign students a research project to find out more about the area and its history.
-  Brother Theophane and the monks copied the Bible and other scholarly works for preservation. Their colorful lettering and drawings are called "illuminations." Assign students to research more about illuminated manuscripts. Have them illuminate their research papers.



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When C.M. Millen visits the ruins of a medieval monastery, she asks herself, “Who walked on these stones? Who touched these walls?” and wonders what paths their lives ultimately took. So often, as with Brother Theophane, our destiny is not what we have planned. C. M. Millen is the author of *Blue Bowl Down*, *The Low-Down Laundry Line Blues*, and *A Symphony for the Sheep*. She lives with her family in Toledo, Ohio, but visits her ancestral home in County Sligo, Ireland, as often as she can.



llustrator

Andrea Wisnewski would love a garden like Brother Theophane’s. When she was a child, she picked flowers from her neighbors’ gardens, much to her mother’s dismay. Today she is an avid gardener and the author and illustrator of *A Cottage Garden Alphabet* and *Little Red Riding Hood*. Andrea begins each illustration by drawing a design and cutting it from paper. She then has the papercut design made into a plate, which she prints on a handmade press. Finally she adds color to the print with watercolor paint. Andrea lives with her family in Storrs, Connecticut.