

## Art and Ethics

### **Objective**

What's the connection between self expression and ethics? Could adolescents' natural need to express themselves and to explore self-expression (through music, visual arts and other forms) be a way to encourage more thinking about "what's right?"

### **Audience, Timing, & Preparation**

**Audience:** Students

**Timing:** Long-term project

**Preparation:** Be prepared to allow students to discover what speaks to them (*see, NOTE*). Provide your own "snapshot of what speaks to you" as a model. Collect examples to use with future audiences.

### **Activity**

Students need to share a piece of artwork with their group. The assignment is: "Present a snapshot of artwork that 'speaks to you' about one or more of the ethical values of our school" (*see, NOTE*)

Once students understand the kinds of art you want them to explore, remind them of the assignment: "Present a snapshot

## Driver and Connector

of artwork that 'speaks to you' about one or more of the ethical values of our school. Your snap shot can be a stanza, scene, segment, or any other excerpt that demonstrates why you chose it." Ask students to prepare responses to these questions:

- *How did you discover this art?*
- *Do you think this art speaks to very few or lots of people your age? Why or why not?*
- *Which core ethical values does this artwork represent to you, and why?*
- *Does this artwork remind you about anything from your own life, or inspire your hopes and dreams? Explain.*
- *If you could talk to this artist, what questions would you ask and what would you want to say?*

### **Reflection**

Return for updates on artwork from time to time – do responses to the above questions change over time?

### **When to Use**

You may need to provide time to study art generally first, but once underway this activity could be used to keep the teacher updated on art trends and student interests periodically across the year.

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## **Note**

Students may need some time to learn or think about/explore what to share. As a first step, talk to your students about what “counts” as art, or what they consider “art”, if the broad definition is “any form of expression that is meaningful.” This is an opportunity to find out what art forms your students are engaging with (if any) to make sense of the world and their lives. If they can’t think of any “artwork” that “speaks to them”, take your time in helping them to explore and connect with human kind through the arts! Encourage them to consider a Facebook Photo, a YouTube excerpt, art from an online gallery, an acceptable “graphic novel” excerpt (*Maus* by Art Spiegelman is an example) or any form of “traditional art” like music, paintings, literature etc.