

PAINTING WITH FLOWERS

Instead of throwing away your bouquet pick off some of the flower petals and crush them between your thumb and forefinger. Rub the crushed, juicy petals on a sheet of paper. God's color flows from the crushed petals onto the paper. Some of the best flowers are iris, coreopsis, roses, cosmos, hibiscus and especially lilies of all colors. If you are serving groups of children call almost any florist and ask what day they throw away their old flowers. I have never known a florist to turn down a request from anyone working with children, their own or the children of others.

As in all things with children the fun is less in the end product and more in the doing. Allow each child to make three or four flower paintings...experimenting with the colors and the juiciness of the flowers. Allow the papers to dry for a day or two and then fold them in half. On the outside of each card write "Thank You" _____, then on the inside "for being _____". Then give the children a list of positive Character qualities...patient, kind, forgiving, generous, loyal, humorous etc. They choose one of the character qualities and print it on the inside of the card, then on the outside they choose someone who has that quality to send the card too.

This activity is great for all children but especially good for the children of divorce as it helps them keep in touch with the adults around them. It helps them see with their hearts instead of their eyes **and it helps them focus on the positive instead of the negative**. To keep children busy ask them to make you a box of stationary...one or two strokes of color across the top of the page and write Thank You across the top or leave it blank. The best way to get them started is to let them watch you do one. Children learn best by watching us.

The Bible verse we have chosen for this activity is Isaiah 53:5: "He was crushed (bruised) for our iniquities." Seeing the flower crushed and having it's color flow into the paper helps children understand Christ's suffering on our behalf. It also helps them understand that his life can flow into ours.

A Russian tradition I have come to love is that no one eats unless they bring the cook a flower (even a twig or bit of grass). Try keeping a small glass or vase on your table and if people want to eat they put something in it reminding them of the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifices (service) of those who love them. It is easy for the children of divorce to forget the love people have for them because of the pain they are experiencing. **Paint with flowers, they are important.**