

# Tips for making art in Friendship Groups



1. **Allow for choice:** Whenever possible, allow choice of materials and techniques.
2. **Too many choices** can be overwhelming. Provide options, but keep a balance.
3. **Model:** Demonstrate how to carry out a task—several times, if that helps.
4. **Hand-over-hand technique:** Don't jump in to help with a difficult task immediately, but if help is asked for, use the hand-over-hand technique, placing your hand over your friend's hand to execute the task together.
5. **Be patient:** Allow time to respond.
6. **It's about process, not product:** It is not the end product that is so important but the process of doing it together. Nurture a sense of exploration vs. a perfect outcome.
7. **Cooperation:** Do group projects, and then share them with others.
8. **Consider your space:** Make sure the project and that it can be physically accessed by all.
9. **Adapt tools:**
  - Paintbrushes: Adapt by building up the handle with foam or tape, or by attaching a Velcro strap which can then be looped around the hand.
  - Palettes: Use plastic bowls that can easily be held.
  - Paper: Tape or clip paper to the table for more stability.
10. **Avoid** toxic materials.
11. **Undercover Artists:** Are there artists-in-hiding among the volunteers in your group? Find out, and ask them to become involved, perhaps even coordinating art projects for your group.
12. **Involve the congregation:** Share the art you've created with others in the church. And ask them to support you by providing resources—by purchasing brushes, by raiding kitchen cabinets for plastic bowls for painting, by sharing their artistic expertise.
13. **Explore online resources** for ideas and inspiration.
  - The National Institute of Art and Disability ([www.niadart.org](http://www.niadart.org)) provides an art program for people with developmental disabilities that promotes creative expression, independence, dignity and community integration. Check out their online gallery for inspiration.
  - VSA Arts ([www.vsarts.org](http://www.vsarts.org)) seeks to create a society where people with disabilities can learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts. Find your local affiliate on their website.
  - Kinder Art ([www.kinderart.com/special](http://www.kinderart.com/special)) This section of the Kinder Art site contains projects and techniques that work especially well for children and adults with disabilities. Adapt projects and materials to suit the ages and abilities represented in your group.
14. **Enthusiasm is contagious!**