



EVERSON MUSEUM OF ART

EDUCATOR PACKET

***Reynolds Unwrapped:
The Cartoon Art of
Dan Reynolds***

MARCH 12 – JULY 10, 2011

INTRODUCTION

In 1989, Dan Reynolds began drawing cartoons when he was 30. As a youth center instructor, Reynolds was surrounded by youthful energy and creative minds. He was an avid follower of popular cartoons of the time, such as Gary Larson's *Far Side* and Bill Watterson's *Calvin and Hobbes*. A native of Brewerton, New York, Reynolds was inspired by his Central New York surroundings, a place where snow is abundant and cows can be found just minutes from anywhere. From the beginning, Reynolds has used farm animals as messengers of humor, particularly cows, pigs and chickens, a series that was immediately accepted by "Reader's Digest" in 1989. A new cartoon has appeared in every issue since then. Reynolds cartoons have also appeared in thematic *Reynolds Unwrapped* book compilations featuring everything from sports to holiday special editions. American Greetings and Recycled Greeting Cards also feature Reynolds cartoons on greeting cards for every occasion.

In 2008, Reynolds was diagnosed with testicular cancer and subsequently received months of chemotherapy. While he was in treatment, he began drawing cartoons about cancer and his personal experience which he found was shared by his fellow patients. He shared the cartoons with the staff and patients at the facility and discovered the power of art to bring humor to an otherwise humorless situation.

Lessons

Lesson 1 Unwrap Your Imagination

Lesson: Unwrap Your Imagination

Using the exhibition *Reynolds Unwrapped: The Cartoon Art of Dan Reynolds* as inspiration, students will explore a variety of themes and create their own cartoon art.

Goals:

- To explore and understand the cartoon art of Dan Reynolds, through viewing his work and discussion
- To identify themes present in the cartoon art of Dan Reynolds
- To transfer these themes to students' own cartoon art through their personal experience and imagination
- To strengthen students' ability to tell a succinct story through images and concise wording

Required Materials:

- Pencil and paper
- Thin black marker
- Colored pencil, crayon, markers, or Watercolor or acrylic paint & brushes
- *Optional:* Poster board for mounting finished cartoons

About the Artist:

From the artist's website (<http://www.reynoldsunwrapped.com/biographypg.htm>):

Dan began drawing cartoons in December of 1989. He draws and eats left-handed. He plays ping pong and pool left-handed. He throws, kicks and bats right-handed. He cuts and runs with scissors right-handed. Dan is what handedness experts call ambi-lateral. No, not ambidextrous, but ambi-lateral. Why is this important? I have no idea, but everything has a reason even if we don't know what that reason is....so, too, with **REYNOLDS UNWRAPPED**.

Like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get, but you will like most of them and they'll keep you coming back. Unlike chocolates, **REYNOLDS UNWRAPPED** cartoons are not fattening.

Dan's cartoons are seen by millions of readers across the US, Canada and points beyond all the way down under in Australia. His work is seen in every issue of Reader's Digest (where he is known for his cow, pig and chicken cartoons), on greetings cards everywhere, and in **REYNOLDS UNWRAPPED** book collections: Birthday Bash!, Christmas Meltdown, Now They All have Window Seats, and How Aging Affects Belt Height (with a foreword from the then oldest man in the world).

His cartoons have appeared on HBO's, The Sopranos, the cover of a National Lampoon cartoon book collection and on greeting cards all throughout the United States. His work also appears in many other places as well.

Discussion:

Using the images provided of Dan Reynolds' cartoon art, discuss the characteristics and themes of the work. Some discussion questions could include:

- What are some of the characters that Dan Reynolds depicts often?
- What sorts of activities do these characters participate in?
- Have you ever seen a cow mowing the lawn or a polar bear bowling in real life?
- What do you think makes these cartoons funny?
- What is a pun? What are some examples of puns or word play that you have heard?
- What are captions? How do they function differently than a speech or thought bubble to convey meaning in a cartoon?

Step-By-Step Procedure:

1. Write the following themes from the cartoon art of Dan Reynolds on a large piece of posterboard or on the blackboard/ whiteboard: Animals, Sports/Activities, Puns
2. Brainstorm with the students to help them each come up with 3-5 animals and sports or other activities, and have each student choose one of each to create a cartoon around – the animal and sport/activity the student chooses should be meaningful to them personally
3. Ask students to create a story, situation, or joke for both the animal and sport/activity they have chosen, reminding them of the definition and examples of puns/ wordplay
4. Ask students to write out the main idea of the story, situation, or joke, and decide if they will include a caption, a speech bubble, or a thought bubble to convey meaning, or if they will let the image speak for itself
5. If students decide to include a caption, speech bubble, or thought bubble, have them condense the meaning into one line of text
6. Have each student sketch out their cartoons in pencil first; 5x8 in. is a good size as it makes the image clear and students can include detail
7. When each cartoon is looking its best, have the students trace over the lines with the thin black marker
8. Using the colored pencils, crayons, markers, or paint, color in the cartoon
Optional: Use posterboard or construction paper in contrasting color to mount the cartoons
9. Have each student present their cartoon to the class, or have them share with groups or partners

10. Collect the cartoons and display them in a book/ album or on a wall in the classroom

Additional Resources:

In Print

Local Newspapers – The Post-Standard Sunday edition is a great source for cartoons/ comics

Books by Dan Reynolds include:

The Toilet Zone: A Hilarious Collection of Bathroom Humor, 1999

Christmas Meltdown, 2001

Birthday Bash!, 2002

Now They All Have Window Seats!: A Reynolds Unwrapped Tribute to Fatherhood, 2004

How Aging Affects Belt Height: A Reynolds Unwrapped Cartoon Collection, 2004

All of these books (except for the first) can be found on Amazon here:

http://www.amazon.com/Dan-Reynolds/e/B001HMMFI0/ref=sr_ntt_srch_Ink_8?qid=1295550120&sr=1-8

Books by Gary Larson (*The Far Side*) can be found on Amazon here:

http://www.amazon.com/Gary-Larson/e/B000APEQ8W/ref=sr_ntt_srch_Ink_1?qid=1295550298&sr=1-1

Books by Bill Watterson (*Calvin and Hobbes*) can be found on Amazon here:

http://www.amazon.com/Bill-Watterson/e/B000APZI66/ref=sr_ntt_srch_Ink_1?qid=1295550351&sr=1-1

Online

Dan Reynolds' Website, Reynolds Unwrapped:

<http://www.reynoldsunwrapped.com>

Dan Reynolds' Blog: **<http://iinkthereforeidan.blogspot.com/>**

Step-By-Step Drawing Tutorials for Kids (scroll down, lessons are on the right hand side and provide a virtual sketch pad so kids can draw while they learn):

<http://www.artistshelpingchildren.org/howtodraw.html>

KidsFront – Learn Drawing for Kids (step-by-step tutorial images, lots of animals): **<http://kidsfront.com/how-to-draw-pictures.html>**

List of Images

3 Ham and Cheese Omelets

AHHCHOO

Cat Commercials

Cow Mower

Cow Wash

Dictionary

Ewe Tube

He Ate All the Magnets

I Feel a Joke Coming On

I Heart Oz

Jelly Beans

Just What I Always Wanted

Mathematician Food Fights

Penguin Birthday Bowling

Pop Art

Snowblower

This is My Mom and Dad

Voted Off the Island