Edward Hicks (1780 – 1849)

*The Peaceable Kingdom* (1826)
Oil on Canvas, 17” x 23” - National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

**Art Style:** Primitive  
**Art Terms:** Foreground, Background, Texture, Balance  
**Activity:** Peaceable Kingdom Drawing  
**Medium:** Oil Pastels and Black Marker

**Meet the Artist**
- He was born in Pennsylvania in 1790, 4 years after the American Revolution. He grew up on a farm. When he turned 14, he went to work for a coach maker and a sign painter. He received no formal education as an artist.  
- He survived an illness when he was 22. He believed it was a miracle, so he joined a religious group named the Quakers. The Quakers were also called The Society of Friends. They emphasized the need for peace. Eventually, he became a minister in the church.  
- Painting became a way that Hicks expressed his beliefs in peace. His best known paintings were the Peaceable Kingdom paintings. He painted the same theme up to 100 times. He once painted his own face onto the lion’s body.  
- There were always 2 elements to his Peaceable Kingdom paintings. The first was the ideal; that enemies could lie down together in peace. In the background was the second. The background depicts early treaties that the early American settlers made with the Native Americans. The background showed that peace was a process, and that in real life, there was strife.  
- Interestingly, the only 3 animals that are present in every version of the painting is the cow, the lion and the leopard. His paintings are classified as American Primitive. Primitive, since they aren’t realistic. The landscape is rather realistic, as are the people and the farm animals, but the animals that he never actually saw have a very childish appearance about them.  
- He was known to struggle through his life with a fiery temper. He died in 1849. His art at the time suggests that he felt very peaceful as he grew older.
About the Artwork

Hicks painted over one hundred versions of this painting. The theme of this painting is drawn from the 11th chapter of Isaiah in the Bible. It says, “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.” He included William Penn presenting a peace treaty to Indians, highlighting the peace this would bring.

Art Style

Primitive
• A style of art created by those who are untrained in art, or do not recognize themselves as artists.

Art Terms

Foreground
• The parts of an artwork that appear to be in the front, nearest to the viewer, usually in the lower part of the picture.

Background
• The parts of an artwork that lie in the distance and appear to be behind objects in the foreground.

Texture
• The way an object looks as though it feels; such as rough or smooth.

Balance
• Refers to the ways in which the elements (lines, shapes, colors, textures, etc.) of a piece are arranged.
• Balance can be symmetrical (“formal”), where elements are given equal weight from an imaginary line in the middle of a piece.
• Balance doesn't necessarily mean symmetry, though. Asymmetrical (“informal”) balance occurs when elements are placed unevenly in a piece, but work together to produce harmony overall.

Questions about The Peaceable Kingdom
• Which part of this painting is in the foreground? Background?
• Can you see a “line” between the two sides? (From the darkest trees in the middle, to the bull’s shoulder. To edge of grass at the bottom left.)
• Is this painting symmetrical or asymmetrical?
• What kind of line is it? (curved)
• How do the children look?
• Which animals look happy or calm? (bull, lamb, goat, calf)
• Which ones look fearful? (lion, tiger, leopard)
• How many main stories are being told in the painting?
• Which one do you think the artist felt was the more important?
• What textures do you see?
• Are there any colors that catch your eyes? (The man wearing red, bringing the peace treaty.)

Activity
Peaceable Kingdom Drawing – Oil Pastels and Black Markers

Supplies
White drawing paper – 9” x 9”
Oil pastels
Black fine tip markers
Pencils
Rulers

Directions
1. Explain that they will be creating their own peaceable kingdom. Brainstorm about what kind of animals the student could draw. Write them on the board.
2. Have students write their name and room # on the back of the paper.
3. Using a ruler, create a 1” border around the paper, then draw a pattern within the border.
4. Using a pencil, draw various animals in the scene.
5. Trace over the pencil marks using a black fine tip marker. Don’t forget to trace the border and pattern.
6. Once everything is outline in black the students can start coloring using oil pastels.
7. Color the pattern in the border, emphasizing the use of “natural” colors found in nature.
8. When the students are done have them title their artwork. Write the title on a label sticker and place it on the back of their work.

Student Artwork 2011-2012