UNIT OF STUDY: Jes Wilhelm Schlaikjer, painter

TITLE OF LESSON PLAN: The Importance of War Posters

GRADE LEVEL: 3-5

SOUTH DAKOTA CONTENT STANDARDS:

Visual Arts Standards:

1. Students will understand and use visual arts as a means for creative self-expression and interpersonal communication.

   Grades 3-4:
   
   Describe how visual arts tell stories or express moods or ideas.

   Grades 5-8:

   Interpret the concepts, stories, moods, or ideas in various works of art.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES:

- Class discussions
- Finished war posters

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will describe how Jes Wilhelm Schlaikjer’s war posters tell stories or express moods or ideas.
- Students will interpret the concepts, stories, moods, and/or ideas used in war poster.
- Students will create a war poster.
TIME REQUIRED:

- Day One: 45-60 for opening discussion and to start on posters
- Day Two: 45-60 minutes to complete posters
- Day Three: 30-45 minutes to share posters

MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY NEEDED:

- Copies of War Posters by Jes Wilhelm Schlaikjer. Copies may be obtained from the South Dakota Art Museum or you may search for them via the Internet.
- Poster board
- Paint/brushes (or if you wish you may use markers, crayons, water colors, etc.)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

During World War II Jes Wilhelm Schlaikjer worked as an official Artist and Art Consultant in the Bureau of Public Relations of the War Department at the Pentagon. From 1942 through 1946 he painted the “Inspirational Series” war posters for the military. Schlaikjer also painted portraits of many military leaders including Douglas MacArthur and George Patton.

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

1. Show the class an example of the copy of the war poster on the War Fund with the caption “Your Red Cross is at his side” by Jes Wilhelm Schlaikjer (provided in this unit). Ask the class questions like:
   a. What do you see in the poster?
   b. What is the mood of the poster?
   c. What story is the poster telling us?
   d. What ideas are expressed in the poster?

2. Discuss the student’s answers to the questions above and ask them to explain their answers.

3. Discuss with the class reasons why war posters were made during WWII and the advantages and disadvantages of them. Explain to the class the
Jes Wilhelm Schlaikjer’s job during WWII was painting war posters for the military.

4. Have each student design and paint a war poster of their own. They may want to do one in pencil before painting it. Remind the students that war posters were done for a reason. They express a story, an idea, or a mood to the viewers. They always have a central theme. This is what the student will need to convey to his/her audience. Give the students a deadline for a due date for completion of posters.

5. Have each student share his/her poster with the class. Once they are finished, hang all posters on the wall or on a bulletin board.

ENRICHMENT:

Have the students design and paint a magazine cover or a book cover.

BIBLIOGRAPHY/RESOURCES:

- South Dakota Art Museum Collection
  - Jes Wilhelm Schlaikjer