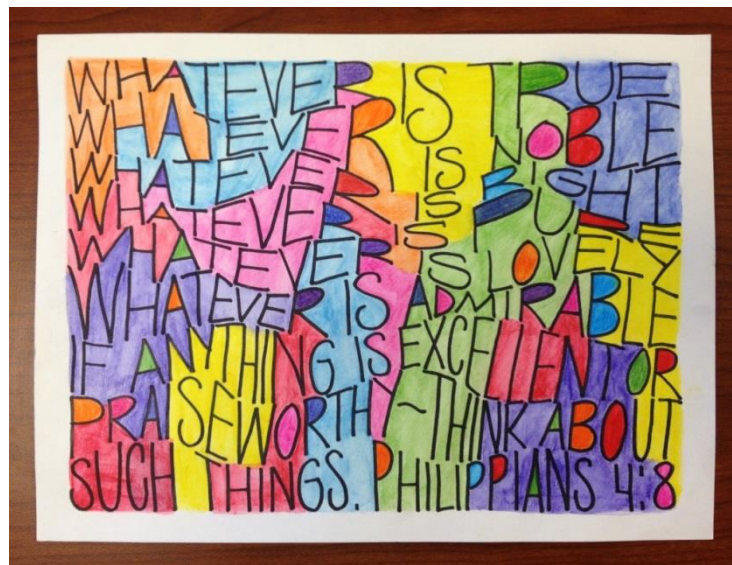




## ART BRIDGES: Lesson Plans for Enrichment, Growth and Healing

### Dense Text Lettering

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Cheryl Trowbridge  
[www.teachkidsart.net](http://www.teachkidsart.net)



My inspiration for this project came from the wonderful book, Hand Lettering by Marci Donley & DeAnn Singh. The authors call this technique “Writing Between the Lines”, but I think “Dense Text” describes it better. I tried it with my middle school students and the results were fantastic! You’ll find so many applications

for this fun lettering style—use it to write out a favorite verse, quote, or poem, make greeting cards for birthdays and other holidays, or simply fill your art journal with a beautiful message. I’ve also seen this technique described as “Slow Journaling”.

### Objectives:

The participants will:

1. Use art elements of lines, color and negative and positive space to create art
2. Incorporate personal writing or quotes into their art

### Audiences:

This activity was originally designed for children but can be enjoyed by any age group.

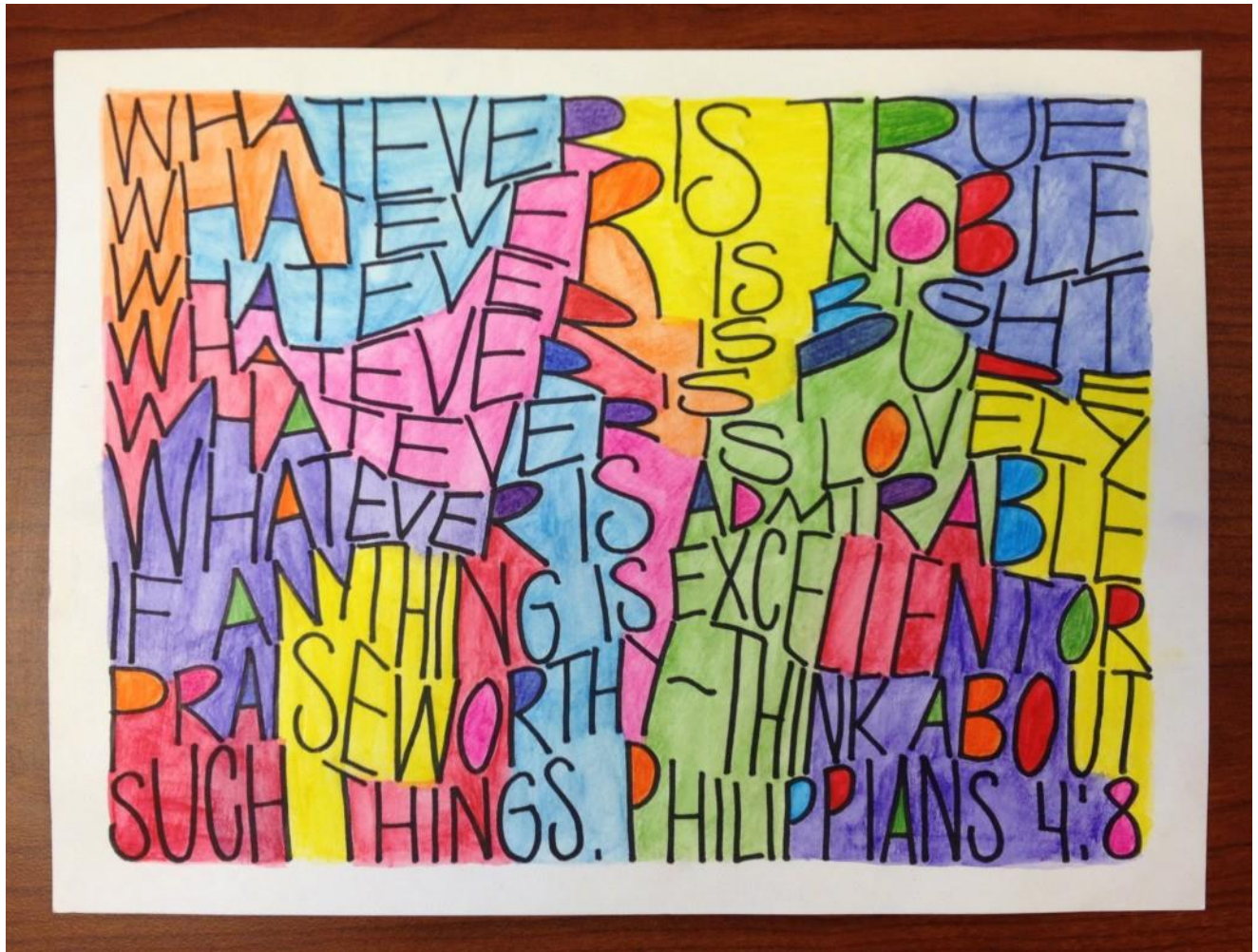
### Supplies/Materials:

- paper (we used 9x12 white heavyweight construction paper)
- pencil and eraser
- black “F” Sharpie marker
- Crayola Watercolor Pencils

### Class Instructions:

1. Choose the text you want to write out.
2. With a pencil, lightly draw a ½” border along each edge of your paper.
3. Next, lightly draw some wavy guide lines across your paper. (If you’re copying a specific text, divide it up by how much you want to write on each line. That way you’ll know how many lines to draw.)
4. Now add your text lightly in pencil, filling the space between each line, using basic sans serif letters in all capitals (a.k.a. “stick letters”). Touch both the upper and lower lines with your letters. (To make your text fit on each line, you’ll be making some letters wider or narrower as needed.)
5. Trace over your letters with Sharpie, but **do not trace over the “guide” lines!**
6. Erase your “guide” lines, border, and any other pencil lines that are still showing.
7. Use watercolor pencils to add color inside the closed shapes of each letter. Then fill in around your letters with contrasting colors. It’s okay to leave some areas white if that works with your design.

8. Finally, blend your colors with a damp brush. You only need a small amount of water when you work with watercolor pencils, blotting your brush on a paper towel each time you rinse it. And be careful not to let complimentary colors mix, or you may end up with “mud”! (Complimentary colors are colors that are across from each other on the color wheel: red/green, blue/orange, yellow/violet... try mixing these colors when you want a variety of interesting browns!)



To see this lesson in its entirety, visit <http://www.teachkidsart.net/dense-text-letting/> .

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*Special thanks to **Cheryl Trowbridge** for sharing a wealth of information and resources and ideas on her excellent website [www.teachkidsart.net](http://www.teachkidsart.net) ! Cheryl has her art education credentials and has been teaching art to kids for over 20 years.*

*She is inspired by watching children of all ages discover their ability to be creative. Her passion is to make successful art lessons accessible to help share the joy of art with all the kids in our lives. Visit Sheryl's on-line store*

*<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Teach-Kids-Art> to purchase a variety of resources for helping kids create art.*

**If you have used this activity, we'd love to hear from you! Please send questions or comments through our website [www.hildegardcenter.org](http://www.hildegardcenter.org) .**

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