Masterpiece: *I and Village, 1911*  
by Marc Chagall

Keywords: Shape, Color, Line, Symbolism

Grade: 6th Grade

Month: September

Activity: Dream Drawing

Meet the Artist

- Marc Chagall was born in 1887 in a small Russian village named Vitebsk (VEE-tepsk). If he were alive today how old would he be?
- Chagall spent much of his childhood playing with his 9 siblings, the village animals and day dreaming. Even though his family was very poor he learned to play violin, took singing lessons, drew and wrote poetry.
- He saw his first painting at the age of 13 and decided that he wanted to become an artist.
- Chagall went to St. Petersburg, Russia for school and it was here that he discovered work by Impressionistic artists like Monet, Cezanne and Van Gogh. He then traveled to Paris where he discovered Cubist art by Picasso.
- These artists inspired him to use more color and simple shapes to convey emotion in his work.
- Chagall kept his work original by using dreams and memories as his subjects. He was famous for taking ordinary scenes and transforming them into dream-like worlds.

Possible Questions:

- What colors do you see in the painting? Do you see more than one
shade of red? Where? (In the background shapes, the cow's head, the man's hat and the village buildings)

- What **color** does an artist mix with red to get it lighter? (white)
- What kinds of **shapes** do you see? (circles, triangles, rectangles, squares)
- Do you see the line between the man's eye and the cow's eye? How do you think the man feels about the cow? (He seems to be fond of the cow)
- What other things do you see? (woman milking a goat, a man with a scythe, a village with a church, an upside down woman)
- Is this picture painted in a realistic style? Why do you say that? (the man's face and the cow's head are painted in unrealistic colors; objects float in unusual places and some are upside down; the picture is broken up into colorful shapes)
- Why do you think he chose all those unrealistic **colors**? (Chagall would paint things that were significant to him the color green. Green **symbolized** a person of importance to him.
- Why do you think he painted some people upside down or up in the air? (If Chagall felt joy or that the person was happy he would place them up in the air or flying)
- Chagall used his imagination to create this fantasy picture. Does the painting remind you of a dream?

**Activity:** Dream Drawing

**Materials Needed:** White construction paper, black felt tip markers, oil pastels.

**Process:**

Before you begin remind the students that they are trying to create a dream-like effect. It should reflect their thoughts, feelings, likes and dislikes. Their subjects can be from dreams or childhood memories. Write down what colors would make them feel happy, sad, etc. Pick some meaningful symbols that they could place through their picture and write them on the board before they begin.

1. Hand out white paper and pencils. Have students write their name and then flip over paper.
2. Using the black marker have students draw their home.
3. Turn their papers around and have them draw themselves, or someone else holding something.
4. Turn the paper again and draw a place they like to be (garden, bedroom, swimming pool, mall, baseball field, etc.)
5. Have them add symbols throughout that mean something to them.
6. Once their paper is filled they may render their illustrations with intense color and divide it into sections like Chagall did.
Marc Chagall (1887 - 1985)

“Art Masterpiece” was presented in your student’s classroom. We discussed the Russian Jewish artist, Marc Chagall (1887 - 1985), who is best known for his Cubist-influenced paintings that resemble stained-glass windows and include dreamlike images. His work is rich in the imagery of the folklore of his native Russia and Jewish life, and often takes on the appearance of a dream-like fantasy. Children created their own Chagall-inspired fantasy collage using mixed media. We enjoyed sharing with your children. Please take the time to ask them to share what they learned and created!