

RILEY'S RAINFOREST

"Send down ... from the clouds of Thy mercy the rains of Thy healing ..." —Bahá'u'lláh

Smart Arts

Can drawing, singing, or dancing improve your schoolwork? Can they make you happier?

The arts not only lift your spirits—they may even help boost your grades. Some studies show that kids who are involved in activities such as dance, drama, music, and visual art have higher reading and math scores. They also have stronger motivation and self-esteem. And the arts help kids develop skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and working with others.

The arts are also linked to health and happiness. One study found that people who create or observe art, such as by singing or attending a concert, report better overall health. And music can relieve stress, helping to keep your heart healthy. Have you noticed how your favorite tunes can make you feel happier? In fact, music therapists use music to help treat many kinds of emotional



and physical conditions.

Some scientists are even exploring whether music changes your brain. They've found that certain areas of the brain can be larger in some musicians. One study showed that kids who studied music had stronger connections in some parts of the brain.

You can also use the arts to express your faith. Whether you're singing, dancing for joy, or using your talents to inspire others, your creativity can soothe your spirit and bring you closer to God. And that's really something to sing about!

Canopy of Questions

What do you want to know about staying healthy and happy? Health can involve your body, mind, emotions, and spirit. Send your questions to brilliant@usbnc.org. Responses are given by a health professional.

“What can I do to keep from being bored?”

—Bayan, age 12

Dear Bayan,

When we see the world as a place full of mysteries to unravel, suddenly nothing is boring. If you are always learning something new, you won't be bored, either—and there are *always* new things to learn. When I was little, I asked my grandmother to teach me the names of all the birds nesting around our house. Larks, doves, wrens, mocking-birds—I learned to recognize them all.

What could you learn to do? You could play a new game, cook something, fix something, learn new words, learn a new language, read about something new, write a story or a how-to manual, record a video, meet a new neighbor, or even create a new world, like author J.R.R. Tolkien's hobbit world.

Make a list of ideas to refer to if you're bored. Or you could write us another letter, telling us something new that you've learned!

Wishing you health and happiness,

Mary K. Radpour

Licensed Family Counselor

Explore and Soar: Creativity Boost

Ever feel like your creativity could use a boost? Try these fun ideas.

- Go outside and make a sculpture using only items in nature.
- Write a story with a friend. Take turns adding lines or sections.

- Choose an object like a pencil or spoon and think of 10 different uses for it.
- Invent new dance moves you've never seen before.

