

Crayons are a vital part of any young student's life. I remember the importance of the 64 crayon box that I had in first and second grade. The fact that I dropped them and scattered them all over the floor in front of everybody is stamped indelibly on my brain. But more than that, I loved all of the colors, and used them to create some fantastic art. Fortunately for this story, none of it survives to prove me wrong.

In those early grades, one of the greatest problems for young scholars is that the crayons break so easily. When I was a child, the first-graders had to use big pencils that fit our little hands, but these obviously marked us as the lower social order in school. In recent years, big crayons and markers have become quite popular and offer much better tools for aspiring artists. Even the larger size, however, rolls very easily off of the table and onto the floor. Triangular pencils can be bought to ease that problem, too.

My wife Soozie is an elementary (former high school) art teacher that creates a very hands-on environment in her classroom. She melts down broken, unusable pieces of crayons and uses candy and ice cube molds to create exciting new crayon shapes¹. The kids absolutely love them! She gives them out as much-coveted prizes for good behavior.

Having more than 20 students in each art class, with many of the classes having special needs children added to that, is a great challenge. Soozie tries to make it a great experience for every one of those kids. This year she has a first-grader that has multiple sclerosis (MS), and has a very difficult time holding anything, much less a regular crayon. But Soozie gave the boy a bag of her special large crayons (in the shape of Batman, bugs, and other things) for him to use at home.

The family's response was very gratifying. The boy's mother pronounced on Facebook how excited he was to be able to hold these crayons in his hand and actually use them. She also said that the whole family was helping and sharing the experience with him! Such a simple gift, but such a profound impact!

We all have our set of tools, like specially made crayons, that we use from day to day. Sometimes we need help visualizing how they can help. But I am reminded of a quote from Charles Kingsley: "Have the tools ready. God will find you work." There is also a pertinent passage from the Bible, that states that God will equip us with everything good for doing his will². We all need to heed this advice.

1. See my story "Forgiveness"
2. Hebrews 1:21