

More Copyright Information

It is tempting to copy beautiful images, written passages, concepts, etc. for use in teaching, blogging, your own web site, and other activities. However, it is extremely important to research the images, etc., you want to copy to find out if they are copyright protected.

Copyright law not only applies to the written word (even excerpts without giving credit to the author), but applies also to artwork, photography, images digitally produced, music, and even a concept (like a game). The familiar copyright symbol (©) or watermark does not have to be displayed for the work to be covered by this law. Copyright applies to the written word, artworks (manual or digital), photographs, music, and other creative works at the moment of creation. Use without proper authorization or “license” is against the law. Copyright infringement carries penalties and fines that can be extremely costly to the perpetrators, plus the hassle of court.

You might say, “But I’m not selling the copy of this creative work.” It doesn’t matter. Also, ignorance of the law will not absolve illegal copyright infringement either. The familiar “I didn’t know” will not hold up in court. To use any of the above named categories without the creator’s permission is illegal.

It would seem that plagiarism would not be noticed because the internet is so gigantic. There are, however, companies that hire professionals to look for violations. There are also friends of the creators who happen to find the infringement accidentally. The artists themselves often do an internet search. With the electronic “bots” roaming the internet, it is easier than ever to find infringements.

How do I find images or other creative works I CAN use?

1. Look for websites containing an “open source” or “public domain” license that specifically permits the use of their images.
2. Ask the creator of the artwork, etc. for permission in writing to use the desired creation.

Better to be safe than sorry.

I will relate an experience I had. I desired to create a paper adaptation of the “Cootie” Game that was so popular many years ago. This was intended to teach children the parts of insects as a science connection in art. I searched the internet for the original manufacturer and was led to the current license holder. I e-mailed the company describing my intent and asked for permission to use the concept. The response was that I had permission, but the limitation on the image was so restricting, that I couldn’t adequately use it to teach the science, because I would have had to eliminate one of the insect parts. I e-mailed back a thanks, but told them I would not be using the project after all. I wouldn’t be surprised if they have checked me out to see if I used it.

We as Christians have an obligation to adhere to truth. We have the Spirit of Truth living within us, so we must follow God’s precepts and imitate His Character. If a law of the land does not violate God’s law, then we must obey that law of the land.

Artfully,
Diane