

Analyzing Artistic Depictions of the Book of Glory

1. Circle the passage from John's Gospel that your group has been assigned:
 - Jesus washing the disciples' feet: 13:1–17
 - the Beloved Disciple and the women at the foot of the cross: 19:25–27
 - piercing of Jesus' side: 19:31–37
 - appearance to Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb: 20:11–18
 - doubting Thomas: 20:24–29
2. Read the passage together carefully.
3. Find four artistic depictions of your group's Gospel story. Use the following Web sites:
 - www.textweek.com (look for the link to "art index," then search by Scripture reference or topic)
 - www.wga.hu (type a topic into the "text" box of the search engine)
 - www.artcyclopedia.com (click "browse artists by subject," then click on "religious art")
4. Choose four images that are substantially different from one another. Ways that images can be different include the following:
 - time periods
 - styles of art
 - countries of origin
 - artists
 - realistic / abstract
 - cultures
 - media (painting, sculpture, and so on.)
5. Organize all four images into one PowerPoint presentation; store this on a USB drive. Be sure to enlarge the images on the slides so that they are easily seen when projected in the classroom.
6. Prepare a presentation using the following questions as a guide to study and analyze each image. Write your answers on the newsprint provided. Asterisks on a question indicate that you must answer it. Choose several from among the others as you prepare your presentation.



- *What is the title of the piece? (Indicate if it is “untitled.”)
 - *Where is the piece located? (For example, is it in a museum or church? It is fine to say “unknown.”)
 - *Who is the artist? (It is fine to say “anonymous/unknown.”)
 - *When (approximately) was it created?
 - *How accurately does the image depict the biblical story on which it is based? What, if anything, is missing? What has been added?
 - How are the characters in the image depicted? With what emotions? What attitude is reflected in their body positioning? Are they static or in motion?
 - In what medium (for example, oil, pen and ink, fresco) was the piece created?
 - How would you describe the mood of the image? Notice color, shapes, forms, textures, and lines.
 - How does the image use light and shadow? What dramatic emphasis is created?
 - What do you think the artist wants the viewer to focus on?
 - How does the image depict the passage of time? For example, is it a snapshot of a single moment, or does it depict many moments at once?
 - *What spiritual, theological, or Christological message or meaning does the image convey?
 - *To what extent does the image capture the particular themes and emphases of John’s Gospel?
7. After you have studied and analyzed your images, discuss together the following questions, and write your answers on the newsprint for your presentation.
- How are the images you chose similar to or different from one another, with regard to mood, focus, style, and so on?
 - Which image appeals to your group the most? Why?
 - Which image do you think best captures the unique literary style and theological approach of John’s Gospel?
 - How would *you* create an image of this Gospel story? How would your work be different from that of the artists you have seen?

Using your PowerPoint and the notes you wrote on the butcher paper, you will present your images and share your analysis with the class in a 5-minute presentation.

