

APPENDIX 1

Leading Art Studies

LEADING ART STUDIES

Many of the chapters in the student book end with a full-page image of a work of religious art. These images are to be used as learning opportunities to engage the students in reflecting on the chapter, leading to deeper understanding of the content. But knowing how to “read” a work of art requires skill and practice! Here are two methods that will help your students engage with religious art.

Preparation for Both Methods

To begin, identify a piece of art connected to your religious topic or theme. In many chapters, we have already identified one art piece. The chapters in the student ebook contain an extra visual feature, some of which could be used for additional art studies. You might also search the internet for a painting that your students are most likely familiar with, preferably one that depicts a biblical scene that has already been studied in class (e.g., *The Creation of Adam*, by Michelangelo [Genesis 2:4–7]).

Next, identify some basic facts about the work of art to share with the students. Or, you could have the students research this information. Often background on the art can be found on the website where you found the image or through an internet search. If it is a modern piece of art, you can sometimes contact the artist directly—they are often very happy to tell you about their art piece.

Some basic facts to begin with could include:

- the title of the piece
- where the piece is located (for example, a museum or church)
- who the artist is
- when (approximately) it was created
- what medium was used to create the piece (i.e., oil, pen and ink, fresco, marble)

Method 1: Basic Art Study

If you are going to use an art study for only a part of a class, you might follow this process.

1. **Ask** the students to examine the art for a few minutes in silence to make initial observations.
2. **Draw** their attention to the specific details of the artwork using questions such as these:
 - Compare the biblical story to the art. Is it accurate? What is missing? What has been added?
 - What are the facial expressions, and what do they reveal about the emotions of the people in the art piece?

- Notice postures, gestures, and stances reflected in body positioning. What do they tell us about the attitudes of the people depicted?
 - How would you describe the mood of the image? Notice color, shapes, forms, textures, and lines.
 - How does the image use light and shadow? In other words, what dramatic emphasis is created by the artist's use of light and shadow?
 - How does the image depict the passage of time? For example, is it like a snapshot of a single moment, or is it like a storyboard, depicting many moments at once?
 - Notice the objects depicted in the painting, both the ones that seem central and the ones that seem peripheral or hidden.
 - What do you think the artist wants us to focus on?
3. **Discuss** the symbolism in the art using one of the following means:
- Share with the students a list of symbols and their meanings that you have compiled in advance.
 - Ask the students to research the symbolic meanings of people, objects, colors, and gestures that have significance in the Christian context. You may need to guide the students through their research by offering examples of Christian symbols commonly found in art. For example, a palm branch of victory carried in someone's hand or arm often indicates that the person is a martyr.

Method 2: Advanced Art Study

If you really want to go deep in engaging the students in an art study, you might take most of a class period and possibly make it a written assignment using any combination of steps from this process:

1. **Ask** the students to examine the art for a few minutes in silence to make initial observations.
2. **Draw** their attention to the specific details of the artwork using these questions:
 - Who is represented? Who is left out?
 - What topic did the artist consider important enough to make a painting of it?
 - When was the artwork made?
 - Does it represent the artist's era or another time? Or is it a combination of the two?
 - Does it depict real time or sacred time (the time of eternity or Heaven or prayer)? Or is it a combination of the two?
 - Where is the action taking place? Is it inside or outside? Is it in some faraway place or where the painting was made?
 - Why was it painted? Why did the artist choose this topic?

3. **Share** the following remarks to help guide the students in uncovering the culture and the religious beliefs and practices of the people at the time the art was created:
 - The community in which an artist lives and worships influences that artist. The artist is also affected by family, upbringing, and social, political, and economic factors.
 - If an artist created a painting at the request of a patron, that piece of art will likely reflect something about the patron.
 - When an artist makes a painting, he or she includes some details intentionally just because that is the way things are done at that time in that place.
4. **Continue** by asking the students to research pertinent questions on the religious, political, economic, and social beliefs and practices that might have influenced the artist.
 - Religious Questions
 - What was this community's understanding of God?
 - What was this community afraid of?
 - Did this community experience a lot of suffering? How did they understand suffering?
 - Did this community experience a lot of evil? How did they understand evil?
 - What gave this community joy?
 - How did this community express love?
 - How did this community understand salvation?
 - What was the relationship between this community and creation?
 - Political Questions
 - Who was in power at the time, and who was not?
 - How was political power exercised (money and influence, arms and fighting, and so on)?
 - How did the people without power feel about those who had it?
 - How did the people with power feel about those without? (Did they even think about them?)
 - How much freedom to speak their minds did average people have?
 - Who had basic political rights, and who did not?
 - Did the Church have political power? If so, in whose favor did it exercise that power?

- Economic Questions
 - How were artists paid? Who paid them?
 - Who had money, and who did not?
 - What economic opportunities were available to which people?
 - What was the economic and political agenda of the person or institution that paid the artist?
 - What economic structure does the painting try to communicate?
 - Did the Church have economic power? If so, in whose favor did it exercise that power?
- Social Questions
 - How were ethnic minorities viewed and treated?
 - How were people of other religions viewed and treated?
 - How were children viewed and treated?
 - How were women viewed and treated?
 - How much did the Church influence social relationships within the family, village, city, and so on?
 - Were people formal and polite or casual and coarse?
 - Did groups exhibit different social norms? How was the society split?

Teacher Note

You may want to go through the steps of each method yourself, to familiarize yourself with the two processes before choosing one and leading it with your students.

Resources

- Christian symbols and their meanings:
www.fisheaters.com/symbols.html
- Finding Christian art: *www.smp.org/resourcecenter/resource/2866/*
- *Beyond the Written Word: Exploring Faith through Christian Art*, by Eileen M. Daily (Saint Mary's Press, 2005)

APPENDIX 2

Methods Resources

Name _____

Using the Whip-Around Method

A Quick and Participative Assessment Tool

The whip-around, as described here, is based on a technique developed by Jack Conklin, PhD, and is designed to provide a quick assessment of what students have learned in a class period or segment of a class. The technique serves several functions: helping students to recall significant facts, allowing student comments to serve as review for the rest of the class, and, as an active learning event, waking students to awareness and getting their minds in gear. The idea is to call on every student, in random order, to answer a question (or short series of questions), making sure every student has a chance to respond.

The Process

At the end of a class or information session (or when changing the topic or activity in a lesson), each student is asked to quickly respond to one of these prompts:

1. State one thing that they have just learned.
2. Answer one of three questions written on the board. (The teacher chooses the question, but the students prepare on paper for all three.)
3. Name one question or concern they have about the material. One student answers, then the question is whipped to the next student (the teacher calls on another student at random), and then the next, until all the students have had the opportunity to respond. It's that simple.

The following hints may prove helpful as you begin:

- Have the students write down responses to the prompts in advance, so that the more introverted students will be able to read their answers.
- It is always good to allow students the option to "pass." This is a technique designed to keep all the students engaged.

The Rules

1. The answers must be short.
2. Everyone should respond as quickly as possible.
3. All answers are accepted.
4. Everyone participates.
5. No "editorial comments" about other people's statements (except when the teacher corrects blatant errors; otherwise, even the teacher should not comment).
6. Whip-around should happen before changing topics, before breaks, or at the end of class.

Response Guide

You might want to provide a chart with the following response initiators when you first use this method. After the first three or four times, this will likely not be needed anymore. Soon enough, students will be able to whip around the room in just a few minutes.

- I now know that . . .
- I learned . . .
- I was reminded of . . .
- I was surprised to learn that . . .
- I feel (an emotional response is given) because I now know . . .
- This makes me conclude . . .
- I discovered that . . .
- I remember that . . .
- "Pass" with a return for an answer or comment.
- "Piggyback" on someone else's comment (with an addition of my own).



Using the Think-Pair-Share Method

The Purpose of the Think-Pair-Share Method

Frank Lyman, EdD, a former professor of education at the University of Maryland, developed the think-pair-share method to engage all students in reflection on a question before holding a class discussion. First, the teacher asks the students to think about a question independently, either in writing or through quiet reflection. Then the students pair up and share their thoughts with each other. Finally, the students discuss the question as a class.

Lyman's method addresses two issues that teachers commonly encounter. The first is that some students rarely raise their hands to answer a question, while others regularly raise their hands before the majority of students have had enough time to think about the question. Think-pair-share provides all students with time to think about the question both individually and with a peer before offering their thoughts to the whole class.

The second issue teachers often face is that some students feel much more comfortable than others sharing their ideas with the whole class. The think-pair-share method allows students to share their ideas with a peer before the class discussion. The practice of sharing their thoughts one-on-one may make students more comfortable discussing their ideas with the whole class.

The Think-Pair-Share Method in Steps

1. Explain the think-pair-share method ahead of time if the students are unfamiliar with it.
2. Ask the students a question, writing it on the board if necessary, and give them a time frame for considering it. Allow about 30 to 60 seconds for this step; provide a longer time period if the students will be writing down their thoughts.
3. Arrange the students in pairs and direct them to explain their thinking to each other. Give them several minutes to complete this step. Remind the students to be respectful speakers and listeners during the process.
4. Bring the students' attention back to the larger class. Repeat the original question and invite the students to share their responses. Give as many pairs as possible the chance to share their thoughts. After the pairs are done sharing, continue discussing the question as a class.



Using the Barometer Method

The Purpose of the Barometer Method

The barometer exercise is a great way to spark classroom discussion by leading students to take a stand (quite literally) in response to a statement or question about a text. Besides encouraging the students to explore their critique of the text more deeply, the barometer method illustrates the range of opinion in the classroom, providing a springboard for further discussion.

In this exercise, the students consider a statement or question that relates to a particular text. (For example, a statement relating to Genesis, chapter 3, might be, "Adam and Eve were equally responsible for the Fall.") The students read the text (or listen as you read it), then stand between two signs representing opposite positions on the statement (e.g., "Agree" or "Disagree") at a point that reflects their own opinion. When the exercise is over, the class comes together to discuss the statement or question in light of the text.

Materials You Will Need to Prepare Ahead of Time

- a statement or question you would like the students to share their opinion about
- copies of a short story, article, or document that relates to the statement you will be making (one for each student)
- two signs, one with the word *Agree* in large letters and the other with the word *Disagree* in large letters (depending on your topic, other terms may work better)
- a roll of masking tape

The Barometer Method in Steps

1. Post the "Agree" and "Disagree" signs on the wall some distance apart. Prepare a "yes or no" statement or question that you want students to consider as they read or listen to the text.
2. Distribute the copies of the story, article, or document. (Alternatively, read the text aloud to the students and then skip to step 4).
3. Instruct the students to read the text silently and allow 5 to 10 minutes for them to do so.
4. Ask the students to form an opinion regarding the statement or question. Do they agree or disagree with the statement in light of the text?
5. Encourage the students to stand anywhere between the two opinion signs, indicating the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statement. (For example, a student who feels completely neutral about the statement or question may stand in the middle between "Agree" and "Disagree.")
6. Invite four or more students standing in different places to explain the reasons for their position.
7. Once these students have shared, ask all the students to return to their seats. Lead the class in a discussion of the document in light of the statement or question.

