

RENAISSANCE ART



Learn about artist Simone dei Crocifissi and his triptych "Madonna and Child with Saints." Questions for looking and art-making projects can be adapted to suit different grade-level standards.

Engage in slow looking and art-making with these classroom resources. You can view these works of art in the museum, online or on a classroom poster.

Simone dei Crocifissi (Italian, 1330 - 1399), "Madonna and Child with Saints," 1370 - 80. Tempera on wood panels, 15 1/4 x 12 7/8 inches. Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia; The Samuel H. Kress Study Collection. 1961.1895.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Look closely at the work of art. What do you see?
- What do you notice about the shape of this work of art? Have you seen something similar before? This work is a **triptych**, which means it has three parts, two of which fold inward. How does the shape add meaning to the work of art? Why do you think it had to fold?
- How many human figures can you find in this work? Who do you think they are?
- Notice how many of the figures surrounding the centered Mary and infant Jesus are holding **attributes**. These are objects or symbols an artist includes in a painting to help the viewer identify a specific saint. What do you think these objects tell us about the person who holds them?
- How does the artist represent the faces of the figures? How do their gazes draw our attention to Mary and Jesus?
- Read the information about the artist and the work on the back of this resource. Look at the painting again. How have your observations and thoughts about the work of art changed?

ART-MAKING: IDENTITY MAP

Create a trifold identity map using thick cardstock and colored pencils, watercolor or tempera paint. Once you fold your paper, consider cutting it into a different shape, similar to how this triptych has a pointed, architectural design. How does the shape of your trifold add meaning? Now draw or paint objects, places or people that are important to you and symbols that show who you are. How will you arrange them? You can decorate the outside, too.

ART-MAKING: VISUAL NARRATIVE

A triptych tells a story across three connected panels. Think of a moment, memory or idea that has a beginning, middle and end or a before, during and after. Use any art materials you like to create your own three-panel artwork. What belongs at the center, the most important part? What surrounds and supports it on either side? How do the three panels feel like a complete image even when viewed separately?

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Simone dei Crocifissi was an early Renaissance artist from Bologna, Italy. During the Renaissance (14th – 17th century), European artists looked to ancient Greek and Roman art for inspiration. They were also influenced by the Byzantine Empire, which developed a rich tradition of religious artwork known as icons during the Middle Ages. Both of these influences, the classical past and the Byzantine icon-making tradition, came together to define

SAINTS AND THEIR ATTRIBUTES IN “MADONNA AND CHILD WITH SAINTS”

- Saint John the Baptist: trees
- Saint Peter: keys, bible
- Saint Paul: sword, book
- Saint Jerome: red hat, lion

ABOUT THE WORK

As with Byzantine icons, people would have worshiped this triptych as a physical representation of heaven. The two side panels fold closed to protect the icon in the middle panel. Due to its small size, this object could be easily carried and unfolded for personal prayer. The shape of the triptych resembles cathedral architecture, adding to its devotional theme and function. This triptych is an excellent example of Byzantine influence in early Renaissance art. Mary on a throne with an infant Jesus was a popular subject in Byzantine icons. Many icons also feature golden haloes to emphasize godliness. At the same time, the triptych shows how Renaissance artists departed from the Byzantine tradition by making images that were less flat and that seemed more three dimensional.

Georgia Standards of Excellence

Elementary: VA(K-5).CN.1, VA(K-5).CR.1, VA(K-5).CR.3, VA(K-5).RE.1, SS2G2d
Secondary: VA8.CN.1/VAHSV.A.CN.1, VA8.CN.3/VAHSV.A.CN.3, VA8.RE.1/VAHSV.A.
RE.1, VA8.CR.1/VAHSV.A.CR.1, VA8.CR.3/VAHSV.A.CR.3