

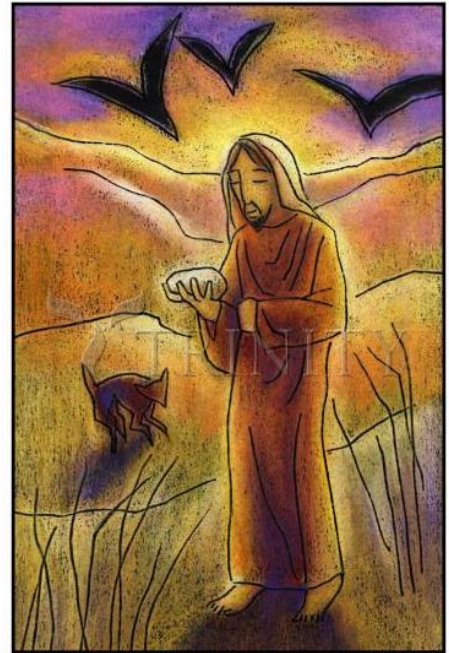
Lent Reflection on Art – Week 2

Christ in the Desert, Julie Lonneman.

Teacher Notes

This week's reflection is based on a painting by [Julie Lonneman](#), an American Catholic artist. Her picture focuses on Jesus' temptation to turn stones to bread – what was wrong with that? Surely everyone would welcome an end to world hunger? Perhaps it was wrong to think about satisfying his own hunger when he had committed to fast for 40 days? Or was it the temptation to win popular support by giving people material things? There are many different interpretations.

Jesus' time in the wilderness gave him time to think about his priorities and what he wanted to achieve in the days, weeks and years ahead. This reflection gives the children the opportunity to think about what they think is important in life.



Explain to the children:

Slide 1:

What's your favourite food? Why? What would you eat for a special celebration? Do you prefer eating by yourself or sharing with other people?

What would it be like to go without food? For a whole day? For longer? What would be the hardest thing?

During Lent Christians sometimes decide to give up sweets or chocolate. This reminds them of when Jesus was in the wilderness and went without food – for forty days (!) This is called fasting and some people still fast today. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims don't eat or drink anything during daylight. Christians sometimes fast if they have something important to pray about. It's not like going on a diet or trying to lose weight, it's meant to help you concentrate on God, or to focus on what's important in life.

(Please stress that fasting is not recommended for children! Muslims don't fast until they're about 12 and doctors suggest children and teenagers shouldn't fast until they've finished growing.)

Slide 2:

Look at this painting of Jesus in the desert (wilderness). What do you notice about it? What else can you see? Can you spot something that no one else in the class will have noticed?

Ask some – or all – of the questions on the slide. These are no right answers, it's an opportunity for the children to share their own ideas.

Slide 3:

The painting shows Jesus being tempted to turn stones to bread. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, 'Life is more than just food'? That's a striking thing for someone to say who hasn't eaten for forty days! What things do you think Jesus thought were more important than food? What do you think life is about? Being happy? Helping others? Making the world a better place? Enjoying yourself? Living life to the full?

Slide 4:

Julie Lonneman has a quote from Mother Teresa pinned up in her studio, which she says inspires her work. This is one answer to the question of what life is about.

'I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot. Not all of us can do great things. But we can all do small things with great love.'

Lonneman says that she can't do great things for God, but she can paint, so that's what she does. It might only be a small thing, but she does it with love.

When Jesus was in the wilderness, he was listening to God to find out what was important and how he should live his life. When he returned to the town, he called a small group of followers to work with him and started to teach people about God's kingdom.

What small, great things can you do?

Is there someone you can help? (Perhaps in secret, without letting them know?)

Do you have a gift which you should be developing and using? (Can you sing? Draw? Run? Dance? Make things?)

Is there a cause you feel strongly about that you should be telling other people about? (Plastic pollution? Saving orang-utans from palm oil production? A local issue?)

Closing prayer

Slide 5:

For our final prayer, you might like to close your eyes or look at the picture of Jesus in the wilderness. If you'd like to make it your prayer, you can say amen at the end.

Dear God,
We can't all do great things,
but we can do small things with great love.
Help is to know what's important in life,
and to live our lives to the full.
Amen.