

Lent Reflection on Art – Week 5

‘Triumphal Entry Into Jerusalem.’ He Qi

Teacher Notes

Palm Sunday 2021 will be celebrated on 28th March. It remembers the events at the start of Easter Week, when Jesus entered Jerusalem and set in motion the events that led to his crucifixion.

Many Jews at the time were expecting God to send a ‘Messiah’ who would lead an uprising and set them free from Roman rule. Jesus subverted this idea by choosing to enter the city on a donkey rather than a warhorse. It is also interesting that the crowds who welcomed him so enthusiastically, were presumably the same people who called for his execution only a few days later.



[He Qi](#) (pronounced Huh Chee) is a Chinese Christian artist, now living in the United States. He paints in a very distinctive style, based on traditional Chinese art, but with a modern twist. During the Cultural Revolution in China, he used to paint portraits of Chairman Mao to avoid hard labour in the fields. He discovered a painting of Rafael’s Madonna and Child in an old magazine and copied it repeatedly. This triggered his interest in Christianity. Later he studied art in the West and was struck by the fact that Jesus was always painted as a white European. This led him to start painting Bible stories with Chinese characters and a Chinese background and he is very keen that Christianity should be seen as a worldwide religion.

Explain to the children:

Slide 1:

Show the children a section of the painting and ask them to imagine what is happening and what’s in the rest of the picture.

Slide 2:

Read the Bible passage with them and ask them to think again about what might be happening in the rest of the picture. Ask them to do a quick sketch and ask them to explain what they have drawn and why. How does their sketch fit the Bible story you have read?

Slide 3:

Now reveal the full picture, by Chinese artist He Qi.

Does anything surprise you about this painting?

What's the same as your picture? What's different?

Do you think it is a good interpretation of the Bible story? Why? Why not?

What do you like about it? Why?

Is there anything that you dislike?

What do you think the artist thinks about Jesus?

If you could ask He Qi any question about his painting, what would you ask?

Slide 4:

Compare these two paintings. The one on the right shows the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar, who was born about 100 years before Jesus. Who looks more important? Why do you think that?

Many people expected Jesus to enter Jerusalem like a military leader, riding a warhorse, maybe leading an army and ready to declare war on the Romans. This may be one of the reasons why the crowds turned against him, when he didn't live up to their expectations.

Why do you think he chose to ride a donkey and enter the city in peace? What was he saying about the sort of king he wanted to be?

Do you think that tells us anything about the way Jesus' followers should act?

Closing prayer

Slide 5:

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

Dear God,

We remember that the crowds cheered and welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem,

But some people didn't like him or the way he behaved.

Thank you that he didn't come to bring war or to lord it over people.

Help us too, to get on with other people and not think that we're better than them.

Amen.