

## Using Art to Develop Thinking Skills in RE

We need to give the children the necessary skills to enable them to:



- ❖ Gather Information – from the story, information or picture
- ❖ Interpret Information- what it tells us
- ❖ Apply Information – what it means in my life and the life of others

Please note: these ideas are taken from a number of sources. References can be found at the end of these notes.

### Looking at a picture

The activities below will help develop the children's observational skills.

- ◆ Looking at the whole picture  
Find something interesting, surprising, puzzling
- ◆ Flash Technique  
Show the picture for 10 seconds. In pairs the children discuss what they saw and then feedback to whole class. Clarify which observations are correct.  
Show the picture again but this time for longer. The children discuss what they can see.
- ◆ Noticing Details  
Show the picture for a few moments. The children should then close their eyes and try to remember details of the picture. Let the children look at the picture again and get them to discuss what they hadn't noticed the first time.
- ◆ Slow Reveal  
Reveal only part of the picture. What do the children think it might be a picture of? Gradually show more and more of the picture until the whole of it is revealed.
- ◆ In the Spotlight  
Highlight one part of the picture and talk about what is being focussed on.

- ◆ Cover up  
Cover up part of the picture. Let the children discuss ideas about what is hidden from view and come up with a suggestion. Get the children to talk about the clues they are using to make that decision.
- ◆ Twenty Questions  
One child looks at the picture. The others ask questions to find out about the picture. Only 'yes', 'no', 'maybe' answers can be given.
- ◆ Quick Draw  
One child studies the picture for a moment and then covers it up. They must now describe the picture for the others to draw it.
- ◆ Where was it?  
Let the children look at the picture for a few moments and then cover the picture up. Using a grid ask the children to draw certain objects/people from the picture.
- ◆ Description snap  
Give each pair of children the same picture and get them to write a description of it. The descriptions can now be swapped. Get the children to identify what is the same/different about the descriptions.
- ◆ First Impressions  
Get the children to write down the words/phrases that first come to their minds when they look at the picture.
- ◆ Adjective Collections  
Write a list of adjectives to describe the picture. You can get each child in turn to think of a word. Alternatively give the children a list of adjectives for them to select words to describe the picture.
- ◆ Alphabetical Description  
Starting with 'a' and going through the alphabet get the children to describe the picture.

### **Looking at a group of pictures**

- ◆ Find the connection  
Give the children four pictures and get them to find the link between them.
- ◆ Odd One Out  
Give the children three pictures and get them to select which is the odd one out and to give reasons why.

- ◆ Same/different  
Look at a number of different pictures of the same event. Get the children to identify what similarities and differences there are.
- ◆ Preference  
Give the children a selection of pictures on the same theme. Which do they prefer and why?
- ◆ Ranking Order  
As above but get the children to arrange the pictures according to their preferences. The sorting can be done in any form i.e. pyramid, diamond nine etc.
- ◆ Quick Flick  
Show the children a number of pictures in quick succession. Ask them to say which picture sticks in their mind and why.
- ◆ Which picture  
Give the children a range of pictures to choose from (but make sure no one can see which picture they are working on) and in pairs get them to write a description of their chosen picture. Swap the descriptions about. Now get the children to find the picture which matches the description given.

### **Questions to ask when looking at a picture**

What can you see?

What is happening?

What caught your eye first?

What are people doing? Are the people indoors or outdoors? Are they standing/sitting/kneeling?

What are people wearing? Are they all dressed the same?

What else is in the picture besides people? What buildings are in the picture? What animals are in the picture?

Where is the picture set?

How many parts to the picture are there? Are different things happening in different parts of the picture? What are people doing in the background/foreground? Are all the things happening at the same time?

What facial expressions can you see? Are the facial expressions all the same?

What colours are used? Which parts of the picture are light/dark?

The above is all about the information presented within the picture. In order to develop the children's thinking we need to allow them opportunities for more interpretive and reflective responses.

- ◆ Outside the picture  
Ask the children to draw what would be beyond the scene depicted in the picture.
- ◆ Narrative Voice  
Tell the story as the narrator would tell it.
- ◆ Lottery winner  
Get the children to choose a character from the picture. What would that character do if they won the lottery?
- ◆ Name the picture  
Ask the children to give a title for the picture and to explain why they have chosen it.

### **Further questions to ask when looking at a picture**

What do the characters think, feel, and believe about what is happening/has happened?

Why did the artist create this picture?

What does the artist think about this person/event?

What does the artist want us to think about?

Why did the artist chose those colours for the picture?

How does the picture make you feel?

Do you like/dislike the picture and why?

Where do you think this picture was hung?

Where would you put this picture?

How did the artist know about this event/person? Where might the artist have got their ideas from? Do you think the artist was there when the event took place?

Resources:

- ◆ 'Picturing Easter' by Lat Blaylock and Victoria Ikwuemesi. A book, pictures and CD-ROM. Other resources similar to this are Creation, Picturing Jesus Pack A and B.
- ◆ 'The Christ We Share' pictures, notes and a CD-ROM.
- ◆ [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov) The website for the National Gallery of Washington. It also includes a feature whereby you can focus in on different aspects of the paintings.
- ◆ [www.biblical-art.com](http://www.biblical-art.com) search for pictures either by artist, scripture reference or word
- ◆ [www.nationalgallery.co.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.co.uk)
- ◆ [www.wga.hu](http://www.wga.hu) database of European painting and sculpture of the Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassicism and Romanticism periods (1100-1850)
- ◆ [www.artcyclopedia.com](http://www.artcyclopedia.com)
- ◆ [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk) search images