

Rembrandt's Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32) Teacher Sheet

Questions for Class (with suggested answers)

Focus: The Artist as a Teacher

Starter: "A picture is worth a thousand words".

Do you agree?

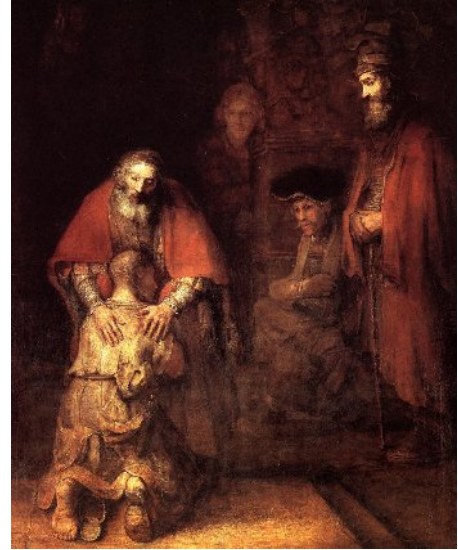
What *can* a picture teach you?

One minute task, in groups.

What is the story being told?

What century was this painted?

Three things that strike you about this painting.



Class discussion re. response to the painting.

What is the point of it? What is the artist trying to show us? How does he do this?

Questions about the painting.

Distribute questions among groups.

Students to scribe answers of group.

1. Who are the characters at the centre of the painting?
 - Father and Lost son
 - Main characters are in central part of painting
2. Who are the other characters, off to the side?
 - The elder brother, servants, neighbours?
3. What is happening in this painting?
 - Father grants his forgiveness:
The son wipes his tears as an act of contrition and thankfulness for the forgiveness shown to him by his father.
4. If the Father had a speech bubble, what would he be saying? (write a quote from the story that would fit)
 - "for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (Luke 15:24)."
5. Describe the Son's appearance, and what he is doing. Why is he looking in such a sorry state?
 - Ragged, ruined, repellent, bald head, like an outcast. Has returned after many wanderings and bad experiences (what ones?) Sunk to the condition of a swineherd, has nothing to offer.
6. What does the Son's body language say about what he is feeling/ thinking?
 - Doesn't dare to stand upright, or look up into his father's face. Yet clinging to him and finding shelter. Hiding from the others?
7. Describe the Father's appearance. What does the Father's body language say about him?
 - The Father has hurried to meet him before the door and receives the long-lost son with the utmost fatherly love Dressed in red, like royalty. Graciousness, benevolent. Contrast of the rich velvet cloak and son's

sackcloth. Outstretched hands, perhaps stiff with age, yet outstretched to embrace the son – his son is worth the effort no matter what.

8. What is the mood of the painting?

- Stillness, meditation: strong feelings are being processed. (what are those feelings?)
- Very solemn – figures still like statues, giving the emotions a lasting character
- Delicate, sensitive, as though son's return very fragile

9. What effect does the contrast between light and dark have?

- Father and son stand out in light against the darkness – the drama of their reunion; the power of forgiveness overcomes all evil.
- Light shining upon them from outside ?God's grace upon their reconciliation

10. How does the artist show that this painting could be about God, and the way that God forgives us? "the darkness of human existence illuminated by tenderness, of weary and sinful mankind taking refuge in the shelter of God's mercy."

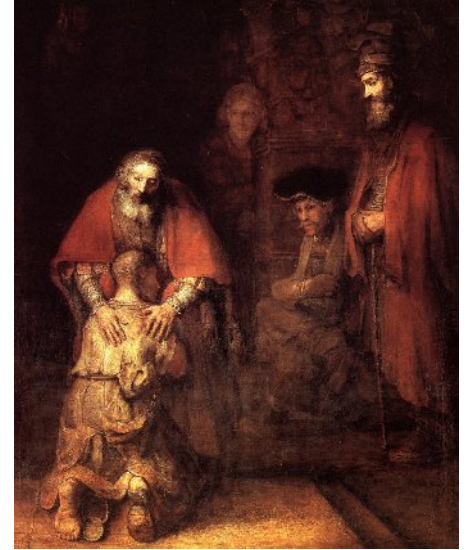
- Gentle, Unconditional acceptance, forgiveness, Sublime goodness, shelter and safety

Homework

"Artist as a Teacher": Sheet for analysis.

Rembrandt's Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32)

Questions for Class.



1. Who are the characters at the centre of the painting?
2. Who are the other characters, off to the side?
3. What is happening in this painting?
4. If the Father had a speech bubble , what would he be saying? (write a quote from the story that would fit)
5. Describe the Son's appearance, and what he is doing. Why is he looking in such a sorry state?
6. What does the Son's body language say about what he is feeling/ thinking?
7. Describe the Father's appearance. What does the Father's body language say about him?
8. What is the mood of the painting?
9. What effect does the contrast between light and dark have?
10. How does the artist show that this painting could be about God, and the way that God forgives us?