



TIMKEN
MUSEUM
OF ART

Lesson: Empathy Grades K-12



Giovanni Francesco Barbieri (1591-1666)

Giovanni Francesco Barbieri was nicknamed Guercino because he was “guercio”, which is the Italian word for cross-eyed. He was born in Cento, a small town in northern Italy. From 1621-23, he worked in Rome painting altarpieces and ceiling frescos for Pope Gregory XV. Guercino painted in the Baroque style, which describes artworks that are ornately decorated, dynamic and filled with emotion.

***The Return of the Prodigal Son* (1654-55)**

The return of the prodigal son is a well known biblical story that teaches repentance and forgiveness. It tells of a younger son who squanders his share of an inheritance and returns home to beg his father’s forgiveness. In this painting, the artist shows the moment when the impoverished son is welcomed by his father, who is dressed as a wealthy man. Depicted to the left is a servant who is sent to bring fine clothes for the penitent son and to kill a fatted calf for a feast.

Look, Talk, Listen, Connect

Look, Talk, Listen, Connect is a first-level activity that should be incorporated in the beginning of each lesson to familiarize students with the focus artwork. Based on the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) teaching method, this question-based activity centers on open-ended discussions of visual art and has proven to significantly increase students’ critical thinking, language and literacy skills.

As a first step, teachers will have to project an image of the focus artwork onto the classroom wall. Go to timkenmuseum.org to download the image. You can also take your students on a field trip to the Timken to have this discussion in front of the original work of art (for information on the Museum’s free transportation program go to timkenmuseum.org).

After students have been given a few minutes to closely examine the artwork, teachers facilitate a discussion by using these three open-ended questions:

- What’s going on in this work of art?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

As students respond, teachers are asked to:

- Paraphrase comments neutrally.
- Point at the area being discussed.
- Link and frame student comments.

Students are asked to:

- Look carefully at the artwork.
- Talk about what they observe.
- Back up their ideas with evidence.
- Listen to and consider the views of others.

Whether or not this is a ten-minute discussion or an in-depth exploration, this simple activity is a great way for teachers to start out each lesson. As they look, talk and listen, students are enabled to make connections to other social/cultural/ historical information and to their own experiences.



"Empathy" | K-5th Grades

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

English Language Arts and Visual Arts

COMMON CORE:

ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.2, 3.4, 3.6

ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2, 3.2A & C

ART MATERIALS:

- Two sheets of white copy paper
- Pencil with an eraser
- Something to color with- colored pencils, crayons, pastels

VOCABULARY:

Empathy – The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Subject Matter – What something is about.

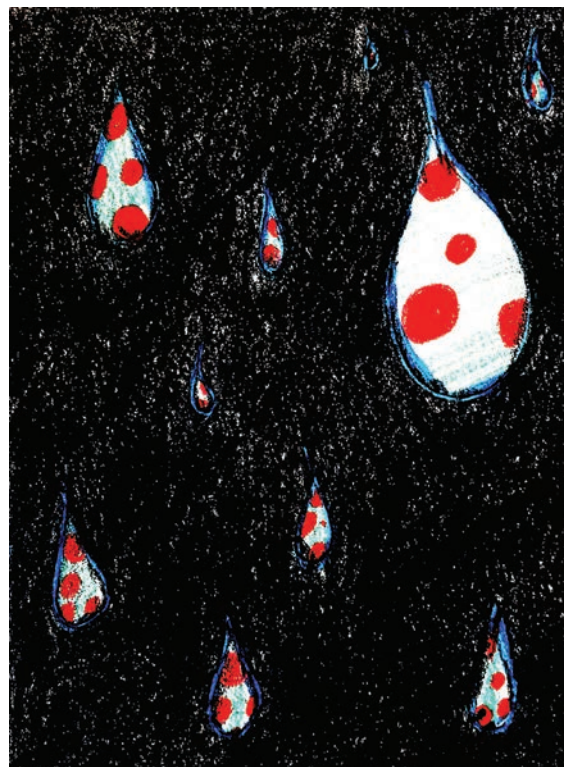
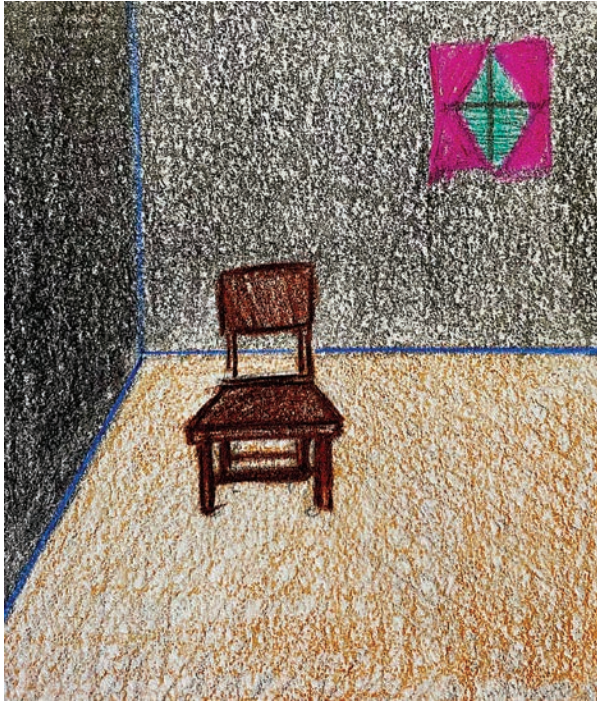
Symbols – Something that represents something else.

Process

- Begin the lesson with a *Look, Talk, Listen, and Connect* activity (see opposite page).
- Share the information about the artist and the painting that is provided on the opposite page.
- Take your students through the vocabulary definitions and point out, if possible, where the vocabulary words are reflected in the painting.
- Shift the conversation to reflecting on the painting as a story. Who are the main characters, where is the story taking place and what is happening? (Who? Where? What?)
- After learning that the painting is a story about forgiveness, ask students to raise their hands if they have ever apologized for something that they had done to someone else.
- Ask if there was anyone in the room who is willing to tell the story of their apology. Follow-up: How did the student feel before they apologized? How did the student feel after they apologized?
- Return to the painting and ask your students to imagine themselves as either the father or the son (remind them of the story being told in the painting). Note: If your students are too young and having difficulty understanding the question, ask them to relate a story of their own about a time when they had to apologize, and then continue the lesson using their personal story.
- Ask your students to think of three feelings they can imagine having if they were the father or the son, depending on which person they decided to be.
- Go around the room and ask students to share which person they chose from the painting, the subsequent feeling they had, and why. For example: "I chose the son, and I imagine that, if I were him I would feel ashamed, because he/I had been selfish for asking for his/my inheritance early.
- Ask students to select one of the feelings they felt for either the father or the son, and write it down on a sheet of blank paper. For example, "Sad".
- On your white board, use the word "Sad" as your example and write the word on the board.
- Go around the room asking students what they picture in their minds when they think of being sad.
- Write their answers on the board. Examples: a person crying, an empty chair in an empty room, a stormy day.
- Choose one of the words or phrases from the list and ask students to tell you something you can draw to symbolize the chosen word or phrase. Encourage simple answers that can be easily drawn.
- Draw out their ideas on to the white board next to the words or phrases. (For example: See supplement on page 4 for illustrations)
 - Someone crying – Draw different sized tear drops covering the paper.
 - An empty room – Draw a single chair in the middle of a piece of paper.
 - Gray clouds – Draw several different sized clouds and color them in with different shades of gray.

- Pass out a sheet of copy paper, and ask students to follow the process you demonstrated (steps listed below). Make sure they fill the paper with their drawings.
 - 1 – Choose a word or phrase that reflects how you think the father or son would feel.
 - 2 – Draw a picture that illustrates the word.
 - 3 – Color in your picture with colors that reflect on the emotive word.
- Go around the room and ask students to share their work, but instruct them to not tell what their word or phrase means.

Supplement 1: “SAD”





"Empathy" | 6th-12th Grades

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

English Language Arts and Visual Arts

COMMON CORE:

ELA-LITERACY.W.11.2.B
ELA-LITERACY.W.11.3.D
ELA-LITERACY.SL.11.5

VOCABULARY:

Empathy – The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Subject Matter – What something is about.

Symbols – Something that represents something else.

ART MATERIALS:

- Two sheets of white copy paper
- Pencil with an eraser
- Something to color with – colored pencils, crayons, pastels

Process

- Begin the lesson with a *Look, Talk, Listen, and Connect* activity (see page 2).
- Share the information about the artist and the painting (see page 2).
- Take your students through the vocabulary definitions and point out, if possible, where the vocabulary words are reflected in the painting.
- Shift the conversation to reflecting on the painting as a story. Who are the main characters, where is the story taking place and what is happening? (Who? Where? What?)
- After learning that the painting is story about forgiveness, ask students to raise their hands if they have ever apologized for something that they had done to someone else.
- Ask if there was anyone in the room who is willing to tell the story of their apology. Follow-up: How did the student feel before they apologized? How did the student feel after they apologized?
- Return to the painting and ask your students to imagine themselves as either the father or the son (remind them of the story being told in the painting).
- Ask your students to think of three feelings they can imagine having if they were the father or the son, depending on which person they decided to be.
- Go around the room and ask students to share which person they chose from the painting, the subsequent feeling they had, and why. For example: "I chose the son, and I imagine that, if I were him I would feel ashamed, because he/I had been selfish for asking for his/my inheritance early.
- Pair up students and ask them to take turns sharing a personal story about a time in their life where they had made a mistake and wished they had done something differently.
- Instruct the person who is listening to write down their thoughts and emotions about the story they are hearing from their partner. For example: I feel compassion because I have been in the same situation. I think this person needs to be forgiven, is very kind...etc.
- Ask students to share their thoughts and feelings out loud and write some of them on your white board.
- Choose one of the thoughts or feelings on the board, circle it, and erase the rest. For example: "I feel compassion."
- Once the feeling or emotion is chosen, go around the room and ask students what visual imagery or symbols can represent it. For example: Compassion can be communicated by a large tree providing cover for a bunny during a rainstorm (see supplement on page 6 for an illustration example).
- Draw out one of the visual images or symbols on the white board to demonstrate what they will be doing for their projects.
- Ask students to choose one of their thoughts or feelings to illustrate.
- Once the project is complete, allow time for students to show their illustrations to their partners to share how their stories influenced the artwork created.

Supplement 2

