Picture Books of The Past:

Celebrating M&G's Collection

Late Renaissance: Sacred Conversations

What We Learned:

- We learned that Venice was a key city during the late Renaissance and that Titian was the most important painter in the city. Two of his students Tintoretto and Bordone also became famous.
- We learned that Venetian painters liked using canvases rather than wood panels for painting because the damp climate in Venice made wooden panels warp. Also, the city's thriving shipbuilding industry made canvas readily available.
- We also explored how the Venetian painters used perspective in two works from the Museum & Gallery collection: *The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon* by Tintoretto and *The Last Supper* attributed to Stefano Cernotto.

Art Activity:

Realistic Landscapes

We had a wonderful time making art today! Your child was introduced to Renaissance Venetian artists like Tintoretto. We learned that artists of this time sought to create more realistic landscapes by incorporating one-point perspective. After our lesson we drew landscapes of our own! We created hazy, sfumato mountains that recede into the distance and added architectural elements like the arches and columns found in Tintoretto's painting *The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon.* We hope you enjoy your child's landscapes as much as we enjoyed making them!



1525



Albrecht Dürer, called the German Raphael, writes the first German manual on geometry.

1537



Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent rebuilds Jerusalem's city walls. These walls still surround the Old City today.

1544



Tomatoes are brought into Venice. Italians first thought they were poisonous but careful observation and taste testing soon helped them overcome that fear!

1558



Elizabeth I becomes Queen of England, beginning a Golden Age in English literature and theater.

1565



Admiral **Pedro Menéndez de Avilés** founds St. Augustine Florida, creating the first successful European settlement in Spanish Florida.

1599



William Shakespeare helps build the Globe Theater in London, where his play *Hamlet* will soon be staged.

Albrecht Dürer:
The German Raphael

Albrecht Dürer, called the German Raphael, visited Venice twice in his life absorbing firsthand the great works of artists like Titian. He was supremely gifted. In addition to creating beautiful oil paintings, Dürer also did woodcut illustrations, intricate engravings, and watercolor studies of the natural world. Below are three examples of his skill:

Consider:

- Notice the amazing detail in each picture.
- Which one do you like best?
- Why? Is it the subject, a specific detail, the color?
- You can read a short biography of Dürer (with more pictures) **HERE**.



The Young Hare



A Great Piece of Turf



A Left Wing of a Blue Roller

A Closer Look:

Sacred Conversations

In today's lesson we looked at Titian's beautiful *Sacred Conversation* to highlight his use of "shimmering colors" on a finely woven canvas. Below is another famous Venetian painting on the same subject from M&G's collection. A "sacred conversation" is an imaginary gathering of figures from different time periods who meet to converse with members of the holy family.

In Titian's painting Mary and the Christ Child "converse" with two saints from the 1200s: St. Catherine of Alexandria and St. Dominic. The kneeling figure in the front is the Donor from the 1500s who commissioned the picture.

In Bonifazio's picture Elizabeth, Zacharias, and their infant son John the Baptist talk with Mary and Jesus. John is wearing his traditional camel skin garment. In addition to the Biblical characters, are two unknown female martyrs being crowned by the child Jesus (both identified by their palm branches). Off to the right, the apostle Andrew talks with the church father Jerome. Andrew lived about 200 years before Jerome was born!

Take a closer look and compare the works. As you do . . .

- Look at how each artist uses perspective to create depth.
- Notice the characters' gestures and focus. What might these details tell us about the story surrounding this conversation?
- Which picture do you like best? Why?



Sacred Conversation by Titian



Sacred Conversation by Bonifazio

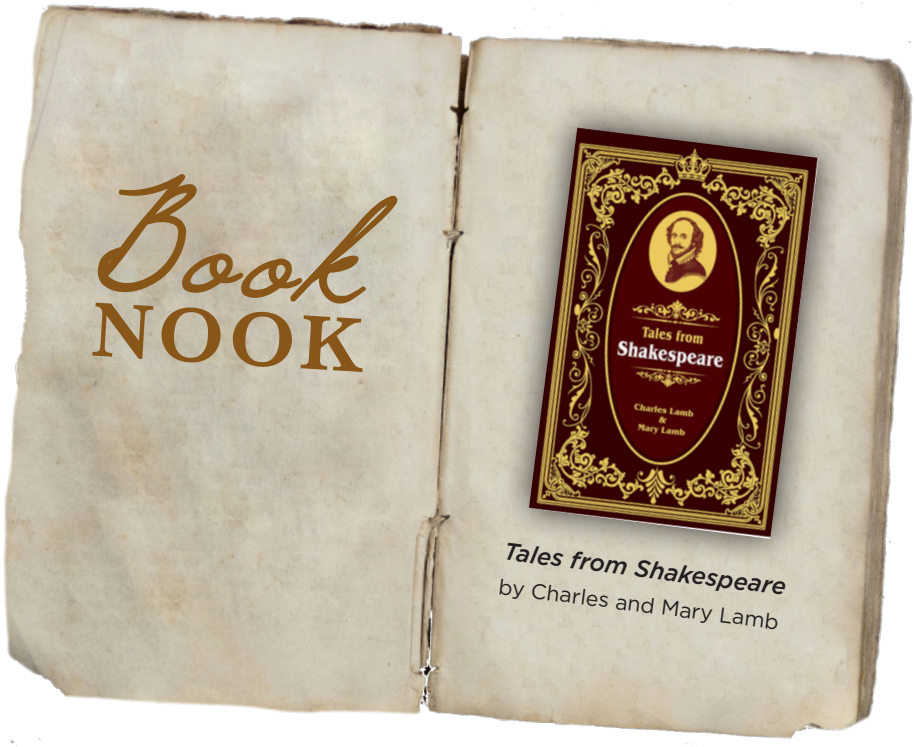
A Little Review on Symbolism: Bonifazio's *Conversation*

- The **broken column** behind Zacharias symbolizes the brevity of life and the presence of sin in a fallen world.
- The **goldfinches** resting on the column are a symbol of Jesus's death. According to legend, these birds fed on thorns and were thus connected to Jesus's crown of thorns.
- The springtime **environment**, the **rabbit**, martyr's **laurel wreaths**, and **palm branches** are all symbols of the resurrection—a topic thrilling to all who are gathered in the painting.
- The image of a **lion** (bottom righthand corner) is associated with Jerome and the gospel writer Mark, who is the patron saint of Venice.

Additional Resources

- Interested in becoming an Italian Chef? Visit I'm the Chef Too! for 5 Easy Italian Recipes for Kids to Cook and Learn.
- Like being a wordsmith? Visit the Folger Shakespeare Library and Try Your Hand at Shakespeare.
- If you prefer acting to writing go to the Folger Library's page and scroll down to their Short Shakespeare play scripts for kids.
- The Venetian artists loved mixing and blending colors to create beautiful fabrics and interesting atmospheric effects. In other words, they had to know a lot about how colors work together. To learn more, watch the video "Art with Ms. Nestel: The Basics of Color Theory."
- To learn about the famous Queen Elizabeth I, click HERE.

Due to the changing nature of web resources, M&G strongly urges you as the parent to preview these sites before your child accesses them. The fact that these sites are available on this handout does not imply that M&G endorses their content from the standpoint of morals, philosophy, theology, or scientific hypotheses.



M&G Educational Mission:
Through tours, events, and publications, the Museum & Gallery seeks to partner with educators in fulfilling all of the National Visual Arts Content Standards. By integrating art into the core curriculum, M&G's goals are to teach children to value the arts, to communicate through the arts, to become creative problem solvers through the inclusion of STEAM-related concepts and fully-developed STEAM units, to understand history and culture in light of the arts, to improve literary interest and understanding through visual storytelling, to critique the arts, and to develop an aesthetic awareness of the arts. Through fulfilling the mission, M&G is able to help develop citizens who have the ability to think, feel, and understand the world in which they live.

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