

Art

Art

Notes

Route B

Age 5-11

Note: any activities involving photographing pupils must have parental permission.

Background information

1. *Naomi entreating Ruth and Orpah to return to the land of Moab* by William Blake

- William Blake (1757-1827) was a man of many talents. He was an artist, poet, printmaker and visionary. He was the writer of 'Tyger' and 'Jerusalem'.
- Blake came from a devout Christian family and the Bible was an influence on his work, although Blake was a rather unconventional Christian.
- Painted in 1795, this image shows the three women wearing the fashions of the late 18th century.
- The painting is the moment when Ruth refuses to leave. She clings to Naomi. Orpah is shown leaving but in deep distress.
- Naomi's open hands suggest she can offer Ruth nothing.
- The flowing lines of the women's clothing, the gentle sweep of the arms and the bent backs echo the landscape. The colours are soft.
- The gestures, body language and expression capture the grief of the women.
- The story of Ruth is set in the turbulent times not long after the Israelites had settled in Canaan (Israel) around 12th century.
- Ruth was the great grandmother of King David and an ancestor of Jesus.
- Ruth is the stranger from another land who shows how faith should be lived. She kept the Jewish law (Honour your mother and father . . . care for the widow, etc.).
- Ruth becomes a gleaner, someone who picked up the fallen bits of corn. Biblical law stated that a farmer could not pick anything that dropped or was left behind by mistake. Farmers also had to leave the corners of their fields for the poor to pick.



Naomi entreating Ruth and Orpah to return to the land of Moab
by William Blake

2. *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* by William Holman Hunt

- Holman Hunt was a founder member of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood founded in the 1840s. This group of painters wanted to show things as they were and see the wonder in reality.
- Hunt was concerned with accuracy so went to Palestine in order to make sure his pictures represented the people and the places. He believed his realism made the Bible more alive for people.
- *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* was painted between 1854 and 1860.
- This painting reflects Luke 2:41-51 when Jesus, Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of Passover. Jesus was about 12, the age when boys became adults. As a 12 year old, Jesus could have travelled with the men or he could have continued to travel with the women as a child. Neither Mary nor Joseph missed Jesus until evening when they camped. They returned to Jerusalem and searched the town, eventually finding him with the teachers in the Temple. Mary was upset and asked Jesus why he caused them to worry. Jesus was surprised and replied

saying he thought they knew he would be involved in his 'Father's work – meaning his father God.

- The Passover celebrated the freeing of the Hebrew slaves under Moses.
- Two verses from this story are inscribed on the frame. Like most Victorians, Hunt used the King James Bible.

And his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

Wist – know

Thou, Ye – you

Thus – in this way

Thy – your

In modern English:

And his mother said to him, 'Son why have you treated us like this? Dad and I have been searching for you, we were worried and upset.' And Jesus replied, 'Why were you looking? I thought you knew I would be doing my Father's work.'



The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple
by William Holman Hunt

- Observations on the painting:
 - In this painting the teachers (Scribes and Rabbis) and their servants are reacting in different ways to Jesus. Some are angry, some are rejecting this young boy, others are fascinated by his wisdom that seems to be beyond his years.
 - The painting shows a range of emotions and reactions. Hunt was not just painting the story.
 - In the background there is building going on. This is the old Temple being completed. Building was still going on in Jesus' time. Symbolically, this is the end of one stage, represented by the Temple and the beginning of the next represented by Jesus. This is a turning point.
 - There are two main groups: the teachers and Mary, Joseph and Jesus. This is the old meeting the new.
- The old world (the teachers) is generally painted negatively: blind, weak, hostile, uninterested, mocking. These are the people who will oppose Jesus when he is older. Blindness in authority figures is a symbol of spiritual blindness.
- The painting is full of symbols:
 - Doves – symbols of the Holy Spirit (God present and active).
 - There is a verse on the gold circle behind Joseph 'And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple' Malachi 3:1. It is written in Hebrew and Latin.
 - Money changers – Jesus as an adult would call them thieves and throw them out of the Temple.
 - Wheat – Jesus referred to his death this way. Wheat has to be buried in the earth and 'die' in order to create a new plant.
 - The blind beggar – Jesus would heal blind beggars.

Resources

For a range of paintings of Ruth and Naomi see: www.bible-art.info/Ruth.htm