

“WHAT COLOR WAS BABY JESUS' HAIR? REPRESENTING THE CHRIST CHILD MULTICULTURALLY”

by Alexis Chin

From: Building Faith — A MINISTRY OF VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
www.buildfaith.org/representing-the-christ-child-multiculturally/

Activity: The Holy Family in Art

Across cultures, Jesus and his family have inspired countless works of art. Christians around the world have represented the Holy Family. When we use art in our teaching we ignite visual learners and inspire children's own art-making. Using books or online tools, select images of Jesus from different cultures and time periods to compare and contrast.

Invite children to notice details and connect to the art using questions such as:

- How does each artist see Jesus (and/or Mary and Joseph)?
- What parts of the story are emphasized?
- In what ways do artist's portrayal of Jesus connect to his/her culture?
- What do you feel as you look at the image?

Tips for Finding Art

Many museums offer online images of pieces from their collection their websites. For example: [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) – see [The Holy Family, by El Greco](#) and [Double Icon, from Ethiopia](#).

The [Smithsonian American Art Museum](#) is a good source for more contemporary American perspectives. Use the search word "Nativity" for works by artists such as [Edward B. Webster](#).

John Giuliani is an American artist who has created Native American images of Jesus and the saints. Many of his paintings are in churches in the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. [John Giuliani icons and paintings](#)

The Jesus Mafa project from Cameroon produced beautiful images of Jesus in traditional African settings. Unfortunately, the main website that housed these full images no longer exists. You can see some small images through Google, and also here: [Jesus Mafa on Global Christians](#)

Used with care, Pinterest is the best online resource for diverse images of the Holy Family. The problem is that many images are not properly credited. Please use these images carefully, do not publish them, and avoid re-sharing them online.

Extending the Discussion

For further connections, use a map or atlas to accompany each image of art. Help children pinpoint the geographic area from which the image comes.