

Simply Charlotte Mason presents

Mark & Acts



Bible Picture Portfolios

by Emily Kiser

With Bible Picture Portfolios

you have everything you need to present enjoyable Bible lessons in a school Bible class, family devotions, or Sunday School. The beautiful art combined with the Bible accounts will influence and enrich your students more than you can imagine.

In this book you will find

- Eight Bible passages from the book or theme of this portfolio. Both English Standard Version (ESV) and King James Version (KJV) are included for you to choose from.
- Simple step-by-step instructions that explain how to use the artwork to enrich Bible lessons with all ages.
- Helpful Leading Thoughts that will allow you to point out details and engage in discussion about each picture.
- A brief biographical sketch of each artist to share with your students as desired.
- Cross references to related works in other Bible Picture Portfolios and Picture Study Portfolios, so you can easily expand or extend your Bible study.

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published by Simply Charlotte Mason

Bible Picture Portfolio: Mark and Acts
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About Bible Picture Portfolios

In *Home Education*, Charlotte Mason suggested that parents give their children reverent pictures to look at—art that illustrates the Bible stories read from Scripture. She said, “The study of such pictures . . . should be a valuable part of a child’s education; it is no slight thing to realise how the Nativity and the visit of the Wise Men filled the imagination of the early Masters, and with what exceeding reverence and delight they dwelt upon every detail of the sacred story. . . . [T]he child who gets it in early days, will have a substratum of reverent feeling upon which should rest his faith” (*Home Education*, p. 252). In keeping with this advice, these Bible Portfolios have been produced, in order to make the selection of profitable pictures easy and to include the relevant Scripture texts that accompany the stories.

Miss Mason recommended that a simple picture study be done with these pictures, allowing the children a few moments to carefully and quietly observe the painting. Afterwards, turn the picture over and give them the chance to “say what they have seen in it” (*Home Education*, p. 253). She cautioned that parents and teachers shouldn’t give the interpretation of the picture, nor drive home the points of the story, but instead, “let the pictures tell their own tale” (p. 253).

These portfolios have been created for all those interested in giving their students biblical art to study and enjoy:

- Teachers may use these portfolios for Bible lessons during school time.
- Families can benefit from adding them into their devotions or family worship.
- Sunday School teachers can use them with their classes to bring high-quality artwork and picture study to children who may not regularly be exposed to it.

We hope these portfolios help make this aspect of the great feast of a Charlotte Mason education easy to implement and enjoy!

How to Use Bible Picture Portfolios

As in other Bible lessons, the Scripture passage should be read and narrated first. This is the one lesson in which Miss Mason encouraged children to use the exact words they heard in their narrations; and as these words are the inspired word of God, it's no wonder! Two translations for each Scripture passage are included in this portfolio: the English Standard Version (ESV) and the King James Version (KJV). You are welcome to use whichever version your family, school, or church prefers.

After the passage has been narrated, show the students the corresponding picture and allow them to observe it carefully for a few minutes in silence. Encourage the children to make a picture of it in their mind. After this quiet time of studying the picture, turn it over and have them share what they've seen. This is all that is necessary to enjoy and learn from the artwork.

Some Leading Thoughts have been included for each picture that give a bit more information about each piece. The biographical information may be shared with your students before looking at the picture to arouse their sympathy with the artist. The other information may prove interesting and useful for the teacher: a painting's history has been shared if it is of particular interest, optional prompts for discussion have been given, and some details that may be unclear have been explained. Teachers should feel free to use the Leading Thoughts with their students if they ask questions or would like to know more about the artwork, but it is perfectly fine to enjoy the picture without using these additional materials.

To recap,

1. Read the Scripture passage.
2. Have the children narrate the passage, using words as close to the text as possible.

3. Show the artwork to the children, possibly sharing a bit about the artist who painted the piece, and allow a few quiet moments to closely examine the painting.
4. Turn the picture over and ask the children to tell what they saw in it—not only a description of what it looked like, but also anything it made them think of in light of the Scripture passage just read.
5. Optionally, share some interesting idea from the Leading Thoughts section about the piece, or invite the students into a discussion using the prompts in the text as they are interested and engaged.

Introductory Note

In choosing Scripture passages for her curriculum programmes, Charlotte Mason relied upon Canon Paterson Smyth's lessons for Sunday Schools. In his volume on the book of Mark, Paterson Smyth included selections from the first eight chapters of Acts after Mark had been completed. Miss Mason followed suit, so we have included a few pieces from Acts as well as those from Mark in this portfolio.



Christ's Baptism

The Baptism of Christ by Nicolas Poussin

c. 1641–1642, oil on canvas, 37.5" x 47.6"
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

1. *Read the Bible passage in the translation of your choice.*

Mark 1:9–11 (ESV)

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open

and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Mark 1:9–11 (KJV)

And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and

the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

2. *Ask for a narration of the Bible passage.*

3. *Show the picture, tell about the artist if desired, and allow a few minutes to study it.*

Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665) was a prominent painter of the French Baroque period, but he spent most of his career painting in Rome rather than his native France. The classical style of Italian Renaissance painting is evident in the following details: muscular figures in various postures, garments draped like classical togas, and the landscape receding into the background.

4. *Turn the picture over and ask students to tell what they saw.*

5. *(optional) Share some or all of these Leading Thoughts.*

Can you identify which figure is Christ? Which is John the Baptist? Which moment of the Scripture narrative did Poussin capture in this scene? How does that realization shed light on the various reactions of the other figures in the picture?

