# **Disposition:** Being Imaginative and Exploratory

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## **Lesson:** Three

### Question/LO: How do Christian artists represent Jesus? How do people imagine Jesus?

| **Dimension of learning** | **Activities** | **Resources** |
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| Learning about religious traditions and non-religious world-views | Select about five or six different images of Jesus from artists from round the world and place them at different parts of the room. It is valuable to choose a range of images from different cultural backgrounds, including any represented in the classroom/school.1. Ask pupils to look at each of the images, and then to line up in front of the image that they recognise most as being an image of Jesus. There are likely to be lines of varying lengths. Ask pupils about the lines that they are not standing in (so that they are not asked about their own views, but to surmise why others are making their choices). Why do you think that one line is so short? Why does this line have lots of people in it? What is it about that picture, do you think, that have made people chose to stand in that line? Receive a few answers.
2. Ask pupils to move to line up in front of the picture that looks least like their idea of Jesus. Repeat the questions.
3. Finally ask pupils to line up in front of the image that they find most interesting or surprising. This time ask questions of pupils in each line about the picture they have chosen.

Explain that Christian artists have painted Jesus for centuries. They had to use their imaginations as the Bible does not provide any descriptions at all, and there were no cameras available, so there is no record. Explain that art has always been an important element of many religions. Do remind pupils, though, as noted in the previous lesson, that many Muslims do not depict Allah or prophets such as Isa (Jesus). Artists show their ideas in their work. They often also share messages about these religious figures by the way they have drawn them, the colours they have used and the symbols that they have included in the image. | If you have them, there are excellent pictures in the packs listed below. If you do not have these resources, then several images can be found and printed from ‘Jesus laughing and loving’. KS2\_Y5\_Unit\_12\_Su\_Wk\_03\_of\_03\_R13\_Resource\_Sheet\_v2Picturing Easter, Lat Blaylock, RE Today, This pack presents Christian art work from around the world on A4 picture cards, teacher’s book and CD-ROM. Picturing Jesus Fresh Ideas, Lat Blaylock, RE Today, ISBN 978-1-905893-19-5. This pack presents 24 images from the global art of contemporary Christians on a CD and on A4 picture cards, with full teacher’s notes. Jesus through art, Margaret CoolingThe Christ We Share, CMS/USPG. This pack presents Jesus as he is shown through the eyes of Christian artists from Africa, Asia and Latin America. |
| Learning from experience | What ideas do pupils have about what Jesus may have looked like? Ask pupils for comments and create a list together. Where have these ideas come from, do they think? | n/a |
| Learning about religious traditions and non-religious world-views | Explain that many people’s ideas that Jesus had a European appearance (blond or brown hair and pale skin) is because of the way that he has been represented in European artwork. The artworks on display in the classroom have been painted by people who want to portray a Jesus who looks familiar to them in their context: “If Christians believe that God became a human being, then God can take the form of any human being – even me.”Sometimes artists use their imagination to make a different point. Show the image found in this BBC story Laura May Wadsworth’s picture (*A Last Supper*, 2009) – shows the moment when Jesus predicts that the apostle Peter will deny knowing him three times before dawn – with Jesus portrayed as a black manin the12-foot-long oil on aluminium. Lorna based her composition on Leonardo da Vinci’s ‘Last Supper’ a 15th-century mural in the refectory of Santa Maria della Grazie, in Milan.  This is a very famous picture. People say that Leonardo Da Vinci used local people as models for his painting. Give pupils a few minutes looking at each of the paintings. What similarities do they notice? What differences are apparent? Create an A4 sheet for each pupil with pasted in images of each of the pictures, and a set of questions for each one:How are the images used to convey meaning about this person or religious beliefs? What religious message do you think is being portrayed? What do you think the colours represent? How does this art work make you feel? Why? How do you think the artist felt? Why? Do you like this painting? Why?For her interpretation, Lorna chose the Jamaican-born fashion model, Tafari Hinds, as Christ. Explaining why she depicted Jesus as a black man, Wadsworth said: *“Painting the Last Supper altarpiece made me really think about how we are accustomed to seeing Jesus portrayed. Experts agree he would most likely have had Middle Eastern features, yet for centuries European artists have traditionally painted Christ in their own image. I cast Tafari as my Jesus to make people question the Western myth that he had fair hair and blue eyes. ………… I also knew that, from a previous portrait of Tafari, there is something in his countenance (face) that people find deeply empathetic and moving, which is the overriding quality I wanted my Christ to embody.”* This is taken from notes on her exhibition.Artist uses their imaginations when painting, but not everyone agrees with what they express. Share the story from the BBC website about the fact that this painting was shot. Ask pupils to use the answers to their questions to create a short piece about the two artworks, and to speculate about why Laura Wadsworth’s painting may have been attacked.  | <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-gloucestershire-50331743> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Supper_%28Leonardo%29>Source of the quotation is found here;<http://lornamaywadsworth.com/exhibitions#onshow-now><https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-gloucestershire-50331743> |
| Learning from faith and non-religious world-views | Why might it be helpful to people to imagine Jesus as not tied to any single cultural background?  | n/a |