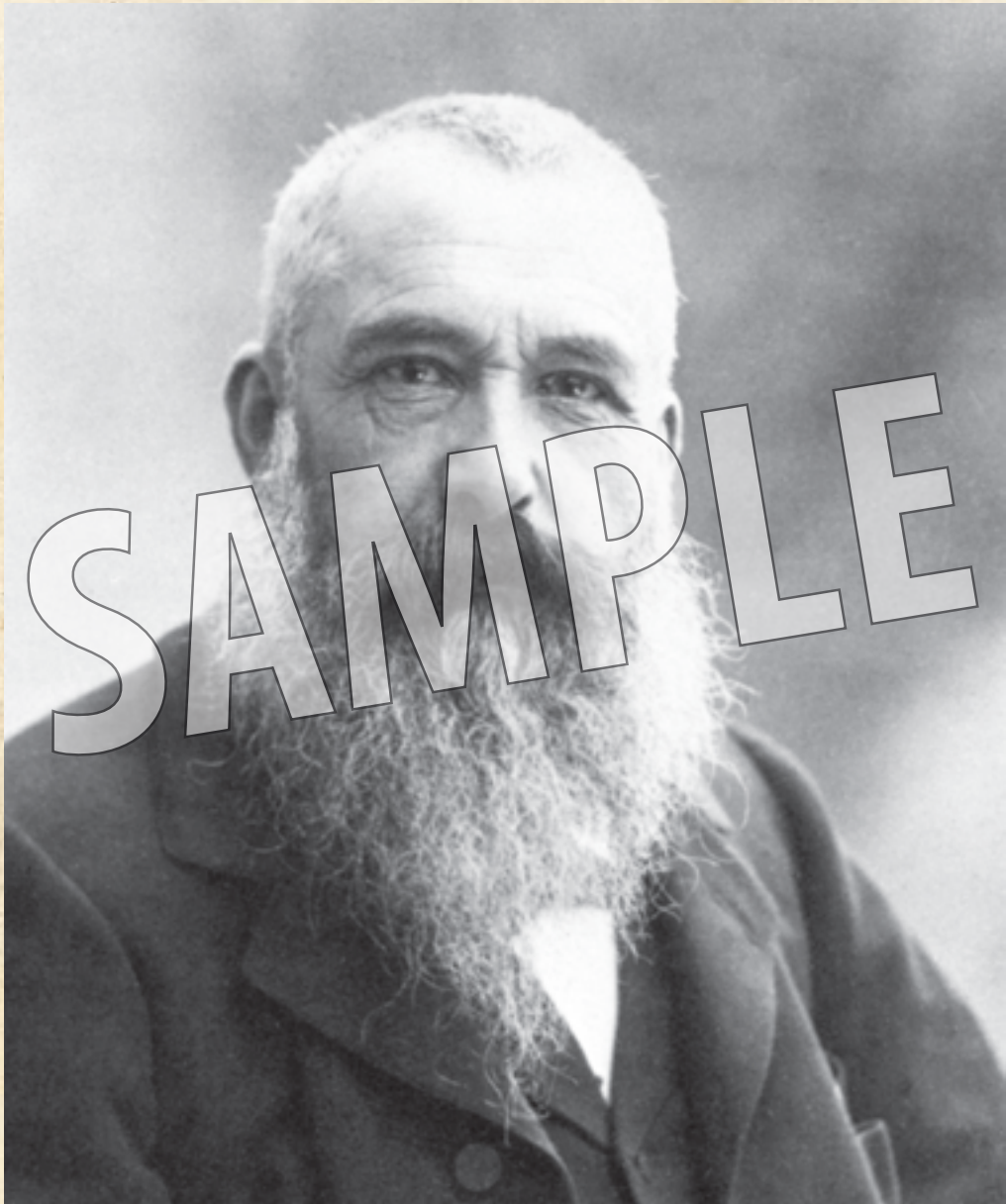


Simply Charlotte Mason presents

Monet



Picture Study Portfolios
by Emily Kiser

Breathe a sigh of relief—you, the teacher, don't have to know about art in order to teach picture study!

With Picture Study Portfolios you have everything you need to help your family enjoy and appreciate beautiful art. Just 15 minutes once a week and the simple guidance in this book will influence and enrich your children more than you can imagine.

In this book you will find

- A living biography to help your child form a relation with the artist
- Step-by-step instructions for doing picture study with the pictures in this portfolio
- Helpful Leading Thoughts that will add to your understanding of each picture
- Extra recommended books for learning more about the artist

"We cannot measure the influence that one or another artist has upon the child's sense of beauty, upon his power of seeing, as in a picture, the common sight of life; he is enriched more than we know in having really looked at even a single picture."—Charlotte Mason

Simply
Charlotte Mason
.com

Monet
(1840–1926)

by Emily Kiser

To be used with the Picture Study Portfolio: Monet
published by Simply Charlotte Mason

Monet
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Picture Study

Why do we do Picture Study?

A Charlotte Mason education is full of variety. Parents spread a feast before their children, giving them endless opportunity to taste, savor, enjoy, discover, and appreciate many different kinds of intellectual food, otherwise known as ideas. Nature study, music, and art are just as important in this balanced feast as math, reading, and science. Picture study doesn't take much time, just fifteen minutes or so each week, but its benefits are far reaching: "We cannot measure the influence that one or another artist has upon the child's sense of beauty, upon his power of seeing, as in a picture, the common sights of life; he is enriched more than we know in having really looked at even a single picture" (*Home Education*, p. 309).

Charlotte Mason says that it rests with parents and no others to provide an *intellectual culture* by which she means, "not so much the getting of knowledge, nor even getting the power to learn, but the cultivation of the power *to appreciate, to enjoy, whatever is just, true, and beautiful in thought and expression*" (*Formation of Character*, p. 212, emphasis mine).

Through conscientious study of the great masters of art, children take delight in the "just, true, and beautiful" expression that these artists have given us. Charlotte Mason went so far as to tell us that God "whispers in the ear" of the great artists and we owe it to Him to study their works and read their messages rightly (*Ourselves*, Part 2, p. 102). This ability to appreciate and read a painting rightly is a skill to be developed over time, one that develops naturally as we, the teachers, expose our children to great works of art. "As in a worthy book we leave the author to tell his own tale, so do we trust a picture to tell its tale through the medium the artist gave it" (*Towards A Philosophy of Education*, p. 216).

How do we do Picture Study?

“But the reader will say, ‘A young child cannot appreciate art; it is only the colour and sentiment of a picture that reach him. . . .’ But, as a matter of fact, the minds of children and of their elders alike accommodate themselves to what is put in their way; and if children appreciate the vulgar and sentimental in art, it is because that is the manner of art to which they become habituated” (*Home Education*, pp. 307, 308).

Art appreciation is an integral part of the abundant feast that parents should spread before their children. Just as we weed the “twaddle” out of our bookshelves, and replace it with high quality literature, we should be feeding our children’s intellects with high quality art, not “vulgar, sentimental” illustrations that are common in children’s books. Our children are born persons who appreciate *real* art, from a very young age.

“We recognise that the power of appreciating art and of producing to some extent an interpretation of what one sees is as universal as intelligence, imagination, nay, speech, the power of producing words. But there must be knowledge and, in the first place, *not the technical knowledge of how to produce*, but some reverent knowledge of what has been produced; that is, ***children should learn pictures, line by line, group by group, by reading, not books, but pictures themselves***” (*Towards a Philosophy of Education*, p. 214, emphasis mine).

The first step in doing picture study is supplying your children with good art. Charlotte Mason believed that art appreciation, in the form of picture study, should be included in a student’s lessons from the age of six onwards. Each term the student studies six or so works by a single artist. It is not important to study artists in chronological order, and we do not give young children teaching on art history periods; rather, they will assimilate this information as their history reading progresses, and their knowledge of art increases. Breathe a sigh of relief—you, the teacher, don’t have to know about art in order to teach picture study! “[T]he first and most important thing is to know the pictures themselves” (*Towards a Philosophy of Education*, p. 216). It can be helpful to choose artists to study who painted during, or pictured scenes from, the history period you are studying, although this is not necessary. More important, make sure that the styles of the artists studied during the year are different from one another to avoid confusion for your children.

When we begin to study a new artist Charlotte Mason suggested that we read a short story of that artist’s life. Then we let the children study one picture, silently taking

it all in, noticing every detail until they know it and see it in their mind's eye. This type of study will furnish them with a portable gallery hung in their mind that they will carry with them throughout their lives. They will have made connections with hundreds of great works of art over the course of their school studies, and will know these works intimately.

After studying the picture, the reproduction is turned over or hidden from sight, and a six- to nine-year-old then describes what he saw with all the details he took in, maybe drawing a few lines to show where various objects were located—all from memory. An older child adds to this narration a description of the lines of composition, light and shade, and the style of this artist, as he is able. (All of this knowledge comes through the simple study of pictures in this manner, week after week, short after short lesson.) High school students may render in mono-chrome (all one color), and from memory, as many details of the picture as they can remember. Don't have your children attempt to reproduce the picture exactly; Charlotte Mason said this lessens a child's reverence for the artwork (*Towards a Philosophy of Education*, p. 216).

When the narrations, oral or drawn, are complete, a discussion about the picture may occur. Teachers should keep in mind that they are not the dispensers of knowledge, but should tell the name of the piece and ask the child's response to it. Did you like this painting? What did this picture make you think of? Did it remind you of anything you've read about? These simple questions further a child's interaction with the piece, helping him connect the new painting to his previous knowledge. Many works of art have subjects from literature, mythology, the Bible; your children will recall the stories that they have read or will remember the picture when they do read about the subjects portrayed.

All of these things occur in one short lesson each week. Fifteen or twenty minutes once a week is not hard to fit in, even though your school schedule may seem full. The change in type of lesson, the enjoyment afforded by looking at great art, and the relations your students will make are just some of the rewards you will discover by including picture study in your home school.

How to use a Picture Study Portfolio

1. Read the story.

At the start of the term, read the story of the artist included in this portfolio. It may take one or two lessons to complete the reading, but keep the lessons short—fifteen to twenty minutes maximum. Make sure students narrate the reading, either orally or in written form according to their ability.

2. Select a picture.

After this introduction to the new artist for the term, select one picture to study per lesson. Charlotte Mason recommended six different pictures. This allows students to become familiar with the style of the artist, after even just six pictures they will recognize paintings they have not seen before as the work of an artist they have studied. We have included more than six pictures so that you may choose which you would like to study. There is no particular order to the pictures; it isn't necessary to study some over others. The choice is yours; select pictures that appeal to you and your children. Spread the individual works out over the term, or introduce one painting each week for six weeks and then allow the students quiet time over the remaining weeks to look over the pictures at their leisure.

3. Do a picture study.

During the picture study lesson follow these steps:

- Ask the children to tell you about the picture you looked at last time. If this is the first picture study of the term, ask them to tell you a little about the artist's life, where he was from, or something else they remember about him.

- Before they look at the picture, you may want to tell them how large the actual work is, comparing it to some object they are familiar with. Do not tell them the title yet.
- Have the children look at the picture silently for 3–5 minutes, looking closely at all the details in the painting until they can see it in their mind’s eye. Have them check to make sure they can see the whole picture with their eyes closed.
- Next, ask the student(s) to narrate the picture, telling as much as they can about the painting. If you are doing picture study with more than one child, start with one and stop him after he has narrated some of the picture, then have the next child add to his sibling’s narration. Older students may do a drawing of the piece from memory if they are able.

4. Have a Picture Talk.

Last, have a “Picture Talk.” Now tell the children the title of the work. Does this shed any light on what they thought was happening in the picture? What do they think of this picture? Do they like it? How does it make them feel? Can they tell what time of day it is? This is not a time to quiz the student(s) on what they may have missed; it is a time for them to engage and contemplate the picture further. Charlotte Mason tells us that questions about what they think never bore the students, but quizzing them does! If there is a story behind the picture, you may want to look that up and read it if there is time. But keep the lesson short!

5. Display the picture in your home.

Put the picture of the week on display somewhere in your home where everyone can see it.

That’s all there is to it. Enjoy this course of your educational feast. Your family will be blessed by having “a couple of hundred pictures by great masters hanging permanently in the halls of [your] imagination” (*Towards a Philosophy of Education*, p. 43).

The Story of Claude Monet

by Emily Kiser

It had been more than 650 years since Giotto, the shepherd boy turned master painter, single-handedly changed the direction of Art when a group of young artists working in Paris managed to do it again. Small innovations had been made over the centuries, but very few people were prepared for the drastic change they were about to witness when “The Impressionists” decided to paint in an entirely new way.

The Impressionists were a group of artists that emerged because of big changes in the world and society; some of these changes were due to politics and some were brought about by new inventions and technology. The camera had only recently been invented and photography was starting to gain a foothold as a true art form—able to capture in an instant a particular moment in time; political and social unrest was changing the face of society and a new class was arising—the bourgeoisie, or middle class; and hundreds of artists were being rejected from exhibiting their art by the rigid control of the National Academy’s annual Salon. But, the most influential factor in the creation of an entirely new art style came in a most surprising, and seemingly insignificant, package—pre-mixed oil paint in small, metal tubes.

Though this new art movement was pioneered by several individuals, one more than all the rest deserves to be remembered as their leader. He was not the first to paint in the new way, but he most consistently painted according to the goals and ideals of the group. His name was Claude Monet.

When we see the dancing light shimmering on the surface of the canvases that the adult Monet painted, we can almost guess the landscape that the child grew up among. We have seen how other artists never forget the setting of their boyhoods and so pay

homage to the rocky cliffs, sheep pastures, and rural scenes in their paintings forever after. Claude spent nearly his entire life living along the river Seine, and it is in part to that changeable, constantly moving, reflective body of water that we must credit the pictures that are so beloved today.

Just three years after John Constable died in England, a baby boy was born in France who would one day take up the mantle of that great landscape artist, and it is his story we are now interested in. In the freshness of spring, 1840, the Monet family of Paris welcomed their second son, Claude, into the world. After five years in his native city, Monet's family moved to Le Havre, a town on the coast of the English Channel where the sparkling Seine pours her cargo into the sea. It was here that Monet spent most of his childhood, and here where he was expected to take up a trade. His father, naturally concerned that his son establish himself in a career, like many other fathers expected him to take up the family business. Though Monet enjoyed visiting the grocery store his family owned, he employed his time drawing comic caricatures of people he met there rather than learning the business. It was this talent that made him long to pursue a career in art rather than as a grocer. Like many fathers before him when faced with the prospect of an artist son, Monsieur Monet was less than excited.

"What? But how will you feed yourself? One must have money! Be sensible, son. A grocer always has food for his table, and it is a dependable profession. Put down your charcoal and listen to reason!"

Claude's mother, a singer herself, we can imagine was more supportive of her son's choice. Unfortunately, she died when Monet was sixteen. Luck was with the young would-be artist, despite the loss he suffered. A landscape painter named Eugène Boudin took the boy under his tutelage and the pair spent many long days painting on the beaches, directly from nature, or as it is called in the art world, *en plein air* ("in the open air"). This was a new technique. Up until the mid-1800s, and even afterward, for most traditionally trained artists, landscape paintings were constructed in the artist's studio. They would sketch out of doors, but the cumbersome task of mixing pigments with oil and applying them to canvases was done inside.

Now the young man was ready to get serious about art, and Paris was the center of the art world, so there he must go. Monet returned to his native city and spent his days among the other art students, copying pictures by the Old Masters that hung in the Louvre. This was the way that art was taught then, and explains why art didn't change

For Further Reading

If you are interested in reading more about Claude Monet, check your library for the following resources:

The Blue Butterfly, Bijou LeTord (Doubleday, 1995)

Sparse, poetic text accompanies illustrations based on Monet's paintings. Picture book for young children.

The Magical Garden of Claude Monet, Laurence Anholt (Barrons, 2003)

A simple picture book tells of Berthe Morisot's (another Impressionist) young daughter and her visit to Monet.

Katie Meets the Impressionists, James Mayhew (Orchard, 1999)

The young girl in this picture book magically "enters" the paintings she sees while visiting the museum.

Linnea in Monet's Garden, Christina Bjork (R&S Books, 1985)

A young girl's dream of seeing Monet's garden at Giverny comes true. For elementary-school readers.

Monet (Getting to Know the Great Artists of the World), Mike Venezia (Children's Press, 1989)

This series is well-loved by younger readers.

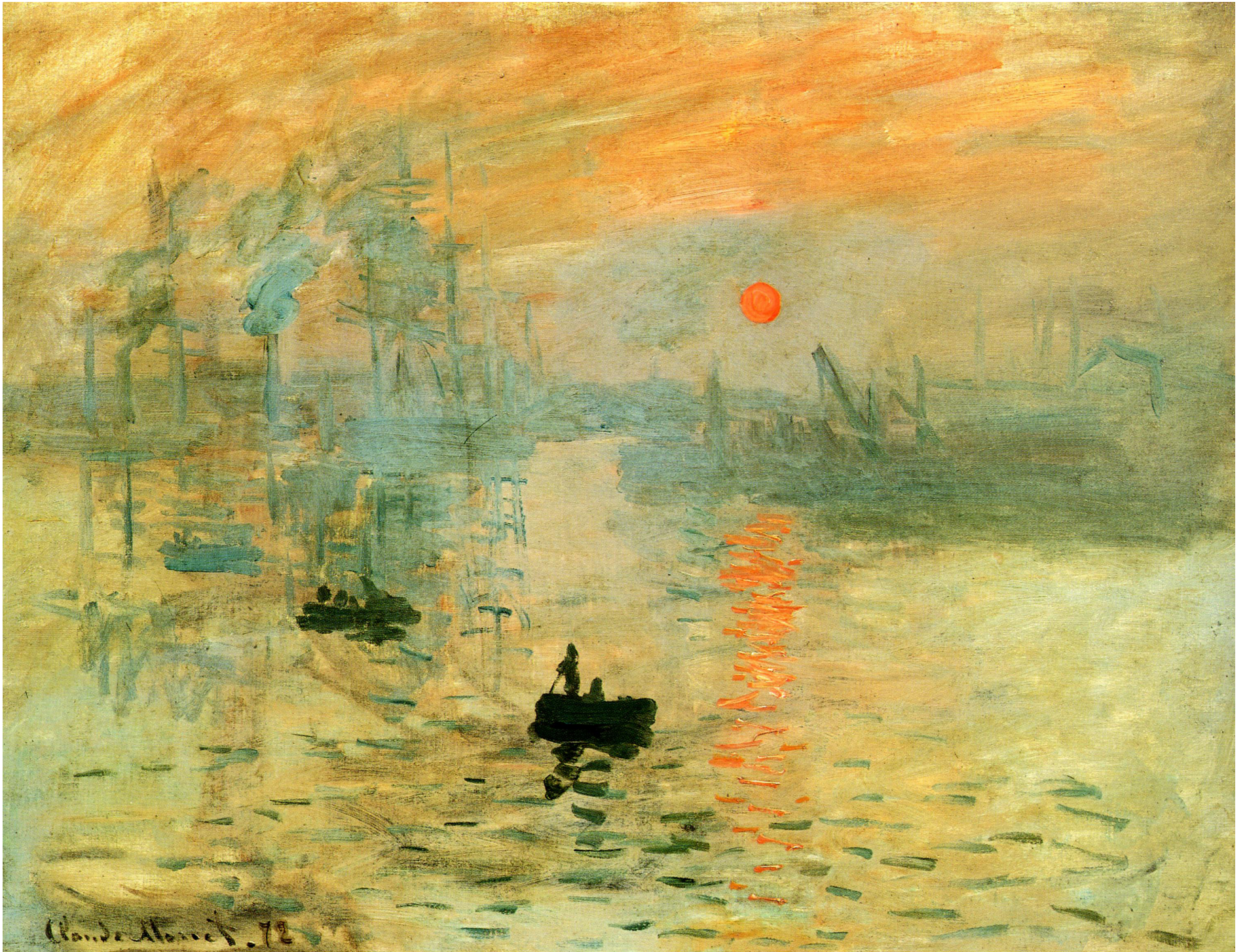
The Impressionists: The Origins of Modern Painting (Masters of Art), Francesco Salvi (Peter Bedrick, 2000)

A detailed look at the movement and the events surrounding Impressionism. For middle-school on up.

Monet Picture Study

Choose **six** of the following pictures to study with your students; select those you like best, or that your students will enjoy the most. There is **no order to the following pages**, though the first few pictures are generally the artist's best known works; the extra pictures are included to give you options when choosing pieces to study.

In each lesson, use the "Leading Thoughts" to lead your students in a Picture Talk *after* they have studied the piece and given their narrations. You may choose to talk about or ask any, all, or none of the questions and comments. These are included to provide any helpful information that you and your students may not be familiar with, and to draw your attention to significant points of the work of art. Remember not to lecture your students; ask them what *they* think of the painting. After even a short time you will be amazed at the number, and quality, of relations your students will have formed with great artists and their works!





Impression, Sunrise

1872, oil on canvas, 18.9" x 24.8"
Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris

Present this picture as described on pages 9 and 10.

Leading Thoughts

This is the painting that lent its name to the group of young painters at that infamous 1874 exhibition. Compare this “impression” with other paintings by Monet. Do you notice a difference in the brushstrokes or painting style? What words would you use to describe this “impression”—the mood or character of the piece.

Why do you think Monet and the other painters were interested in painting “impressions?”

What details of the subject can you make out in this painting? What do you think the main subject of this picture is?