

THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Do- It- Yourself

The Story of Jan

Key Stage 1/ Lower Key Stage 2

This is one of our range of DIY resources, which aim to provide you with what you need to teach your pupils in the galleries. We hope that the following teaching ideas include some which are suitable for your needs. As we do not know your pupils, or the specific aims of your visit, these ideas may need adapting, but we hope they will act as a springboard. Each idea includes signpost sequences all of which point to pupil interaction with the exhibits, *example prompt questions written in italics*, and information. Many are followed by suggested extension ideas that can take place in the galleries. 'Into Action' sheets, which are linked to these teaching ideas, are available for pupils to use in the galleries.

When you are talking in front of the painting, or any work of art in the Museum, be very careful not to touch it yourself. Also, as the children sit down in front of the painting make sure that they can all see the painting – the gallery lighting can make this difficult if the children sit too close. Often it is better to sit the children a little further back to give them a good view.

Aims of 'The Story of Jan' session

- To introduce young children to looking at paintings.
- To encourage young children to engage actively with real paintings.
- To link paintings and story to provide a familiar context to learn from paintings.
- To encourage children to enjoy paintings and make them want to see more.
- To stimulate a desire for children to make paintings themselves.

Galleries used in this session:

Gallery 15

You will need to bring:

- One clipboard for each pupil
- Paper and pencil for each pupil
- Photocopied 'Into Action' sheets

The Story of Jan

Take children to Gallery 15, the Dutch Gallery. Sit them down comfortably in front of *Farm Buildings in a Landscape, 1625 - 1628* by Salomon van Ruysdael, 1600/1603(?) - 1670 (this is by the double doors to gallery 14, so make sure everyone can see properly and other visitors can get past your group)



No: 1049

Once upon a time, there was a little boy who lived in Holland. *Where is Holland?* This little boy lived there about 300 years ago and his name was Jan. This picture shows the house where he lived. *What else can you see in the picture?*

Get the children to look very carefully at the picture and find details.

Look at the house - think what it is made from - wood not brick, straw roof (called thatch). Chimney. Is the house lived in? There is smoke coming out of the chimney. *What is the other building? Are these buildings in a town or village?* In the middle of the countryside. *Are there any people in the picture?* By the gate with a dog. Also another person in the background near the cart. *Which one do you think is Jan?* One with the dog is Jan's father, the other person is Jan. Jan is walking to the left out of the painting - carrying a stick over his shoulder. He is off to round up the cows. He did this twice a day - *why do you think he did this?* To get the milk.

Somewhere else in this gallery there is a picture of Jan with his cows - there are lots of pictures in this gallery but you are going to look for one that only has cows, people and one of these people is carrying a stick. Clue: the picture has a black frame.

Remind the children of the rules of the museum (no running, no touching, no leaning on anything) and then ask them to go and find the painting. When they have found it the children should sit down in front of the painting.

Sunset after Rain, 1640 - 1645 by Aelbert Cuyp, 1620 - 1691



Why did you decide on this picture?

How many people are there in the picture? Look carefully. There are actually three - the smallest one is Jan and the other two are Jan's brothers.

Why did they need the stick? To whack the cows to get them to move. Jan's brother has borrowed his stick.

What time of day is it in this picture?

Sunset or sunrise? It is sunset.

Do you think Jan enjoyed his life? No he didn't - very fed up. Very boring - did the same thing everyday. Worked very

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hard and no treats.

Did he go to school? No - only rich people could afford to send their children to school.

But there was one day every month that Jan looked forward to - market day. He would get the donkey and cart and load up the cart with cheese they had made out of the milk.

The market was in a seaside port town and Jan enjoyed the trip taking his time walking along the road by the sea, and watching the people on the beach and the boats on the horizon. Today there were lots of excited people on the beach and they were all looking at something, which made Jan stop and stare in amazement!

Can you find that painting? There are people huddled together in groups on the beach and they are looking at something unusual washed up on the shore. Go and sit in front of the painting once you find it.

View of Scheveningen Sands with a stranded sperm whale, 1641 by Hendrick van Anthonissen, 1606 – after 1660



What can you see in the picture? What are all the people looking at?

A whale!

What is it doing here, where has it come from?

The sea, sometimes

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whales get stuck on beaches when they swim in too shallow water. *Do you think Jan has seen a whale before?* No, he lived on the farm where everything was the same each day and nothing very exciting happened.

Jan couldn't believe his eyes; life on the farm was very normal and usually all he would see was cows from morning to night. He had never seen anything like a whale before. It made him think of the world and of all of the exciting things there are to see and discover. It reminded him of a dream he had always had. His dream was to run away to sea and become a sailor.

Jan continued but he had now forgotten about his cheese and the market and instead found himself walking towards the boats and the exciting noises around him. *What noises do you think Jan heard?* Sounds of the seaside? Waves, seagulls? Noises of the sailors loading the boats. Singing? But not from church or a busker.

The noise that Jan heard was sailors singing by the boats. The sailors sang as they loaded up rowing boats with food and provisions for their voyage and sang as they rowed across to join the larger ships anchored in the harbour.

Jan heard the singing and went towards it. He saw rowing boats tied along a jetty and sailors loading up food. When the boats were loaded with food and men they set off towards the big ships. The scene he saw was very exciting and enticing. Very different to his normal life. By the sides of the boats were barrels containing food, one had fallen off and floated away into the sea.

Can you find a picture of this scene – look out for the barrel in the water, rowing boats and some big sailing ships anchored in the harbour.

***Shipping before Dordrecht, 1651* by Simon de Vlieger, 1600(?) - 1653**



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Jan watched and listened. Then he made a very big decision. He could see a way of escaping from his life by running away to sea. *But how could he get on the boat?* If he asked the sailors whether he could get on the boat they would have said no.

What could he do? He saw some barrels waiting to be loaded. Without thinking Jan jumped into one and pulled the lid shut. Seconds later he heard the lid being hammered down. His fate was decided.

The inside of the barrel was dark, wet and smelt of fish. The barrel was lifted up and carried onto the boat. It was rolled down into the bottom of the boat with Jan spinning round and round inside. Eventually it came to a standstill – *how do you think Jan felt?*

The boat began to move and the sea got rougher. The first day was bad, but the second day was worse because a storm blew up and the barrels rolled around in the bottom of the boat. Suddenly there was an almighty crash. The boat had been blown against the rocks. *Can you find a picture of the storm at sea?* Not a sea fight, there is a rescue boat and a big boat crashed on the rocks.

***A Storm at Sea* by Abraham Susenier, 1620 – 1672. Museum No: PD26-1983 (no image available)**

The boat has crashed on the rocks. Jan was terrified. He had to get out of the barrel. *But how?* He remembered the shoes he was wearing on his feet – heavy wooden clogs – and he started to hit the barrel with it until it broke open. Jan found himself on the deck of the sinking ship. *Where were the other sailors?*

They had got into the lifeboat, Jan got in too. They saw the other boat and rowed towards it. The ship had no flag. *What kind of a ship was it?* When they reached it they were to find out. Jan was pulled out of the lifeboat and thrown exhausted onto the deck of the other boat where he landed at the feet of a very frightening looking man – he had a great big sword, wore a breastplate of armour, red velvet sleeves and hat with a feather. There is a picture of that man in this gallery – can you find him?

Man in a Fanciful Costume, 1650 by Rembrandt Harmensz. Van Rijn, 1606 - 1669



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Jan landed at the feet of this man, half conscious, who looked at him and said “Oh good, I needed a cabin boy” and with these words Jan’s fate was sealed.

What sort of ship do you think it was?

It was a pirate ship and this is the pirate captain.

He stayed on the Pirate boat for many years, working for the pirate captain. There was no escape. He was a cruel man who made Jan work very hard. Everyday Jan had to get up early, give the captain his

breakfast, scrub and clean the captain’s cabin and the deck, etc. His only food was the scraps that the captain left on his table. The captain would beat Jan if he did anything wrong and he was ignored by the other sailors. He had no friends, was very lonely, hungry and miserable. Every night he fell into bed exhausted and dreamt of escaping back to his father, his brothers and the farm. He dreamt of his cows and the cottage where he used to live.

Maybe Jan did eventually escape, but I am not sure how – anyone got any ideas?
When you have decided you could draw the next picture in the story.

Resources for 'The Story of Jan'

The following "Into Action" sheets are available from the Education Department and can be found here:

<http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/education/schoolscolleges/selfled/jan.html>

- Pirate Adventure
- Treasure!
- The Pirate Captain' Supper

Further information about many exhibits is available on our website Pharos -

www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/pharos