

5.21 Madonna and Child

Instructions: During the European Renaissance (c. 1300 to 1600), a popular subject for painters was to portray the Christian Madonna, or mother of God, with the baby Jesus. Changes in the way the mother and child were depicted symbolize broader changes taking place in European societies. Examine images of these paintings, Giotto, Madonna and Child (c. 1320), Da Vinci, Benois Madonna (c. 1478), and Raphael's Small Cowper Madonna (c. 1505) and answer questions 1-3.

Questions

1. How does the Giotto painting differ from the paintings by Da Vinci and Rafael? In your answer focus on the appearance of the mother and child, the background, the painter's use of color, and imagery.
2. Why would religious critics be concerned about the way Da Vinci and Rafael portrayed the Madonna?
3. Based on what you see in these pictures, what type of changes do you think were taking place in European society during this historical period? Explain.



Giotto, Madonna and Child (c. 1320)



Da Vinci, Benois Madonna (c. 1478)



Raphael's Small Cowper Madonna (c. 1505)