

# Painting in a Worship Context

Theme: Any, In a sense this is Romans 12:1 in action

What you need to do this project:

Varies depending on the context of the piece and the style of the artist and what will be done with the finished piece

For my piece I needed:

An easel

A surface to work on. (for my piece I used a 30" x 40" piece of foam core my next piece will be done on canvas though)

Artist acrylic tube paints

Several large brushes

A drop cloth

About a year ago, I went to the Creation festival in Pennsylvania and was thrilled as I watched a guy who called himself The Jesus Painter do a painting of Jesus on the main stage as part of the evening worship service. He was so quick. His motions were big and dramatic as he painted along with the music. You could feel his passion for his subject as he painted. I knew right then and there I had to try that. A week ago I got my chance. I was called upon to do a painting of Jesus on the cross during the worship service at our Eastern Region Youth Conference. Here is how I prepared: My first thought was could I do it fast enough, I knew that this particular piece would have to be planned and practiced. I bought large sheets of foam core to practice on. I started out by doing sketches in my sketch book. The illustration on this page was the sketch I ended up with. I knew that since this piece would have to be done fairly quickly, I would have to come up with a fairly minimalistic piece. I broke my piece down into stark black and white. Color highlights would be added but I felt it most important to get a strong and recognizable image first that could be seen throughout a large room. The foam core worked so well as a ground, the paint glided over it's smooth surface, that I decided to do the finished piece on it. I now feel that was a mistake because I ended up giving the piece away and I would much rather have them have the piece on a good solid canvas.

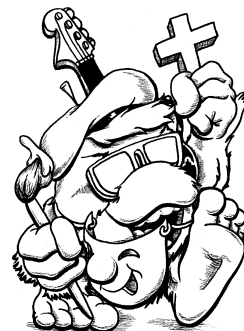
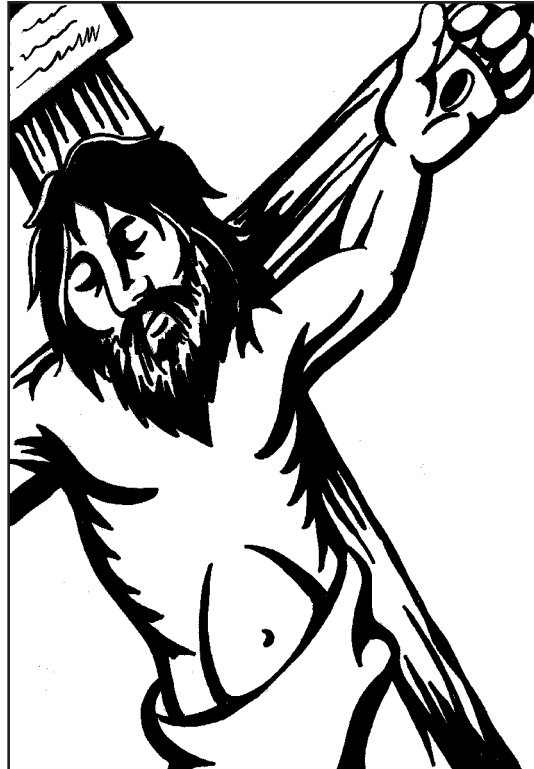
The practice pieces went very well and very quickly, but nothing could have prepared me for the evening when I did the piece live. They set me up on the stage of a beautiful chapel a large spotlight shone

down from above totally eliminating my shadow from the work. It was the first time I had ever worked with such great lighting. I prayed that God would be glorified in the piece and got to work. Almost as soon as I started to sketch it was as if everyone else disappeared. The worship music was playing and it was wonderful. As I finished the face of Jesus, I began to fight back tears, a process that continued throughout the piece. The time flew by so quickly, I'm not sure how long the finished piece took, but I know it went much faster than either practice piece. It was an amazing spiritual time. I would encourage any artist to try this.

There are varying approaches to worship painting. In this case, the folks planning the service had a clear idea of where they were going and what they needed and so I was able to plan the piece and work accordingly. Sometimes when I am doing my own services, I paint an image to tie the message together.

Some folks I know do work that is more prophetic in nature. They create the image that God is laying on their hearts, allowing the work to develop over time, sometimes spending weeks on a piece and allowing the process to be used as their act of worship. Romans 12:1 encourages us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices as a spiritual act of worship. That means laying yourself on the altar, which includes your gifts and talents. If you have a creative gift, I encourage you to use it in worship as an act of worship.

It will be a blessing to you, your congregation and the audience of One that we all worship for.



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