

January 18

Memory Verse:

and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruninghooks:

nation shall not lift up a sword against nation,

neither shall they learn war any more. Micah 4:3b

I have tried to indicate ways in which you could break up this verse for learning. Younger children can learn the words in bold and understand that when Christ comes again, war will end for ever. Do you know what a plowshare (ploughshare) is? See the last page of today's lesson for more relating to this verse.



Something to look at¹

Grinling Gibbons was one of the world's finest wood carvers. You can see his work in St Paul's cathedral, where he was employed by Sir Christopher Wren to carve the stalls. The picture on the left shows a small part of his carving at Hampton Court Palace.

In his diary John Evelyn, the 17th century public servant, records how he met Gibbons and was so impressed by his skill that he introduced him to the king.

January 18th, 1671

I this day first acquainted His Majesty with that incomparable young man, Gibbons, whom I had lately found in an obscure place, and that by merest accident, as I was walking near a poor solitary thatched house in a field in our parish. I found him shut in, but looking into the window I saw him carving...

I asked if I might come in and he opened the door civilly to me and I saw his work, which, in the excellence of his handling, drawing and

studious exactness, I never in my life had seen before in all my travels. I asked why he worked in such an obscure and lonely place; he told me it was that he might apply himself to his profession without interruption, and he wondered not a little how I came to find him out.

I asked him if he were willing to be made known to some great men, for I believed it would be of profit to him. He answered that he was only a beginner, but would not be sorry to sell the piece on which he was working. He told me the price was £100.

In truth the very frame was worth the money, there being nothing in nature so tender, so delicate as the flowers and festoons about it, yet the work was very strong.

I found he was musical, and very civil, sober and discreet in his discourse. There was only an old woman in the house, so asking leave to visit him sometimes, I took my leave.

Gibbons' work very often includes carvings of pea pods. Some people say that he would include a closed pod in his work, only carving it open once he had been paid. If the pea pod was left shut therefore it indicated that he had not been paid for the work. Look closely at the picture above from

¹ Picture: Camster2, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Hampton Court. Can you see any pea pods?²

Something to listen to³

The king who Gibbon was introduced to in 1761 was James II but Gibbon remained in royal favour after the Glorious Revolution of 1685, becoming known as “The King's Carver” under William III.⁴ Pictured on the right is another Gibbon carving, this time from Petworth House in Sussex where Gibbons' carvings decorate a whole room.

In the carving you can see all sorts of musical instruments intertwined with flowers, leaves, fruit, lace edged fabric and a rope of pearls or beads. There are even music books for the

instrumentalists to play from with pages that seem to be turning themselves over as if by an invisible hand! The music carved on the music books is from *The Fairy Queen* by Henry Purcell. Purcell wrote this music to celebrate the wedding anniversary of William III and Queen Mary. How many different instruments can you see? I can pick out a violin with its bow and a cittern – the instrument under the pearls and the music book which has a face as a “figurehead” at the top. Then there are two recorders near the bottom carved opposite ways up to show the bell of one and the mouthpiece of the other. Nearer the top on the left is the mouthpiece of what looks like a natural or baroque trumpet and on the right near the top is a narrow flared bell perhaps of another brass instrument. Above the trumpet mouthpiece is what looks like the bell of a woodwind instrument, perhaps a hautbois. There are two more string instruments. I think the one sticking out on the left behind the music book is a dancing master's kit or pochette. The head and neck sticking out on the lower right looks like another violin. I have highlighted the instruments so that you can look them up and find out what they sounded like. You might like to listen to the suite from *The Fairy Queen* (z.629) too.⁵



Something to make

If you want to do some carving of your own, carving soap is a good way to start. Use bars of cheap soap and the following tools:

vegetable peeler for smoothing and scraping and twisting into the soap to make holes

dinner knife for chopping and slicing

teaspoon for scooping

unbent paper clip or toothpick for detailed work

You can mark the outline of your design out on the soap to begin with using a pencil or any pointed

² I think there might be pea pods under the flower at the bottom of the carving – and they are closed!

³ Picture by Paul Dunleavy from Elstead, UK, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

⁴ See lesson on 21st April for how William and Mary became King and Queen.

⁵ You can hear it here:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pV7SR_jlDEY&t=13s

tool. Aim for a simple bold shape without small fiddly parts, such as a fish or a house. Now rough out your design removing only small pieces of soap at a time until you are within about half a cm of your outline. Then go on slowly, turning your sculpture round as you work. Gradually add the details to your design. When you have finished you can rub the soap to polish it.

Something to read and something to think about

The author A A Milne (1882-1956) was born on 18th January. He wrote books and humorous essays for the magazine *Punch* but he is best remembered now for two books of delightful whimsical stories about his little boy's teddy bear, Winnie-the-Pooh, and his other toy animals. These were illustrated by Charles Shepard and quickly became children's favourites. Milne's deft characterisations of the animals' personalities gives them great charm and appeal. If you want to read these stories however, **be sure to avoid the Disney versions** which are crass visually and also edited versions that destroy Milne's delicate use of language.

AA Milne fought in the First World War and afterward became a pacifist.⁶ However, the advent of the Second World War saw him alter his views, "I believe that war is a lesser evil than Hitlerism, I believe that Hitlerism must be killed before war can be killed," he wrote. Christians know that wars will not "be killed" until Jesus comes again. How should Christians think about war?

6 Someone who thinks that war is never justified.