

## The Last Supper Story at Spokane Valley Baptist Church

### *The Last Supper:*

The Last Supper was painted by Leonardo Da Vinci, a noted Italian artist; and the time engaged for its completion was seven years.

The figures representing the twelve Apostles and Christ himself were painted from living persons. The life-model for the painting of the figure of Jesus was chosen first.

When it was decided that Da Vinci would paint this great picture, hundreds and hundreds of young men were carefully viewed, in an endeavor to find a face and personality exhibiting innocence and beauty, free from the scars and signs of dissipation caused by sin.

Finally, after weeks of laborious searching, a young man nineteen years of age, was selected as a model for the portrayal of Christ. For six months, Da Vinci worked on the reproduction of this leading character in his famous painting.

During the next six years, Da Vinci continued his labors on this sublime work of art. One by one, fitting persons were chosen to represent each of the eleven Apostles; space being left for the painting of the figure representing Judas Iscariot, as the final task of this masterpiece. This was the Apostle, you remember, who betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver, worth \$16.96 in our present day currency.

For weeks, Da Vinci searched for a man with a hard callous face, with a countenance marked by scars of avarice, deceit, hypocrisy, and crime; a face that would delineate a character, who would betray his best friend.

After many discouraging experiences, in searching for the type of person required to represent Judas, word came to Da Vinci that a man, whose appearance fully met his requirements, had been found in a dungeon in Rome, sentenced to die for a life of crime and murder.

Da Vinci made the trip to Rome at once, and this man was brought out from his imprisonment in the dungeon and led out into the light of the sun. There Da Vinci saw before him a dark, swarthy man; his long, shaggy and unkempt hair sprawled over his face, which betrayed a character of viciousness and complete ruin. At last, the famous painter had found the person he wanted to represent the character of Judas in his painting.

By special permission from the king, this prisoner was carried to Milan where the picture was being painted; and for months he sat before Da Vinci at appointed hours each day, as the gifted artist diligently continued his task of transmitting to his painting this base character in the picture representing the traitor and betrayer of our savior. As he finished his last stroke, he turned to the guards and said, "I have finished. You may take the prisoner away."

As the guards were leading their prisoner away, he suddenly broke loose from their control and rushed up to Da Vinci, crying as he did so, "Oh, Da Vinci, look at me! Do you not know who I am?"

Da Vinci, with the trained eyes of a great character student, carefully scrutinized the man, upon whose face he had constantly gazed for six months and replied, "No, I had never seen you in my life, until you were brought before me out of the dungeon in Rome."

Then, lifting his eyes toward heaven, the prisoner said, "Oh, God, have I fallen so low?" Then turning toward the painter he cried, "Leonardo Da Vinci! Look at me again, for I am the same man you painted just seven years ago as the figure of Christ."

Many lessons can be learned from this true story of the painting of The Last Supper. This is a story of how we often perceive others - how easily we overlook the Christ within the people we meet, and judge by outward appearances. This also strongly teaches the lesson of the effects of right or wrong thinking, on the life of an individual. Here was a young man whose character was so pure and unspoiled by the sins of the world, that he presented a countenance of innocence and beauty fit to be used for the painting of a representation of Christ.

But within seven years, following the thoughts of sin and a life of crime, he was changed into a perfect picture of the most traitorous character ever known in the history of the world.