

PLUTARCH

Picture Study



JULIUS CAESAR

A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY

A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY PRESENTS

PLUTARCH'S LIFE OF
JULIUS CAESAR
PICTURE STUDY

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HOW TO USE THIS PLUTARCH PICTURE STUDY

CITIZENSHIP AND GREAT ART

The subjects of Plutarch and Picture Study are two integral parts of a Charlotte Mason education. Sharing the beauty of art with students is something I feel strongly about and it is one of the reasons I decided to integrate Picture Study with the subject of Plutarch. The artwork helps to tell a more complete story as students read. Through the artwork, students are able to connect to and visualize the events within the Plutarch text.

The fascinating world of ancient Greece and Rome comes alive through these great works of art. Many artists throughout history have painted famous scenes from Plutarch's *Lives* time and again.

HOW TO INCORPORATE PICTURE STUDY WITH PLUTARCH

Each Plutarch Guide has 10-12 lessons. Notice which of these lessons match up with a lesson in the accompanying Picture Study. Read a lesson in the Plutarch Guide, have the student narrate, then introduce the additional material in the accompanying Picture Study lesson.

Give the student a print to study and tell them some background information about the painting. Share any information to help bring attention to important aspects of the artwork or the story.

Note that The Plenary provides background information and a range of discussion questions for each painting. Some paintings will have more information than others, depending on the artist's intent and the amount of information readily available. The types of questions provided range from simple questions for younger students to more complex questions for older students. Feel free to choose background information and discussion questions that resonate with you and your individual students.

MAKE CONNECTIONS

The goal is to allow the student to make connections between the print and the text they have just read.

Discuss how the artwork and the text are related. Does the artist do a good job of telling the story? What was the artist's intent when he created the artwork? Try not to give your own opinions on whether you like the artist or the paintings. Let the students decide if they like the work for themselves. You want the students to make their own connections.

In various *Parents' Review* articles regarding Picture Study, the PNEU teachers listed goals for the lessons. Some of those goals included:

- The idea that every artist shows us his or her conception of a subject through a painting
- The idea of a story is worked out in the composition of the picture
- Every artist has an idea which he or she wishes to be interpreted

What idea is the artist trying to convey? And how does he or she want us to interpret that idea? These are grand ideas that should easily facilitate Grand Discussion.

You will also find a more in-depth look at how to implement Picture Study at different ages in The Plenary article [*Picture Study Throughout the Forms*](#).

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

In some cases, more than one painting is included for a specific lesson. Many artists throughout history chose to

illustrate the stories of ancient Greece and Rome. In this case, you are asking the student to compare and contrast the artwork pieces with each other and with the text. Which artist illustrated the story better? How do different artists highlight different aspects of the story? What are the ideas represented? And how are they represented differently by each artist?

After the lesson is completed, display the paintings until a new piece is introduced. Let the students become familiar with the work by displaying it in a common area where it can be seen daily. If space permits, display all the included paintings for the length of the term. The displayed artwork will be a visual representation of the story told within Plutarch's text.

MORE RESOURCES

Additional information about Plutarch's *Life of Julius Caesar* can be found on the JULIUS CAESAR RESOURCES PAGE of the website. There you will find additional artwork, photos, videos, and links to learn more about specific topics. All links are teen-friendly according to my family's standards. As standards vary among households, please preview to make sure they are suitable for your family.

Thank you and I hope you enjoy Plutarch and Picture Study with The Plenary!



Rachel Lebowitz

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LINKS

JULIUS CAESAR RESOURCES PAGE: [CMPLENARY.COM/PLUTARCH-RESOURCES/JULIUS-CAESAR/](https://cmplenary.com/plutarch-resources/julius-caesar/)

PICTURE STUDY THROUGHOUT THE FORMS: [CMPLENARY.COM/PICTURE-STUDY-THROUGHOUT-THE-FORMS/](https://cmplenary.com/picture-study-throughout-the-forms/)

PRINT #1: JULIUS CAESAR

RESOURCE FOR LESSON #1: THE CIVIL WAR OF CAESAR'S YOUTH

BY PETER PAUL RUBENS, C. 1619

OIL ON WOOD, 68.20 CM TALL X 58 CM WIDE; 26.85 X 22.83 INCHES

LOCATION: CAPUTH CASTLE, POTSDAM, GERMANY

PAINTING INFORMATION

This painting was just one in a series of 12 paintings depicting the early Roman Emperors. The series was painted by famous Dutch and Flemish painters from 1616-1625 for the Caputh Castle collection.

The paintings include portraits of Julius Caesar plus the first 11 Emperors of the Roman Empire: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Domitian, Trajan, Hadrian, Antonine Pius, and Marcus Aurelius.

The 12 paintings are based on the descriptions which can be found in a book called *The Twelve Caesars* by Suetonius, an ancient Roman historian.

As noted on the Caputh Castle website,

"Princes and kings liked to surround themselves with symbols of ancient rulers, which were related to their own rulership. The painting shows the laurel-wreathed Caesar in a breastplate and a red cape. He fixes the viewer with a fixed gaze."

The symbol of a laurel wreath goes back to ancient Greece. The Greek god Apollo was often depicted with a laurel wreath on his head. Laurels were also awarded to winners in the ancient Olympic games.

In ancient Rome, a laurel wreath symbolized military victory. Roman commanders often wore laurel wreaths during their Triumphs, or parades, held to celebrate military victories. The laurel wreath was also used as a diadem, or crown, in ancient Rome.

The phrase "resting on one's laurels" comes from the laurel wreath and refers to someone relying on past achievements for continued fame or recognition.

EXTRA: You can see the paintings of the other 11 Caesars in the Caputh Castle collection on The Plenary website at:

CMPLINARY.COM/PLUTARCH-RESOURCES/JULIUS-CAESAR/11-CAESARS (PASSWORD:)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is this how you imagined Julius Caesar?
2. Do you think the artist did a good job creating a realistic likeness?
3. Why do you think the artist painted Caesar in a laurel wreath?
4. Note the artist's use of letters in the top right corner. "IMP. I." stands for "Imperator 1." If you haven't already, read the annotation for "Imperator" on page 10 of the Julius Caesar Study Guide and answer the question about it at the end of the lesson.

SPACE FOR YOUR OWN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND NOTES:

A detailed oil painting of Julius Caesar by Peter Paul Rubens. Caesar is depicted from the chest up, wearing a laurel wreath and a red cloak (paludamentum) over a dark tunic. He has a serious expression and is looking slightly to the right. The background is dark and indistinct. In the top right corner, the inscription 'IMP. I.' is visible in gold letters.

IMP. I.

SAMPLE

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JULIUS CAESAR
BY PETER PAUL RUBENS

PRINT #5: VERCINGETORIX

RESOURCE FOR LESSON #5: THE GALLIC WARS

BY LIONEL ROYER, C. 1899

OIL ON CANVAS, 15 FEET, 9 INCHES X 10 FEET, 6 INCHES

LOCATION: CROZATIER MUSEUM, LE PUY-EN-VELAY, FRANCE

PAINTING INFORMATION

This painting depicts the surrender of Vercingetorix, a Gallic chieftain, after the Battle of Alesia during the Gallic Wars. The full title of the painting is *Vercingetorix Throws Down His Arms at the Feet of Julius Caesar*.

Lionel Royer (1852-1926) was a French artist who painted historical scenes related to French nationalism. Much of ancient Gaul included modern-day areas of northern Italy, Belgium, Germany, and France; so the Gallic Wars, and Gallic chieftains like Vercingetorix, are part of French history. The Battle of Alesia took place near the present-day city of Alise-Sainte-Reine, France. One art historian calls the painting

“a startling image of nationalism, nation-hood, and endurance, and a remarkable reproduction of a historical reality seen through the telescope of turn-of-the-century thought. It is a dramatic and stirring vision of the Gaulish defeat at the siege of Alesia which, owing to its pictorial power and ubiquitousness, became the archetypal image of the ancient Gauls, and paved the way for the popular iconography of Gauls and Romans. Showing a great diversity and abundance in arms, costume and building, Royer has achieved the elements of a truly theatrical performance. Vercingetorix, at the middle of the frame, physically dominating the figure of Julius Caesar, who is diminished both pictorially and morally. Although an image of defeat, the aggressor is imbued with the qualities of the imperialist, fighting to win back the land he claims to be the land of their ancestors.”

After the Gaul's defeat, Julius Caesar brought Vercingetorix back to Rome in chains, dragging the chieftain behind his chariot in a Triumph through the city. Afterwards, Vercingetorix was executed.

EXTRA: YOU CAN SEE A MAP OF THE BATTLE OF ALESIA AT [CMPLENARY.COM/PLUTARCH-RESOURCES/JULIUS-CAESAR](https://cmplenary.com/plutarch-resources/julius-caesar).

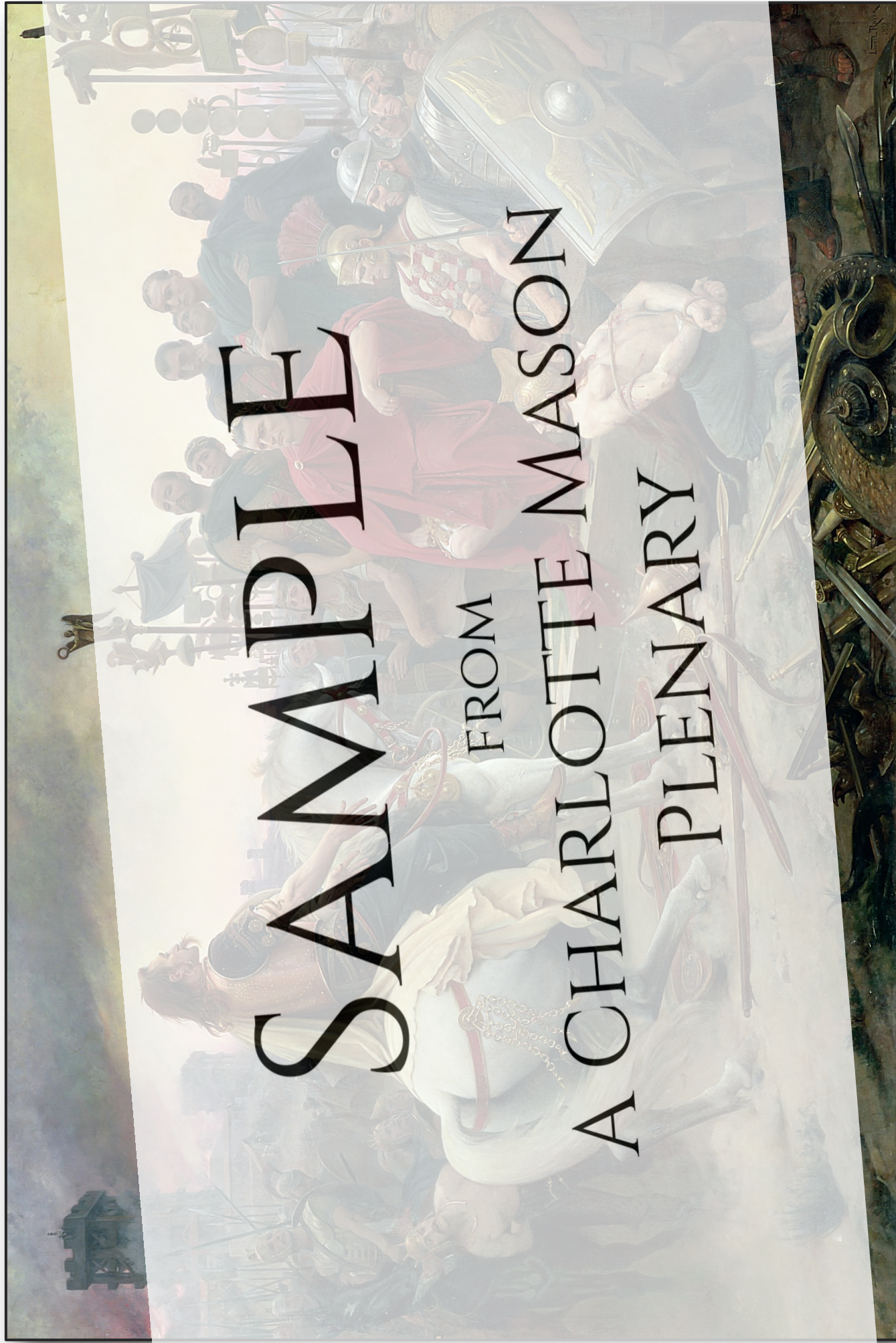
EXTRA: To see another painting of this same scene, go to:

[CMPLENARY.COM/PLUTARCH-RESOURCES/JULIUS-CAESAR/GALLIC-WARS](https://cmplenary.com/plutarch-resources/julius-caesar/gallic-wars) (PASSWORD:)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the painting make you feel about Vercingetorix? about Julius Caesar?
2. Which man looks like the victor? Why?
3. What do you think the artist was trying to say with this painting?
4. Compare and contrast this painting with the painting by Henri Paul Motte (see link above).

SPACE FOR YOUR OWN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND NOTES:



SAMPLE

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VERCINGETORIX THROWS DOWN HIS ARMS AT THE FEET OF JULIUS CAESAR

LIONEL ROYER