



KS1 Florence Nightingale session ideas

Introduction

The below portrait from the National Portrait Gallery is called **The Mission of Mercy: Florence Nightingale Receiving the Wounded at Scutari** by Jerry Barrett. In it you can see Florence Nightingale receiving soldiers in the courtyard of Scutari Hospital. There are several soldiers in the courtyard and more coming up the ramp to the door from the quay below. The artist has painted Florence in the middle of the painting. Many people around her played an important part in her medical reforms. The artist has painted himself looking down on the scene from a window.

You can [zoom in on the painting to look at different parts in more detail](#).



Suggestions for extension activities

Below are suggestions for using the painting and extending work from it. These ideas can be adapted to meet the needs of your children.

Introduction and Art:

- As an introduction, ask the children to create questions about the painting. Create 'I wonder...' questions. What questions could they ask about the painting? For example, 'I wonder where the soldier is from', 'I wonder what is in the cup the nurse has given the soldier', and so on.

English

- Have the children explore the painting using their senses. Ask the children what they think Florence could hear (eg: gentle waves, moans of soldiers, running feet, calls for help), see (eg: injured soldier, nurses ready to help, good food), smell (eg: salty sea, dirty clothes, delicious soup), feel (eg: rough dirty soldier's uniform, hard cobbled courtyard floor, soft bandages), taste (eg: salt in the air, warm soup). Encourage the use of adjectives and similes.
- Explore descriptive writing. Use ideas from the previous sessions to create a description of the courtyard at Scutari Hospital.

Art and Design

- Make a fanoos (Turkish lamp) that Florence would have carried around the hospital to check on the soldiers at night. You can [download instructions for this on our website](#).

History

- Show a picture of Florence and have the children describe what she is wearing. Can they explain why she and her fellow nurses wore sashes? Have the children think of questions they would like to ask Florence. You can [find a video clip and a quiz about her on BBC Bitesize](#) or you can [see a longer BBC video about Florence's life on YouTube](#).
- Compare the painting with a modern-day hospital. Can children compare the hospitals? Can they explain some of the changes Florence made (eg: big windows, plenty of fresh air, cleanliness, nutritious food) and understand that these are still principles used in hospitals today? You can [download a separate worksheet for this activity from our website](#).
- Ask the children if they would prefer to be treated in Scutari Hospital or a modern-day hospital? Why?

Drama

- Have the children imagine they are a nurse or doctor at Scutari Hospital looking after the soldiers. They could pretend to bandage the soldiers' arms, give them a drink, tuck in their blankets. They could use their lamps and pretend to walk around the soldiers' beds and check on them. They could create a Scutari Hospital at home with teddy bears as wounded soldiers to tend.

The Florence Nightingale Museum

You may also like to visit the [website of the Florence Nightingale Museum](#). During 2020 the Florence Nightingale Museum is celebrating Nightingale's bicentenary with an exhibition called **Florence Nightingale in 200 Objects, People & Places**, demonstrating what influenced her on her journey as an icon, leader and pioneer. This is an online exhibition.