

# Hey Kids, Meet Jan Vermeer

Dutch Baroque Artist (1632-1675)



**Jan Vermeer** was born in the Netherlands in the city of Delft and baptized on October 31, 1632. His father, Reijnier Janszoon, was a textile worker and later an art dealer. Jan became interested in art through his early contact with artists. When his father died in 1652, Vermeer took his place as an art dealer.

Raised a protestant, Johannes Reijniersz Vermeer married a Catholic girl named Catherina Bolenes on April 5, 1653. Together they gave birth to 14 children, 10 of which survived. Vermeer probably never became Catholic, though his painting, *The Allegory of Catholic Faith*, reflects a belief in the Lord's Supper. The work may have been created for an art collector or church.

Vermeer painted *View of the Delft* between 1659 and 1660. The painting of the city in which he was born is a simplified view of the township. The work Vermeer created highlights its main characteristics of the township with selected buildings being reflected in the water with magnificent cloud formations overhead.

*The Girl with a Pearl Earring*, painted in 1665, is recognized as Vermeer's greatest achievement. This masterpiece is sometimes referred to as "The Dutch Mona Lisa". Little is known about this work. Who was the sitter? Why was it almost forgotten about until its rediscovery in 1881? Why did it once sell for the price of a reproduction? The mystery is as beautiful as the painting itself.

Vermeer also is a painter who specialized in beautiful indoor scenes of everyday people. He worked on his paintings with great care. He used bright colors and seemed to prefer painting with cornflower blue and yellow. He is especially remembered for his masterful painting of light. *The Lacemaker* (1669-1670), which hangs in the Louvre in Paris, France is an excellent example of this skill.

Jan Vermeer was almost forgotten for almost 200 years. Since the rediscovery of his work, Vermeer's reputation has grown. He is now recognized as one of the finest painters of the Dutch Golden Age.

