

The Renaissance

Humanism



During the Middle Ages art and learning were centered on the church and religion.

At the start of the 14th century, people became less interested in thinking about religion and more interested in thinking about themselves and what they were capable of doing.

Part of this change was influenced by the study of ancient Greek and Roman writings.

The values and ideals popular during the European Renaissance can be described by the term **secular humanism**

The interests of Renaissance scholars began to turn away from traditional areas of study such as religion, medicine, and the law and toward people became interested in other areas such as science and the natural world.



Humanist Literature, Education, and Art



The Italian poet Petrarch (1304-1374) studied the works of Roman writers Cicero and Virgil and modeled some of his own writings on their works.

His best known work is a collection of love sonnets to Laura, a married woman with whom he'd become infatuated.



Breeze, blowing that blonde curling hair, stirring it, and being softly stirred in turn, scattering that sweet gold about, then gathering it, in a lovely knot of curls again,



During the Middle Ages, saints in paintings wore halos and were larger in scale than ordinary or less important figures.

As Humanism became more popular during the Renaissance, ordinary people grew to be the same size as saints in paintings and saints began to look more like ordinary people.

The central figures of the Madonna and child in this Middle Ages painting are larger than others to help viewers understand that they are the most important figures in the painting.

The holy family of Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus are joined here by shepherds and an angel in the center playing a lute. The landscape around them is earthly rather than heavenly.

