

LITTLE STORIES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE**THE MADONNA OF THE CHAIR**

MANY YEARS AGO there was a great artist who painted many wonderful pictures. His name was Raphael Santi.

One of the famous pictures which Raphael painted is shown on this page. It is a picture of the Christ Child whose birthday we celebrate at Christmas time. He is not shown as a tiny baby in this picture, but as a little fellow who has learned to crawl and to walk. He is listening very quietly while His mother, Mary, tells Him of the time the shepherds left their flocks and came to see Him, of the star that shone over the manger where He lay, and of the song that the angels sang.

This picture is called "*The Madonna of the Chair*," and this is the very delightful story about it: Long ago, in a doorway of a simple cottage in Italy, the young artist, Raphael, saw a mother holding her baby son, while beside her a young child looked up in love and wonder.

This made the artist think of the holy Madonna—Mary, the mother of Jesus—with the Christ Child and His young cousin John. Quickly the artist made a charcoal sketch upon the top of a barrel. When he reached his studio he finished it with glowing colors. And that is the story of the picture which you see repro-

duced on this page.

In the picture which Raphael painted there is an Italian scarf with its lovely design draped beautifully over Mary's shoulders. On her head she wears another. Her blue robe looks very pleasing beside the golden dress of the young Jesus. And our eyes are carried right to the place of greatest interest in the picture—the faces of Mary and Jesus.

Perhaps some day you can see the original painting of the *Madonna of the Chair* just as Raphael painted it.



*The Madonna of the Chair*

**SOMETHING TO  
THINK ABOUT**

1. Has the artist Raphael helped you to feel that Jesus was once a little child just like you?

2. Do you think it was a beautiful idea to have used a real mother with her baby as the subjects for the Madonna

and the Christ Child?

3. Can you tell why you like to celebrate the Christ Child's birthday and what you believe is the most beautiful way that you can do it?

4. Do you know of any other paintings which are suitable for Christmas and which were made by famous artists? What are the pictures? Who were the artists?