

GLENCAIRN MUSEUM

Medieval Stained Glass

Centuries Old Glass

The first stained glass was made in the 1140s—about half way through the Middle Ages. This beautiful art form appeared mostly in religious buildings like churches and cathedrals. Glencairn Museum is home to many stained-glass panels both from the Middle Ages, and from modern times! Throughout this resource you will have a chance to explore some of the glass in Glencairn's collections, as well as research other medieval stained glass and do some stained-glass inspired projects and activities!



An Elder of the Apocalypse, from an Unknown Window, France, About 1240-1245, Pot-metal glass, Diameter 43.1cm (17 in.) 03.SG.208



Flight into Egypt, from the Infancy of Christ window of the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis, France, c. 1140-1145 03.SG.114

What's In This Resource?

This resource includes information and activities that will allow you to explore both the medieval stained-glass collections on display at Glencairn Museum, as well as the medieval style stained glass that was created for and built into the Museum itself. Each page has been designed with an age range in mind, and includes discussion questions, project ideas, multisensory prompts and opportunities to see stained-glass artwork digitally. Scroll through to find the page for your age or grade, or learn from and explore all the pages!

Observing Glencairn's Collections For All Ages

Object Observations

Let's begin by observing stained glass on display at Glencairn. Follow the link below to an image of a window from Glencairn's Medieval Gallery. Print project or zoom in on the image to view it. Using the questions as prompts, have a discussion as a class or in small groups.

<https://bit.ly/2WYcXOI>

- ◆ What colors do you see? What colors are missing? Why do you think that is?
- ◆ What do you think the object is made of? How do you think the colors were made?
- ◆ Why is the picture broken up by dark lines? Was this to repair it? Was it made this way?
- ◆ Do you recognize anything in the artwork that is familiar to you?
- ◆ Do you notice any clues that might tell you who this is?
- ◆ Do you see anything that surprises you?
- ◆ What are you curious or wondering about?

Once you have had your discussion, visit [this page](#) to find out more about this object. How close were your thoughts to what those who viewed it in the Middle Ages thought about it?

The Five W's of Medieval Stained Glass

Throughout this resource we will explore the Five W's of medieval stained glass by looking at real windows from the Middle Ages, and thinking about the lives of the people who made them and saw them. Here are some of the questions that we could include in the Five W's. You might think of a few of your own! Check back here when you are done to see how many you can answer!

Who?

- ◆ Who was making stained glass in the Middle Ages?
- ◆ Who do we see in medieval stained-glass windows?

What?

- ◆ What is stained glass made from?
- ◆ What is the process for making it?

Where?

- ◆ Where was stained glass usually seen in the Middle Ages?

When?

- ◆ When was stained glass first made?
- ◆ When was it most popular?

Why?

- ◆ Why do stained-glass windows exist?
- ◆ Why did people travel to see them?

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Medieval Stained Glass *Grades K-2 Resource Page*

Looking for Clues

Sometimes you can tell something about a person by looking for clues in what they wear. A doctor might wear a white coat, or a construction worker might wear a hardhat. We can also tell who is in stained-glass windows from the Middle Ages by noticing clues about the people they show!

◆ Kings and Queens

Take a look at these three windows that show royalty—kings and queens. What clues do you notice that show these people are royal?

[Window 1](#) [Window 2](#) [Window 3](#)

Did you notice crowns, a special stick called a scepter, decorated robes? These are all clues to show kings and queens!

◆ Holy People

These two windows show angels and people who were thought of as very special by some medieval people. The first is a medieval window, the second is modern window made for the Museum. What do you notice about how they look? Can you see any clues to help tell who they are?

[Window 1](#) [Window 2](#)

Did you notice halos, wings and bare feet? These are all clues artists to show people who were holy to medieval Christians!

◆ You!

If you were in a stained-glass window, what clues could we use to know who you are? Maybe you'd wear the jersey of your favorite sports team, or hold an instrument if you love music. Use [this template](#) to put yourself in a stained-glass window, and don't forget to add in clues to show who you are. Don't forget to add lots of color!

Christ in Majesty, France, Western Loire, c. 1235 AD, 03.SG.46



Glencairn Museum 03.SG.504

Medieval Movies

Do you have a favorite story? Maybe one of your favorite stories has beautiful pictures, or maybe it is from a movie. In the Middle Ages, people didn't have movies but they did have stories that they loved. Often these stories were made into stained-glass windows, like some stories today are made into movies.

Many medieval windows showed stories from the Bible, like [this one](#) that shows the story of Lazarus, or [this one](#) that shows the story of Mary and Elizabeth.

People who might not be able to read in the Middle Ages, could enjoy "reading" these windows and enjoy the stories they told.

Watch [this video](#) of a fairytale told with all of the pictures made in stained-glass windows! This story is the beginning of a video game that people play today!

Imagining the Middle Ages Today

What would it have been like to be a stained-glass artist in the Middle Ages? Let's find out!

Although we can't make real stained glass at home, you can watch [this video](#) about the hot and sometimes dangerous way of making glass by hand!

Even though we can't make real stained-glass windows at home, we can make stained-glass cookies! Ask for help from an adult to follow [this recipe](#) and make your own edible stained glass!



*Glencairn Museum
03.SG.558*

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Medieval Stained Glass *Grades 3-6 Resource Page*



Lawrence Saint Window, c. 1919

Creating a Heavenly Atmosphere

Did you know that the beauty of stained-glass windows has some neat science behind it? The hand-blown medieval stained glass in cathedrals and churches captured the light, made the walls glow and created a heavenly atmosphere. This atmosphere feels different because of how the glass changes the light. Let's explore how this works!

1. Watch these videos to see how [making machine made glass](#) is different to [making hand-blown glass](#). Write or draw 3 differences that you noticed.
2. Machine made glass is regular and even. Hand-blown glass is irregular and uneven. It has small imperfections. These little imperfections do amazing things to light! Let's see how [hand-blown glass can act in light!](#)
3. Now let's explore this at home! You will need:

- ◆ An empty glass, or pitcher
- ◆ A flashlight
- ◆ Water
- ◆ A straw, stick or something to stir with

First, take your materials to a darkened room, and find a table or surface next to a wall.

Place your glass on the table and shine your flashlight through your empty glass, onto the wall behind it. What do you notice?

Now add water to your glass, and shine your flashlight through it again. What do you notice now? Has anything changed?

Last, hold your flashlight in place—shining through your water and glass—while you stir up and disturb the water inside with your straw. What do you notice? What has changed? What does the light do on the wall, that you didn't see before? How does this connect to medieval stained-glass? Explore the [science of light here!](#)

Significant Structures

During the Middle Ages in Europe, stained glass appeared in the important buildings of that time. What do you think those buildings were? If you guessed churches and cathedrals you would be right! These buildings were important to many people in medieval Europe who were Christian. Churches and cathedrals were some of the fanciest and most expensive buildings as they were thought of as palaces for God and places to worship God. Stained glass was used to make these "palaces" and worship halls very beautiful. Check out [this link](#) where you can take a 360° tour of Chartres Cathedral in France which is home to the largest collection of preserved stained-glass windows in the world!

What are some designs and features that are only used in important buildings today? What buildings do we consider important? Draw, write a list, make a chart, or create a poster to show 5-10 important buildings that you know. See if you can find any similarities in how they look. A good way to start is to Google "Important buildings in..." and add your city!



Glencairn Museum, 03.SG.182

Who's Who in the Windows?

In medieval stained-glass windows, there are some clues to help you know who is being shown.

Take a look at these three windows:

[Window 1](#)

[Window 2](#)

[Window 3](#)

What similarities do you notice?

These all include women—often women had their hair covered, had long clothes that bunched at their feet, and did not have beards.

Now take a look at these three windows:

[Window 1](#)

[Window 2](#)

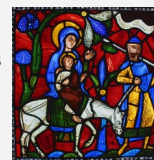
[Window 3](#)

What similarities did you notice? What differences did you notice compared to the first three windows? These all included men—often men had their hair and feet showing. They also often had beards, but not always.

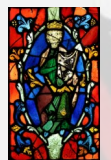
Glass Games

Stained-glass windows are almost like puzzles. Each piece has to fit perfectly with the others. Try your hand at a fun stained-glass inspired [puzzle challenge here!](#)

We have made two online puzzles of our stained-glass windows for you to try! Click on the pictures below to get started! You could even try making your own [online puzzle](#) or [paper puzzle](#)!



Puzzle 1



Puzzle 2

GLENCAIRN MUSEUM

Medieval Stained Glass *Grades 7-8 Resource Page*



*Seven Kneeling Men
(probably apostles), Rouen
Cathedral, France, c. 1240-
1245, (03.SG.52)*

Stories in the Windows

One of the main uses of stained-glass windows in the Middle Ages was to depict stories that taught about virtue and morals. Many of these stories came from the Bible, but some did not. The Legend of the Seven Sleepers is one such story that is told in stained glass.

- ◆ First, view these three windows ([One](#), [Two](#), [Three](#)), and see if you can tell what might be going on in each window, before you hear the story.
- ◆ Next, watch [this video](#) to hear about the story and the time in history when these windows were made.
- ◆ Finally, what do you think this story taught people in the Middle Ages? What do you think it means to people now?
- ◆ Your turn! Pick a story or write a story that has a lesson to be taught. Use [this storyboarding template](#) to design images that tell your story. Add color to your images, or maybe even turn them into stained-glass designs!
- ◆ For more information about the Seven Sleepers windows at Glencairn, read our [Museum News article here!](#)

Modern Copies of Medieval Craft

Some of the windows in Glencairn are replicas of medieval windows. Raymond Pitcairn commissioned the artists that worked on the construction of Glencairn to recreate windows from the Middle Ages, some even travelling to Europe to see the windows in person! You can watch the steps of making a stained-glass window [here](#).

To the right are some windows in the Museum that are replicas of medieval windows. Click each image to take you to see the original windows in their setting in Chartres Cathedral, France, and the replicas in their setting at Glencairn. See if you can notice any differences between the originals and the replicas!

The Science of Stained Glass

The creation of stained glass involves scientific and artistic processes working side by side. We are going to explore two places in that process, and how they were done in the Middle Ages.

Making Glass:

A lot of what we know about how medieval glass was made comes from a book called *On Divers Arts* by a man named Theophilus Presbyter, thought to be a Benedictine monk and artist who lived and worked around the year 1000 CE. You can see a page of the surviving manuscript [here](#). Read Theophilus' [procedure for making glass here](#), which includes Chapter 1-4 of Book 2. Now imagine you are creating a one-page scientific instruction manual about making stained glass. Try using [this template](#) and the information from Theophilus' book to create your scientific manual page!

Coloring Glass:

What kinds of things do you think would have been used to create glass of different colors? Many of the colors were made from natural minerals and metals. Write down or draw some of your guesses for each color. When you're ready, check out this article to find out which minerals and metals make which colors. If you want to try making your own "stained-glass" mason jars, [check out this video here!](#)

Symbolism Clues

Many medieval stained-glass windows depict figures that were considered holy or heavenly by medieval Christians. Two visual clues can help to identify these people.

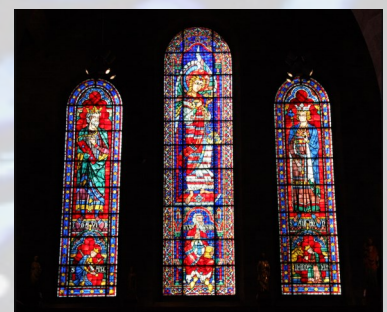
- ◆ Halos: There are two main kinds of halos that figures might be shown wearing. Follow the links to explore the [Nimbus halo](#) and the [Mandorla](#).
- ◆ Bare feet: Many figures that were considered holy or heavenly, were depicted with bare feet.
- ◆ The following 5 windows are either medieval or modern, but together they show 18 holy or heavenly figures, some with nimbus halos, some with mandorlas and some with bare feet. Can you find them all?

[Modern Window 1](#) [Medieval Window 2](#) [Modern Window 3](#)
[Modern Window 4](#) [Medieval Window 5](#)

Chartres Cathedral



Glencairn Museum



For more information, please contact:

Amy Glenn | Educational Programs Manager | Glencairn Museum

[1001 Cathedral Road](#) | [PO Box 757](#) | [Bryn Athyn, PA 19009](#) | [267-502-2962](#) | amy.glenn@glencairnmuseum.org