

Cadw Creators: Stained Glass Windows Learning Resource

A guide for teachers and educators, using built heritage and stained glass, for a curriculum based learning project [#cadwcreators](#)



Abstract Quarry window, Miskin



Brief: Create images that tell stories inspired by stained glass

Cadw Creators is a series of resources to help teachers and educators deliver a creative learning curriculum and Arts Award programmes with school age children. Activities are designed to be used for project-based work and suggest ways of using local heritage resources and the built environment as inspiration. This supports the Welsh Curriculum's Four Purposes and is appropriate for all phases as well as for those working towards Arts Awards qualifications.

This resource has been a collaboration between Cadw, artist and historian Dr Martin Crampin, and Officers from Llandaff Diocese.

Using this resource

This guide provides a framework for teachers, artist educators and pupils to explore stained glass using the local built environments, in particular churches, for inspiration in the expressive arts Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE). Using this guide will provide at least six weeks of lessons, introduce the concept of site-specific artwork and develop artistic skills.

The resource provides an in depth look at stained glass focusing specifically on examples from Wales. This is designed to equip teachers and artist educators with the knowledge and tools to facilitate a high-quality stained-glass project with a group of learners. A project planning framework is suggested with clear links to both the Expressive Arts and Religion, Values and Ethics Areas of Learning and Experience statements for the Welsh Curriculum.

The new curriculum for Wales advocates the use of local cultural resources for learning. Exploring the built environment and stained glass for project work is an excellent way of achieving this objective, and clearly facilitates the curriculum's Four Purposes. This guide aims to help teachers and educators feel more confident in using stained glass to facilitate this style of learning, enabling you to develop high quality projects to use with pupils at school, and in arts education settings.





Porthcawl, Karl Parsons 1927

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Stained Glass in Churches

Stained glass is commonly linked with churches, and the practice of decorating church windows with colorful, painted, and stained glass dates back over a millennium. Some stained glass is purely decorative and the coloured and textured light coming through the windows transforms spaces.

During the Middle Ages, stained glass was used to alter the incoming light in both large and small churches and monasteries.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, disagreements arose regarding the appropriate images for church display. These disagreements, along with neglect toward the windows, resulted in the loss or destruction of much of the original stained glass. However, some examples can still be found in Wales.

By the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, stained glass regained popularity. Large glass sheets were manufactured in significant quantities.

Influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement, certain artists sought to craft their own windows to showcase the distinctive qualities of glass more effectively.

Artists continue to create stained glass windows. Their expertise in handling delicate glass often leads them to restore old windows that have been damaged or vandalized.

Stained glass in churches often contains images of saints or depict stories from the Bible. In Wales you will often find the Welsh saints St David, St Teilo, St Deiniol and St Winefride.

Most windows were placed in churches in memory of family members who had died. These were expensive ways to show that rich families wanted to decorate churches with beautiful works of art, and provided memorials to individuals in public places. The people remembered in the windows are often named at the foot of the window.



Right top: The Jesse window in Dyserth, 1533

Right bottom: Abbey Cwm Hir, Clayton and Bell c 1870



Biblical windows often showed key stories such as the birth of Jesus or his death on the cross. These themes are often found in the easternmost windows of a church behind the high altar. Scenes with children are often found near the font where children are baptised.

Windows showing stories from the Bible did not always relate directly to the people remembered in stained glass, but sometimes connections could be made. For example, the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd was sometimes used to remember vicars who looked after the congregation. When the people commemorated shared the names of saints, these saints were sometimes chosen to be included in the windows.

Some stained glass windows depict not only local saints but other historical characters associated with the church or the local area. More recent windows might have local features or landmarks.

Left: Dorcas memorial at St Nicholas Church Montgomery c.1921

Below: East window with biblical scenes at St Martin's Church, Caerphilly 1879



Where to find stained glass in churches



Church of All Saints, Gresford

Large churches and cathedrals often have plenty of stained-glass windows, but many smaller churches also have collections of stained glass. Windows in these smaller churches can often be easier to look at closely.

Most of the surviving medieval stained glass in Wales is found in churches in the north-east of Wales, with more across north and mid Wales, but very little survives across the southern half of Wales.

Most pictorial stained glass can be found in Church in Wales or Catholic churches, but some can also be found in chapels.



Bangor Cathedral

Church of All Saints, Gresford

One of the best places to see medieval stained glass in Wales is at the parish church in Gresford. Most of the medieval stained glass was made in around 1500 and there are scenes from the Lives of the Virgin Mary, St John the Baptist and St Anthony.

Bangor Cathedral

Windows of the 1840s by the Welsh artist David Evans were moved to the back of the cathedral when they were replaced by windows of a later style. Images of saints made in the early twentieth century by other large London firms, James Powell & Sons and Burlison & Grylls can also be found in the cathedral.

Llandaff Cathedral

Some of the earliest windows at Llandaff Cathedral are by the firm set up by William Morris 1861.

Church of St Peter, Lampeter

Various firms produced windows for this church from the 1870s to the mid-twentieth century. The west window, the church's final grand creation, is the masterpiece of Irish Arts and Crafts artist Wilhelmina Geddes, which took over a decade to complete.



Llandaff Cathedral

Church of St Mary, Swansea

Due to the church was badly damaged in the Second World War all the windows at the church date from the 1950s and later. They include work designed by the artist John Piper, along with windows designed and made by staff and former students of Swansea College of Art including the big millennium window made in 2000.



Church of St Peter, Lampeter



Church of St Mary, Swansea

Stained glass at other heritage sites



Plas Newydd, Llangollen



Church of St Gwenllwyfo, Llanwenllwyfo

Stained glass was a popular choice among royalty and nobility for adorning their castles and residences. Just like in churches, certain windows displayed intricate decorative patterns, while others showcased images of significance to their family and heritage.

During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, stained glass became a trend among the wealthy, who not only collected pieces from various countries but also gifted them to local churches besides displaying them in their homes.

Stained glass was not limited to churches; it found its place in castles and houses as well. Often used in private chapels, it also served to illuminate stairwells and important rooms with colorful light.

Plas Newydd, Llangollen

A range of stained glass pieces were collected by the Ladies of Llangollen in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, dating from the late medieval period into the eighteenth century.

Church of St Gwenllwyfo, Llanwenllwyfo

Part of the collection of Flemish glass acquired by the Neave family was given to the church at Llanwenllwyfo by Sir Arundell Neave in 1877. Other glass from the collection can now be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Penrhyn Castle

Penrhyn Castle

Stained glass by Thomas Willement at Penrhyn Castle includes the two large windows in the Great Hall with images representing the months and images of the signs of the zodiac, made in 1835.

Cardiff Castle and Castell Coch

The third marquis of Bute was Catholic convert and enjoyed the arts. He commissioned a set of saints for his chapel at Castell Coch, and a range of subjects, including biblical and Welsh mythological themes for Cardiff Castle. Twentieth-century windows by the Arts and Crafts artist Paul Woodroffe depicted royal figures, including the Tudors.

Some Cadw heritage sites feature extra information displayed by the windows to share the stories of Wales' history with visitors.

Beaumaris Castle

Beaumaris Castle, built by Edward I, began construction in 1295. However, Edward, being occupied with matters in Scotland, never completed the castle. Following restoration work at this World Heritage Site, artists Linda Norris and Rachel Phillips were tasked with creating five stained glass windows as an art piece. They combined traditional and modern glass-making techniques to capture the essence of the castle's history.



Cardiff Castle and Castell Coch

The design blends medieval glass patterns with contemporary glass methods to illustrate the unique legacy of Edward I in Wales.

A detailed plan of the castle, prominently featured and central in the window design, served as the foundation for the placement of colours and intricate details within the windows.

Caernarfon Castle

At Caernarfon Castle, a window crafted by Studio Melyn (Rachel Phillips and Linda Norris) showcases various stages of the stained-glass making process in its upper part, depicting hands shaping the glass and painting the design. When viewed from a distance, the window reveals tools at the bottom against coloured glass, followed by a more intricate representation of the work above.

While there is no concrete evidence of stained glass in the chapel at Caernarfon, historical records indicate that Simon le Verrier from Chester was tasked by Edward I to supply glass windows, potentially stained, at other sites in North Wales.

Conwy Castle

With an underlying design structure based on the map of north Wales, the three windows in Conwy Castle tell the story of the Welsh Princes and their struggles with Edward 1st who built the castle in 1283-89.

The window, again made by Studio Melyn (Rachel Phillips and Linda Norris) was inspired by medieval glass fragments in north Wales and carvings from churches and other medieval buildings in Gwynedd.

The imagery is inspired by images in medieval texts and stained glass of the period as well as some modern images, including what is possibly the first mobile phone to appear in a stained glass window. You will also find a mountain bike and a walking boot if you look closely!

Strata Florida Abbey

Strata Florida Abbey was a grand medieval abbey fit for generations of Welsh princes and a place of huge religious significance. The stained glass panels draw inspiration from twelfth-century floor tiles discovered in the medieval chapel located within the site.



Stained Glass and the Welsh Curriculum

The Curriculum for Wales guidance supports schools to design a curriculum with the four purposes at its heart. A key aspect of this is learners developing an understanding of their identity. Supporting this is a focus on understanding the diversity of perspectives, values and identities which shape their locality and Wales. Understanding who they are and where they come from.

This project offers an opportunity for learners, through a creative approach, to start to discover the stories that are contained in stained glass. It allows them to gain an understanding of local heritage and an appreciation of the beauty we find in buildings. It encourages a creative response intertwined with personal storytelling and understanding of identity.

This project provides links to the statements of what matters through:

- Exploring heritage, sites such as churches.
- Gaining knowledge about local heritage.
- Exploring how creative work can represent, document, share and celebrate personal, social and cultural identities.
- Making connections between their own creative work and creative work by other people and from other places and times.
- Planning and communicating their own creative work.
- Exploring their own cultural heritage and that of other people, places and times.
- Discovering how expressive arts can be used to shape and express personal, social and cultural identities.



Beaumaris Castle

Project planning and facilitating the Welsh Curriculum

This framework is designed to take learners on an authentic journey, and to draw learning from the process, rather than focus on a product. This project outline will facilitate many opportunities for learning from experience within the Curriculum for Wales framework.

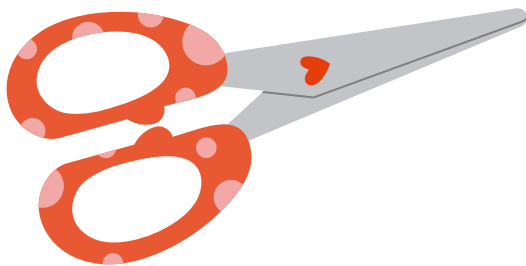
Step 1 — Explore

Explore site-specific stained glass: Visiting a church and what to look for.

Objective: Use www.stainedglass.llgc.org.uk* to identify images of local stained glass. Explore site specific stained glass in a local building.

When looking at stained glass in churches here are some things to look out for:

- Stained glass windows in churches were sometimes commissioned at the same time and from the same studio or over many decades from a range of makers. Do the windows match each other or suggest different styles?
- Sometimes windows have signatures and dates, usually lower down on the window. Can you find any? Sometimes signatures take the form of a mark or monogram.
- If there is no date with a signature, can you see anything on the windows or on surrounding plaques to find out how old the window is? You might need to learn Roman numerals!
- Look for texts on the windows that say who it was given by or who it is in memory of. What can you find about the people mentioned on the window? Does it relate to the imagery in the window?



Links to Areas of Learning

Expressive arts: I can explore how creative work can represent, document, share and celebrate personal, social and cultural identities.

Humanities: I can describe how some different characteristics of communities and societies have changed, within and across periods of time, in my locality and in Wales, as well as in the wider world.

Religion, Values and Ethics: I can explore how religious and non-religious beliefs and practices impact on the lives of individuals, the local community and wider society

Step 2 – Design

Design and key features of stained glass

Use a selection of images, including ones from the site-specific visit. Discuss the stories, images and design. Do they all use the same technique? Do they always link to religion or beliefs? What key features can you identify and what do represent? Is the image telling a story? Introduce the concept of a cartoon for stained glass — this is not a comic strip but a full-size working drawing to assist with the making of a stained-glass window.

Activity 1 — Create a cartoon

- Use a collection of images and photographs from site specific visit.
- Ask learners to identify an aspect of the design that interest or inspire them.
- Ask them to replicate their version of this in a cartoon.
- A variety of materials may be offered: black tape, thick tipped felt pens, markers etc.



Links to Areas of Learning

Expressive Arts: I can reflect upon how artists have achieved effects or communicated moods, emotions and ideas in their work.

Expressive Arts: I can explore and experiment independently and demonstrate technical control with a range of creative materials, processes, resources, tools and technologies showing innovation and resilience. 17

* <http://stainedglass.llgc.org.uk> is from an outside source and is not available through the medium of Welsh.

Step 3 – Storytelling

Reflect back on the stories that you have seen in the stained glass. How are they represented? Why are they chosen? Who has chosen them? Why are they important? What do they tell us about our heritage and culture? What do they tell us about our locality and Wales?

Activity 2 – What’s the story?

Learners may want to consider a response to the story through:

- a dramatic interpretation
- a poem
- a cartoon strip of the story
- a written response.

Links to areas of learning

Expressive Arts: I can explore how creative work can represent, document, share and celebrate personal, social and cultural identities.

Step 4 – Telling our Story

As an individual, group or class identify a story that you want to tell. This may be linked to a personal story, an upcoming event, a community story or to mark an event. Create a piece of art, using inspiration from stained glass techniques.

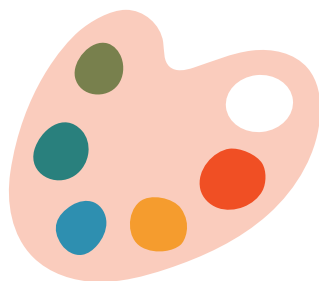
Activity 3 – Stained Glass Stories

Identify the key aspect that you want represented in your stained glass.

Create a design or cartoon to include these. Test your design with others to see if they are able to identify the theme of the story.

Adjust your design or cartoon as needed.

Use one of the following techniques to create your stained glass.



Method 1

You will need: Acetate, PVA glue, black acrylic paint, squeeze bottle, acrylic paints in assorted colours.

1. Mix the black paint and glue and put in squeeze bottle.
2. Place your design or cartoon underneath the acetate to use as a guide.
3. Carefully squeeze the black glue to make the outline of your design.
4. Leave to dry.
5. Fill in design with acrylic paints.



Method 2

You will need: sticky back plastic, black sharpie pen, tissue paper, glue stick.

1. Use the sharpie pen to draw your design on to the sticky back plastic using your cartoon as a guide.
2. Peel the backing off the sticky back plastic and place on window.
3. Use the tissue paper and glue stick to add the colours to your design.

Method 3

You will need: a pencil, large sheets of paper or sheets of paper taped together, black tape, selection of materials in assorted colours e.g. tissue paper, coloured acetate, pens, paint.

1. Use the pencil to outline the shape of your design.
2. Use the black tape to create the black outline following the lines of pencil.
3. Chose you materials and fill in section of your design using appropriate colours.



There are many other ways to create a stained-glass replica, chose one that suits your class and the art the way in which they want to express their stories.

You may like to identify a window in your school that could be used for a collaborative piece. Window markers or paints are available for this type of work.

You may like to collaborate with an artist on a piece of stained-glass artwork for your school.

Links to areas of learning

Expressive arts: I can combine my knowledge, experience and understanding to plan and communicate my creative work for a range of different audiences, purposes and outcomes.

Expressive arts: I can safely choose and use the correct creative tools and materials with some consideration for others.

Step 5 – Celebrate and share

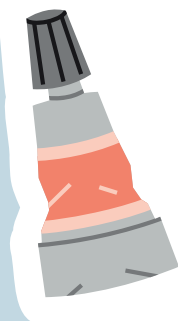
Once you have completed your artwork you might like to share the work and the stories behind them with you school and local community. You could:

Collaborate with the place that inspired your work. Display your work and invite people to come and share the stories whilst also learning about the stained glass in the building. Churches are a great option for this!

If your work relates to a specific event or to mark a special anniversary think about inviting people from the community to come and look at your work and discuss why it's important to you.

Create a virtual gallery on your website. The gallery could also include stained glass windows that have inspired your work. Don't forget to tell people where the stained glass is so they can go and look at it for themselves.

Video the process of you making your stained-glass window and speed up the video. Add a voiceover to explain the process and what inspired you. Share on social media sites such as twitter to inspire others.



More Information

An online database of stained glass in Wales can be found at www.stainedglass.llgc.org.uk,* where there is also a list of some contemporary makers of stained glass.

Links to areas of learning

Expressive arts: I can perform, produce, design, exhibit and share my creative work in formal and non-formal contexts, considering the impact of my creative work on the audience.

* www.stainedglass.llgc.org.uk is from an outside source and is not available through the medium of Welsh.