

Stained Glass Windows








Stained glass windows are a very old art form, and you will very often find them in churches, cathedrals and other places of worship as well as stately homes.

Stained glass is made by adding colour from different metals when the glass is still liquid (molten).

The different colours of glass are then cut and arranged to make pictures or patterns, and it is all held together by pieces of lead inside a strong frame. Sometimes extra details are painted on after the main design has been finished.

Sometimes stained glass is coloured by painting them on to the glass which is then fixed to the glass in a high temperature oven called a kiln.

The salts of the following metals are used to add colour to the glass –

-  **Cobalt** – makes brilliant blue
-  **Gold** – the metal itself is used in very minute amounts and produces a ruby red colour and violet
-  **Iron II oxide** – makes a blue-green colour
-  **Copper** – makes a dark red colour
-  **Chromium** – makes a dark green
-  **Silver (Nitrate)** – makes a number of colours in the red and yellow spectrum
-  **Manganese dioxide** – makes green

Stained glass was an expensive product in the medieval times, and so it was a way of telling people how wealthy you were. If the colours were very deep and rich, it meant that you had plenty of money to afford the amount of gold or silver to produce the reds or yellows, for instance.

Even small country churches have some stained glass, but not all of them have the very rich colours of the cathedrals or larger churches. This is because there was not much money to afford the very bright colours, and the congregation often helped to pay for them.

The pictures in the windows you will see in many churches and other places of worship are stories or scenes from the Bible, or other Holy Book.

Hartlebury Castle has lots of stained glass panels and windows, many are shields of the Bishops of Worcester, but the big window in the chapel is from 1898 to commemorate Bishop Perowne's 50 years as a priest, and replaces an earlier one of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Now you know a little more about stained glass windows, perhaps you could design your own, or go to our activity pages and discover how to make one yourself using punched poly pockets/plastic wallets and marker pens!