

LIGHT OF THE PRAIRIE: STAINED GLASS IN SOUTH DAKOTA TEACHER'S GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

In **LIGHT OF THE PRAIRIE Stained Glass in South Dakota**, South Dakota Public Broadcasting Television explores the state's artistic history. The one-hour SDPB Television production travels throughout the state to look at a beautiful and often underappreciated aspect of South Dakota's history. The documentary touches on the history and culture of stained glass windows with expert and Humanities Scholar Dr. Barbara Johnson of Aberdeen.

Many communities across the state have used these stained glass windows to tell their stories – their connection to God, the homestead experience or life on the Great Plains. Windows can be found in private homes, churches, courthouse, schools, and even in barns.

The production looks at three broad topics.

- **The History of Stained Glass on the Great Plains**
Stained glass windows originally were developed in the Middle East. Early stained glass artists learned to use metals like gold, cobalt, copper and others to create vibrant colors in glass. Centuries later, settlers who immigrated to the Great Plains brought their stained glass traditions with them. In South Dakota, these colorful windows often tell the same stories as windows found in Europe and the Middle East about religion, art and memories.
- **The Buildings**
Churches are most commonly associated with stained glass. Some windows depict biblical figures or stories and some are merely decorative. But not all stained glass is connected to religious communities. Throughout South Dakota there are buildings where stained glass tells stories of our state, individual communities, prominent families, epic events, or sometimes mystical people and places. The State Capitol building is home to many beautiful windows, but the art form is found across the state in schools, courthouses and homes.
- **The Present and Future**
Many of the stained glass windows found across the state are showing the ravages of time. The restoration of a stained glass window is expensive and time consuming, but those who love and respect these beautiful pieces of history are finding ways to restore them. Creating stained glass remains a living art form, and many of today's artists continue to carry on the storytelling tradition in their contemporary creations. Technology is allowing today's craftsmen to create more contemporary designs with vivid color choices.

LIGHT OF THE PRAIRIE: Stained Glass in South Dakota is produced with the support of the [South Dakota Humanities Council](#), an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

This teaching guide plus online elements support classroom use of the video. The companion website, www.sdpb.org/StainedGlass, includes photographs not included in the one-hour program and links to interactive online elements and downloadable educational resources.

USING THE TEACHER'S GUIDE

This guide suggests activities and resources for connecting the video to curriculum goals and standards. It is meant to be flexible to work at multiple grade levels to support the teaching of both visual arts and South Dakota history. The video content links to history, civics (government), and visual arts classes.

The guide is not designed as a curriculum in and of itself. It offers teachers flexibility in planning activities to meet their objectives in limited or more extended time periods.

The guide includes the following sections:

Standards Links: Video links to the South Dakota State Content Standards.

Video Synopsis: A brief description of the video contents.

Interviewees: People interviewed in the program.

Pre-Viewing Activities: Activities to focus student viewing of the video.

Post-Viewing Activities: Activities that support curriculum goals and standards, including some extended lesson plans.

Visiting Stained Glass: Activities to support a visit to a building with stained glass windows.

Terms: Terms mentioned in the video.

Resources: Books and other resources with more information on stained glass.

STANDARDS LINKS

The primary subject areas that Light of the Prairie supports are visual arts and South Dakota history. Following is a selection of the South Dakota State Content Standards that the video and the activities support.

VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS

Standard 1: Students will understand and use visual arts as means for creative self-expression and interpersonal communication.

Standard 2: Students will understand the media, techniques and processes used in the production of visual arts.

Standard 3: Students will understand the relationship between visual arts and history, culture, and society.

HISTORY

Fourth Grade U.S. History

Indicator 1: Analyze U.S. historical eras to determine connections and cause/effect relationships in reference to chronology.

4.US.1.2. Students are able to identify basic environmental, economic, cultural, and population issues of concern to South Dakota.

Indicator 2: Evaluate the influence/impact of various cultures, philosophies, and religions on the development of the U.S.

4.US.2.1. Students are able to describe the impact of significant turning points on the development of the culture in South Dakota.

Fourth Grade World History

Indicator 2: Evaluate the interactions of world cultures, civilizations, philosophies, and religions.

Fourth Grade Civics

Indicator 1: Analyze forms and purpose of government in relationship to the needs of citizens and society including the importance of historical events, ideals, and documents.

Core High School U.S. History

Indicator 2: Evaluate the influence/impact of various cultures, philosophies, and religions on the development of the U.S.

9-12.US.2.1. Students are able to describe the causes and effects of interactions between the U.S. government and Native American cultures.

9-12.US.2.2. Students are able to describe the causes and effects of cultural, economic, religious, political, and social reform movements on the development of the U.S.

9-12.US.2.3. Students are able to identify the influences of local groups on settlement patterns of South Dakota and the Great Plains Region.

Core High School World History

Indicator 2: Evaluate the interactions of world cultures, civilizations, philosophies, and religions.

9-12.W.2.1. Students are able to define the key distinguishing features of significant cultural, economic, and political philosophies in relation to the other.

VIDEO SYNOPSIS

Teachers are encouraged to view the video prior to watching it with students. Pre-viewing may suggest options for presenting it to students. The following synopsis briefly describes the documentary.

LIGHT OF THE PRAIRIE: STAINED GLASS IN SOUTH DAKOTA ([Watch entire program online](#))

The Beginning ([Watch online](#))

The video visits buildings with some of the earliest stained glass windows in the state, including churches and courthouses.

What Is Stained Glass ([Watch online](#))

Dr. Barbara Johnson, a South Dakota Humanities Scholar, describes some of the history of how stained glass came to be, both naturally and as an art form. She explains the basic process for creating stained glass. Stained glass was important in churches in the Middle Ages to help relate church teachings to a largely illiterate audience through visual communication.

The Story Behind the Story Teller ([Watch online](#))

Dr. Johnson relates how she researches stained glass windows in South Dakota and how she has learned about their history as well as the history of the people who purchased or created them.

Native American Culture ([Watch online](#))

The video reports on stained glass windows in South Dakota Indian reservations that relate Lakota spirituality.

Reading the Windows ([Watch online](#))

The video visits Pierre and examines stained glass windows in the State Capitol as well as churches, considering the different ways that the windows tell stories, including their use of color.

The Importance of Color ([Watch online](#))

The various meanings of colors in stained glass as well as the ways of producing color are explained. St. Anthony's Church in Hoven has windows in the Munich Pictorial Style. The church is also an example of how local citizens used stained glass to promote local values. In depicting a Biblical story about Joseph, the father of Jesus, the early German settlers revised the story to emphasize German values. The stained glass windows of the VA Hospital in Hot Springs depict the values of the institution in the caring for wounded soldiers.

Stained Glass in Our Homes ([Watch online](#))

The video also visits two private homes with stained glass windows, noting that they can have more personal meanings as well.

The Wild West ([Watch online](#))

The video visits Deadwood, where several stained glass windows from a now demolished historic church have been reused in newer buildings. Other windows rescued from old buildings are also seen.

Protecting Stained Glass ([Watch online](#))

A visit to a closed church in Zell raises the issue of preserving stained glass windows, which can be impossible to replace, and the importance of documenting and studying windows. The video also visits churches in Aberdeen, Sisseton, and Blue Cloud Abbey, in Marvin.

Salvation to Forgiveness ([Watch online](#))

The state penitentiary in Sioux Falls features stained glass windows made by a prisoner.

Historic to Present ([Watch online](#))

Sioux Falls is home to many buildings with stained glass windows, including some by noted artist Louis Comfort Tiffany. Dakota Stained Glass in Sioux Falls restores and preserves stained glass windows.

Preserving History ([Watch online](#))

After a few summary comments, a final montage shows images of stained glass windows from all the buildings visited in the video.

(See the Resources section for a list of places visited in the video.)

INTERVIEWEES

Ken Bird, Owner, Dakota Stained Glass, Sioux Falls
Gert Boyles, Christ Episcopal Church, Yankton
Gail Damin, Black Hills Glass Blowers, Keystone
Father Kevin Doyle, Pastor, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Hoven
David Gilbertson, Chief Justice, South Dakota Supreme Court
Violet Inman, homeowner, Hot Springs
Dr. Barbara Johnson, SD Humanities Scholar, Aberdeen
Lynn Namminga, historian, Deadwood
Dr. Robert Pharres, homeowner, Hot Springs
Mike Runge, City of Deadwood Historical Director
Betsy Savage, VA Hospital, Hot Springs
Father Shane Stevens, Pastor, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Aberdeen

PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Use the following to help focus student viewing of the video.

Display an image of a stained glass window from the video, accessible from the program [photo website](#) or from your community. Alternatively, ask students to identify some buildings in town with stained glass windows. Have them describe the windows, particularly windows with which most students are familiar. For the windows you consider, ask:

- Why does that building have that window?
- What is its purpose?
- Where do they think the window was produced?
- When was it made?
- What is the purpose of stained glass windows?
- How did the artist add color to the glass?
- Where are most stained glass windows found and why?

As students watch the video, they should keep track of the subject matter depicted in the windows (e.g., Jesus Christ, firefighter, pelican). After viewing, discuss the meanings of the various windows containing those subjects. Ask what the variety of window subjects says about the art form. As an alternative, provide students with a list of window subjects to watch for in the video. You might put the following (or others that you find as you preview the video) on the board or distribute on a worksheet:

- Beehive
- Bucking horse
- Crown
- Firefighter
- Jesus Christ
- Joseph, the father of Jesus
- Man with a shovel
- Pelican
- Person in a hospital bed
- Praying hands
- Preacher
- Scales of justice

After doing either activity, remind students to keep these discussions in mind as they watch the video.

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

The following offer a variety of ways to explore issues raised by the video. They are generally interdisciplinary in nature, often tying together history and visual arts and addressing content standards. Review and adapt the activities for their appropriateness for your class content and grade level.

Discussion questions

Discuss: Why do artists create stories with no words? Analyze: What challenges do artists face when trying to tell a story with only images? Why are these visual stories captured on stained glass rather than being painted on the walls or a canvas? ([Related activity](#))

Review some examples of windows shown in the video. Ask for examples of ways stories were told in stained glass windows. Ask students to recall how locals add their own touch and emphasis (for example, the Hoven Germans).

Review the types of buildings shown in the video that include stained glass windows. Ask students if they agree with this statement: Stained glass windows inspire awe, wonder, and amazement and create an almost magical environment inside a building. Explain why they do or do not agree. Discuss: Why is it important for churches and other important buildings to have windows of such beauty?

The video talks about how the State Capitol window that commemorates the plane crash victims is done in segments of eight to symbolize the eight victims. Ask students to describe other methods used in windows to tell stories or symbolize aspects of the story. ([Additional information](#))

Review examples of how artists use different colors to mean different things in windows and iconography. What emotions, actions, or things do we typically associate with each of the following colors: Blue, Yellow, Red, Green, Violet, and Orange? (For example, warm colors—red, yellow, and orange—are typically associated with high emotions like anger, joy, passion, happiness, and the like; cool colors—violet, green, and blue—are most commonly associated with less loaded emotions like melancholy, serenity, and calmness.)

The video raises the issue of preservation of stained glass windows. Ask students to identify factors that should be part of such discussions (e.g., cost, culture, artistic value). Have students apply these factors to stained glass windows they know or other local artworks in deciding about preserving them. That is, if there were a need to demolish a building containing the artwork, what factors would call for saving or discarding the artwork.

Review the stories of how some of the stained glass windows in South Dakota came to be. Work with students to infer what stained glass windows can tell us about the communities and people who commissioned their creation. Where, when, and why were the windows created? Is there an underlying story behind

the windows—something besides the illustrated story being communicated by the artist?

Stained glass first appeared in the Middle Ages when people were less literate to help educate them about church teachings. Ask students to explain why stained glass continues to be part of churches and other buildings even after people have become more literate.

Review the subjects of the windows that are based in South Dakota history. Ask: Why were these subjects depicted in stained glass windows rather than in a different art form? What about stained glass or the building is appropriate for these topics?

The video includes examples of stained glass windows that depict and/or emerge from certain cultures or religions in South Dakota. Ask students to identify and explain these examples. What are some other cultures in the state? How might those cultures be depicted in art? What kinds of buildings might have stained glass windows reflecting those cultures?

Review the stories behind some of the windows in the video—e.g., the Pierre windows depicting the first preaching in South Dakota, the windows featuring Native American spirituality, the windows in the VA Hospital. Why were these subjects depicted in those buildings? Why were they important to the people who chose them? Discuss various artworks in your community, not just stained glass windows. How do they reflect local interests or values?

Stained glass windows are time consuming to create and are far more durable and long lived than artwork created on canvas or paper. What kinds of themes or subject matter are typically reserved for this durable and labor intensive medium? If you were creating a stained glass window what important subject would you choose to include in the design?

Activities

Have students choose a stained glass window they know or one from the video. Ask them to reproduce the window in the medium of their choice. Analyze: What does the process of reproducing the image tell you about how it is composed? If it's a large window, students can work in groups to reproduce it. They can divide the window into sections and each group member can reproduce a section. Discuss their choices compared to the original artist's choices.

Offer a list of buildings in your community, including types of buildings that traditionally would not have stained glass windows (e.g., a supermarket or motel). Without saying why, have each student choose a building from the list. Alternatively, don't offer the list and have students name a building in town. They should write the name of the building on a piece of paper. Next, have students trade buildings with each other. Discuss some examples in the video of how

stained glass windows relate to the purpose of the building they are in and how local people have influenced the selection of subject matter and depiction (e.g., the Hoven German depiction of Joseph). The assignment is to design or describe a stained glass window that's appropriate for that building and choose a location in the building for it. They should be prepared to explain why their subject and design make sense for the building.

Have students conduct research on stained glass through history. To narrow their research, they should choose specific stained glass artists, artistic styles, or specific countries or centuries. They should consider how the styles, methods, colors, and stories they tell change over time or not. Students might create a presentation or display, perhaps linking their projects together in a single presentation.

As a whole class project, have students choose a place in their school where they would put several stained glass windows. Have them discuss as a class what story or themes or values they would want to convey in the windows. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group to create a design for one of the windows. Each group should choose a window topic that fits the overall theme. If there is time, have the groups present and discuss their ideas with the whole class to seek approval before designing the individual windows. The groups should present their final designs to the class as a whole. Follow up: Discuss what would be involved in actually getting the windows made and installed (e.g., permission, artist commission, etc.). As an extension, have the students present their designs to another group, such as a student government council, faculty committee, or school board.

Extended Lesson Plans

Fort Randall

Materials : Access to a library/computers for research. Scratch paper. 9x12 drawing paper. Colored Pencils. Tagboard. Glue and Scissors.

Fort Randall may be home to the oldest stained glass windows in South Dakota, but these windows are missing and little is known about them. Students will conduct research on the history of the Fort Randall area and then create a design for a unique stained glass window for the historic church that illustrates a story, event, or other piece of history concerning Fort Randall. Students will create several small brainstorm sketches (in the shape of a stained glass window opening) before drawing their best idea on 9x12 inch drawing paper. Their drawings should be segmented and broken into many small pieces based on changes in color, texture, and shape. Students will color their drawings with heavy strokes of colored pencil to achieve a shiny burnished appearance. The lines separating each portion of the drawing should be gone over several times with black colored pencil to create thick "lead" separations. The finished drawings should be cut out and then mounted on a larger piece of black tagboard for presentation. ([Additional information](#))

Geometric Stained Glass Design

Materials: Jugs of Pre Mixed Glue and Pigment. The teacher should mix up large jugs of school glue with pigment (dick blick liquid watercolor is a good possibility) ahead of time. A jug for each primary color is suggested; secondary colors can be mixed. Paper or plastic cups for holding colored glue. Plastic sheets (like those used for overhead projectors). Scratch paper. Tagboard. Scissors. Small bottles of glue mixed with black pigment.

Students will create a unique faux stained glass window whose subject matter is an abstract geometric pattern and will gain a greater understanding of the work that goes into making a stained glass window.

1. Discuss stained glass windows, watch the **Light of the Prairie** DVD or [online](#), and then talk about how stained glass windows are produced.
2. Discuss geometric shapes, the principle of balance (symmetry, radial balance, and asymmetry), and how to create a geometric design.
3. Have students decide which colors they want to use for their design
4. Distribute colored glue and plastic sheets to the class. Have them pour the glue on the plastic sheets, when this dries it will be their "glass." Colors can be mixed, drizzled together, swirled or dragged into one another, or just poured as solid color on a sheet. Students may lay down colored glue on multiple sheets.
5. While the glue sheets are drying, have students brainstorm ideas for their geometric designs on scratch paper. Option: Have students fold a sheet in half multiple times to give them 8 small rectangular boxes to work in. They should come up with 8 different designs.
6. Students will draw their best designs on tagboard and then cut the tagboard up into separate geometric shapes.
7. Once the glue is dry, the tagboard pieces will be used as templates. Trace a tagboard shape onto the desired section of glue with a pen and then cut out the shape. Repeat this process for each of the shapes.
8. Lay out the finished geometric design on another sheet of clear overhead plastic with small 1/8 inch spaces between each section of colored glass.
9. Use the black colored glue to lay down a thick line of glue to fill in the 1/8 inch gap. This line of glue should be larger than 1/8 inch and should overlap the colored glass slightly.
10. Allow the black glue to dry completely and then peel the finished window off of the plastic. The finished product can be hung in a window, dangled from the ceiling, or displayed however the teacher sees fit.

Stained Glass Research

Review the stained glass windows shown at the end of the video. Students can also access this segment on the [program website](#). Have students choose one of the windows to do a project. Their project should include at least two of the following:

- A personal drawing or painting of the window
- A two-paragraph written description of the window
- An interpretation of the window describing the story or message it conveys and the methods used to tell the story
- An explanation of the historical context of the window—either of the subject matter or the building it is in
- A defense of preserving the window in the event that its building would need to be demolished

VISITING STAINED GLASS

Use one or more of the following activities during a visit to a building in your community with stained glass windows. You may also adapt some video-related activities for a visit.

Visit the building in advance and find several features in the windows. Create a scavenger hunt list and distribute it to the class with the assignment to find the features you identified. After the hunt, have students tell what they learned about the windows as a result of looking for the scavenger hunt features.

When visiting, ask how the windows in the building are related to each other. Do they tell a story, relate certain related characteristics or values, share a color scheme or otherwise have something in common?

Compare and contrast a stained glass window from an inside and outside viewing perspective.

Have the students take photos of the windows from a church or other building and create a slideshow. Consider: How does viewing the slideshow compare to seeing the windows in the actual building? Do the students see things in this second viewing that they didn't see before?

Ask students to compare and contrast the windows they are visiting with some in the video. Explain: With which windows in the video do these windows have the most in common? In what way? Which windows do they like better? Why?

TERMS

The following terms are used in the video.

Dome: an architectural element that resembles half a sphere.

Fusing: a method of joining pieces of glass or adding color by heating the glass.

Graven image: an object of worship typically made from wood or stone.

Icon: a religious artwork, typically a painting, usually from Orthodox Christianity; an icon represents its subject directly or symbolically.

Iconography: the identification, description, and the interpretation of the content of images, including the subjects, compositions, and other elements.

Liturgical: related to religious worship.

Munich Pictorial Style: an artistic style of stained glass developed in Bavaria in the 18th and 19th centuries featuring painting on large glass panels.

Orthodox: referring to the Eastern Orthodox Church, the second largest Christian Church in the world, with believers primarily in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Pane: an individual sheet of glass in a window.

Prairie School Architecture: a late 19th and early 20th century American architectural style, marked by horizontal lines, flat roofs, windows grouped in horizontal groups, integration with the surrounding landscape, solid construction, and limited use of ornament.

Rotunda: a building with a circular plan or a round room inside a building.

Sacred: worthy of spiritual devotion; or inspiring awe or reverence among believers.

Saint: a person (usually deceased) recognized for having an exceptional degree of holiness and virtue.

Secular: the state of being separate from religion.

Stained glass: glass that has been colored by adding metallic oxides during manufacture. The glass is made into windows in which small pieces of glass are arranged to form patterns or pictures, usually held together by strips of lead. Alternatively, the colors may be painted onto the glass and then fused with heat. The design of a window may be non-figurative or figurative.

Tiffany, Louis Comfort: (1848 –1933) an American artist and designer who worked in the decorative arts and is best known for his work in stained glass.

Victorian: the Victorian era of British history was the period of Queen Victoria's reign from 1837 until her death in 1901.

RESOURCES

Dr. Barbara Johnson is available for in-person presentations on her research on stained glass windows in South Dakota. Contact her through the South Dakota Humanities Council: www.sdhumanities.org.

Books

A Thousand Years of Stained Glass, Catherine Brisac, Trans. By Geoffrey Culverwell, Photographs by Yukichi Watabe, 1986. Doubleday.

Discovering Stained Glass, John Harries, rev. and expanded by Carola Hicks, 1996. Shire Publications.

Louis Comfort Tiffany Masterworks, Camilla de la Bédoyère, 2007. Flame Tree Publishing.

Stained Glass, Roger Rosewell, 2012. Shire Publications.

Online

Visit the [Light of the Prairie: Stained Glass in South Dakota](#).

The [Hovland Center for Liturgical Arts Collection at Augustana College](#) contains photographs of architecture and visual art in churches and other places of worship in South Dakota, including information about stained glass windows supplied by Dr. Barbara Johnson and funded through a grant from the South Dakota Humanities Council. The arts collection may be searched online at

Additional PBS stained glass related resources can be found at the following sites:

- [NOVA: Medieval Stained Glass Science](#) (Related Interactive)
- [NOVA: Building the Great Cathedrals](#) (Watch online)
- [Dragonfly TV: Stained Glass](#) (Related video: Elementary-HS)
 - [Dragonfly TV: Activity Ideas](#) (Click stained glass)
- [Religion and Ethics: Stained Glass Artist](#) (Watch online)
- [NOVA: Making Stuff Smaller](#) (Section about stained glass)
- [Colorful Sun Catcher](#) (Craft for kids)

Stained Glass Locations Visited in the Video

ABERDEEN

Brown County Courthouse

First Methodist Church
Aberdeen Recreation and Cultural center (old Central High school)
Sacred Heart Catholic Church

BLUE CLOUD ABBEY

BROOKINGS

First Presbyterian Church

DEADWOOD

Adams House Museum
Deadwood City Hall
Namminga House
Deadwood United Methodist Church

CHAMBERLAIN

St. Joseph's Indian School

HOT SPRINGS

Veterans Hospital
St. Anthony's of Padua Church
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Robert Pharres Home

HOVEN

St. Anthony's

LAKE ANDES

Charles Mix County Courthouse

LEAD

Christ Church Episcopal
Methodist Memorial Park

PIERRE

St. Joseph's
Congressional United Church of Christ
State Capitol

RAPID CITY

Emmanuel Episcopal Church

SIOUX FALLS

All Saints
Calvary Cathedral
St. Joseph's Cathedral

St. Katherine's Drexel
State Penitentiary

TYNDALL

Bon Homme County Courthouse

SISSETON

Sisseton Alliance Church
St. Peters' Catholic Church

VERMILLION

St. Agnes Church

YANKTON

Yankton Christ Episcopal Church

ZELL

St. Mary's Catholic Church

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Black Hills Glass Blowers

Deadwood History Inc.

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