Stained Glass windows

Bath Abbey has been called the Lantern of the West because it has so many glass windows. There are 52 in total.

The oldest stained or coloured glass is from about 1604 while the most recent is from 2026.

The windows contain inspiring images telling the story of Jesus, the saints and other important people in the Bible.

The large East window is a very special one because it contains 76 square meters of glass and shows 56 scenes from the life of Jesus. The most important events are in the middle and run vertically from the bottom (Nativity) to the top (Crucifixion). You can see how much detail there is from this close-up of the Nativity scene.

Stained glass making is a very old and skilled craft. The glass is made from silica (sand). It is coloured by adding minerals. Details such as faces are painted on, and then the glass is fired at a high heat. A tool called a grozing iron is then used to cut the glass into pieces. They are then joined together using metal strips made of lead called cames.

The blue glass is made by adding cobalt, the green glass by adding iron oxide and the red glass by adding gold.

This is a picture of Noah's Ark, a story in the Bible of how God saved all the animals in the world from a storm. What animals can you see? (the answer is at the bottom of the page)

3 kinds of birds, lambs, giraffes, camels

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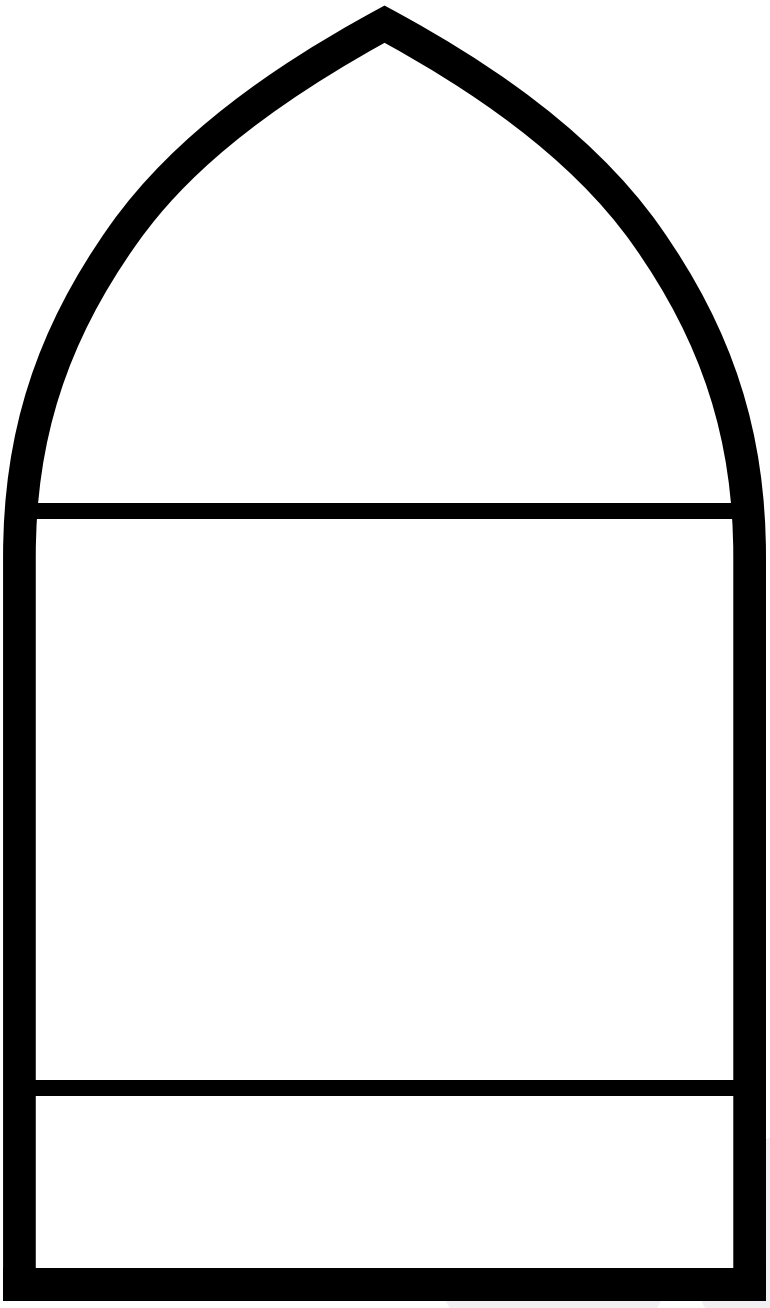
Activity ideas

1. Design a stained glass window, using the outline below. You could draw and colour your own version of Noah's ark or else choose your own subject.
2. Do some research to find out the names of the metals which turn glass dark green, turquoise, pink, or any, other colour you particularly like.
3. The East Window shows all the important events in Jesus's life. If you had to create a stained glass window about your life so far, what moments would you choose and why? Try drawing them then colouring them in. You could create a display called 'My life in stained glass!'



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