

STAINED GLASS: TEACHING UNIT

As teachers working in schools of different levels, we thought it was a good idea to create three types of activities, suitable for all our students, using the same material as a starting point, that is to say the picture of a stained glass window we saw during our guided tour in Saint Theresa's Church in Dublin:



ACTIVITY ONE: pre-primary students

- Target students: **pre-primary pupils**, aged 3-6
- Duration: One hour

Warm up activity: Students are shown the picture of the stained glass window above and are encouraged to give their impressions, elicited through questions (“What’s in the picture?”, “What colours can you see?” “How many animals are there?” “Is the man angry/happy/good/evil?” “Where can you find this kind of picture?”)

Main Activity

Part I

The teacher gives the children a simple explanation about what stained glass is, about the technique and where children can see some examples.

Part II: Creative activity

The children are given a simple picture they’re supposed to copy on tracing paper. They are encouraged to colour it using paint brushes, choosing the colours they prefer. All the pictures will be hung on windows, to show the light passing through them.

Here are some examples of possible outcomes:

ACTIVITY TWO: primary students

- Target students: **primary pupils**, aged 7-11
- Duration: 4 hours

Warm up activity: Students are shown the picture of the stained glass window above and are encouraged to give their impressions.

Main Activity

Part I

Students are shown a video describing how to paint a glass jar to make a lantern out of it.

<http://youtu.be/RDIk1Lzxum4>

The children are asked to focus both on the technique used and on the words connected with glass painting. The teacher makes sure the children have understood most of these key-words, particularly the vocabulary related to colours, shapes, materials and tools.

Part II: Creative activity

The children are invited to create their own painted lantern using the technique shown in the video.

ACTIVITY THREE: SECOND-LEVEL STUDENTS

Secondary level activities focus more on language and analysis, so it is important to think of activities involving different communication and high order thinking skills.

- Target students: Secondary school, aged 14-18
- Duration: 4 hours (or more, depending on extra activities)

Warm-up activity:

Students are shown the picture of the stained glass and are encouraged to give their impressions in English.

A short presentation of the technique is given, comparing it to other techniques. Specific vocabulary is elicited (colour shades, materials, tools, context) through questions: “Where do you expect to see this piece of art?” “What kind of atmosphere does it suggest?”, “Which materials are used?” “Which technique is used?” “What colours are predominant?” “Can you find a title for this work?”

Main activity

Part I:

Students are divided into groups and they are invited to use the information they got in the warm up activity to describe the picture. Each group must also focus on some particular elements:

- Group one should focus on the animals present in the scene
- Group two focuses on the fire and on the use of colours
- Group three focuses on the main figure

At the end of the group discussion, the three groups share their outcomes and try to connect them, in order to get a general overview of the work. The teacher plays the role of a facilitator.

Part II:

Individual work:

Drawing inspiration from the piece of art we’ve examined in class, write a story beginning with the words “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself”(John 12:32).

Students are encouraged to read out their stories in class.

POSSIBLE EXTRA ACTIVITIES:

- Workshop: how stained glass is made (videos, expert interventions, exhibitions...)
- Web research on Harry Clarke or other stained glass artists

- Cooperation with the Arts teacher to create a piece of stained glass
- Exploration of the students' town to find some piece of stained glass

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