



American MASTERS

Louis Comfort Tiffany: Innovator of the Decorative Arts

What We Learned:

- Louis Comfort Tiffany was born in 1848 and was the son of the jeweler, Charles Lewis Tiffany.
- He began as a painter but eventually branched out into interior design and decorative arts, which included a variety of artistic media.
- We focused mainly on the art of stained glass and mosaic



Art Activity: Stained Glass Votive

Although Louis Tiffany was an interior designer working with many kinds of decorative arts, he is best known for his glasswork. He experimented with different glass techniques, producing unusual and beautiful finishes. Because of his innovations, he revolutionized the world of stained glass.

The students made a stained glass votive candle holder by choosing different color combinations and overlapping the colors to create a stained-glass effect when a candle inside is lit.



Book Nook

A Short Biography of Louis Comfort Tiffany
By Julia Hartman



Glassmaking Process Review

Do you remember the steps to make a stained-glass piece? Number the steps in order below.

(Answers are at bottom of the page.)

- _____ Cut pieces of glass
- _____ Solder together
- _____ Draw cartoon of design
- _____ Put flux on copper foil
- _____ Number the color pattern
- _____ Wrap pieces of glass with copper foil



Connections at Home: Tiffany Stained Glass

Tiffany loved the outdoors, and many of his designs include trees, flowers, birds, and other items found in nature. Below is an example of one of his stained glass windows focused on nature. Tiffany's finished work of *The Tree of Life*, looks like this, but color your own version however you would like.

Materials:

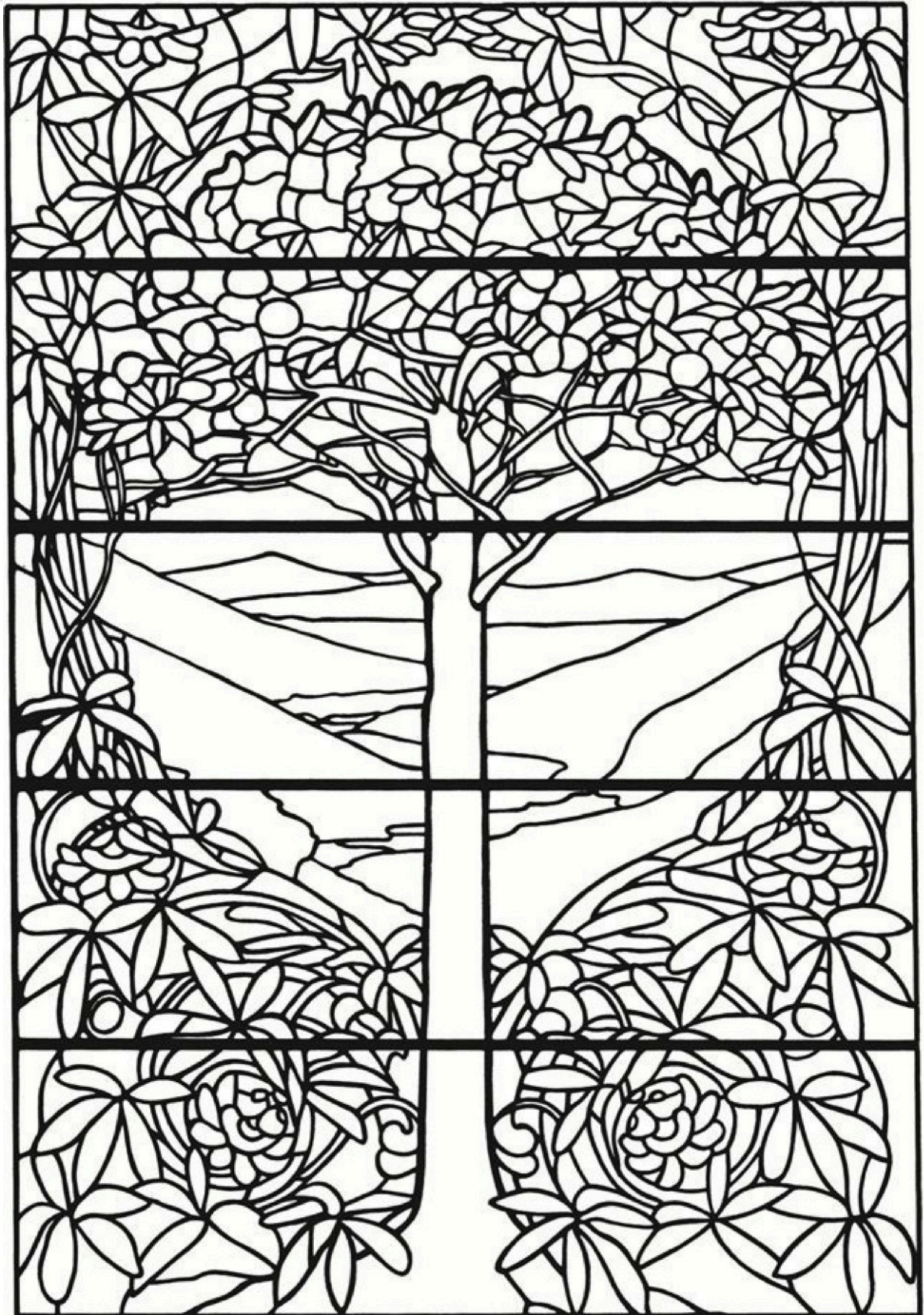
- Black and white line drawing of Tiffany window (next page)
- Transparency or translucent paper
- Sharpie permanent markers in colors of your choice

Directions:

- Trace with a black sharpie or print the picture on transparent or translucent paper (such as glassine, vellum, or transparency film).
- Color with markers.
- Place the finished work in a window for your own personal Tiffany stained glass.



The Tree of Life



For Parents:

The first thing you might think about when Tiffany is mentioned is the famous jewelry store with the little blue boxes. However, the founder of Tiffany & Co. was Louis's father, Charles Lewis Tiffany.

Louis Comfort Tiffany was born in 1848 in New York City. He began studying painting at age eighteen but eventually shifted his interest to decorative arts. He worked with furniture and textiles for a while, but his main interest was glass-making. He opened his own glass company, and the business became very successful. In 1882, Tiffany was commissioned by President Chester Arthur to redecorate the White House. (Although in 1902, President Roosevelt removed Tiffany's Victorian additions to enlarge and restore the White House to the Federal style). Louis experimented with glassmaking and is best known for his stained glass windows, lamps, and vases. He also crafted mosaics and in 1902 became director of design for Tiffany & Co., his father's jewelry company. Tiffany designed his own 84-room house, Laurelton Hall, in grand style. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by fire in 1957. Tiffany lived during the impact of the Victorian Era, the Civil War, WW I, and the Great Depression. Tiffany died at age 84 in 1933, but he greatly influenced the art world especially through his innovative stained-glass techniques.

Please note: As M&G's host location for *Homeschool Days*, Mack Library will feature books each month for parents to reference as resources. We hope these additional features will further support your teaching at home.

Additional Resources

Read this article to learn more about Tiffany's designs in the White House:

<https://www.themagazineantiques.com/article/red-white-and-tiffany-blue/>

Learn more about the art of stained glass here:

- Stained Glass Resources, Inc. is a company in Massachusetts that specializes in stained glass. They design, create, and repair. Learn more about their work and the process of caring for stained glass: <http://www.stainedglassresources.com/index.html>
- Although, not a Tiffany window, learn more about M&G's rare stained glass window, *The Fountain of Life*: <https://museumandgallery.org/object-of-the-month-october-2018/>

To learn more about Tiffany and his work in stained glass, click on the links below:

- The Morse Museum in Winter Park, Florida (not far from Orlando) houses the world's most comprehensive collection of works by Louis Comfort Tiffany. Explore their website to learn more about the man and his craft: <https://morsemuseum.org/>
- Read about Tiffany glassmaking and watch the video of the meticulously detailed work involved in making a Tiffany style lamp shade: <https://morsemuseum.org/on-exhibit/secrets-of-tiffany-glassmaking/>
- Enjoy these beautiful pictures and interesting article about Tiffany's glasswork: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/tiffany>
- Although this is a video produced by Bonhams Auction House in 2015, it provides a short history of Tiffany, showing beautiful images of his glass works and estimating the value of his designs: https://www.bonhams.com/press_release/20529/

Additional Resources continued

To learn more about the art of mosaics, click on the links below:

- View a simple video on mosaics for beginners: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmKhBr4bDqY>
- View this information about M&G's Tiffany mosaic:
 - o Audio Stop: <https://museumandgallery.org/louis-comfort-tiffany/>
 - o Video: <https://museumandgallery.org/louis-comfort-tiffany-inspiration/>
 - o Article: <https://museumandgallery.org/object-of-the-month-august-2015/>
- *Garden Landscape* mosaic by Tiffany at The Met:
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/9620>

Due to the changing nature of web resources, M&G strongly urges you as the parent to preview these sites before your child accesses them. The fact that these sites are available on this handout does not imply that M&G endorses their content from the standpoint of morals, philosophy, theology, or scientific hypotheses.

Answers to Glassmaking Process Review: 3, 6, 1, 5, 2, 4



M&G Educational Mission:

Through tours, events, and publications, the Museum & Gallery seeks to partner with educators in fulfilling all of the National Visual Arts Content Standards. By integrating art into the core curriculum, M&G's goals are to teach children to value the arts, to communicate through the arts, to become creative problem solvers through the inclusion of STEAM-related concepts and fully-developed STEAM units, to understand history and culture in light of the arts, to improve literary interest and understanding through visual storytelling, to critique the arts, and to develop an aesthetic awareness of the arts. Through fulfilling the mission, M&G is able to help develop citizens who have the ability to think, feel, and understand the world in which they live.