MEDIEVAL COAT OF ARMS

BACKGROUND

In Europe during the Middle Ages, knights wore full-body armor that made them unrecognizable on the battlefield and in tournaments. In order to set themselves apart, knights would decorate their shields and banners with colors and symbols. Knights would have their symbol on a garment they would wear over top of their armor known as a "surcoat".

Over time, these colors and symbols were passed down and became family symbols and became known as a "coat of arms".

As time went on, more families had a coat of arms and some towns even adopted them. In an age when many people could not read or write, these symbols became easy ways to distinguish a person, place, or family.

DIRECTIONS

Today, you will design your own personal coat of arms. Think of colors, images, symbols, or other things that are important to you and your family. What would you want strangers to know about you?

There are also colors and symbols that have traditional meaning in heraldry. "Heraldry" is the art of creating coats of arms. Over time these colors, symbols, and animals have developed and held significance. Feel free to use these examples below:

COLORS
White - Peace
Black - Grief
Blue - Loyalty
Red - Strength
Green - Joy
Purple – Royalty
Gold - Generosity

SYMBOLS
Axe - Devoted
Crescent - Intelligence
Crosses - Christianity
Crown - Authority
Fire - Zeal
Heart - Passion
Moon - Serenity
Oyster Shell - Traveler
Ring - Fidelity
Star - Nobility
n - Glory
Sword - Warlike
Castle – Fortitude

ANIMALS
Bear - Protectiveness
Camel - Determination
Dog - Loyalty
Eagle - Leadership
Dragon - Defender
Fox - Cleverness
Griffin - Bravery
Lion - Courage
Snake - Ambition
Deer - Peace
Tiger - Valor
Wolf - Vigilance