

## A Self-Guided Tour for the Young at Heart



Welcome to Washington National Cathedral. We have 112 friendly and spooky characters for you to find and meet!

What are gargoyles really meant to do? They are part of a building's guttering system; they are water spouts meant to keep water from running down the walls of buildings. They are often, but not always, carved in the form of fantastic or imaginary animals or humans. A number of our Cathedral carvings memorialize real people, often in a funny way. However, the sculptors were always careful not to be mean while poking fun.

Some of our critters are not really gargoyles, but are called "grotesques," which are also part of the Cathedral's rain control system. Gargoyles carry away excess water via pipes running through their mouths; grotesques deflect rainwater by bouncing it off the top of their heads, noses or other projecting parts, and away from the stone walls.

The easiest gargoyles for you to see are on the north side of the building (as you face the front of the Cathedral, the side to the *left*), above the lowest stained glass windows. To begin, walk to the top of the ramp on the north side, face the door and look *up*. The gargoyles described are found on this lowest level unless otherwise noted.



**1** The first gargoyle you see may surprise you, as he doesn't look scary at all. He's a gentleman with lots of teeth and masses of curly hair. He wears half-glasses and looks as if he wants to start reading that book in his hand.

**2** The gargoyle to the left of #1 is a cat clinging to the top of a tree limb. His body is stretched the length of the branch. He's gazing fixedly at the small mouse under the limb, just beyond reach.

**3** Here's a scary one! A fat snake coils around a tree branch. Note his fangs and the tiny rattle at the end of his tail. Many people think that this is one of the most finely carved of the Cathedral's gargoyles.

**4** A stone carver noted for losing his temper is seen "blowing his top." This gargoyle is an affectionate tribute to former master carver Roger Morigi, who often exhibited "five o'clock shadow" and wore a soft hat like the one seen here. Note his cleft foot, the horns poking through the hat and the curly tail, all signs of his "devilish" nature. He carries not only his carver's mallet but also an impressive array of weapons in his back pocket.

**5** Look above #4 to the pair of gargoyles on the next level, who show two (real) grandsons: one naughty and one good. While the good grandson has an angelic halo around his head, the naughty grandson has his hand in a cookie jar and wears a broken halo.

**6** This fierce fellow is a dragon-like creature. See how large the scales are on its head? Beware the teeth and claws of this winged creature!

**7** This is a frightening creature with bony legs and sharp teeth. It has curled horns and fleecy chest hair like a real ram. Watch those teeth!

**8** Meet a basenji, a type of African hunting dog, holding a bone with his paws. The design for this gargoyle was one of the winners in a Cathedral gargoyle contest held in 1959–60. When the gargoyle was placed on the building, the excited artist reportedly remarked, "Just think, a thousand years from now we could look up and see my gargoyle!" Her son quickly replied, "I would rather hope that a thousand years from now we could see it by looking down!"

Enjoy your hunt! Now, see how many other Cathedral gargoyles and special carvings you can find. Have you tried our self-guided gargoyle tours, "Wacky Western Gargoyles" and "Silly Southern Gargoyles"?