



With holiday meals coming up, I thought you might like to practice making music with the things usually set on top of the table as part of place settings.

With a little practice, you can get a tune or two out of stemmed wineglasses. The music used to be compared with the songs angels might sing if we could hear them.

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In 1757, Benjamin Franklin worked in England and attended a concert played by a musician who was strumming wineglasses tuned to different notes.

In 1761, Franklin had a bunch of wine goblet bowls nested on a spinning rod. With his fingers wetted, Franklin could play music that people said sounded like angels singing.



Experiment #1

WHAT YOU NEED: Stemmed glasses - water - permission from the owner of the glasses **CAUTION: Do NOT use chipped glasses! It would cut open your finger, and blood is better on the inside!**

WHAT TO DO:

Lots of times people put these glasses away to use for special occasions or holidays. So be sure to ask first.

Put a spoonful of water in a glass. Use one hand to hold down the glass's base. Wet a finger on the other hand and rub it on the edge of the glass. Keep trying different pressures until the glass sings. It will!

WHAT IS GOING ON:

Your finger rubbing up against the edge of the glass made the glass vibrate. The smaller the glass, the faster the vibration and the higher-pitched the singing will be.

You Can change the size of the part of the glass that can vibrate by adding water to the glass. The more water, the slower the vibrating and the lower the note. Different amounts of water make different notes.

P.S. from Beakman: Bigger stuff vibrates slower and makes lower-pitched sounds. That's why a tuba has low notes and a little flute or piccolo has high-pitched notes.