



Empires in the Middle Ages

Lesson 7: The Power of the Church in the Middle Ages



Chapter 5: The Power of the Church

Vocabulary 7.1

Vocabulary for “The Power of the Church”

1. **summon**, *v.* to call or send for someone (38)
2. **anchored**, *adj.* strongly connected (38)
3. **fast**, *v.* to eat little or no food (**fasting**) (40)
4. **rose window**, *n.* a circular stained-glass window in a church that contains a pattern near the center (**rose windows**) (40)
5. **spire**, *n.* a tall, cone-shaped structure at the top of a building (**spires**) (40)
6. **devote**, *v.* to give time or attention to something (**devoted**) (41)
7. **exquisite**, *adj.* extremely beautiful (43)
8. **destined**, *adj.* certain to become something or do something (44)
9. **humble**, *adj.* not thinking you are better than others (44)
10. **sacred**, *adj.* holy; deserving special respect (45)

Chapter 5 “The Power of the Church”

The BIG Question

What practices in the Middle Ages show the influence and power of the Church?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Chapter 5

The Power of the Church

THE BIG QUESTION
What practices in the Middle Ages show the influence and power of the Church?

It is 6:00 a.m. The church bells are ringing to welcome the day and to *summon* you to church. The early morning sunlight illuminates the stained-glass windows. Sometimes, at daybreak, you attend a church service before starting work. You pray often and your life is *anchored* to the Church.



Stained-glass windows in La Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, France, built in the 1200s

The *italics* on page 38 signals that the text is different in some way than the regular font on page 39.

The text on page 38 is written as if you were a person living in the Middle Ages.

What do you think it means when the text says, “your life is anchored to the Church”?

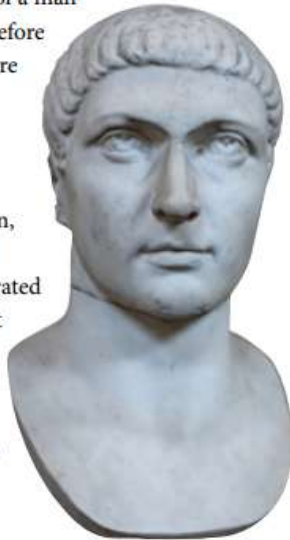
Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

It may be impossible for us to understand just how important the Christian Church was to most Europeans in the Middle Ages. Not only did the local lords have great influence over people's lives, but the Church did, too. The power of the Church had grown gradually over a long period of time.

Christianity is based on the teachings of a man named Jesus who lived hundreds of years before the Middle Ages began. Jesus's followers were known as Christians.

In the first 300 years after Jesus's life, Christianity grew slowly. In fact, in the early years of the ancient Roman civilization, Romans were not permitted to practice the Christian faith. Later, Christianity was tolerated as one religion among several. Eventually, it became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Christianity spread throughout the Empire. As it spread, the power and influence of the Church in Rome grew. The pope was the leader of the western Church.

As time went on, during the Middle Ages, conflicts developed between the eastern followers of the Church, who spoke Greek, and the western followers, who spoke Latin. Finally, in 1054 CE, the two sides split over differing beliefs. The eastern Church was called Orthodox. Members of the Orthodox Church thought their beliefs were orthodox, or correct. The western Church, based in Rome, was called Catholic. Members of the Catholic Church thought their beliefs were catholic, or universal. The two Christian Churches that emerged

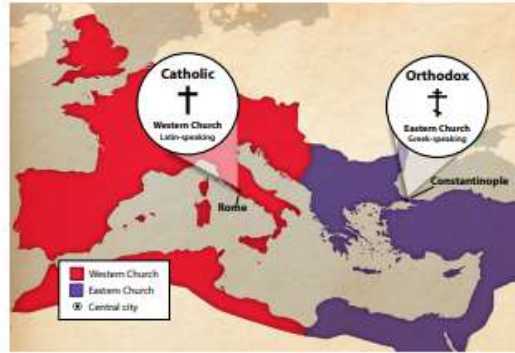


Under the Roman emperor Constantine the Great, Christianity was accepted as one of several religions in the Roman Empire.

How do paragraphs 2 and 3 support what the author stated in paragraph 1?

When the Christian Church split into two parts, one part was called the Orthodox Church and one was called the Catholic Church. What do the words **orthodox** and **catholic** mean?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”



The Christian Church split apart

during the Middle Ages still exist today.

In western Europe, almost every village and town had a church. Most people attended church on Sunday. In addition, certain days were

considered holy days to mark important events in the life of Jesus and his followers. People did not work on these days, but instead went to church. Some holy days were feast days and other holy days were days of **fasting**. Christmas, an important Christian holiday, was a time of feasting, or celebration. The 40 days before Easter, another Christian holiday, were a time of fasting called Lent.

Architects and craftsmen in the Middle Ages built beautiful churches to express their love for God. New engineering skills enabled stonemasons to create a style of architecture that later became known as Gothic. They built tall towers, arches, **rose windows**, and **spires**. Sometimes it took hundreds of years to complete a great medieval cathedral.



Chartres Cathedral

How did Christians in the Middle Ages celebrate holy days? Holy days were divided into what categories?

How would you describe the architecture of churches and cathedrals?

Why do you think it took so long to build the medieval cathedrals?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Chapter 5

The Power of the Church

THE BIG QUESTION
What practices in the Middle Ages show the influence and power of the Church?

*It is 6:00 a.m. The church bells are ringing to welcome the day and to **summon** you to church. The early morning sunlight illuminates the stained-glass windows. Sometimes, at daybreak, you attend a church service before starting work. You pray often and your life is **anchored** to the Church.*



Stained-glass windows in La Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, France, built in the 1200s

Turn back to page 38 and locate the image of the rose window.

Why do you think this is called a rose window?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Holy shrines dedicated to people who played an important role in the history of Christianity were scattered across western Europe. These shrines were usually places where religious figures had been killed or buried, or where miracles were believed to have happened. Most Christians



Medieval pilgrims

hoped to go on at least one journey, or pilgrimage, to visit one of these shrines in their lifetime. For many, going on a pilgrimage meant walking or riding long distances, and eating and sleeping in roadside taverns or religious houses. Many men and women made the journey to fulfill a vow to God, to seek a cure for a disease, or just to travel abroad.

Monks were men who chose to live apart from society and to **devote** their lives to the Church. They spent their lives in monasteries, working on the land, studying, and praying. Monks were often the most educated people in Europe, especially in the early part of the Middle Ages. A monastery was a building, or collection of buildings, that housed monks.

Monasteries were usually contained within high walls that provided a certain amount of protection.



Sénanque Abbey in Provence, France, was founded in 1148 CE.

What was a pilgrimage?

Who were monks?

Where did they live?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Women also joined the Church. Women who devoted their lives to the Church were called nuns. Nuns lived in convents, or nunneries. Nuns received many of the same benefits as monks. They were educated and were taught crafts and other skills.



A painting from the 1400s shows nuns kneeling in prayer.

As the Church grew in power and influence, it became very wealthy. The Church raised taxes and it owned land. People who held powerful positions within the Church often came from wealthy noble families. They gave large amounts of money to the Church. The Church also influenced political decisions and supported or opposed kings.



Interior of the Duomo, or Cathedral, of Pisa, Italy, begun in the 1000s

Not only powerful people gave money to the Church. All Christians were required to pay one-tenth of their earnings to the Church. This payment was known as a tithe.

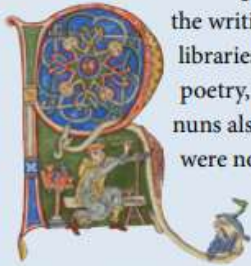
However, there was a troubling side to this deeply religious period in history. Some people expressed ideas with which the pope and other Church leaders disagreed. Church leaders called these contradictory opinions heresy, and the people who held them were called heretics. Heretics were treated cruelly.

Describe women who devoted their lives to the church.

How did the Church become wealthy?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Precious Books



Illuminated manuscripts were works of art.

During the Middle Ages, monks and nuns studied the writings of ancient Greeks and Romans. Their libraries contained books about religion, science, poetry, mathematics, and history. Monks and nuns also copied ancient writings by hand. There were no machines or printers that made books.

By copying these texts, monks and nuns helped to preserve, or save, ancient knowledge that would otherwise have been lost.

In the late Middle Ages, the higher social classes who could read, and even write, owned their own prayer books, such as the *Book of Hours*. These prayer books were read at different times of the day. In addition to prayers, the books included biblical texts, calendars, hymns, and painted pictures.

Many of the books produced by monks and nuns contained **exquisite** art and design features. After the Middle Ages, as a result of Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press around 1450 CE, more affordable books were produced. These printed books began to replace the beautiful handmade books and made these original manuscripts even more rare.



Page from *Book of Hours* created in the early 1400s for John, Duke of Berry (France)

How did monks and nuns help preserve, or save, knowledge from the ancient Greeks and Romans?

What is the author of the text describing as exquisite?

What does the word **exquisite** mean?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

If You Were a Monk

Young boys like you are often given to a monastery. Even a serf can become a monk. Therefore, if you are not **destined** to become a craftsman or a merchant, then becoming a monk is a good option.

Life within a monastery certainly is hard. However, you are assured of a place to sleep, clothing, food, medical care, and an education.

Your training will take many years. When you start your training, you are called a novice, another word for *beginner*. You begin by learning to read and write. You study texts from the Bible, pray, and learn to farm or to acquire a certain skill. If, at the end of your training, you are certain you want to join the Church, you

take part in a special ceremony. In this ceremony, you vow, or promise, to dedicate your life to God. You also vow not to marry, and to live a **humble** and obedient life. Then, the top of your head is shaved, identifying you as a monk.



Novice



Novice working in the monastery garden



Novice taking his vows



Monks chanting hymns

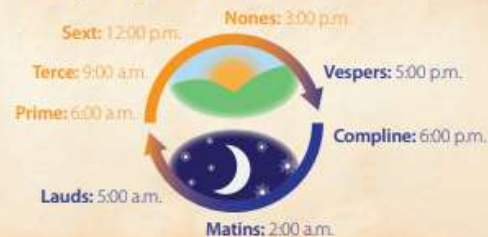
As a monk, you spend a large part of your day in worship and prayer. However, you also spend time working on the land or in the monastery itself. You might wash clothes, cook, or tend to the vegetable garden. You might learn to make honey, wine, or beer. Or, you might learn how to make shoes or furniture. If you have a beautiful singing voice, you might participate in the performance of Gregorian chants. Gregorian chants are a form of **sacred**

vocal music, or musical speech, based on hymns or passages from the Bible. Monks perform these chants on certain holy days. As a gifted artist, you might work in the scriptorium copying the work of classical writers or producing new books. For many like you, the life of a monk provides a degree of security and protection from some of the challenges of medieval life.



Monk working in the scriptorium

A Monk's Daily Prayer Schedule



What were some of the advantages of life in a monastery?

What did monks vow, or promise, to do in the ceremony in which they officially joined the church?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Medieval Musings

1. What did monks and nuns write with?
(Clue: This writing tool was once attached to a creature that can fly.)
2. Certain religious people provided serfs with medical care. Who do you think those people were?



John Duns Scotus, a member of the Church

Letter Quest

Find the letter in this stained-glass window and record it on Activity Page 2.3.



Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Discuss the Chapter

What practices from the Middle Ages show the influence and power of the Church?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Discuss the Chapter

What practices from the Middle Ages show the influence and power of the Church?

- People went to church often and created holy days to mark important religious events.
- They built large cathedrals.
- Some people devoted their lives to the Church.
- The Church grew wealthy.
- The Church influenced political decisions and supported or opposed kings.

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Discuss the Chapter

When you see the size and architectural details of churches built during the Middle Ages, and know that they took many, many years to build, what does that tell you about the importance of the Church in the lives of Europeans who lived during that time period?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Discuss the Chapter

When you see the size and architectural details of churches built during the Middle Ages, and know that they took many, many years to build, what does that tell you about the importance of the Church in the lives of Europeans who lived during that time period?

- The Church was very important because people were willing to put so much time, effort, and money into make such elaborate buildings.

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Discuss the Chapter

Why would someone in the Middle Ages decide to become a monk?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Discuss the Chapter

Why would someone in the Middle Ages decide to become a monk?

- The Church played an important role in the lives of people in the Middle Ages.
- It was a way for someone like a serf to have a better life.
- Monks were assured of a place to sleep, clothing, food, medical care, and an education.
- Being a monk offered some security and protection from the challenges of medieval life.

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Discuss the Chapter

How would the lives of a monk and a serf in the Middle Ages differ?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Discuss the Chapter

How would the lives of a monk and a serf in the Middle Ages differ?

- Monks went through a training period in which they learned to read and write.
- Monks took part in a ceremony in which they would dedicate their lives to God.
- Serfs were controlled by the lord.
- Serfs lived on a manor. Monks lived in a monastery.

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Discuss the Chapter

How would the lives of a monk and a serf in the Middle Ages similar?

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Discuss the Chapter

How would the lives of a monk and a serf in the Middle Ages similar?

- They both worked hard for many hours of the day.
- Both often worked outside to grow food.

Chapter 5: “The Power of the Church”

Activity page 7.7

“The Power of the Church”

Answer the following question in complete sentences.

1. What are three ways the Church influenced the lives of people during the Middle Ages?

Word Work - *Devote*

From the Text

“Monks were men who chose to live apart from society and to *devote* their lives to the Church.

Definition

To give one's time or attention to something

Part of Speech

Verb

Sentence




Sandra and her brother love to play basketball, so they *devote* at least five hours a week to practicing.

Writing – Persuasive Paragraph

- ❖ An **informative paragraph** gives factual information about a topic.
- ❖ A **persuasive paragraph** states an opinion and tries to **persuade** people to agree.

Writing – Persuasive Paragraph

Activity page 7.2 Graphic Organizer

KNIGHTS, CRAFTSMEN, MONKS, AND NUNS GRAPHIC ORGANIZER			
	Knights 	Craftsmen 	Monks or Nuns 
Homes			
Work			
Clothing			
Food			
Amount of Power			

Writing – Persuasive Paragraph

Activity page 7.2 Graphic Organizer

- ❖ Each group will write complete the organizer for one category.
 - ❖ Knights – use pages 20-21
 - ❖ Craftsmen – use pages 31-35
 - ❖ Monks/Nuns – use pages 41-45
- ❖ Then we will share our information with the class!