

Reading Essentials and Study Guide **networks**

Crusades and Culture in the Middle Ages, 1000–1500

Lesson 1 Medieval Christianity

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How did the Church influence political and cultural changes in medieval Europe? How did both innovations and disruptive forces affect people during the Middle Ages?

Reading HELPDESK

Academic Vocabulary

pursue to follow up or proceed with
remove to eliminate

Content Vocabulary

lay investiture the practice by which secular rulers both chose nominees to church offices and gave them the symbols of their office
interdict a decree by the pope that forbade priests from giving the sacraments of the Church to the people
sacrament a Christian rite
heresy the denial of basic Church doctrines
relic bones or other objects connected with saints; considered to be worthy of worship by the faithful

TAKING NOTES: *Categorizing*

ACTIVITY As you read, use a table like the one below to identify the characteristics of the Cistercian, Dominican, and Franciscan religious orders.

Cistercians	Franciscans	Dominicans

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IT MATTERS BECAUSE

The Catholic Church reached the height of its political power in the thirteenth century under Pope Innocent III. Religious enthusiasm spread, and new monastic orders developed. The Catholic Church was a major force in Europe by the High Middle Ages.

The Papal Monarchy

Guiding Question *How did the political power of the Catholic Church change between the papacies of Pope Gregory VII and Pope Innocent III?*

The popes of the Catholic Church had claimed supreme leadership of the Church since the fifth century. They had also gained control of territories in central Italy. These territories came to be known as the Papal States. This control kept the popes involved in political matters, but it also took time away from their spiritual, or religious, duties.

The Church also became more involved in the feudal system. The Church's chief officials included bishops and abbots. They got their positions from nobles. They were also required to carry out feudal services as vassals, which included military duties. The nobles, or lords, often chose their vassals from other noble families for political reasons. This meant that the bishops and abbots they chose were often not very interested in the spiritual duties but were more interested in their social or political position.

Reform of the Papacy

Church leaders in the eleventh century wanted to stop the lords' control over choosing Church officials. Church officials were given a ring and a staff when they took their office. These objects symbolized the spiritual authority the Church gave to the official. Secular rulers usually chose people for Church offices. They also gave them the symbols of their office. This was a practice known as **lay investiture**. Pope Gregory VII decided to fight this practice.

Gregory was elected to be pope in 1073. He believed that he had been chosen by God to reform the Church. He claimed that he was God's representative on earth. To **pursue** his goal, he also claimed that the pope's authority extended over all the Christian world, including its rulers. The Church could regain its freedom only by end of lay investiture. The Church would appoint clergy and run its own affairs. The pope would **remove** rulers who did not accept his ideas.

Henry IV was Holy Roman Emperor and the king of Germany. Gregory VII soon found himself in conflict with the king over these claims. German kings had appointed high-ranking clergy, especially bishops, as their vassals for many years. They did this in order to use them as administrators. The king could not hope to keep power over the German nobles without them.

Pope Gregory issued a decree, or order, in 1075. It forbade high-ranking clergy from receiving their investiture from any lay person. However, Henry would not agree to the pope's decree because it challenged an important part of his way of administration.

The struggle between Henry IV and Gregory VII was known as the Investiture Controversy. It was one of the great conflicts between church and state in the High Middle Ages. It lasted until a new German king and a new pope reached a compromise agreement known as the Concordat of Worms in 1122. Each side got part of what it wanted. Under this agreement, a bishop in Germany was first

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elected by Church officials. The new bishop paid homage, or showed respect, to the king as his lord after election. Then the king invested him with the symbols of earthly office. A representative of the pope then invested the new bishop with the symbols of his spiritual office.

The Church Supreme

Pope Gregory VII also tried to improve the Church's spiritual guidance to the people. Twelfth-century popes did not give up Gregory's reforms. However, they wanted to strengthen papal power and build a strong administrative system. The Catholic Church reached the height of its political power in the thirteenth century. This was during the papacy of Pope Innocent III, who had a strong belief that the pope was supreme, or had the highest power.

Innocent used religious practices and rules to reach his political goals. His favorite tool was the interdict. An **interdict** forbids priests from giving the **sacraments** of the Church to a particular group of people. As a result, the people did not have access to the comforts of religion. The goal of the interdict was to lead people to put pressure on their ruler. For example, King Philip Augustus of France tried to have his marriage annulled, or ended. Innocent used an interdict to force Philip to take back his wife.



Reading Progress Check

Determining Importance Why was the Concordat of Worms an important turning point for the Catholic Church?

New Religious Orders

Guiding Question *What effects did the new religious orders formed after 1098 have on medieval Europe?*

Religious enthusiasm, or strong feelings of interest, spread in Europe in the late 1000s and early 1100s. This movement led to an increase in the number of monasteries. New monastic orders also developed.

Cistercians

One of the most important new monastic orders of the Middle Ages was the Cistercian (sis•TUHR•shuhn) order. It was founded in 1098 by a group of monks who were unhappy with the lack of discipline at their own Benedictine monastery. Cistercian monasticism spread rapidly from southern France into the rest of Europe.

The Cistercians were strict. They ate a simple diet, and each had only a single robe. All decorations were removed from their churches and monastic buildings. They spent fewer hours at religious services, which gave them more time for prayer and manual labor.

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The Cistercians played a major role in developing an active new spiritual model for twelfth-century Europe. Benedictine monks spent hours inside the monastery in personal prayer, but the Cistercians took their religion to the people outside the monastery. Bernard of Clairvaux expressed the new spiritual ideal of Cistercian monasticism more than any other person. He talked about how monks should think of themselves as soldiers of Christ. They needed to return to the battle and fight for their religion.

Women in Religious Orders

The number of women joining religious houses also increased. Most nuns in the High Middle Ages were from the landed aristocracy. Families who were unable or unwilling to find husbands for their daughters sent them to convents. Aristocratic women who did not choose to marry or were widows also went to convents.

Female intellectuals found convents a supportive place for their activities. Most educated women of the Middle Ages, especially in Germany, were nuns. Hildegard of Bingen became abbess of a religious house for females in western Germany. Hildegard was also one of the first important women composers. She made important contributions to a kind of music known as Gregorian chant. Her work is important because she succeeded at a time when music, especially religious music, was almost completely written by men.

Franciscans and Dominicans

Two new religious orders developed that had a strong impact on the lives of ordinary people in the 1200s. They were the Franciscans and the Dominicans.

Francis of Assisi founded the Franciscans. Francis was born to a wealthy Italian merchant family in Assisi. He had a series of important spiritual experiences after having been imprisoned during a local war. These experiences led him to give up all the things he owned and to live and preach in poverty. He worked and begged for his food. His simplicity, joyful nature, and love for others soon attracted a group of followers who took vows of absolute poverty. They agreed to reject all property and live by working and begging for their food.

The Franciscans became very popular. They lived among the people, preached repentance (the act of showing sorrow for a wrong action), and helped the poor. Their calls for a return to the simplicity and poverty of the early Church were effective, and their own actions provided a powerful example of their preaching. The Franciscans also undertook missionary work first throughout Italy and then in all parts of Europe and even in the Muslim world.

Dominic de Guzmán was a Spanish priest who founded the Dominican order. Dominic wanted to defend Church teachings from **heresy**. Heresy is a belief that does not agree with basic Church doctrines, or set of beliefs. The spiritual revival of the High Middle Ages had led to the development of heresies within the Church. People who accepted heresies were called heretics. Heresies became especially widespread in southern France. Dominic believed that a new religious order of men who lived in poverty and could preach effectively would best be able to attack heresy.

The Inquisition

The Church created a court to deal with heretics. It was called the Inquisition, or Holy Office. This court developed a regular procedure to find and try heretics. The Dominicans became especially well known for their roles as examiners, or questioners, of people suspected of heresy.

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Those who confessed to heresy performed public penance and received punishment, such as whipping. The Inquisition added torture to get confessions beginning in 1252. Those who did not confess but were still considered guilty were executed, or put to death by the state. So were those who had done penance for heresy but returned to it again. Thirteenth-century Christians believed the only path to salvation was through the Church. Heresy was a crime against God and humanity. As a result, using force to save souls was the right thing to do.



Reading Progress Check

Making Connections What led to the creation of the Cistercian order? Explain how it was different from the Benedictine order.

Religion in the High Middle Ages

Guiding Question *How did religion influence the daily lives of people in the High Middle Ages?*

The Catholic Church of the High Middle Ages was an important part of ordinary people's lives from birth to death. The sacraments, such as baptism, marriage, and the Eucharist (Communion), were seen as means for receiving God's grace. They were also necessary for salvation. Only the clergy could administer these rites. This caused the people to depend on the clergy to achieve salvation. Ordinary people also respected saints. Saints were men and women who were believed to have reached a special position in Heaven because of their holiness. It was believed that saints could ask for favors before the throne of God for people who prayed to them. This made saints very popular with all Christians.

Among the recognized saints were Jesus' apostles, Mary, and numerous local saints of special importance to a single area. The Italians had Saint Nicholas. He is the patron saint of children who is known today as Santa Claus. Mary was the mother of Jesus. She was the most highly regarded of all the saints in the High Middle Ages. A large sign of Mary's importance is the number of churches all over Europe that were dedicated to her in the 1100s and 1200s. (Such churches in France were named Notre Dame, or "Our Lady.")

The worship of saints was closely tied to the use of **relics**. Relics are objects connected with saints or sometimes even their bones. Relics were venerated because they were believed to provide a link between the earthly world and God. Many believed that relics could heal people or produce other miracles.

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Medieval Christians also believed that a pilgrimage, or journey, to a holy shrine was important. The greatest shrine was the Holy City of Jerusalem, but it was also the most difficult to reach. Two pilgrim centers were especially popular in the High Middle Ages. Rome contained the relics of apostles Peter and Paul. The Spanish town of Santiago de Compostela was supposedly the site of the tomb of the apostle James.



Reading Progress Check

Inferring Why were relics important to Christians living in Europe during the Middle Ages?
