

Chapter 1 : Issue 30 | Christian History Magazine

Women in the Medieval Church: From the Editor's "In the Middle (Ages) of a Debate. Despite countless books, conferences, and theological debates, the role of women in the church is far from settled.

The Middle Ages Date: They were the German barbarians, or Teutonic tribes, who swept across the Rhine and the Danube into the empire. There they accepted Christianity. The union of barbarian vigor and religious spirit carried Europe to the threshold of modern times. That span from the ancient era to the modern is called the Middle Ages. The change from ancient ways to medieval customs came so gradually, however, that it is difficult to tell exactly when the Middle Ages began. Other historians give the year , when Alaric, king of the Visigoths, sacked Rome. Still others say about AD or even later. It is equally hard to determine exactly when the Middle Ages ended, for decisive events leading to the modern age took place at different times. Historians say variously that the Middle Ages ended with the fall of Constantinople, in ; with the discovery of America, in ; or with the beginning of the Reformation, in . From to , the Carolingian House of the Franks brought stability and progress to northern Europe. A large portion of the West enjoyed military and political security as well as religious unity. This accomplishment was not to last, however. The Frankish empire did not endure, partly because it lacked the strong economic bases that has supported the Romans. By the ninth century, Muslim conquests and commercial activity successfully competed with the Franks; inland trade declined sharply and urban life almost disappeared in the north. In addition, the empire had no strong administrative machinery to compensate for the weak rulers who followed the dominating leadership of the emperor Charlemagne; the empire disintegrated amid civil wars and invasions. The impressive achievements of the Carolingians towards building a unifying governmental system were not able to counteract the decentralization of political, military, and economic activity in most of western Europe. A system of government sometimes referred to as feudalism attempted to provide stability and to serve as an effective political substitute for a powerful, effective central government. Economic life centered on a concern for subsistence and security, which could only be provided by the acceptance of local and rural customs and practices designed to ensure the necessities of life through resisting change and fostering self-sufficiency. The church continued its efforts to convert and standardize the belief of its members, and in so doing attempted to provide spiritual security in a troubled and insecure world. The kingdom of the Franks was not only the most enduring of the Germanic states established in the West, but it became, with the active support of the church, the center of the new Europe that attempted to assume the place of the western Roman Empire. Late in the fourth century the Franks began a slow movement south and west across the Rhine into Gaul. By they occupied the northern part of Gaul as far as the old Roman city of Paris; in that year Clovis I of the Merovingian House became ruler of one of the small Frankish kingdoms. By the time of his death in , Clovis had united the Franks into a single kingdom that stretched south to the Pyrenees. Clovis achieved his aims by the crafty manipulation of marriage alliances, treachery, assassination, and the use of religion. Clovis first allied himself with other kings of the small Frankish states to dispose of Syagrius, the last Roman general in Gaul. He then turned against his own allies and subdued them. According to the sixth century Gallo-Roman bishop and historian Gregory of Tours, whose *History of the Franks* is the most detailed account of any of the early Germanic peoples, Clovis was converted to Christianity in as a result of a battle against the Alemanni, a pagan Germanic tribe whose name became the French word for Germany, *Allemagne*. On the verge of being defeated, Clovis called on the Christian god for help: I will believe in you and be baptized in your name. I have called on my gods, but I have found from experience that they are far from my aid. The Macmillan Company, , p. He became the only mainstream Christian ruler in the West, for the other Germanic tribes were either pagan or Arian Christians. The conversion of the Franks to Christianity is considered a decisive event in European history. Ultimately it led to an alliance of the Franks and the papacy, and immediately it assured Clovis the loyalty of the Gallo-Roman bishops, the leaders of the native Christian population of Gaul. This was a political advantage not open to the Arian Visigothic and Burgundian kings. With the help of the native population of Gaul, Clovis was able to expand his control in the name of Christian orthodoxy. The Visigothic

king was killed, and his people abandoned most of their Gallic territory. Clovis died four years later at the age of forty-five; his conquests formed the core of what would eventually become the French nation.

Chapter 2 : The Church in the Middle Ages

We hope to offer in this issue a neglected aspect of the debate: the role of women in the church during the medieval period (especially in Europe in the High Middle Ages). Please let us know what.

Historians of the Middle Ages have been exploring issues related to sex and sexuality. Here are some of the more interesting pieces of research we have uncovered about sex in the Middle Ages. In the Middle Ages, everyone noticed the eyes first. For the medieval man and woman, the eyes and their gazes were an important part of sexuality. The very act of looking could stimulate desire in the observer and the observed. Where can you have sex in the medieval village? Medieval homes and communities often lacked privacy, and it might have been difficult for a couple to find a place they could be intimate. The character Hysminias was describing where he was kissing and fondling his partner. An unspeakable, inexpressible, incomparable passion took control of me. I then experienced "by Eros" what I had never experienced before. Sexy fruits. By the end of the Middle Ages, several fruits became associated with love. Michel Pastoureau explains that cherries were a symbol of love, as was red apples, if given by a man. In the same vein, the pear, no matter what color, could symbolize male genitals. There were also three lengthy periods of abstinence during Lent, which could last between 47 to 62 days; before Christmas, which could be at least 35 days; and around the Feast of Pentecost, which could range from between 40 to 60 days. Also, many Feast days for particular Saints would be considered no-sex days as well. Here is a helpful chart: During the Early Middle Ages, Penitentials, books that set out church rules and the penance done for breaking them, were popular works. Amid the many different sins they noted were those that dealt with sexual practices. The seventh-century Irish penitential of Cummean, for example, banned oral, anal and inter-formal sex, as masturbation and bestiality. The Anglo-Saxon Canons of Theodore, meanwhile, includes these punishments: Whoever fornicates with an effeminate male or with another man or with an animal must fast for 10 years. Elsewhere it says that whoever fornicates with an animal must fast 15 years and sodomites must fast for 7 years. If he defiles himself masturbates, he is to abstain from meat for four days. He who desires to fornicate with himself. If he is a boy and does it often, either he is to fast 20 days or one is to whip him. Whoever ejaculates seed into the mouth, that is the worst evil. From someone it was judged that they repent this up to the end of their lives. While it was permitted to have sex with your spouse, only one type of position "the Missionary" was allowed, on the basis that this provided the least pleasure for the couple. Penitentials gradually fell out of favour during the Middle Ages, and were rarely produced after the twelfth-century. What kind of man did a woman prefer? She too will court the man who is uncircumcised in the flesh and lie against his breast with great passion, for he thrusts inside her a long time because of the foreskin, which is a barrier against ejaculation in intercourse. Thus she feels pleasure and reaches an orgasm first. They are united without separating, and he makes love twice and three times in one night, yet the appetite is not filled. Medieval riddles, such as this one found in the Exeter Book, often seem to have double-entendre meanings: It is pierced through in the front; it is stiff and hard and it has a good standing-place. When the man pulls up his own robe above his knee, he means to poke with the head of his hanging thing that familiar hole of matching length which he has often filled before. These were comic stories that frequently included wives and other women in sexual escapades with a variety of men. Some regulations of prostitution still survive, such as Regulations concerning Prostitutes Dwelling in Brothels, which was part of the Nuremberg city ordinances from about 1527. Also, the brothel keeper, man and woman, must provide the women living in their house with chambers, bed linens, and decent food, and they must feed them two meals a day and at every meal two decent dishes; and for such expenses each common woman living in the brothel must give the brothel keeper separately the sum of forty-two pence weekly, whether she uses the food or not. Click here to read more about Prostitution in the Middle Ages. Names for a Penis. The Perfumed Garden of Sensual Delight is one of several books written in the medieval Arabic world that deals with sex and sexuality. Written in Tunisia in the early 15th-century, it offered candid advice on lovemaking between a man and his wife. In one chapter, the author lists the many names a penis could be called: We take a look at the prescriptions offered in one of the most popular medical textbooks from the

Middle Ages. However, in late medieval London there were at least 13 cases of women accused of doing just that.

Chapter 3 : Women in the Medieval Church: Did You Know? | Christian History Magazine

The early Middle Ages gave birth to the view of the woman as the instrument of evil. Women rose in men's esteem in the later Middle Ages, due to the spreading of the cult of the Virgin. The Virgin Mary was the ideal woman.

One who did so was Hilda of Whitby , whose abbey became famous for its learning and libraries. Five future bishops were trained in her community, and kings and rulers sought her advice. Many women joined the Crusades. Christian women often corresponded with and gave advice to the most prominent leaders of their day. Heloise better known for her relationship with famous philosopher Peter Abelard maintained a significant exchange with Peter the Venerable, the influential abbot of Cluny. The two discussed theology and spirituality at length. Anselm, later Archbishop of Canterbury , corresponded with Queen Matilda on matters of religion. Of all the recognized saints between and , about 15 percent were women. Some Anglo-Saxon queens appointed bishops. Queen Emma of Normandy, one of the most powerful people in England in the early eleventh century, clearly did so. Brigid of Ireland was said to have been consecrated a bishop. Brigid, who was born in the late s, founded the first nunnery in Ireland and served as an abbess. Hrotsvit, a German Christian woman who lived in the tenth century, wrote verse, history, and, in fact, the only dramas composed in all of Europe from the fourth to the eleventh centuries. Only their failure to do so allowed her to grow up, and at age 17 save France from military destruction. Her alleged reign for almost three years ended when she gave birth while riding in procession. The story was so widely held that a bust of Pope Joan was placed in Siena cathedral in about , and John Hus spoke of her while on trial shortly before his death. Not until the mids was the story repudiated. In the later Middle Ages, some Christian women chose lives of prayer and solitary confinement in their pursuit of holiness. These anchoresses, as they were known, often lived in a small room attached to a church. Windows allowed them to look into the sanctuary, to view the services there, and to look out into the village, to be able to buy food and necessary supplies. The first known morality play, an important form of drama in the late medieval period, was written by a woman Hildegard of Bingen, the twelfth-century German abbess. Holy women so valued their virginity that in some extreme cases they cut or disfigured themselves so they would not be molested by marauding invaders of their monasteries. One who did so was Ebba the Younger, abbess of a remote monastery in Scotland during the wave of Danish invasions in the late ninth century. Fara, a saint in the late s, founded a joint community of men and women in the north of France, where she ruled as abbess and assumed priestly and episcopal powers, hearing confessions and excommunicating members. Abbesses continued to hold considerable authority; as late as the thirteenth century, certain abbesses had to be halted from hearing confessions of their nuns. Anna Comnena, daughter of Byzantine emperor Alexius I, wrote the most detailed history of the church of her time. Women made extensive pilgrimages often with small retinues to the Holy Land. One such pilgrim was Margery Kempe, who traveled without her husband first in England and then to Rome and Jerusalem. Eleanor of Aquitaine the twelfth-century queen of England and France, and generous supporter of Fontevault Abbey wore the color of mourning white to her wedding. She thus set a precedent for brides in all centuries since. Angell is a doctoral candidate in history and liturgics at the School of Theology, Boston University. Next articles Despite countless books, conferences, and theological debates, the role of women in the church is far from settled.

Chapter 4 : Christianity in the Middle Ages - Wikipedia

The main role of women in the Middle Ages was to run the household and raise children. The position of women in the medieval society was greatly influenced by the views of the Roman Catholic Church. Women were taught to be obedient to their husbands.

The feminist protests of the sixties and seventies brought many changes. Church and Medicine Women in modern history, including twentieth century feminist revolution The Changing Experience of Women Through History Throughout history, women have had very different experiences at different times. Some past societies had women who were warriors, powerful priestesses, and political leaders. At other times strict expectations have been placed on women, with male writers portraying them as inferior to men. Looking at how a society treats its women can be very enlightening. An investigation into the position of women at different points in history shows us how our society has grown and changed. Often we think of history developing in a straight line. Women enjoy a better level of equality in present-day Western societies than at any time in history that we know of. Unfortunately, the further back in history you go, the less equality women have had. However, the truth is not so simple. In fact, women through history have gained and lost power at different times. We can also remember that in many parts of the world today, women do not enjoy equal opportunities to earn, participate in politics or get an education. They can face gender-based violence and discrimination. Progress is not inevitable - we need to take action to ensure women have a life of dignity and fairness. Women in Ancient Times Surprisingly perhaps, ancient history records many strong female figures - rulers and warriors who did deeds the history-writers thought worthy of recording. Their names echo down history to the present day. The first poem written down, which has survived to the present day, was written by a woman called Enheduanna. She was a priestess in Sumerian civilisation and her poem is a prayer of praise to a female deity called Innana. So, the first known author was a woman - very interesting given that in later times women were discouraged from writing and even from learning to read! The impact of Greco-Roman culture was significant. Within the Roman empire, for example, women had a role defined by staying at home and staying out of politics. However, in other parts of the ancient world, women played a significant historical role. In the Celtic culture of Gaul now France and the British Isles, women fought as warriors alongside their men. What they may have lacked in physical strength, they are said to have made up for in the fierceness of their attacks. Boudicca, a British Celtic queen who fought against the roman invaders of her country is a prime example of how a woman at this time could be a political and military leader. Women and the Church in Medieval Europe In the early Christian church, there is evidence that women could hold positions of influence equal to men. This was particularly true of followers of Gnostic Christianity in the first and second centuries AD who had female bishops among their communities. As sensationalised in the Da Vinci Code, there are indications that Mary Magdalene was once a significant religious leader - on a par with Peter and the other apostles. An apocryphal gospel of Mary Magdalene was discovered in the late nineteenth century in Egypt - only an important religious figure would have a gospel named after them. But all this was to change. Writers such as Tertullian. It was these church fathers who blamed Eve for the downfall of humanity, and by extension all women, everywhere. Their writings seem to have had a huge impact. Even today, women cannot be priests in the Catholic church which has followed on from these early traditions. The treatment of women in Medieval medicine also shows how women have been put down through history. Women had traditionally been herbal healers, and their wisdom was very valuable in a world without modern medicine. Often they gave their help to friends and neighbours freely, or in exchange for small items. As the middle ages wore on, men began to muscle in on what had traditionally been the realm of women. Apothecaries, barber-surgeons, alchemists and doctors began to compete with herbal cures. Doctors dismissed these herbal remedies as quackery, in favour of their own practices which frankly were a lot less effective - blood-letting, leeches, balancing humours and suchlike. Eventually, it became illegal to practise medicine at all without having studied at university, and guess what? Medieval universities did not admit women! This persecution culminated in accusations of witchcraft and the mass-burnings of women accused of witchcraft in the s. Feminist poster from the twentieth

century. Women in Modern History Modern History is generally seen as beginning in the late s with the Renaissance. Across Europe, women could not vote, were strongly discouraged from owning a business and had many fewer property rights than men. Young aristocratic women were often forced into political marriages where all their property transferred to their husband and they were effectively trapped. It is only really in the twentieth century that women have made such gains in equality that it is nothing short of revolutionary. After WWII many women were reluctant to go back to their previous lives. They had enjoyed the camaraderie and sense of purpose of the factories. While full equality has now been reached it is now natural to see female politicians, doctors, business leaders, and writers. It seems crazy now that a woman could be dismissed as automatically dumber than a man, or that a woman could be barred from a profession because of her gender Catholic priesthood notwithstanding! At the end of the day what is important is that women have a choice about how they want to be, and behave and how they spend their time. Women through history have not always had that choice - often society has placed strict controls on them. We owe a debt of gratitude the women who went before us and changed the rules forever.

Chapter 5 : Women in the Middle Ages | Middle Ages

The Church system. The success of the Church as a dominant force can be attributed in no small measure to its highly developed organisation, which over the course of the Middle Ages developed a sophisticated system of governance, law and economy.

The names of the famous women of the Middle Ages have found their place in history as scholars, artists, through their religion or in their roles as the mistresses of great men. Women of the Middle Ages: Joan of Arc, famous female heroine of the French Facts and a short biography with key dates about Joan of Arc who was famous as the Maid of Orleans who roused the French against the English during the Hundred Years War and was eventually burnt at the stake. Joan of Arc Women of the Middle Ages: Katherine Swynford, famous mistress, and later wife, of John of Gaunt Facts and a short biography with key dates about Katherine Swynford who was famous as the beautiful mistress of John of Gaunt. The couple eventually married and their children were legitimised. Katherine was therefore the ancestor of the Tudor dynasty. Katherine Swynford was also the sister-in-law of Geoffrey Chaucer. Katherine Swynford Women of the Middle Ages: Anna Comnena, famous as a great Medieval female author Facts and a short biography with key dates about Anna Comnena who was a famous author and the daughter of Emperor Alexius Comnenus of the Byzantine Empire. She wrote and dedicated a 15 volume book, called the Alexiad. Anna Comnena Women of the Middle Ages: Heloise, made famous by minstrels in the tragic story of Abelard and Heloise Facts and a short biography with key dates about Heloise who was famous as the lover of Peter Abelard who was castrated as a result of their doomed love affair. Heloise Women of the Middle Ages: Hildegard of Bingen, poet. Julian of Norwich, anchoress Facts and a short biography with key dates about Julian of Norwich who was enclosed as an anchoress at the Church of St. Christine de Pizan, famous Medieval author and feminist Facts and a short biography with key dates about Christine de Pizan who was highly intelligent author who not afraid to speak her mind. Christine de Pizan Women of the Middle Ages: Jane Shore Women of the Middle Ages: Alice Perrers Women of the Middle Ages: Margery Kempe Women of the Middle Ages: Lady Godiva, the Saxon noble woman who rode naked Facts and a short biography with key dates about Lady Godiva who was famous as the woman who rode naked on a horse through the Medieval town of Coventry. All the townspeople stayed inside during her ride, except one man called Tom - hence the expression "Peeping Tom" Lady Godiva The Lives of Medieval Women in the Middle Ages For facts and information about the daily lives of religious women nuns, anchoress and convents and other women in the Middle Ages including peasants and the Lady of the Manor please refer to the Middle Ages Sitemap. Middle Ages Women Each section of this Middle Ages website addresses all topics and provides interesting facts and information about these great monuments to bygone times. The Sitemap provides full details of all of the information and facts provided about the fascinating subject of Middle Ages!

Chapter 6 : Women in the Middle Ages - Wikipedia

Many women were canonized by the Church throughout the Middle Ages becoming some of the most well-known saints, including: Hilda of Whitby, Saint Walpurga, Columba of Spain, Saint Margaret of Scotland, Saint Rosalia, Elizabeth of Hungary, Catherine of Bologna, and many others.

Quick Facts The main role of women in the Middle Ages was to run the household and raise children. The position of women in the medieval society was greatly influenced by the views of the Roman Catholic Church. Women were taught to be obedient to their husbands. An average peasant women married at the age of 14 and gave birth to the first child at the age of 16. Some noble women gained great influence but medieval queens regnant were the exception rather than the rule. Medieval marriages were arranged by the parents and were often marked by absence of love. Women in the service of the Roman Catholic Church could only be nuns or in best case abbesses. Women from wealthy merchant families dedicated themselves almost exclusively to the role of a wife and mother. The Church considered women to be responsible for the original sin or the Fall of Man on the basis that a woman "Eve persuaded Adam to eat the fruit from the forbidden tree of knowledge which resulted in the expulsion of man from paradise. The end of the Middle Ages saw the beginning of witch-hunts which reached their height in the Early Modern Period. Thousands of people were executed for witchcraft, while about 80 percent of the victims of this mass hysteria were women. Peasant Women Peasant women had a considerable equality within their social class although this equality was mostly limited to labor on the field rather than marriage. All women were taught to obey their fathers and later husbands although they probably did not allowed themselves to be ordered around, at least not all of them. An average peasant woman married at the age of 14 and gave birth to the first child at the age of 16. Mortality rate at childbirth was extremely high and as a result, many women died before the age of 20. Noble Women Unlike peasant women, noble women were often shown a lot of respect although they usually had no say in the decisions of their husbands. However, some had a great deal of influence especially those who belonged to high nobility or royalty. Queens regnant ruling queens were the exception rather than the rule, however, it was not unusual for queens to act as regents to their underage sons. Noble women could also inherit titles and estates from their fathers of course, if they did not have legitimate brothers but the title and their right to the land passed to their husbands upon marriage. Medieval Marriages Despite the fact that the troubadour poetry puts a major emphasis on courtly love, love had little to do with marriage in the Middle Ages. Just about all marriages were arranged by the parents or guardians in all classes of medieval society, while the children were not asked for their opinion and wishes. Rather than a union between a man and woman who are in love, marriage was perceived as an instrument to extend the wealth and influence of the family especially by the medieval social elites. The lowest classes of the medieval society, on the other hand, were happy for having one hungry mouth less to feed. Medieval Women in the Service of the Roman Catholic Church The Roman Catholic clergy, a highly respected and influential class of the feudal society in the Middle Ages was organized into a strict hierarchy which excluded women completely from the highest structures. Female members of medieval clergy were almost exclusively nuns, while the highest status they could achieve was the position of an abbess or superior of the abbey or monastery. This position, however, gave them a significant influence although it cannot be compared with the influence of priests, bishops and deacons, offices which were and still are closed for women. Women in Medieval Towns and Cities The role and life of women in medieval towns and cities depended greatly on their social status. Women who originated from wealthier merchant families usually dedicated themselves to running the household and raising children, while those from less wealthy families were expected to help in the family business. Women from the working class mostly worked as spinners, saleswomen and bakers, however, they were often forced to work in physically demanding jobs for lower wages than men.

Chapter 7 : Church In the Middle Ages | Middle Ages

The first autobiography in the English language was written by a Christian woman, Margery Kempe, who lived in the early calendrierdelascience.com the early Middle Ages, it was not uncommon for an abbess (the.

The Domesday Book In order to best describe the role and position of women in the Middle Ages, it is first necessary to look at social standing of the women. In general, women at this point were considered inferior to men and their duties were primarily confined to the home and family life. A number of women, however, were able to transcend the confines of societal expectations to become prominent women in medieval society. They are seen as weaker, less intelligent, and otherwise less fit than men for most tasks. However, women do maintain significant control within family life. While men are occupied with their respective duties and obligations, women typically found themselves maintaining the home and the family. Poorer medieval families did not have many positions and typically lived in small quarters. It was necessary for the women to maintain the tidiness and cleanliness of the space as best as possible to make the most of living situations. Wealthier women typically had several servants to take care of quotidian tasks such as cooking and cleaning, but it was her duty to manage the domestic end of the household. Noble women had leisure time available to develop skills in music and drawing, and those who were literate could spend time reading, provided she had access to texts.

Roles Available for Women Not all women were to be confined to a life in the home, and some were able to balance the position of wife and mother with an outside occupation. In the peasantry it was common for women to assist their fathers and husbands with their occupation. Women would assist in the brewing of beer and wine, working the land, and maintaining livestock. Other occupations such as spinning, weaving, and embroidery, allowed women to work in or near the home so as not to neglect other duties. Women were also able to commit themselves to the Church. Though the Council of Epaon of prohibited women from obtaining leadership positions such as priesthood or becoming deaconesses and bishops, they were able to enter the Church as nuns, or sisters. By entering a convent, women became married to the Church and, therefore, could not marry a man and bear children. Within the convents women were able to study and acquire academic knowledge, which was very rare for women, even in the upper classes. The one authoritative position women could achieve was the role of Abbess. This position of Mother Superior presided over the sisters and held certain influence outside the convent as well. In the later parts of the Middle Ages, a specific profession from women arose â€” midwifery. It was not uncommon for women and infants to die in childbirth, but the development of this new trade allowed for more successful births. It was a position that began as experienced women helping those less experienced with childbirth, but it evolved into a science of its own. This is an somewhat anomalous occurrence in that it was a profession reserved specifically for women â€” men were not midwives. In a small number of cases, women rose to prominence as writers and artists, though these professions were thought to belong almost exclusively to men. Artist representations show occasions of women defending a town from attack or hunting, or even instructing men, though presumably these instances were quite rare in the Middle Ages. Though someone were able to improve their situation in life through education, religion, and some occupations, a significant number of women did work as prostitutes throughout the Middle Ages. With the growth of urban centers and towns, prostitution developed an increased presence. Attempts were made to regulate the practice such as laws confining prostitution to specific civic brothels or restricting prostitution inside the walls of the city. The Roman Catholic Church, one of the most authoritative institutions in the Middle Ages, declared that prostitution and soliciting a prostitute were clearly sins, but determined them to be lesser sins than rape, sodomy, and masturbation, thereby instilling a small degree of tolerance of the profession. A Selection of Notable Medieval Women Hildegard von Bingen â€” became a Benedictine abbess, thereby giving her opportunity to arrange preaching tours to spread her beliefs and teachings on religion, mysticism, and philosophy. Constance, Queen of Sicily â€” reigned as monarch of Sicily. After the death of her husband, Constance made a number of significant decisions and was placed by Dante Aligheri in Paradise of the Divine Comedy. Christine de Pizan â€” c. She made a career as a professional writer, completing over 40 works. Using poetry and essays, de Pizan raised awareness of

important women throughout history and questioned contemporaneous stereotypes of the female gender. Joan of Arc c. Born of humble background, Joan of Arc believed herself to be on a divine mission and was eventually burned at the stake by the English for heresy. Many women were canonized by the Church throughout the Middle Ages becoming some of the most well-known saints, including: Conclusion Whether a woman in the Middle Ages held the occupation of mother, nun, artisan, peasant, or noble, her role in life was set from the beginning. Through marriage or prolific accomplishments, individual women were able to merit more respect from men or other women. Though in appearance and everyday activity poor women and rich women were worlds apart, they were both restricted by their sex and seen as inferior by men and society.

Chapter 8 : The Role of Women in the High Middle Ages

Women in the Middle Ages occupied a number of different social roles. During the Middle Ages, a period of European history lasting from around the 5th century to the 15th century, women held the positions of wife, mother, peasant, artisan, and nun, as well as some important leadership roles, such as abbess or queen regnant.

The Church in the Middle Ages: The Catholic Church encouraged the Kings, the knights and ordinary people to undertake the Crusades. They travelled thousands of miles to fight for the Christian religion and the Roman Catholic Church in the belief that this would earn them a remission of all their sins and a guaranteed entry into heaven. Churches and Cathedrals The Church in the Middle Ages led to the building of great churches and cathedrals across Europe. The magnificent Gothic architecture of the Middle Ages featured beautiful stained glass windows, great pointed arches and vaults, flying buttresses and hideous gargoyles, an ever-present reminder of the horrors of hell. There were no seats in the cathedrals and church of the Middle Ages. People were expected to stand throughout the service which was conducted in Latin. Ordinary people were unable to understand the words but were able to view the religious art that visually conveyed the teachings of the church via the images portrayed in the stained glass windows, and also the religious art conveyed in mosaics and frescoes. Excommunication The Church in the Middle Ages maintained their power over all the countries and kings in Europe with the threat of excommunication. Excommunication from the church was in the power of the Pope - a great hold on the warring Kings and leaders of the era. The Catholic Church in the Middle Ages was therefore able to influence the kings and rulers of Europe with the threat of excommunication. Opposition to the Catholic Church and the pope would result in excommunication which they were banned from attending any church services, denied the sacraments and would go straight to hell when they died. The hierarchy of the church was, like everything else in the Middle Ages, pyramid shaped. The Inquisition was greatly feared and the threat of the Inquisition increased the power of the Churches in the Middle Ages. Religious Festivals The Church in the Middle Ages influenced the activities of Medieval people on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Certain foods were allowed on specific days of the week. Prayers were made at specific times of the day. Everyone was expected to attend church on a Sunday, the day of rest. There were Religious Festivals in every month of the year. The nuns and monks worked for the good of the churches and also for the good of the community. The Monks and Nuns performed many works of charity by providing food for the hungry and help and medicines for the sick. Work was conducted on church-owned lands and the monks, and sometimes the nuns produced beautifully illuminated manuscripts of classical authors and religious works.

Chapter 9 : Middle Ages Women

The church in the middle ages played a central role in people's lives as well as the state. The middle ages were a turbulent time marked by wars in which millions of lives were lost. The church played a strong and controversial role during these tumultuous times.

The middle ages were a turbulent time marked by wars in which millions of lives were lost. The church played a strong and controversial role during these tumultuous times. The church was a universal, all encompassing institution, with the Roman Catholic Church permeating every aspect of societal life. The Bible was the main source of educational activity and most people sought to devote their life to serving the church. Some of the most common terms that were used and propagated by the church were mass, sacraments and Holy Communion, terms that the modern day church still relates with. The church in the middle ages was so powerful that it had its own set of rules and a large budget too. The leaders of the church came from privileged, wealthy families of the nobility. The bishops and archbishops reigned over diocese, which were clusters of parishes spread out over a geographical location. While the bishops and archbishops hailed from richer families, the priests who oversaw the parishes had very little education and had humble origins. At the bottom of the hierarchy was the village priest who was responsible for caring and ministering to the sick and old, and taught the youth how to read the Bible and how to speak in Latin. The church building itself was exceptional in that so much detail and money was put in developing it, especially the larger cathedrals. This was in large contrast to the poor shacks that surrounded the church in which poor villagers dwelt. The stone used to build the church was sourced from nearby quarries and the peasants were responsible for putting up the structure. In the middle ages, the church building served as a civic monument that peasants looked at as a symbol of self-reliance and community. Features of the building such as the windows were used to demonstrate Bible stories because the attendants could not read the Bible neither in English nor in Latin. However, the bishops said the Mass proceedings in Latin even though the villagers could not comprehend the language. The Bible began being translated in English at the start of the fourteenth century to enable the common person to understand the text. An important feature of the Church was the crucifix, which symbolized affiliation to Christianity. The Church and The State The church in the middle ages ruled in tandem with the prevailing government. The bishops were close enough to the kings that they would compose letters, declaration and rules on behalf of the king. Additionally, the local governors and lords appointed the village and the church priests who were then required to adhere to the wishes of the lords. Kings in the Middle Ages ruled based on divine right. This implied that the king was ordained by God to rule over his people. The monarch was in charge of both the Church and the Crown. The Catholic Church reinforced this system by declaring that the Pope is an earthly representative of the Christ and as such has authority over the monarchy in addition to the church. The collapse of the Roman Empire in the 5th century saw the predominance of the Church so much so that there was no clear line as to the separation of church and state. There was also a lack of strong secular governance and the Church came in to assume the role of government. However, starting in the 10th century, the Church and state began to engage in a struggle for dominance. During this time, states such as the modern day Vatican were completely ruled by the Pope. The Pope also claimed the authority to replace and choose the Kings of Western Europe. In eastern the Roman Empire the church was distinctively separate from the state, while in the Islamic societies, the state and religion were inseparable. A significant example of the powers that the Pope claimed to yield is of Gregory VII who was one of the strongest Popes of the middle ages. He sought to rule over the kings and the local lords but faced resistance from kings such as King Henry IV of Germany. The conflict that ensued was later settled through the The Concordat of Worms treaty that enabled the king and the pope to appoint bishops. The church played a great role in urging the church and Christians to seize back the Holy city of Jerusalem from the Turkish Muslims. Both the kings and church leaders in Europe were ready retaliate when the Muslims prevented the Christians from undertaking pilgrimages to Palestine. The Pope declared that he would forgive the sins of those who went to fight in the siege of Jerusalem. This marked the first of the seven subsequent crusades that saw thousands of people die in

battle. Monasteries and Pilgrimages Many people aspired to serve in the monasteries as monks and nuns. Serving in the monasteries was a sign of dedication to God and the church. Benedict, a 6th century pope created the monastery rules; the monasteries acquired the name Benedictines from the influence of this Pope. The church required that monks and nuns take vows of chastity, obedience and poverty. They were also restricted from owning or acquiring property or leaving the monastery. They engaged in manual labor and cared for the sick, old and poor in society. In the church of the middle ages, pilgrimages played a vital role in the lives of Christians and the society. Some of the most popular pilgrims were those to the Holy Land of Jerusalem and Rome. The England Canterbury cathedral and the Church of St. James at Santiago de Compostela in Spain were equally important shrines.