

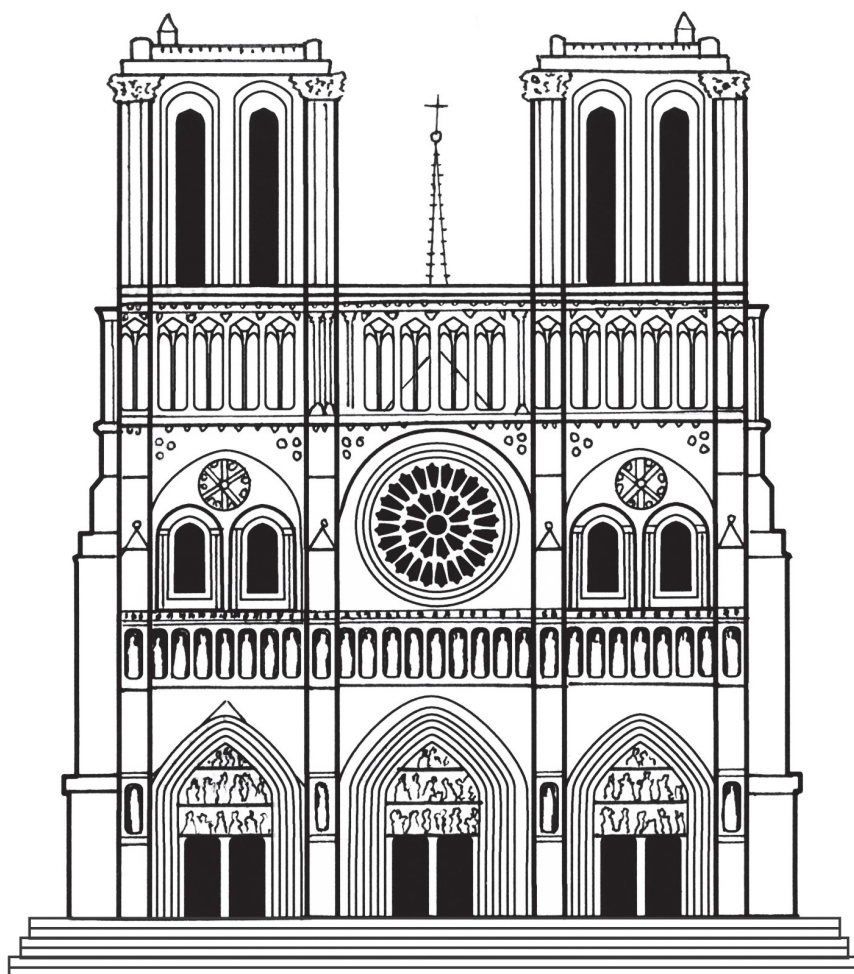
The medieval Catholic Church

During the Middle Ages, most people in Europe believed whatever the Catholic Church said. They believed in a Christian God and in **Heaven** and **Hell**. The Church told people that they would only go to Heaven if they followed the rules the Church set. People were scared of going to Hell and so most of them did what the priests, bishops and pope told them to do.

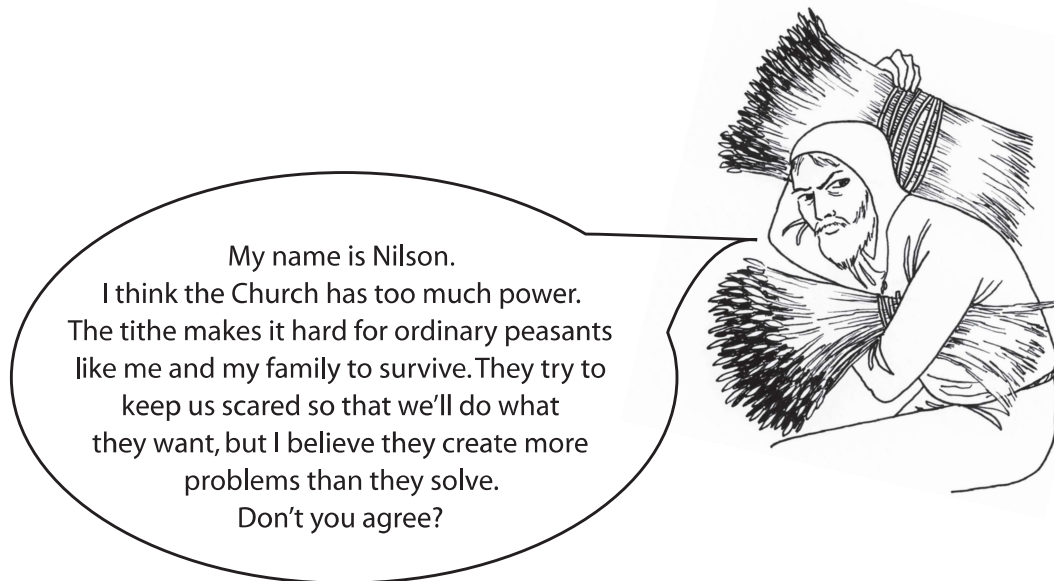
The Catholic Church was extremely rich. In fact, the Church was richer than any other group or individual during the Middle Ages – it was even wealthier than any king. This was because the Church demanded that its followers pay it money. For example, the Church claimed that people would only go to Heaven if they had been baptised. As a result, most people wanted to get their baby baptised – and the Church made people pay for the baptism. The Church also charged money to perform marriages and funerals. People were told that if they didn't have a proper Catholic funeral they wouldn't go to Heaven.


Everyone had to pay a tax to the Catholic Church called a **tithe**. The Church, however, didn't have to pay taxes to anyone at all. As the Church became wealthier, it spent lots of money building large **cathedrals**. Some Catholic cathedrals and **monasteries** were larger than castles.

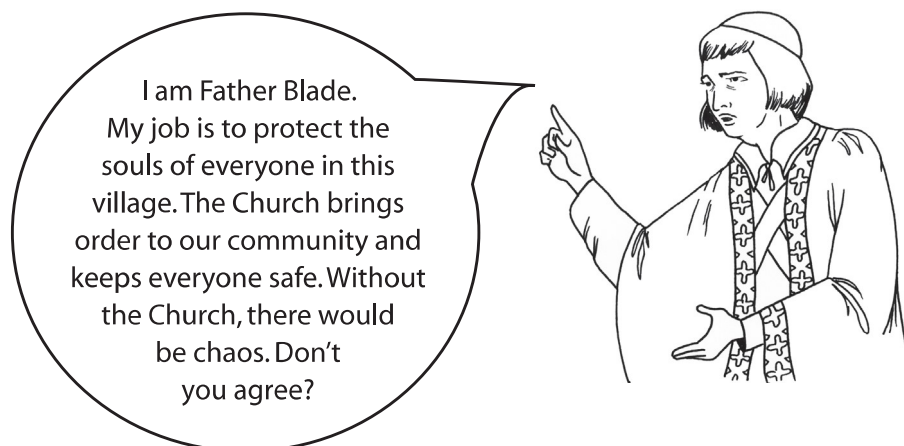
Even if people didn't believe in God, the Catholic Church still had a big effect on their lives. The Catholic Church made laws about how people should act and what they could and couldn't do. People who went against these laws could be punished, even if they didn't believe in God.



Was the Church too powerful?



-  **1** Write down three things that support Nilson's belief that the medieval Catholic Church was too powerful.




- 2** Write down three things that support Father Blade's belief that the Catholic Church was a necessary part of medieval society.

Medieval monasteries

A **monastery** is a building used for both worship and as a home. The Catholic Church built monasteries throughout Medieval Europe. Many monks lived in these monasteries. The life of monastic monks was very strict. They lived by three main **vows**:

- a vow of **poverty**
- a vow of **chastity**
- a vow of **obedience**.

Medieval monks spent many hours a day working, often tending to the monastery's farm and animals. They also spent hours praying, reading and writing about God and the Church, and taking care of **pilgrims** (people on sacred journeys) and sick people.

-  **1** Each monk in a monastery had a specific job. Below is a list of some of those jobs. Can you find the correct name for the monk who did each job?

cantor	barber surgeon	almoner	lector	sacrist
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- ___ a ___ This monk looked after the books in the monastery. He also ensured the buildings were well looked after.
- ___ r This monk looked after the poor and sick by giving them money and other support. These charitable gifts were called **alms**.
- ___ r ___ n This monk was both a barber and a surgeon. He made sure all monks were clean-shaven and kept their hair cut properly. He also performed simple surgeries.
- ___ n ___ This monk was the choir master.
- ___ e ___ This monk was a reader. He would often read aloud during Church services.

- 2** Which of the jobs in Question 1 would you have preferred? Why?

Illuminated manuscripts



The Catholic Church made many books during the Middle Ages. The monks living in monasteries were usually given the task of creating them. Some of these books were especially beautiful. They were known as **illuminated manuscripts**.

An illuminated manuscript is simply writing that has been decorated. Sometimes, only the first letter of the manuscript was enlarged and decorated. In other cases, **intricate** (complicated and detailed) borders would be added or small pictures would be drawn onto the page.

Illuminated manuscripts were created in bold colours. The most important manuscripts also had real gold or real silver in the decoration. This is why they are called illuminated manuscripts – because the use of these metals makes the work shine.

Medieval texts were written on **parchment**. Parchment is made from animal skin (usually from a calf, goat or sheep) that has been flattened and prepared for writing. The finest parchment – called **vellum** – was used for creating illuminated manuscripts.

Illuminating manuscripts took a lot of skill and time. This made the process expensive, and only very wealthy people could afford to have them done.

Making an illuminated manuscript

 Read the Resource sheet 'Illuminated manuscripts'.

Making an illuminated manuscript took a lot of skill. It involved:

- cutting the vellum to the correct size
- planning the layout of the page
- lightly ruling the vellum and writing in the text
- marking the decorated design onto the vellum
- painting in the colours
- adding gold foil or specks with a brush.

- 1 Design and make your own illuminated manuscript. Choose a piece of writing you like. It can be from your favourite book or magazine. Then, in your workbook, design and create your own page of decorative text, just like the monks did during the Middle Ages.

Make sure that your page contains the following elements:

- an enlarged and decorated first letter
- a decorative border around the whole page
- neat handwriting for the text
- lots of bold colours.

You might even like to glue some gold-coloured glitter onto your page.