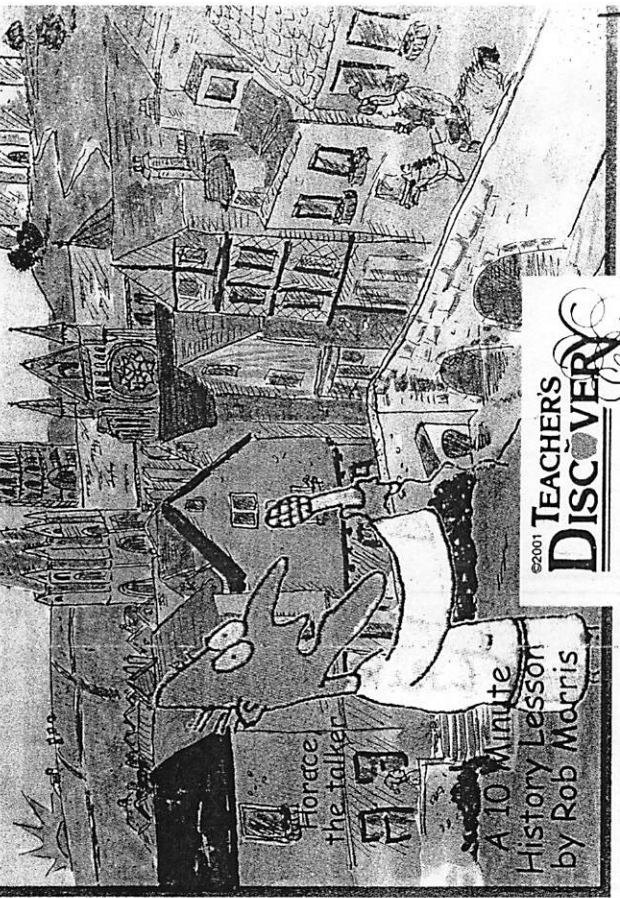


*brief*  
**HORACE'S**  
**12 PAGE**  
**ILLUSTRATED**

# HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE AGES



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**TEACHERS**  
**DISCOVERY**

## Quick Quiz

- What is the Middle Ages sometimes called?
- When was the Middle Ages?
- What is Constantinople now called?
- What did the Romans call the people who lived outside Italy?
- What is feudalism?
- Most people of western Europe were members of what Church?
- Who was Charles Martel's grandson?
- How did one become a knight?
- Where is Carcassonne?
- Who disobeyed Pope Gregory VIII?
- Name two reasons people went on the Crusades.
- Who led the French army in the 100 Years War?
- How did conditions improve for plague survivors?
- What era was a "rebirth" of learning in Europe?
- What priest from Germany believed people could only be saved by faith?

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**DISCOVERY**

Hello, readers. Today Sid, Horace and I are going to take you on a short trip through the Middle Ages. But first, do you want to know why it's called the Middle Ages?

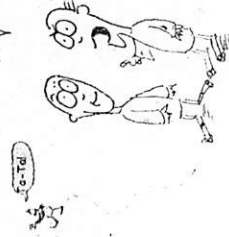
Yeah, in the middle of what?

No Sid. Renaissance scholars called it that because it was a time when few people learned, liked to read, or brought in their own medieval expert. Let's ask him about it here he comes now.



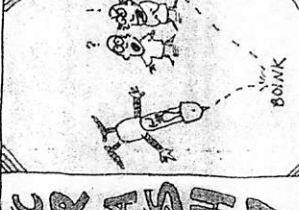
Lots of stuff happened in the Middle Ages. I should know. I was there. You've got the Crusades, lots of great wars, knights, castles, Cathedrals, Viking attacks, Hun attacks, popes fighting, kings, the Bubonic Plague.

I think we need to have a little chat with Sir Cecil about modesty!



The Middle Ages was between the fall of the Roman Empire in AD 476 and the beginning of the Renaissance in the fourteenth century, a period of roughly one thousand years. Do you know what else the Middle Ages is called, Sid?

Hey!



Calm down, Sir Cecil.

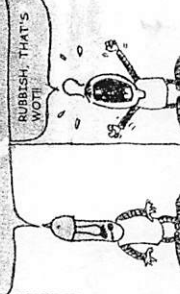
Dops, sorry.

I'm in the dark on this one, Tony.

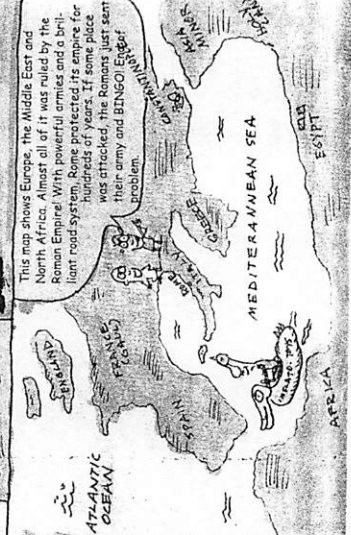
Right as usual, my friendly pal. The sun wasn't invented yet!

Don't tell me the sun wasn't invented yet!

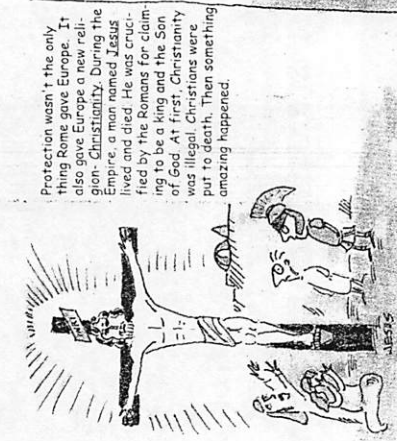
Sorry about that, mates. 'Ello, my name is Sir Cecil Backlethorne. I may be small but I assure you I am feared by my foes. You know what I think of the term 'Dark Ages'?



And you have lots of interesting people. Joan of Arc, Charlemagne, Peter the Hermit, King Arthur, William the Conqueror, Saladin, Richard the Lion-Hearted, Johannes Gutenberg and . . . me.



This map shows Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Almost all of it was ruled by the Roman Empire. With powerful armies and a brilliant road system, Rome protected its empire for centuries. But in AD 476, some place was attacked, the barbarians just sent their army and BINGO! Big problem.



Protection wasn't the only thing Rome gave Europe. It also gave Europe a new religion, Christianity. During the Empire, a man named Jesus lived and died. He was crucified by the Romans for claiming to be a king and the Son of God. At first, Christianity was illegal. Christians were put to death. Then something amazing happened.

Around AD 300 the Empire was split in two. The western half was ruled from Rome, in modern Italy. The eastern half was ruled from the city of Constantinople, which Constantine named after himself. Over time, these two halves became very different.



Horace's Fun Fact: Constantinople is now called Istanbul. Can you find Istanbul on a map? What country is it in?

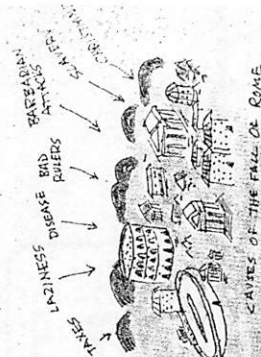
The Romans called the people who lived outside Italy 'Barbarians'. In the years around the fall of Rome, many barbarian groups were on the move. As the barbarians moved, they came into the Empire.



A man named Constantine was fighting for the throne. He had a vision of a blazing cross in the sky and heard the words 'In this conquer, Constantine had his army put crosses on their shields before battle. His army won. Constantine became emperor. And Christianity became Rome's - and Europe's - official religion.



Many Romans blamed Christianity for the fall of the western Roman Empire. But Rome had been weakening for years. There are a number of possible reasons for the fall of Rome: Roman laziness, bad rulers, high taxes, slavery, poverty, barbarian attack, disease and yes, Christianity.

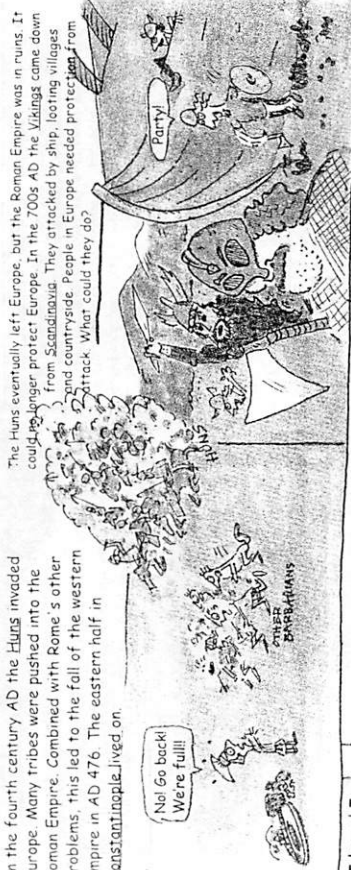


Some of the barbarian groups ended up fighting in the Roman army and most became Christians.

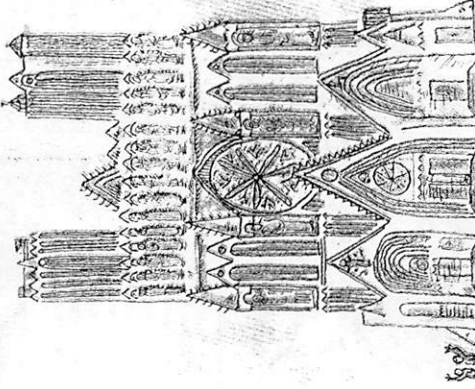




In the fourth century AD the Huns invaded Europe. Many tribes were pushed into the Roman Empire. Combined with Rome's other problems, this led to the fall of the western empire in AD 476. The eastern half in Constantinople lived on.



So the feudal hierarchy needed the Church to get to heaven and the Church needed the feudal system for protection and to collect large amounts of money and land. As the Church became wealthier, it built great structures, called cathedrals, dedicated to the glory of God.



Cathedral at Rheims, France

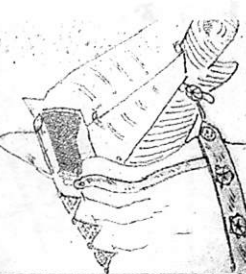
Charles Martel's grandson Charles got the support of the Pope. He built a huge kingdom and became known as Charlemagne, or 'Charles the Great.'



Charlemagne converted those he conquered.



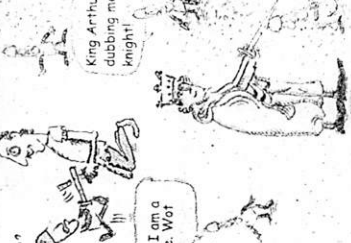
Charlemagne built an army of horse men called a cavalry. A new breed of horse, called a destrier, had been brought from the east. It was big and strong enough to carry an armored man and his weapons.



Horse in Armor

An armored, mounted warrior was called a knight. Knights were very expensive to train and equip. A warhorse in battle wore the armor above. The knight's armor could weigh 40-55 pounds!

Most knights were nobleman. How did one become a knight? A boy first became a page. At age seven he went to live with another family. He was like a servant, but he learned how to ride horses and use weapons. At fourteen, he became a squire, like the personal assistant to a knight. He also learned from the knight's equipment. Usually by age twenty one, he became a knight himself.



Becoming a Knight

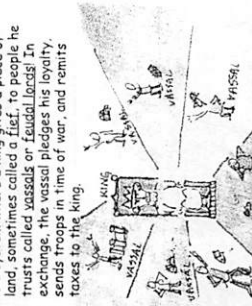
### A Medieval Manor

I know! I know!

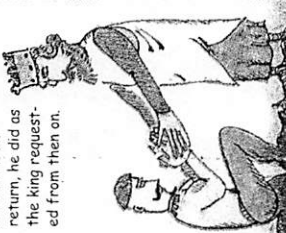
Very well, Go ahead, Sir Cecil.



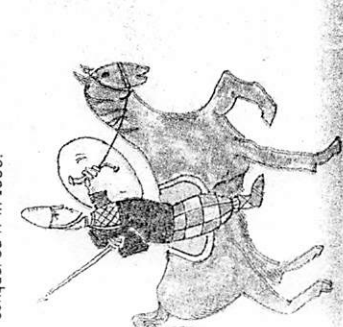
They turned to their feudal lord. Feudalism is a system where a king gives a piece of land, sometimes called a fief, to people he trusts called vassals or feudal lords. In exchange, the vassal pledges his loyalty, sends troops in time of war, and remits taxes to the king.



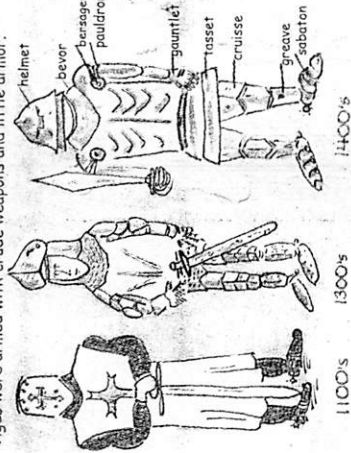
To become a vassal, a man had to swear an oath of fealty to the king. He knelt before the king, placed his hands between the king's hands, and pledged homage, promised he was the king's man. The king then accepted his homage and made him a vassal. The vassal then got the fief and all the peasants on it. In return, he did as the king requested from then on.



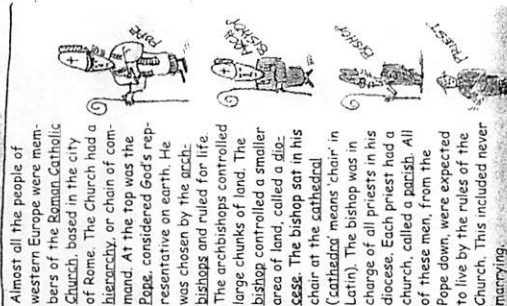
This system was used by an early Frankish king named Charles Martel. Martel knew he couldn't control all the land himself, so he divided it up among his vassals. William the Conqueror took the feudal system to England when he conquered it in 1066.



A knight would have the following equipment: horse, shirt of mail (armor), leggings, helmet, lance, shield, and sword. The value was equal to 22 oxen! For armor, knights first wore chain mail, which is made by connecting hundreds of rings of metal. Later, knights used lighter plate mail, made of solid pieces of metal. Foot soldiers in the Middle Ages were armed with crude weapons and little armor.



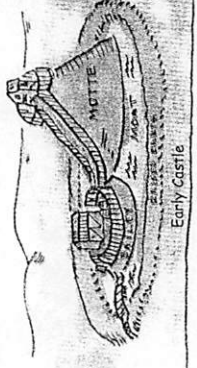
Almost all the people of western Europe were members of the Roman Catholic Church, based in the city of Rome. The Church had a hierarchy, or chain of command. At the top was the Pope, considered God's representative on earth. He was chosen by the archbishops and ruled for life. The archbishops controlled large chunks of land. The bishop controlled a smaller area of land, called a diocese. The bishop sat in his chair at the cathedral ('cathedral' means 'chair in Latin'). The bishop was in charge of all priests in his diocese. Each priest had a church, called a parish. All of these men, from the Pope down, were expected to live by the rules of the Church. This included never marrying.



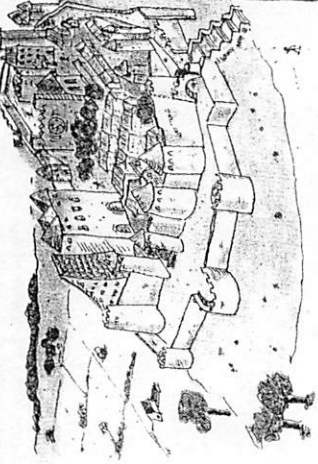
Knights had a code of behavior called chivalry. The word comes from the French word for "horseman," chevalier. A knight had to be brave, loyal, honest, respectful to ladies, and treat conquered foes gallantly.



A vassal needed to protect his fief. Over time, vassals designed and built sturdy wooden buildings for defense. These were the first castles. The early castles were called motte-and-bailey castles and looked like this.

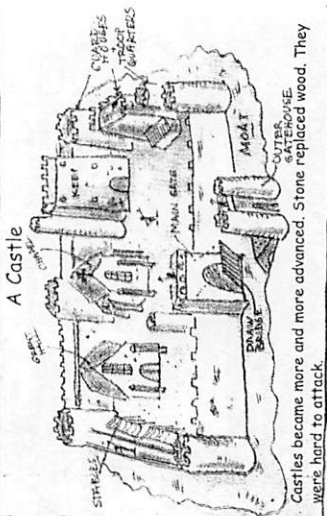
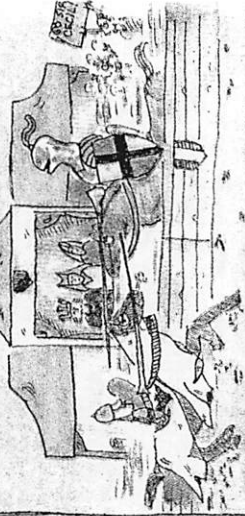


Castles protected all the people on a fief. People liked to live close to the castle so they could run there during an attack. The town of Carcassonne was built inside the castle walls.



Carcassonne, France  
A Castle Town

Knights held tournaments for entertainment and to demonstrate their skill. Jousting was a particularly dangerous game. Each knight tried to knock the other off his horse.



Castles became more and more advanced. Stone replaced wood. They were hard to attack. Most people on a fief or manor were peasants, and farmed for the vassal. Peasants couldn't read or write. They worked from sunup to sundown, most never leaving the fief, and wore homespun or leather clothes and wooden clogs. They had simple food and weren't allowed to hunt or fish on the vassal's land or they would be punished. The



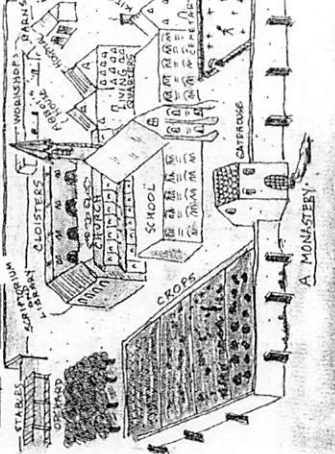
Ninety percent of medieval people lived on farms and manors. Peasants lived in small cottages of wattle-and-daub (mud and sticks) with thatch (hay) roofs.



Few people could read and write, so medieval churches had stained-glass windows and statues to serve as picture stories. The only educated group was the clergy (churchmen). Monks in monasteries copied great works by hand. Here,



A monastery was like its own little town. It produced all of its food and drink and had craftsmen. Each monk had a certain job. Women could become nuns. Nuns lived together in abbey or convents.

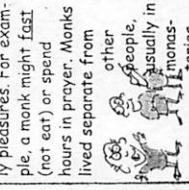


Peasants had very little furniture, and animals often shared the one-room huts. Some peasants, called serfs, were like slaves. Some were free.

Horace's Fact: The length of a strip of plowed land was called a furlong (furlow long). We use this measure in horse racing. The width of a plowed row was called a rod, the width of the long strip used to switch the oxen. This measurement is also still used.



Some members of the clergy believed a person could get close to God by giving up earthly pleasures. For example, a monk might fast (not eat) or spend hours in prayer. Monks lived separate from other people, usually in monasteries.

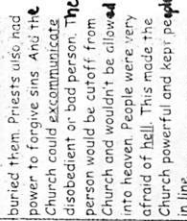


One way a person could get forgiveness of sins was to go on a pilgrimage - a journey to a holy place. Many cathedrals had relics to attract the faithful. A relic is something that belonged to one who was touched by a holy person.



Relics were thought to have the power to bless and even heal pilgrims.

The Catholic Church was the center of life, and baptized babies, confirmed them as children, married and eventually buried them. Priests also had power to forgive sins. And the Church could excommunicate disobedient or bad persons. The person would be cut off from Church and wouldn't be allowed into heaven. People were very afraid of hell. This made the Church powerful and kept people in line.



Horace's Fact: A monk named St. Simeon Stylites who died in AD 489, lived on a tall pillar for 30 years without going down! He got all his supplies by rope basket.





How did they know if the relics were real or not?

They didn't. Here we're looking at a reliquary, something that holds a relic. This jeweled, gold arm and hand contains an arm bone of SAINT BABYLOUS. It is so old that no one knows for sure if it is real, but it might be.

We now go to our time-traveling news reporter, Horace the Talker, for a live update.

I'm standing in the city of Mecca. In AD 610 a man named Muhammad received a visit from the Angel Gabriel!

Mecca

live AD 610 Near Mecca

The Muslims were important to the Middle Ages for many reasons. For one thing, Arab traders on camels brought trade goods to Europe from far-away places like India, China and North Africa. The increase in trade helped towns grow in medieval Europe.

One king, Henry IV, learned how powerful the Church could be. He disobeyed Pope Gregory VIII, who excommunicated him. Now, Henry's subjects could not obey him. Henry had no power! He had to go beg Pope Gregory's forgiveness.

Sorry!

Don't try it again!

The moral: Don't be a dope! Don't mess with the Pope!

Gabriel told Muhammad that he was to be God's prophet, or messenger. He told Muhammad that there was only one God, "the same God worshipped by the Jews and Christians. This new religion, called Islam, stressed the importance of prayer, fasting, charity and living a pure life. His followers, called Muslims, spread Islam across Africa, Asia and even into Spain.

Muslims loved learning. Remember, in Europe, few could read and write. Muslim scholars had large libraries. They translated Greek and Roman works into Arabic. Muslim scholars were also mathematicians, astronomers and philosophers. Their Arabic number system was adopted by Europeans. Here, Muslim scholars study in a library. There was tension between European Christians and Muslims. Islam still controlled the Holy Land. Jerusalem was a holy city to Jews, Christians and Muslims. Christians were afraid that Muslims would not let them make pilgrimages to the Holy Land. They were afraid of powerful Muslim armies.

Get a map. Find Mecca on it. What modern country is it in? Find the Holy Land. What modern country is it in?

A camel can drink 50 gallons of water at a time, but it doesn't store water in its hump - the hump stores fat.

In AD 1096, a French monk named Peter the Hermit convinced Pope Urban to call for a Crusade, a mission to free the Holy Land from the Muslims. Urban promised that all Christians who went on the Crusade would get complete forgiveness of their sins. Christians were given a cloth cross (cross) to sew onto their clothing. This is where the word "crusade" comes from.

The Muslims wouldn't let me get to the Holy Land.

Europe, we have a problem.

I'm going to get present money from my father and have a big adventure.

I'm a knight. I'm going to fight. I'm rich.

I'm going to get gold for my knights. I'm going to get gold for my knights. I'm going to get gold for my knights.

In the Second Crusade, the French and English occupied Jerusalem for six months but quarreled the whole time. A great Muslim general named Saladin recaptured the Holy Land.

Saladin

In the Third Crusade, Richard the Lion-Hearted, King of England, recaptured Jerusalem and made a truce with Saladin.

That's a good lad, Sally.

Because the Crusades weren't a failure. Europeans failed to win back the Holy Land but they learned much from Muslim scholars. This got Europeans interested in learning once again.

You know, these Muslims know a thing or two. I'd kinda like to learn more!

I quite agree. But not I kinda like being ignorant.

Yeah, and you're SO good at it!

Astrolabe  
A hand-held instrument perfected by the Arabs to determine the date and hour by the position of the stars.

Windmill  
Brought to Europe after Crusades

Spinning wheel  
Paper (from China)

Compass (China)

Gunpowder (China)

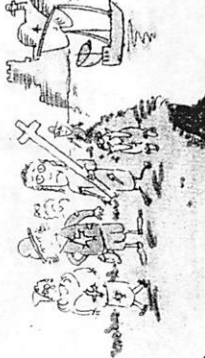
The First Crusade left Calaginis, Germany in AD 1096. The route to the Holy Land was over 1,500 miles long. The Crusaders were not a trained army. They were more of a mob. They pillaged cities and killed people all the way to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, they killed 12,000 people, mostly Jews and Muslims.

In the Fourth Crusade, the army sacked Constantinople, the second holiest city in Europe. They filled three huge churches with plunder: gold, silver, jewels, silk and furs. And guess what? No Holy Land. The Fifth Crusade was also a failure.

Why don't you just come out and say it! The Crusades were a big, fat failure!

Also, Europeans saw what great wealth could be made through trade. As trade increased, European towns grew. In Italy, Holland and Germany some people became very wealthy. And with trade came Muslim and Far-Eastern ideas - geometry, astronomy, poetry, navigation, the windmill, the spinning wheel, paper, gunpowder, Arabic numerals, and much, much more.

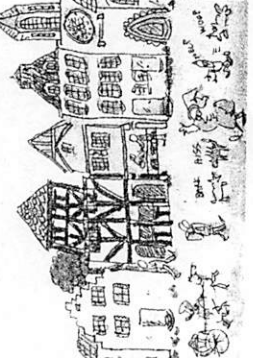
Did you know there was also a **Children's Crusade**? Said story It was led by a French shepherd boy named **Stephen**. According to him, when the child army reached the **Mediterranean Sea**, God would part the waters so it could walk across. Instead, the army of children was kidnapped by pirates and sold into slavery in Africa. Most were under twelve years old. They were never heard from again.



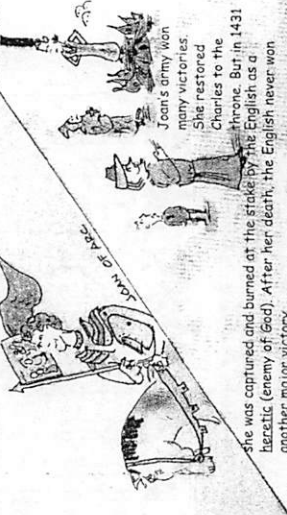
In 1347, the **Bubonic Plague** disease swept across Europe. It was carried by **fleas on rats**, that traveled from port to port on merchant ships. Also called **The Black Death**, because of the blotches that appeared on its victims' skin, it killed nearly one-third of all people in Europe in just a few years!



In towns, shops sold items from far and wide. In towns that had grown around cathedrals, pilgrims brought more money to spend during visits. Towns held fairs to attract traders.



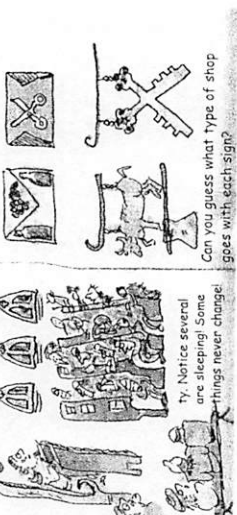
No story of the Middle Ages would be complete without mentioning **Jeanne d'Arc**. Jean was an illiterate 16-year-old peasant girl from **Dametz**, France. She claimed that in a vision God told her to lead the French army against the English in the **100 Years War**. Even though she was a peasant girl, she convinced **Charles VIII**, France's rightful king, to let her lead.



People didn't know that disease was spread by unclean conditions especially in towns and cities. Healthcare was poor. Here, a doctor wearing a mask to protect himself from plague visits patients. A nun helps him.



Cities became centers of education. Unlike medieval people who worried most about getting to heaven, many Italians, including **merchants and bankers**, were interested in the world around them. They studied **Greek and Roman** thought, a study known as **humanism**. **Universities** were founded to educate scholars. Here are students in class in an early university.



To become a guild member, you had to first become an **apprentice**, learning from a master craftsman for seven years. Then you took a test to demonstrate your skill. You did this by making a masterpiece. If your work was good, you became a **master craftsman**. Here, a stone mason and a carpenter create their masterpieces before a guild judge.



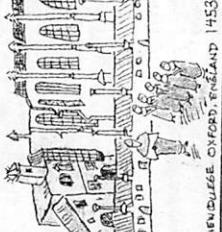
The era known as the **Renaissance** was beginning, a 'rebirth' of learning in Europe. Wealthy bankers, nobles and merchants became patrons, paying artists and musicians to create great works of art.



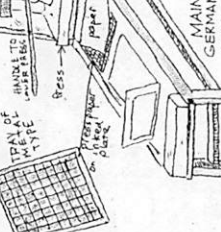
The Church made money selling indulgences, which were tickets that forgave sins. A priest from Germany named **Martin Luther** believed people could only be saved by faith and not by works or money. **Excommunicated**, he founded the first Protestant Church, protesting the abuses of the Catholic Church.



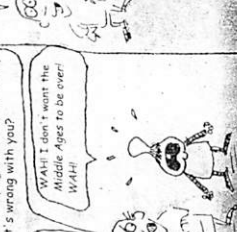
Early universities were church-run and the main area of study was religion. Classes were given in **Latin**, the language of the Church. Later, universities became more secular (interested in things other than religion) and classes were taught in the vernacular, or native language, of the area.



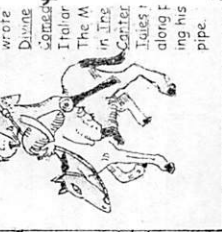
An important invention was the **printing press**. Books had been written by hand on large carved blocks of wood. Books were very rare and few people owned them. Follows, is an interview with printing press inventor, **Johannes Gutenberg**.



The Middle Ages was over. At the beginning of the Middle Ages, Europe was either ruled by Rome or was barbarian. By the end, it was a continent of thinkers and explorers poised to conquer the world. The **Crusades** reintroduced trade and ideas. The plague resulted in higher wages. Towns and cities replaced castles and manors.



**Humanism** spread throughout Europe. Paintings and sculpture became realistic. Writers began writing in the vernacular. **Geoffrey Chaucer** wrote *The Canterbury Tales* in English, and **Dante** wrote *Divine Comedy* in Italian. The **Magna Carta** in 1215 in Italy in the center along with a pipe.



MAINZ, GERMANY 1450's



But an even more exciting time was beginning: the Renaissance - the rebirth of learning after the Middle Ages! Do you want to know more about the Renaissance? Read our next book!

