# Connections Across Kingdoms

How Christianity linked communities in medieval Europe

**WH.3.3** "Explain the role of Christianity as a unifying force in medieval Europe."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline three ways Christianity connected people across kingdoms. Number each connection, then circle a phrase that shows a limit to that unity.

### A Traveler's Shared World

1 Imagine a merchant arriving in a town far from home in about 1200. The local speech may sound unfamiliar, but church bells still call people to worship. In much of western and central Europe, parish churches marked important moments with baptisms, marriages, and funerals. The Christian calendar also set shared seasons of fasting and celebration, including Lent and Easter. A traveler might find the same holiday observed in several kingdoms, even when local customs differed. These repeated practices gave people a sense of belonging to a wider Christian community, not just to their village or ruler.

2 Connections also moved through people who could read and write. Across much of western Europe, educated church members used Latin for worship, letters, and study. A cleric trained in one kingdom could exchange written ideas with a cleric in another. Monasteries copied religious works and other texts, while cathedral schools taught students who might later serve the Church or a ruler. Such institutions helped carry ideas beyond local borders. Shared learning did not make everyone educated: most people learned beliefs through sermons, rituals, and images rather than Latin books. Still, the Church linked distant centers of learning.

3 Pilgrims made these connections visible on the road. A person traveling to a shrine could meet Christians from many regions, worship with them, and sometimes find shelter at religious houses. Church leaders, including the pope, also claimed authority that reached beyond individual kingdoms. Yet unity was incomplete. Eastern Orthodox Christians did not accept the pope's authority, and western rulers sometimes fought each other despite their shared faith. Jewish and Muslim communities also lived in medieval Europe, often facing exclusion or persecution by Christians. Christianity created common ties across many communities, but it did not erase political conflict or religious differences.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could the Christian calendar help a traveler feel connected to people in another kingdom?

2. How did the use of Latin help church members connect places with different local languages?

3. How could a pilgrimage strengthen ties among Christians from different regions?

4. Why did shared Christianity not create complete unity in medieval Europe? Use two details from the passage.

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Two neighboring western European kingdoms face a famine in 1200. In one paragraph of 70 to 100 words, propose how two Christian connections from the passage might help people across the border respond, and explain one limit to that cooperation.

ANSWER KEY

# Connections Across Kingdoms

HIGH SCHOOL · WH.3.3

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three ways Christianity connected people across kingdoms. Number each connection, then circle a phrase that shows a limit to that unity. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How could the Christian calendar help a traveler feel connected to people in another kingdom? | **The traveler could observe familiar seasons such as Lent and Easter in several kingdoms, creating a sense of belonging despite different local customs.** |
| 2 | How did the use of Latin help church members connect places with different local languages? | **Educated church members could use Latin to exchange written ideas across kingdoms even when local languages differed.** |
| 3 | How could a pilgrimage strengthen ties among Christians from different regions? | **Pilgrims could meet and worship with Christians from other regions and sometimes receive shelter at religious houses.** |
| 4 | Why did shared Christianity not create complete unity in medieval Europe? Use two details from the passage. | **Eastern Orthodox Christians did not accept the pope's authority, and western rulers sometimes fought one another despite their shared faith.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1200, clerics in the two kingdoms could write Latin letters to share news about where grain is needed and where some is available. Because educated church members in both kingdoms use Latin, the messages could cross a language border. Religious houses along a travel route might offer shelter to people carrying supplies, as some sheltered pilgrims. These networks could make cooperation easier, but they could not force rival rulers to share grain. A shared faith would offer useful connections without ending their political conflict.

Accept other plausible applications of two connections described in the passage if the response explains how each could help across the border. The limit should show that shared faith did not guarantee cooperation.