Paths of Influence

Trace how faith shaped medieval communities

AWH.C.9.2 "Explain the growth and influence of Christianity and the Catholic Church in medieval society, including the significance of Europe's network of medieval pilgrimage routes, the role of monasteries in preserving the culture of antiquity..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one action taken by Christians or church institutions in each paragraph, then circle a result of that action. Use your marks to trace how Christianity grew or influenced medieval society.

Roads, Books, and New Churches

1. Imagine a traveler in the twelfth century walking toward Santiago de Compostela, a shrine in northwestern Spain. The traveler might wear a scallop-shell badge and follow roads also used by merchants. Across Europe, routes to shrines such as Santiago and Rome formed a network, not a single road. Churches and monasteries offered worship and sometimes lodging; towns sold food and supplies. Pilgrims carried stories, money, and religious practices between regions. This movement drew distant communities into shared Catholic rituals and helped some towns prosper. Yet travel could be dangerous, and not every pilgrim could afford the journey.

2. At a monastery, a traveler might see a scribe copying an older book by hand. Monastic libraries kept works by ancient Greek and Roman authors, sometimes in Latin translation, alongside Christian writings. Copying was slow and selective: some texts survived because monks copied them, while others disappeared. Monasteries also taught clergy to read and maintained records that local leaders could use. Such work gave the Catholic Church influence over learning and administration in western Europe. Monks did not preserve antiquity alone; scholars in the Byzantine and Islamic worlds also studied and transmitted ancient works.

3. Christianity spread north and east through more than travel. In Scandinavia, missionaries preached while rulers adopted Christianity and supported churches; conversion unfolded unevenly over generations. Among Slavic peoples, Byzantine missionaries Cyril and Methodius taught Christianity and promoted worship in their languages. In 988, Vladimir of Kyiv accepted Byzantine Christianity, strengthening its place in his realm. This eastern tradition was connected to Constantinople, not simply to the pope in Rome. A formal break between the western and eastern churches in 1054 marked growing differences between their traditions, even as both continued to shape medieval societies.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did pilgrimage routes spread Catholic practices and affect towns?

2. How did monasteries help preserve ancient culture, and what limit does the passage place on their role?

3. How did missionaries and rulers both contribute to the spread of Christianity in Scandinavia?

4. Why would it be inaccurate to describe the spread of Christianity to Kyiv as simply an expansion of the pope's authority?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a museum label of five or six sentences for an imagined chest containing a pilgrim badge, a copied manuscript, and a missionary's report. Explain how each object shows a different way Christianity grew or shaped medieval society, and distinguish western Catholic influence from eastern Christian traditions.

ANSWER KEY

Paths of Influence

HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.9.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action taken by Christians or church institutions in each paragraph, then circle a result of that action. Use your marks to trace how Christianity grew or influenced medieval society. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did pilgrimage routes spread Catholic practices and affect towns?	**Pilgrims carried religious practices between regions and joined shared rituals. Their spending on food and supplies helped some towns prosper.**
2	How did monasteries help preserve ancient culture, and what limit does the passage place on their role?	**Monks copied and kept some ancient works, but copying was selective, and Byzantine and Islamic scholars also transmitted ancient works.**
3	How did missionaries and rulers both contribute to the spread of Christianity in Scandinavia?	**Missionaries preached, while rulers adopted Christianity and supported churches. Conversion took place unevenly over generations.**
4	Why would it be inaccurate to describe the spread of Christianity to Kyiv as simply an expansion of the pope's authority?	**Vladimir accepted Byzantine Christianity, an eastern tradition connected to Constantinople rather than simply to the pope in Rome.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This chest holds evidence of three ways Christianity shaped medieval life. A pilgrim badge shows how travelers joined shared Catholic rituals and brought business to towns along their routes. The manuscript shows how copying in a monastery could preserve an ancient work for later readers. The missionary's report describes preaching and royal support that helped churches grow in a northern kingdom. It also describes eastern Christians whose worship was linked to Constantinople rather than simply to the pope in Rome. Together, these objects show that travel, learning, and conversion spread Christian influence in different ways.

Accept other passage-supported explanations of each cause and effect. For the museum label, look for a distinct role for all three objects and an accurate distinction between western Catholic and eastern Christian traditions.