

The Dissolution of the monasteries in Tudor Nottinghamshire
A seven-week scheme of work for key stage 2 and 3 history

Lesson 5 - What was life like for the monks inside the monastery?

Objectives The children will learn:
about the lives of the monks in a 16th century monastery and how this contrasts with their own lives.

Resources

Enlarged copy of the 'My school day' sheet;
Game materials for each group of 5 – game board, 5 sets of different colour coded cards, 1 die, 1 different coloured counter for each player;
'Life in the Abbey' game from: www.english-heritage.org.uk/battleabbey (Accessed 18/7/05).
Note: Cut one sheet of game cards at a time, as the different sheets of cards do not line up exactly on the master sheets.

Teaching activities

Introduction

Using an enlarged copy of the 'My school day' sheet, record a typical school day for the children in the class from midnight to midnight. Work out how much time they spend on different activities, including sleep, through the day. List this on the board. Show the children the game board for 'A 16th century monk's summer day'. Work out how much time is spent on different activities, listing this on the board. Compare the two lists, identifying the similarities and differences between the two lives. Ask the children what each group spends most of its time doing?

Tell the children they are going to find out more about what the monks did at different times in the day by playing a game.

Main activity – Small groups

In groups of 5, children start the game by having a counter in the 'Start here' space under the title. Throw the die and move the number of spaces shown, pick up a card matching the colour of the board. The cards either move players forward or backwards. The winner is the first to go round the board and pass 'Start here' (approximately 10 minutes). The game can be played several times with the children keeping a tally to find the overall winner.

Main activity – Whole class

Each group of 5 chooses a team name for itself that has to be related to monasteries. The teacher writes this on the board. Each child in a group has one stack of cards from the game. Less able children can have the smaller stacks. The teacher uses each set of coloured cards in turn to prompt a question about a mediaeval monk's life. The first child with the relevant stack of cards to find the answer and answer correctly wins a point for their team. If they answer the question wrong they lose a point. The teacher records this on the board.

Using ICT in this lesson – Main activity extension

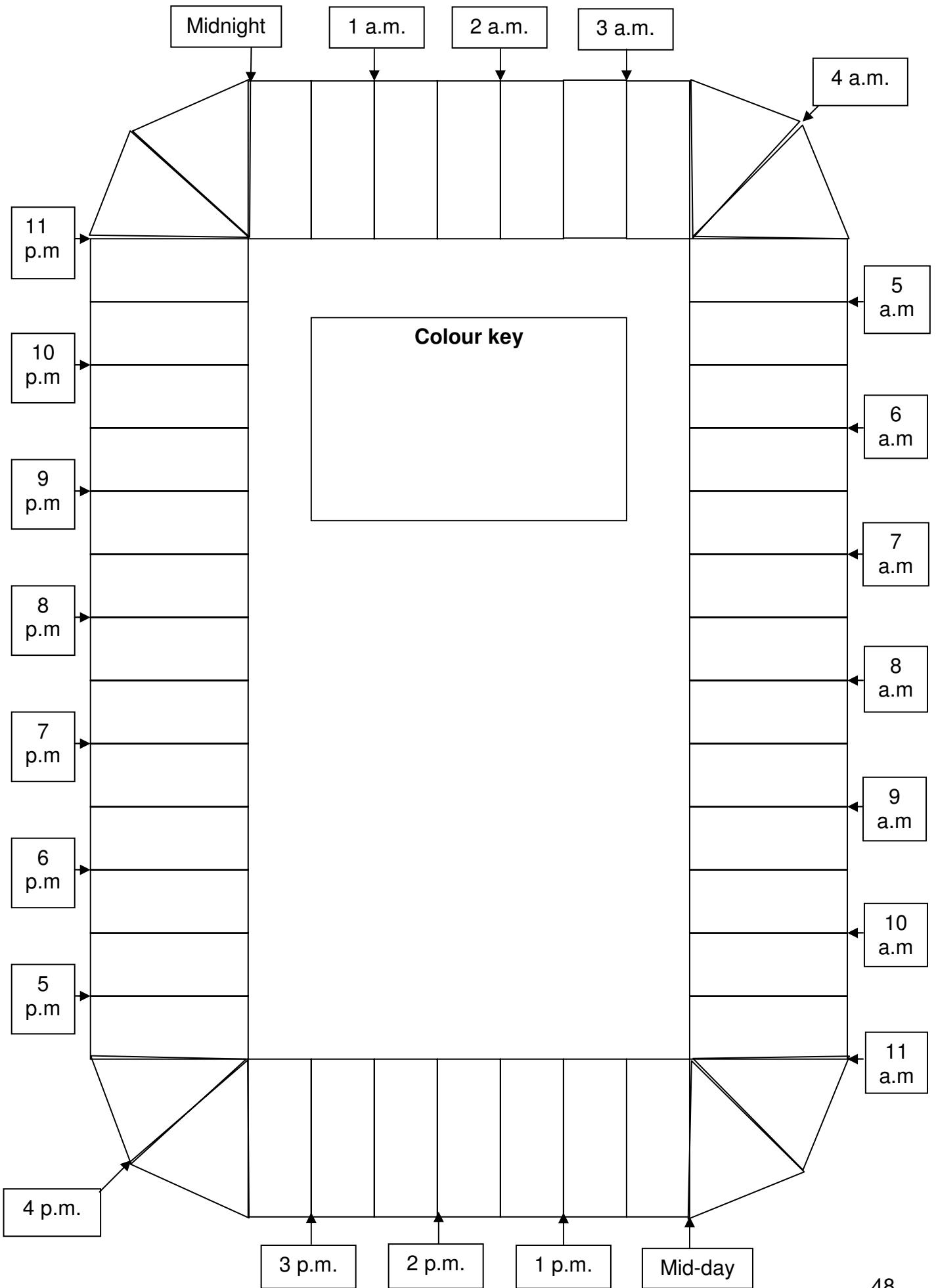
Play the 'Life in the Abbey' game to supplement the information given in the board game.

Key vocabulary - similarity, difference, activities

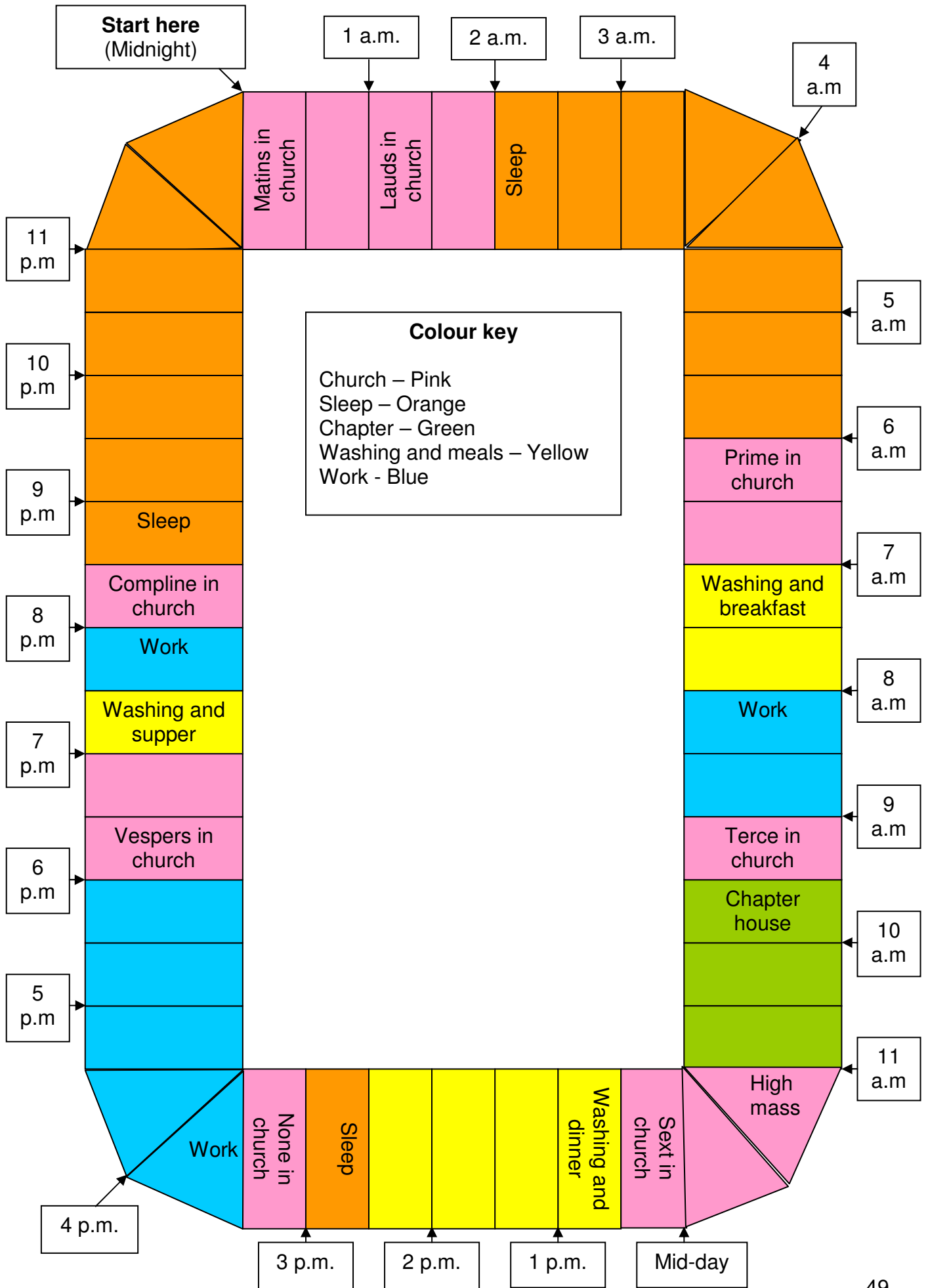
Plenary / assessment questions

Ask the children what they think are the good and bad points about the monks' way of life. Compare the board game with the ICT game. Which gives the most information? Which is most interesting? Why?

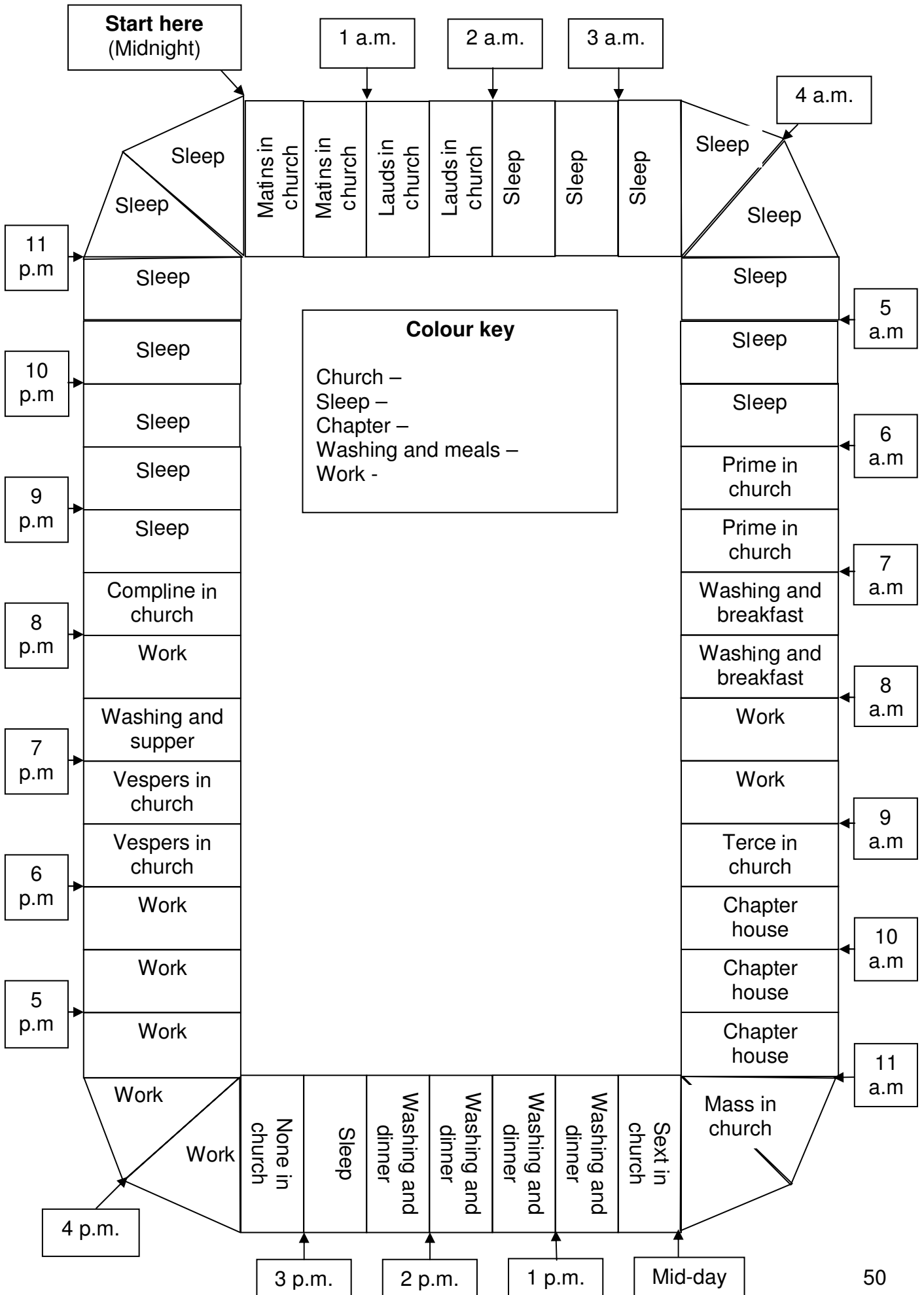
My school day



A 16th century monk's summer day



A 16th century monk's summer day



Lesson 5 game cards – Chapter house – Sheet 1 of 2

You are the **abbot**. You decide what punishments the **monks** will get for things they have done wrong. (Gain 5 points)

You admitted making a mistake in the **church** service. The **abbot** has decided you must say extra prayers. (Lose 2 points)

You admitted talking when you should have been silent. The **abbot** has decided you must kneel at the next **church service** when all the other **monks** stand. (Lose 2 points)

You have been chosen to read today's **chapter** of the **monastery's** rules. (Gain 2 points)

You lied about breaking a rule and you have been found out. The **abbot** has decided you are to be whipped 10 times. (Lose 3 points)

You have been accused of walking in **cloister** with your head up, it should have been down. The **abbot** says you can only have bread and water for the next meal. (Lose 1 point)

You have been chosen to read about the life of a Christian **martyr**. (Gain 2 points)

You are the **priest of the week** so you sing in **chapter** every day this week. (Gain 3 points)

You are the **abbot**. You give a **sermon** in **chapter** every day. (Gain 5 points)

You have broken one of the rules for the first time. You use this chance to **confess**. The **abbot** decides to give you a verbal warning. (Gain 4 points)

You are a **monk**. The **circator** found you asleep in the **re-re-dorter** when he checked the monastery last night. The **abbot** says you must say extra prayers. (Lose 2 points)

Another **monk** has said you were talking in the **dorter**. You are not allowed to defend yourself even if you were not talking. (Lose 2 points)

A man wants to be a **novice monk**. The **abbot** will decide if he can after asking the other **monks** what they think. You know the man is honest and say so. (Gain 3 points)

Chapter has finished early. You can walk in the **cloister** and talk to the other **monks**. (Gain 2 points)

You are worried about a serious problem. You go and see the **abbot** in private. (Gain 4 points)

The **abbot** has decided that most of the rooms in the **monastery** can have fires in them when winter comes. (Gain 4 points)

The rent on the **monastery** farms has not gone up for ten years. The **monks** are thinking about putting the rents up. You say yes, but not too much. (Gain 3 points)

The **monastery** needs a washerwoman to work in the **laundry**. You know about someone who is honest and works hard. You suggest she gets the job. (Gain 3 points)

Lesson 5 game cards – Chapter house – Sheet 2 of 2

A **monk** has died. You help take his body to the **chapter house** for a special service before he is buried.
(Gain 2 points)

You have been seen smiling in **church**. The **abbot** has decided you will sit with the younger **monks** tomorrow.
(Lose 3 points)

You have been seen stretching in **church**. The **abbot** has decided to give you a verbal warning this time.
(Lose 1 point)

You have been seen sitting with your legs apart in **church**. The **abbot** has decided you will sit with the younger **monks** tomorrow.
(Lose 2 points)

You are an old **monk**. You made a mistake when reading from the **bible** in church. You get whipped three times in **chapter**.
(Lose 3 points)

The same family has rented a **monastery farm** for the last 100 years. They say it belongs to them now. You agree with the other **monks** that it does not. (Gain 2 points)

A family on one of the **monastery farms** should have given the **monastery** one tenth of what they grew last year. They gave too much. (Gain 4 points)

The **monastery** needs more money. You suggest building some houses in the nearby town and renting them out. (Gain 4 points)

It has been decided in **chapter** that you can have one pound pocket money a year.
(Gain 2 points)

You have been seen throwing one foot over the other in **church**. The **abbot** has decided to give you a verbal warning this time.
(Lose 1 point)

You have been seen resting on your elbows in **church**. The **abbot** has decided that you will have to do extra work today.
(Lose 2 points)

You made a mistake when you were reading from the **bible** in **church**. You are only a **novice** so you will not be whipped this time.
(Lose 1 point)

A farm tenant has not paid their rent for a long time. In the **chapter meeting** you suggest giving them another month to pay.
(Gain 2 points)

The **monastery** has been given a **church** and the land that goes with it. You suggest someone who works for the **monastery** as the new **vicar**. (Gain 3 points)

The **monastery** needs more money. You suggest building a new market place in the nearby town and making people pay rent to sell things there. (Gain 4 points)

The **monks** have to pay a toll to cross a bridge near the **monastery**. The **abbot** is going to write to the king to ask if the **monks** can cross without paying. (Gain 2 points)

Lesson 5 game cards – Church – Sheet 1 of 2

You have just come into **church**. You wait on your knees for the **abbot** to come in.
(Gain 1 point)

You have been chosen to read to everyone from the **bible**.
(Gain 2 points)

You have stayed in **church** after the service to do **private prayer**.
(Gain 5 points)

You have been chosen to be the **cantor** for the week. It is your job to lead the singing in the **choir**.
(Gain 4 points)

It is a **feast day** so remember to touch yourself with **holy water** before going into **church**.
(Gain 1 point)

The **monks** on the different sides of the **church** are taking it in turns to sing. You leave a pause after the **monks** on the other side have finished singing. (Gain 1 point)

You have been chosen to sing the **psalm** (hymn) in church.
(Gain 3 points)

You are the **abbot** so you sit at the front of the **church** with the **prior**.
(Gain 5 points)

You are a **senior monk** so you have a special job to do. You can go before the end of the **church service**.
(Gain 2 points)

You got to the **service** late. You have to stand by the door as punishment, where everyone can see you.
(Lose 2 points)

All the **monks** have to go into **church** in **procession**. You are ready on time.
(Gain 1 point)

You have been chosen to learn to play the organ.
(Gain 4 points)

It is a **feast day** so there is a **procession** around the **church** before the **service** starts.
(Gain 1 point)

You are an older **monk**. You sit at the back of the church choir in a chair with a high back and a cover.
(Gain 1 point)

You have been chosen to turn the pages of the book for the **monk** singing the **psalm** (hymn) in **church**.
(Gain 1 point)

You are a **senior monk** so you sit near the front of the **church** just behind the **abbot** and the **prior**.
(Gain 4 points)

Lesson 5 game cards – Church – Sheet 2 of 2

You are a **choir monk** so you sit behind the **senior monks** in the **church**.
(Gain 2 points)

You are a **novice monk** so you sit near the front of the **church** in front of the **senior monks**. Make sure you do things right, you can be seen clearly. (Gain 1 point)

You have been chosen to be the **servant of the church** for this week. One of your jobs is to help the **priest** by putting the **chalice** (wine cup) on the **alter**. (Gain 1 point)

You have been chosen to be an **aceolyte** (ac-e-o-lyte) for the week. Your job is to carry one of the two large candles used in the **church services**. (Gain 1 point)

You have been chosen to be the **thurifer** for the week. It is your job to carry the **thurible** that holds the burning **incense** to make the **church** smell nice. (Gain 1 point)

You have been chosen to be the **servant of the church** for this week. One of your jobs is to help the **priest** by putting the **cross** on the **alter**. (Gain 1 point)

You are the **deacon** for this week. One of your jobs is to put **incense** in the **thurible**. Then the incense will be burnt to make the church smell nice. (Gain 1 point)

You are the **deacon** for this week. One of your jobs is to carry the **bible** to the front of the **church** at the start of the **service**. (Gain 1 point)

You are the **master of ceremonies**. You tell the monks what to do or say in the **church services** if they forget.
(Gain 3 points)

You are the **deacon** for the week. One of your jobs is to take the **bible** to the **lectern**. This is a special desk that a book can rest on when it is being read. (Gain 1 point)

You have just said the **Lord's Prayer**. It is time for the **sign of peace** so you shake hands with the **monk** next to you.
(Gain 1 point)

You are the **night office reader** for this week. It is your job to read in the **night-time services**.
(Gain 1 point)

Lesson 5 game cards – Sleep – Sheet 1 of 1

You are the **sacrist**. You get up before midnight to get the **church** ready for **matins**.
(Gain 3 points)

You are the **sub-prior**. Ring the bell to wake the **monks** up for the night-time services.
(Gain 3 points)

You have just been woken by a bell. You make the **sign of the cross** before you get out of bed.
(Gain 1 point)

You have just woken up. You say a **prayer** after making the **sign of the cross**.
(Gain 1 point)

You have just got up. You sit on the bed in silence with your head covered by the hood of your **cowl** (a long cloak with a hood).
(Gain 1 point)

You must always go in and out of the **dorter** in a silent **procession**.
(Gain 2 points)

You are not allowed to have any private things. The **abbot** has checked your bed to see if you have hidden anything. You have not.
(Gain 2 points)

It is time to go to bed. You walk into the **dorter** in a silent **procession** with the other **monks**.
(Gain 1 point)

You wear all your clothes in bed apart from your **cowl** (a long cloak with a hood) and your shoes. You remember to take your shoes off after you have got into bed. (Gain 2 points)

The **dorter** has been split into separate cubicles by using large pieces of cloth. This makes it more private.
(Gain 1 point)

You are the **circator**. You go round at night and check that everyone is asleep in their beds and all the outside doors are locked before you go to bed. (Gain 4 points)

You have to change the straw in your mattress. You only have to do this once a year.
(Gain 1 point)

You are the **abbot**. You have your own house inside the **monastery** so you do not have to sleep in the same room as the other **monks**.
(Gain 4 points)

Because it is summer you have to get up at midnight to go to **church**, so you have a sleep in the **dorter** after dinner. (Gain 1 point)

Lesson 5 game cards – Washing and eating – Sheet 1 of 2

You are ill so you are in the **infirmary**. This is the only place you can eat meat every day, usually pork, bacon or beef, you get milk to drink as well. (Gain 2 points)

It is a **normal dinner** so you get bread, fish, eggs and vegetables as well as beer to drink. You are not allowed meat. (Gain 3 points)

It is not a **fast day** so you get breakfast. You get $\frac{1}{4}$ lb bread (about 225g) and $\frac{1}{3}$ pint of beer (about 300 ml). (Gain 3 points)

You are being punished so you only get bread to eat and water to drink. (Lose 2 point)

You eat in silence and signal with your hands if you want something. (Gain 2 points)

You line up with the other **monks** before you go out of the **frater** at the end of the meal. When you get outside you must wash your hands in the **laver**. (Gain 3 points)

You must not wipe your nose or rub your teeth on the tablecloth. You do not. (Gain 2 points)

You have been late for a meal once. The **abbot** has told you off. (Lose 1 point)

You have been late for a meal three times. The **abbot** has said you must **fast** on bread and water until you start turning up on time. (Lose 3 points)

It is a **feast day**. There is about one feast a week. You get wine to drink at dinner and you can eat meat. There is pudding as well like fruit tart or rice and almonds. (Gain 5 points)

It is a **fast day** so you only have bread and water for dinner today. You do not get breakfast or supper. (Gain 1 point)

It is your turn to serve the meals in the **frater** this week. You start on Saturday and must wash everyone's feet at the end of the week. (Gain 4 points)

You wash your hands in the **laver** and line up in silence before going into the **frater**. (Gain 2 points)

You are a good reader so you will read to the other **monks** this week while they are eating. You make sure you read slowly and repeat the important bits. (Gain 4 points)

It is your turn to serve the food. You must not rush or stand around doing nothing, and no talking. You do your job well. (Gain 4 points)

You are the **fraterer**. It is your job to make sure the **frater** is clean, the food is ready and everything is tidy afterwards. (Gain 3 points)

You have been late for a meal twice. The **abbot** has told you off again. (Lose 2 points)

You are the **almoner**. It is part of your job to give **charity** to poor people outside the **monastery**. You give the left over food to the poor. (Gain 3 points)

Lesson 5 game cards – Washing and eating – Sheet 2 of 2

You are the **almoner**. It is part of your job to give **charity** to poor people outside the **monastery**. A **monk** has died. You give his food to the poor for 30 days. (Gain 3 points)

You have had too much beer at dinner. (Lose 3 points)

It is time to take a warm bath. You only have a bath four times a year unless you are ill. The bath is in the **infirmary**. (Gain 1 point)

You have your head and beard shaved every week and a half in summer. You are a young **monk** so you go last. You get cold water, a blunt razor and a wet towel. (Lose 2 points)

You are ill and in the **infirmary**. You can have a bath any time you need one. (Gain 3 points)

It is the anniversary of a **benefactor's** death (someone who left the monastery money). You have a **feast** and get jugglers and acrobats to entertain you. (Gain 3 points)

You are the **kitchener**. You make sure there is not too much noise in the kitchen at mealtimes. (Gain 2 points)

When you wash before dinner you sharpen your knife on a **whetstone** as well. (Gain 1 point)

You are one of the **senior monks** so you have your own room with somewhere to wash in it. (Gain 4 points)

You have just washed yourself at the **laver**. You remember to **pray** while you are waiting for the towel. (Gain 1 point)

After you have washed at the **laver** you remember not to blow your nose on the towel or wipe dirt onto it. (Gain 2 points)

You have your head and beard shaved every week and a half in summer. You are an older **monk** so you go first. You get warm water, a sharp razor and a dry towel. (Gain 2 points)

It is time to put clean clothes on. You do this once every two weeks. (Gain 1 point)

You are the **chamberlain**. You make sure there is hot water for the **monks** to have their feet washed on Saturday. (Gain 2 point)

You are the **kitchener**. Your job is to make sure the right food is cooked and it is cooked properly. (Gain 3 points)

You are the **kitchener**. You make sure all the plates and bowls are cleaned properly. (Gain 1 point)

Today is a **holy day** so you get extra food called **pittance** at dinner. It could be eggs, fish, meat or pudding like figs or cakes. (Gain 2 points)

Lesson 5 game cards – Work – Sheet 1 of 3

You are a **novice monk**. You are taught about the bible, music and how to read and write. You listen carefully.
(Gain 3 points)

The **monastery** needs large amounts of fish. It is your turn to go and catch some. You catch three big fish.
(Gain 2 points)

One of the other **monks** has finished copying a book. Your job is to bind it together.
(Gain 2 points)

You have been doing hard work digging in the garden, so you are allowed to have more bread than usual today.
(Gain 2 points)

You are the **chamberlain**. It is your job to employ tailors, buy cloth, make sure the laundry is done and that clothes are mended.
(Gain 3 points)

A **monk** has died. It is your job to wash and dress him before he is buried.
(Gain 2 points)

Because it is summer you can have a game of skittles or draughts after dinner but only outside the buildings, and no skittles in the **cloister**. (Gain 2 points)

Three poor people have come to the **monastery** to have their feet washed by a **monk**. The **almoner** chose you to do it today. You have done a good job. (Gain 4 points)

You are the **almoner**. You make sure there are clean rushes on all the **monastery** floors and straw mats in the **church**. (Gain 3 points)

You are the **almoner**. You teach some poor children in the **almshouse school**. If they live in the **almshouse** you give them clothes and food as well. (Gain 4 points)

Your job is to copy a book so there will be two copies in the **monastery**. You work slowly and carefully.
(Gain 3 points)

You are copying the page of a book. You need a long time to do the **illuminated letter** at the start of the page.
(Gain 2 points)

You are the **sacrist**. One of your jobs is to make bread for the **Eucharist service** in the **church oven**. You say **prayers** while you make it. (Gain 3 points)

A **monk** has died. It is your turn to keep watch over the body in **church**.
(Gain 2 points)

You are the **hosteller**. You make sure the **guest house** is clean and ready for any traveller's who want to stay the night.
(Gain 3 points)

You are supposed to be reading. No talking is allowed.
You concentrate on your reading.
(Gain 3 points)

You are the **almoner**. You go and find sticks that can be used for beating monks with if they need a serious punishment.
(Gain 1 point)

You are the **precentor**. You are in charge of all the books in the **monastery**. You have made the ink, the tools for writing with and the **parchment** to write on. (Gain 3 points)

Lesson 5 game cards – Work – Sheet 2 of 3

You are an old **monk**. You live in the **infirmary** where it is more comfortable and you will be looked after. You can talk whenever you want to as well. (Gain 3 points)

You are the **almoner**. You visit the sick and old outside the **monastery** to give **charity**. (Gain 4 points)

A **monk** is close to dying. You are one of the two **monks** that stay by his bed and read to him from the **bible** all the time. (Gain 2 points)

You are the **chamberlain**. You have to go outside the **monastery** to buy cloth for the tailor to make clothes with. (Gain 4 points)

You are the **infirmarer**. You have to keep the fire in the **infirmary** burning to keep everyone warm. (Gain 2 points)

You are the **hosteller**. You make sure you are up early in the morning to check no visitors steal anything when they leave. (Gain 3 points)

You are the **bailiff**. You give money to the other **monks** so that they can buy things to do their jobs. You collect money as well, like rents for land. (Gain 4 points)

You are the **cellarer**. You are in charge of buying food. You have to make sure it is cooked and served properly as well. (Gain 3 points)

You are the **sacrist**. You make sure the **church** is clean and locked up when it is not being used. (Gain 4 points)

You have just been bled. You have this done once a month and can stay in the **infirmary** for three days afterwards to get your strength back. (Gain 2 points)

You are going to work in the garden, looking after the fruit, vegetables and herbs the **monks** will eat. (Gain 2 points)

You are the **chamberlain**. It is your job to make sure everyone gets new straw for their mattresses once a year. (Gain 3 points)

A **monk** has died. You are the **infirmarer** so you are in charge of the **infirmary**. It is your job to wash the body and dress it in clean clothes before it is buried. (Gain 3 points)

You are the **hosteller**. You make sure the **guest rooms** are clean and have rushes on the floor. (Gain 4 points)

You are the **almoner**. You give the leftover food and old clothes to the poor. Some of them come to the **monastery**, but you have to visit some as well. (Gain 4 points)

You are the **bailiff**. You make sure all the grain on **monastery land** is collected properly at harvest time and given to the **monastery**. (Gain 3 points)

You have some free time so you go and see a cock-fight outside the monastery. (Gain 1 point)

You are the **sacrist**. If any repairs need doing to the **church** it is your job to make sure they get done. (Gain 4 points)

Lesson 5 game cards – Work – Sheet 3 of 3

You are the **sacrist**. You make sure there are enough candles, and anything else needed for the **services** in the **church**.
(Gain 3 points)

You are the **precentor**. You choose the best singers to sing on their own in **church**.
(Gain 1 point)

You have some free time so you go for a walk in the **cloister** with another **monk** and talk quietly.
(Gain 1 point)

You have some free time so you have a game of tennis with another **monk**.
(Gain 1 point)

You are the **precentor**. You are the best singer in the **monastery** and in charge of all the singing in **church**. You run the **singing practices**. (Gain 2 points)

You are the **precentor**. If a monk makes a mistake when they are singing you have to tell them.
(Gain 2 points)

You have some free time so you have a game of chess or dice with some other **monks**.
(Gain 1 point)

You have some free time so you go hunting with the **monastery's** hunting dogs.
(Gain 1 point)