***The influence of the Church during the Middle Ages***

**The Medieval Church**

During the Middle Ages, the Church the church was the center of peoples lives, all town meetings and plays and entertainment were held at the church. The church provided education for some and it helped the poor and sick.

It was a daily presence from birth to death. In fact, religion was so much a part of daily life that people even said a certain number of prayers to decide how long to cook an egg!

Christian belief was so widespread during this time that historians sometimes call the Middle Ages the “Age of Faith.” People looked to the Church to explain world events. Storms, disease, and famine were thought to be punishments sent by God. People hoped prayer and religious devotion would keep away such disasters. They were even more concerned about the fate of their souls after death. The Church taught that salvation, or the saving of one’s soul, would come to those who followed the Church’s teachings.

**Increasing Power of the Church**

During the Middle Ages, the Church acquired great economic power. By the year 1050, it was the largest landholder in Europe. Some land came in the form of gifts from monarchs and wealthy lords. Some land was taken by force. The medieval Church added to its wealth by collecting a tithe, or tax.

Each person was expected to give one tenth of his money, produce, or labor to help support the Church. The Church also came to wield great political power. Latin, the language of the Church, was the only common language in Europe. Church officials were often the only people who could read. As a result, they kept records for monarchs and became trusted scribes and advisers.

At times, the Church’s power brought it into conflict with European monarchs. If King’s did not do what the church told them to, they would excommunicate the king . This meant he was not allowed to attend church and no one in the church could speak to him anymore. He also was sentenced to go to hell, he could not be saved.

Entrance Slip:

1. What is feudalism? Where did the church rank in the feudal system?
2. Describe how the church a part of everyday life? (Give 2 examples)
3. How was the church involved in politics? What would they do if there did not get their way?