**A MONK IN A MEDIEVAL MONASTERY**

* My name is John and I have just joined a monastery. I am called a **novice** – this means I am in training to become a monk.
* I must learn to follow the rules of **St Benedict**. I wear a woollen tunic called a **habit and sandals** on my feet.

* After a year I must decide if this life suits me. If the abbot thinks I will make a good monk then he will let me take **solemn vows.**
* These vows will include **a promise of poverty, chastity, and obedience**. Sometimes we must be silent (especially during meals)
* My hair will then be cut in a **tonsure** – I will have a bald patch in the middle of my head.
* The monastery has many buildings including a church, a dormitory, cloisters, a chapter house, an infirmary, a library and a refectory.
* Monks serve God by doing ordinary work like **working in the fields, caring for the sick and poor, cooking, washing and cleaning.** Monasteries also serve the community by **educating** some of the local people and by acting as **inns and hospitals.**
* When I am a monk my day will be very full. It will begin at **3 am** when we sing **matins** (morning prayers). We **go back to bed** until 6am and then we **pray in silence** until **breakfast** at 7am. We eat our meals in silence.
* After this we **work** in the fields or in the library. Then we go to mass at 10 am, work some more, and then have dinner in the refectory.
* We read and work in the afternoon and then at 5pm we have **evening prayers called Vespers.**
* At 6 pm we have our **supper** and at 8pm we say our **night prayers, called Compline**. Finally we go to **bed**.
* We monks are very **self sufficient –** we grow our **own food**, make our **own medicines** and make our **own furniture**.
* Some of the monks carry out **other jobs**:

(a) **almoner** – looked after visitors/travellers at the monastery.

(b) **the infirmarian** – looks after the sick and the making of medicines from herbs etc.

(c) **the librarian** – looks after the library

(d) **the illuminator** – creates the artwork in the manuscripts which are made in the scriptorium.

* Some monks are called **friars** and they **travel from place to place working with the poor**. They are called **Franciscans** after their founder, **St Francis of Assisi.**