X Christmas in the Middle Ages

Christmas in the Middle Ages was very different to Christmas today. It was a very religious holiday and enjoying yourself was less important than it is today. The first recorded use of the word 'Christmas' was in 1038.

The Christmas crib originated in Medieval Italy. St Francis of Assisi used the crib to try to explain the story of Christmas to the people of Assisi.

Apart from Christmas day, December the 28th was an important day in the Middle Ages as on this day people remembered how King Herod ordered all children under 2 years old to be killed. In Medieval England children were reminded of Herod's evil by being beaten. On the other hand in some towns in Europe it was custom for one boy from the town to be made leader of that town for one day only this day.

'Mumming' was also a tradition at Christmas where actors performed plays and danced in villages and castles. Mystery plays were also performed which told the story of Jesus. Herod was the Medieval equivalent of the 'baddie' in the modern pantomime.

1 and 2. The adoration of the Magi (left Catalonia), Spain, right Gloucester (U.K.)

1. **Answer true/false**

❏ Christmas was a religious festival in the Middle Ages.

❏ The word Christmas has always existed.

❏ The Nativity set came from Germany.

❏ December 28th was an important day as it remembered king Herod's bad treatment of children.

❏ In some towns the tradition was that a boy was sent to prison for a day.

❏ All Christmas plays or dancing were prohibited during Christmas time.

Correct the false statements

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

2. Answer the clues

1. The year when the word Christmas was first used _____

2. The man who used a crib for the first time was _____

3. The date that some children were beaten was _____

4. A tradition of dancing and acting was _____

5. The evil character in the mystery was _____

3. Do you prefer Christmas now or would you prefer a Middle Ages Christmas?

Why? Give a reason. _____

_____

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4. Internet search: find the meaning of the word Christmas.

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5. Make a Medieval Christmas card written in gothic script. Draw a picture related to Medieval Christmas on the front.[1]

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[1] To know more about Christmas visit the following webs:
http://webtech.kennesaw.edu/jcheek3/middleages.htm
An execution and a miracle http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends/story16-an-execution-and-a-miracle.html
A king revenge: http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends/playstory7-a-saints-revenge--edmund-of-the-east-angles.html
Create your own story http://myths.e2bn.org/create/