



Teacher's Pet Publications

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK  
for  
Catherine, Called Birdy

Based On The Book By  
Karen Cushman

LitPlan Written By  
Jeanne Conaghan  
Mary B. Collins

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### **Karen Cushman**

CUSHMAN, Karen (1941- ). Karen Lipski Cushman was born into an ethnic, working-class Chicago family. They moved to Los Angeles in 1952. She didn't know that writing was a job, something that real people did with their lives. The type of jobs she knew about were secretary, salesman, or school crossing guard, like her Grandpa. A scholarship to Stanford University sent her off to write depressing poems and irreverent parodies of school songs. She graduated in 1963 with a degree in English and Greek. She wanted to dig for treasures on the Acropolis by moonlight, instead she worked for the telephone company in Beverly Hills, a job she quit. She found other jobs. Quit them all.

While working at the Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles, she met Philip Cushman, married him and moved to Oregon. There he taught, while she wove, made blackberry jam and had a daughter, Leah. They came back to California, both earning further advanced degrees. She currently is the Assistant Director of the Museum Studies Department at John F. Kennedy University in San Francisco, California. She and her husband and daughter, along with two cats, a dog and a rabbit, live in Oakland, California.

Karen considers herself a late bloomer. She is making a new career late in life, writing children's books and having a wonderful time. Over the years she's had lots of book ideas. She'd tell her husband and that would be that. One time when she told him, he said, "Don't tell me. Write it down." So she did and the rest is history.

### **Major Works**

1994 Catherine Called Birdy (Newbery Honor Book)

1995 The Midwife's Apprentice (Newbery Award)

1996 The Ballad of Lucy Whipple

2000 Matilda Bone

2003 Rodzina

2006 The Loud Silence of Francine Green

2010 Alchemy and Meggy Swann

2012 Will Sparrow's Road

## INTRODUCTION *Catherine, Called Birdy*

This LitPlan has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *Catherine, Called Birdy*. It includes 24 lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to the novel through a journal entry that explores their own feelings about the level of autonomy they feel they have in their own lives.

Following the introductory activity, students are given a transition to explain how this contrasts sharply with the relative lack of autonomy that is experienced by the protagonist in the story.

Following the transition, students are given a list of key words and phrases from the novel and are asked to generate a predictive summary of the story based on this list.

The narrative writing assignment will be completed over the duration of the novel's study. A daily entry can be completed as homework each evening and compiled into a personal narrative that is due after the novel is completed.

Next, students are given the materials they will be using during the unit, and students begin the pre-reading work for the first reading assignment.

There are thirteen **reading assignments** that average fifteen pages each; some are a little shorter while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15-20 minutes of pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for 4 to 9 vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple-choice. The best use of these materials is to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple-choice version for occasional quizzes.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for approximately 4 to 9 vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment.

Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues. Students are given the sentence in which the word appears in the text, and they are to write down what they think each word means based on its usage, contextual clues, and their prior knowledge.

Part II gives students dictionary definitions of the words, and students match each word to the correct definition based on the word's contextual usage. Students should then have an understanding of the words when they meet them in the text.

Each reading assignment also includes additional content specific vocabulary words to help students understand the text. You may use the content specific vocabulary as extra credit, or as an addition to the vocabulary tests.

After students complete the novel, there is a **vocabulary review lesson** which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of

the words they have studied.

Following the vocabulary review, a lesson is devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the novel.

There is a choice of **group projects** in this unit. These projects can take several forms. Teachers can assign small groups to expand upon any of the non-fiction topics. Some examples include researching medieval “doctoring” and herbal treatments and creating an herbal much like Catherine did. Another small group project could be to have the students write a story set during the time Catherine lived, using illuminated letters to decorate the pages. Another idea that the entire class can plan and participate in would be a medieval festival or feast. The class can decide which festival or feast they would like to celebrate (from many examples throughout the story). Small groups can research the food, games, music, decorations and costumes appropriate to that particular celebration. Teachers can also use the mumming activity described in lessons nine, ten and eleven for a whole-class themed project.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the specific purpose of persuading, expressing personal opinions, or informing. The first writing assignment is to write a letter from Catherine to her brother Edward asking him to talk to their parents about her marriage situation. In the second assignment, students explain and support their personal stand on whether or not they believe people can change. The third assignment is a personal narrative that is the culmination of a series of diary entries that students make throughout the unit.

There is a **nonfiction reading assignment**. Students must read nonfiction articles, books, etc. to gather information about the many facets of life during the middle ages.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given several choices of activities or games to use, which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: multiple choice or short answer. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included. There is also an advanced short answer unit test for higher-level students.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **Unit Resource Materials** section includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** that gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a **list of extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answer keys** are located directly after the reproducible student materials throughout the unit. The **Vocabulary Resource Materials** section includes similar worksheets and games to reinforce the vocabulary words.

The **level of this unit** can be varied depending upon the criteria on which the individual assignments are graded, the teacher's expectations of his/her students in class discussions, and the formats chosen for the study guides, quizzes and test. If teachers have other ideas/activities they wish to use, they can usually easily be inserted prior to the review lesson.

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## UNIT OBJECTIVES

### Catherine Called Birdy

#### **Lesson One**

1. Students will make summary predictions about the novel.
2. Students will begin the journal assignment.
3. Students will receive the student materials for this unit.

#### **Lesson Two**

1. Students will preview the vocabulary for the first reading assignment, September.
2. Students will preview the study questions for the first reading assignment, September.
3. Students will read the first reading assignment, September.
4. Students will have their oral reading skills evaluated.

#### **Lesson Three**

1. Students will review the main ideas and events from the first reading assignment, September.
2. Students will begin the mural bulletin board project.
3. Students will preview the vocabulary and study questions for Reading Assignment 2, October.
4. Students will read Reading Assignment 2, October.

#### **Lesson Four**

1. Students will discuss the main events and ideas from Reading Assignment 2, October.
2. Students will discuss superstitions and locate examples of superstitions in the text.
3. Students will learn about illuminated letters.
4. Students will demonstrate understanding of superstitions and illuminated letters through a creative writing assignment.
5. Students will preview the vocabulary and study questions for Reading Assignment 3, November.

#### **Lesson Five**

1. Students will review the vocabulary for Reading Assignment 3, November.
2. Students will enjoy an authentic treat from the historic time period of the novel.
3. Students will read Reading Assignment 3, November.

#### **Lesson Six**

1. Students will review the main events in Reading Assignment 3, November.
2. Students will preview the vocabulary and study questions for Reading Assignment 4, December.
3. Students will explore non-fiction topics related to Catherine Called Birdy.

## Unit Objectives *Catherine Called Birdy*

### **Lesson Seven**

1. Students will experience the Lord of Misrule idea from the book.
2. Students will read Reading Assignment 4, December.
3. Students will finish the non-fiction assignment.

### **Lesson Eight**

1. Students will review the main events and ideas in Reading Assignment 4, December.
2. Students will preview the vocabulary and study questions for Reading Assignment 5, January.
3. Students will learn about and discuss humor in the story.
4. Students will read Reading Assignment 5, January.

### **Lesson Nine**

1. Students will review the main events and ideas from Reading Assignment 5, January.
2. Students will preview the vocabulary for Reading Assignment 6, February.
3. Students will catch up on journal writing, scene illustrations, illuminated manuscripts, and non-fiction assignments.
4. Students will read Reading Assignment 6, February.

### **Lesson Ten**

1. Students will review the main events and ideas in Reading Assignment 6, February.
2. Students will complete the non-fiction assignment by having reports and discussions about the non-fiction pieces they have read.
3. Students will learn more about medieval times and a variety of topics through the non-fiction reports.
4. Students will practice public speaking skills.
5. Students will preview the vocabulary for Reading Assignment 7, March.
6. Students will read Reading Assignment 7, March.

### **Lesson Eleven**

1. Students will review the main events and ideas from Reading Assignment 7, March.
2. Students will preview the vocabulary for Reading Assignment 8, April.
3. Students will do a quick-write assignment to practice writing skills and connect the book to their personal lives.
4. Students will read Reading Assignment 8, April.

### **Lesson Twelve**

1. Students will review the main events and ideas from Reading Assignment 8, April.
2. Students will preview the vocabulary in Reading Assignment 9, May.
3. Students will review the vocabulary from Reading Assignments 1 - 7.
4. Students will read Reading Assignment 9, May.



## Unit Objectives *Catherine Called Birdy*

### **Lesson Thirteen**

1. Students will review the main events and ideas from Reading Assignment 9, May.
2. Students will preview the vocabulary for Reading Assignment 10, June.
3. Students will study and write dialogue.
4. Students will read Reading Assignment 10, June

### **Lesson Fourteen**

1. Students will review the main events and ideas from Reading Assignment 10, June.
2. Students will preview the vocabulary for Reading Assignment 11, July.
3. Students will write a persuasive letter.
4. Students will read Reading Assignment 11, July.

### **Lesson Fifteen**

1. Students will review the main events and ideas from Reading Assignment 11, July.
2. Students will preview the study questions for Reading Assignment 12, August.
3. Students will explore and discuss point of view.
4. Students will read Reading Assignment 12, August.

### **Lesson Sixteen**

1. Students will review the main events and ideas presented in Reading Assignment 12, August.
2. Students will preview the vocabulary for Reading Assignment 13, September.
3. Students will review and discuss similes and metaphors.
4. Students will read Reading Assignment 13, September & Author's Note.

### **Lessons Seventeen and Eighteen**

1. Students will review the main events and ideas from Reading Assignment 13, September.
2. Students will prepare to discuss and discuss the book *Catherine Called Birdy* on a deeper than direct recall level by exploring the Discussion Questions.

### **Lesson Nineteen**

Students will review all the vocabulary studied in this unit.

### **Lesson Twenty**

Students will review the events and ideas presented in this unit in preparation for a unit test.

### **Lesson Twenty-One**

Students' understanding of the *Catherine Called Birdy* unit will be evaluated.

READING ASSIGNMENTS *Catherine, Called Birdy*

Date Assigned	Assignment	Completion Date
	<i>Assignment 1</i> September	
	<i>Assignment 2</i> October	
	<i>Assignment 3</i> November	
	<i>Assignment 4</i> December	
	<i>Assignment 5</i> January	
	<i>Assignment 6</i> February	
	<i>Assignment 7</i> March	
	<i>Assignment 8</i> April	
	<i>Assignment 9</i> May	
	<i>Assignment 10</i> June	
	<i>Assignment 11</i> July	
	<i>Assignment 12</i> August	
	<i>Assignment 13</i> September-Author's Note	
	Whole Book	

# UNIT OUTLINE *Catherine, Called Birdy*

<b>1</b> Intro Journal Assignment Materials	<b>2</b> PVR RA#1 Sept Oral Rdg Eval	<b>3</b> Study ?s RA#1 Sept Mural Bulletin Board PVR RA#2	<b>4</b> Study ?s RA#2 Oct Superstitions Illuminated Letters PV RA#3 Nov	<b>5</b> Vocab Review RA#3 Soul Cakes Read RA#3 Nov
<b>6</b> Study ?s RA#3 Nov PV RA#4 Dec Begin Non-Fiction	<b>7</b> Lord of Misrule Read RA#4 Dec Finish Non-Fiction	<b>8</b> Study ?s RA#4 Dec Humor PVR RA#5 Jan	<b>9</b> Study ?s RA#5 Jan Catch-up Day PVR RA#6 Feb	<b>10</b> Study ?s RA#6 Feb Non-Fiction Reports PVR RA#7 March
<b>11</b> Study ?s RA#7 March Quick-Write PVR RA#8 April	<b>12</b> Study ?s RA#8 April Review Vocab 1-8 PVR RA#9 May	<b>13</b> Study ?s RA#9 May Dialogue PVR RA#10 June	<b>14</b> Study ?s RA#10 June Dialogue PVR RA#11 July	<b>15</b> Study ?s RA#11 July Point of View PVR RA#12 August
<b>16</b> Study ?s RA#12 August Similes and Metaphors PVR RA#13 Sept & Author's Note	<b>17</b> Study ?s RA#13 Sept Extra Discussion ?s	<b>18</b> Extra Discussion ?s	<b>19</b> Vocabulary Review	<b>20</b> Unit Review
<b>21</b> Unit Test				

Key: P = Preview Study Questions   V = Vocabulary Work   R = Read

## LESSON ONE

### Objectives

1. Students will make summary predictions about the novel.
2. Students will begin the journal assignment.
3. Students will receive materials for this unit and have their uses explained.

### Activity 1: Distributing Unit Materials

Distribute the materials students will use in this unit. When you have given out all the materials, have students stop working on their journal entries and explain in detail how students are to use these materials. Students may finish their journal entries at home.

### **Books**

Each school has its own rules and regulations regarding student use of school books. Advise students of the procedures that are normal for your school. Preview the book. Look at the covers, front matter, and index. Glance through at some of the drawings.

### **Reading Assignment Sheet**

You need to fill in the reading assignment sheet to let students know when their reading has to be completed. You can either write the assignment sheet up on a side blackboard or bulletin board and leave it there for students to see each day, or you can make copies for each student to have. In either case, you should advise students to become very familiar with the reading assignments so they know what is expected of them.

### **Vocabulary Worksheets**

Prior to reading a reading assignment, students will do vocabulary work related to the section of the book they are about to read. Following the completion of the reading of the book, there will be a vocabulary review of all the words used in the vocabulary assignments. Students should keep their vocabulary work as study materials for the unit test.

### **Study Guides**

Students should read the study guide questions for each reading assignment prior to beginning the reading assignment to get a feeling for what events and ideas are important in the section they are about to read. After reading the section, students will (as a class or individually), answer the questions to review the important events and ideas from that section of the book. Students should keep the study guides as study materials for the unit test.

### **Nonfiction Assignment Sheet**

Explain to students that they each are to read at least one non-fiction piece from the in-class library at some time during the unit. Students will fill out a nonfiction assignment sheet after completing the reading to help you (the teacher) evaluate their reading experiences and to help the students think about and evaluate their own reading experiences.

### **Journals**

If you are providing your students with journals or materials with which to make journals, include them in your initial distribution. Otherwise, when making the journal assignment in the next activity, make clear to students that they will need to create journals. Explain your expectations for their journals and give them the criteria on which their journals will be graded.

### **Extra Activities Center**

The Unit Resource Materials portion of this LitPlan contains suggestions for an extra library of related books and articles in your classroom as well as crossword and word search puzzles. Make an extra activities center in your room where you will keep these materials for students to use.

(Bring the books and articles in from the library and keep several copies of the puzzles and worksheets on hand.) Explain to students that these materials are available for them to use when they finish reading assignments or other class work early.

### Activity 2: Journal Project

Explain the on-going journal project to students. Students will keep a daily personal journal, much in the same way as Catherine does. The accumulation of these daily diary entries will be used as the basis for the informative writing assignment.

Explain how you expect the journals to be constructed (simple notebook, pages bound with a decorated cover, illustrations included or not, etc.) and the criteria on which their journals will be graded (if at all). Journals should have at least 15 entries--more if you choose to require more.

Distribute Writing Assignment #1 and discuss the directions in detail.

### Activity 3: Journal Entry

Tell students that their first journal entry should respond to the question, "Is there something in your life you wish you had control over but don't?"

Tell the class that this is one main problem of Catherine, the protagonist (explain the term "protagonist" if students are not familiar with it) in the novel *Catherine Called Birdy*. Catherine's father is arranging a marriage for her. Talk a little bit about this custom, which your students may not be familiar with. Ask if they've ever heard of this sort of thing before and briefly discuss it.

The journal entry is a homework assignment.

### Activity 4: Predictive Summaries

The story impressions strategy is simply a list of teacher-generated key words or phrases from a novel that are presented to the students in a list form. The items are listed in the order that they develop in the text. Students use the list of key words and phrases to write a predictive summary of the novel. Students can work individually, in partners or small groups. The list should not include any clues that will give away the ending.

Using a story impression list, have students work in partners or small groups to come up with a predictive summary of the novel.

The following is a sample of items for this strategy that you may want to use for *Catherine, Called Birdy*. Feel free to add to or delete from this list. You have already discussed "arranged marriage." If there are other things on this list your students may need clarification about, take a minute to briefly discuss those items before students begin their work.

September, 1290	14 year-old girl
Stonebridge Manor	Shire of Lincoln, England
Friends	Adventures
Chores	Mischievous
Strict parents	Arranged marriage
Rebellion	Acceptance

Give students class time to work on their predictive summaries.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 *Catherine, Called Birdy*

### PROMPT

In much the same way that Catherine kept a journal over the course of a year, you too will be keeping a personal journal during the reading of this novel. At the conclusion of this series of diary entries, you will compile them into a personal narrative that will hopefully help you to understand more about yourself.

### PRE-WRITING

The pre-writing consists of daily journal entries of at least a paragraph. These entries need to include a summary of the things that happened to you on that day. You may also include personal observations about why things happened the way they did.

### DRAFTING

The first draft of your personal narrative will consist of editing all of the individual entries you made. You need to condense and combine similar ideas. You are looking for all of your entries to reveal who you are and how you feel about the things that are happening in your life.

### PROMPT

When you finish the rough draft of your paper, you can ask a student who sits near you to read it, only if you want to share it with a classmate. After reading your rough draft, he/she should tell you what he/she liked best about your work, which parts were difficult to understand, and ways in which your work could be improved. Reread your paper considering your critic's comments, and make the corrections you think are necessary. If you don't wish to share your story with another student then re-read your story to yourself using a barely audible voice. Look for areas that don't sound quite right and correct them and circle any words that you think you need to check the spelling.

### PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.

Due Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ORAL READING EVALUATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Book \_\_\_\_\_

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Fluency					
Clarity					
Audibility					
Pronunciation					
Expression					

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

## STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS *Catherine, Called Birdy*

### **Assignment 1**

#### September

1. Why is Catherine keeping a diary?
2. Why does Catherine's father invite the wool merchant from Yarmouth to have dinner with them?
3. Why does Catherine make herself dirty and ugly when the wool merchant visits?
4. Where has George been for 20 years prior to the beginning of the story?
5. Why is Perkin the cleverest person Catherine knows?
6. Identify these characters:
  - a. Morwena
  - b. Perkin
  - c. Lord Rollo
  - d. Lady Aislinn
  - e. Edward
  - f. George
  - g. Robert
  - h. Thomas

### **Assignment 2**

#### October

1. What does Catherine expect to find on the bodies of the Jewish people?
2. Why do the Jewish people have to leave England?
3. Why does Catherine decide to leave the next day with the Jewish people?
4. Why does Catherine pass pieces of the Saint Faith's cake through her mother's ruby ring and then hang the ring from her beadstead?
5. How does Catherine get rid of the young man who has come to court her?
6. What does Catherine's mother do that makes Catherine's father angry?
7. Where does the abbot allow Catherine to go when she visits her brother?
8. Who is Aelis?
9. In her dream about George, what does Catherine say they rode off together to do?
10. According to Catherine, why is her father trying to marry her off?
11. What does Catherine paint on her chamber wall?
12. How do George and Aelis get along when they first meet?

### **Assignment 3**

#### November

1. Who makes the best soul cakes? Why doesn't she always make them?
2. What does Catherine's father do after her bird falls in the boiled mirling?
3. How does Catherine's mother test Catherine's doctoring skills?
4. What does Catherine learn about Aelis and George?
5. Why does Catherine want Aelis and George to "meet a pig while walking"?
6. What does Catherine do at her birthday dinner that causes her to get sent to her room?



MULTIPLE CHOICE STUDY/QUIZ QUESTIONS  
*Catherine, Called Birdy*

**Assignment 1**

**September**

1. Why is Catherine keeping a diary?
  - A. To practice her writing
  - B. To avoid spinning
  - C. Because she wants to remember every detail of her life
  - D. Because she is bored
  
2. Why does Catherine's father invite the wool merchant from Yarmouth to have dinner with them?
  - A. He hopes the wool merchant will sell him a loom.
  - B. He hopes the wool merchant will want to buy sheep.
  - C. He hopes the wool merchant will sell him wool.
  - D. He hopes the wool merchant will want to marry Catherine.
  
3. Why does Catherine make herself dirty and ugly when the wool merchant visits?
  - A. Because she is mad at her father and wants to embarrass him
  - B. To make herself undesirable so the merchant will not want to marry her
  - C. So she won't have to eat dinner with the guests
  - D. So the poor, dirty merchant won't feel out of place
  
4. Where has George been for 20 years prior to the beginning of the story?
  - A. At an abbey
  - B. In prison
  - C. In London
  - D. Crusading
  
5. Why is Perkin the cleverest person Catherine knows?
  - A. Perkin can fix anything with a rope.
  - B. Perkin tricks Catherine's father.
  - C. Perkin has figured out how to cure rashes.
  - D. Perkin can light a fire in the rain.

## VOCABULARY ASSIGNMENT 1 *Catherine, Called Birdy*

### Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Contextual Clues

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean on the lines provided.

1. .... hid from Morwenna and her endless chores, ate supper, brought in the forgotten linen now wet with dew, endured scolding and slapping from Morwenna, pinched Perkin, and went to bed.  

---
2. There was a hanging in Riverford today. I am being punished for impudence again, so was not allowed to go.  

---
3. My mother seeks to make me a fine lady – dumb, docile, and accomplished...  

---
4. I am no beauty, being sun-browed and gray-eyed, with poor eyesight and a stubborn disposition.  

---
5. Although she is wed to a knight of no significance, her fathers were kings in Britain long ago, she says.  

---
6. I thought first he spoke in some foreign tongue or a cipher designed to conceal a secret message...  

---
7. He is sore afflicted with wind in his bowels, so I regularly make him a tonic of cumin seed and anise to unbind his liver and destroy the wind.  

---

*Catherine, Called Birdy* Vocabulary Worksheet Assignment 1 Continued

Part II: Determining the Meaning -- Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

- |        |              |  |
|--------|--------------|--|
| ___ 1. | Endured      | A. Importance; value; noteworthiness         |
| ___ 2. | Impudence    | B. Continued on despite hardships            |
| ___ 3. | Docile       | C. Being rude or disrespectful to a superior |
| ___ 4. | Disposition  | D. Troubled with; negatively affected by     |
| ___ 5. | Significance | E. Easily managed                            |
| ___ 6. | Conceal      | F. Hide; keep secret                         |
| ___ 7. | Afflicted    | G. One's customary manner or mood            |

**Content-Specific Vocabulary You Might Need to Know**

Privy              An outhouse

Chamber        A room in a house, especially a bedroom

Minstrel        A medieval musician who traveled from place to place singing and reciting poetry

Betrothal       A mutual promise to marry; an engagement

Crusading       Participating in a European Christian holy war during the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries to recover the Holy Land from the Muslims

Heathens        People who do not acknowledge the God of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam

Draughts        The game of checkers