

A Modern Pilgrimage

Discuss modern pilgrimages i.e. many students go on church youth trips for the right reasons but some also go for other reasons--just as some adults attend church for right and wrong reasons. Tell the class that they are going on a modern day pilgrimage--brainstorm a destination (it must be somewhere they can go by bus). Next, brainstorm a list of modern pilgrims that might be found among their peer group: the jock, the cheerleader, the nerd, the whiner, the player, teacher's pet, the tattler, goody two shoes, the stoner, the prep, the gothic, etc., etc., (your geographic region may cause this list to vary greatly--also, some of these may seem negative, but remember the majority of the characters in *The Canterbury Tales* are not very ethical or moral. Then have students choose a persona--emphasize that they do not have to pick one that matches their own personality.

Each "pilgrim" must write an 18 line piece (rhyming couplets) about him/herself. The poem must be in the same style as Chaucer--make sure you point out that Chaucer often focused on one aspect of a character such as appearance and sometimes he gave a broad description of a character. Emphasize that the other pilgrims on the trip should be able to figure out their character's spiritual condition based on their poem.

Culminating activity--Make a pretend bus! We took our chairs to our school's commons area and set them up like a bus--we even had the row down the center aisle--Then I read my prologue that I wrote for the trip then I have each of them read their character's description--when all are finished--we've reached our destination. Optional: have the class vote on the best and give that student a prize.