

Explorer's Notebook

*A Multisensory Experience Inspired by a
Medieval Book of Hours*

Hello, explorers!

Today, you are exploring something called a Book of Hours. Doesn't that sound like something you would read about in a story?

A Book of Hours is not a storybook, it is a book that is full of Christian prayers that would be spoken at each of the different hours of the day and night. In the Middle Ages, Christians used them to read their prayers. Books of Hours are full of beautiful pictures that often show what the prayers are about.



Book of Hours
Tempera, ink and gold leaf on parchment
Northeast France (?)
First quarter of 15th century
07.MS.639

There are many Books of Hours in the world. Often, they come from Europe. In the Middle Ages, very rich people wanted to have them so that their lives could be just as faithful as monks and nuns. Books of Hours were also very expensive since they were made by hand and covered with precious materials. A beautiful Book of Hours could show just how rich someone was.

Do you own something that is very special to you? What is it?
What makes it special?

Have a good adventure!

Exploration 1: Initial Illumination



In Books of Hours, there are beautiful pictures called illuminations. Often, the first letter - or initial - of a new prayer would be illuminated with a beautiful drawing around it. What letter do you see in this illumination? It looks like the letter “D” with a horse and knight in it!

You can illuminate the first letter of your name, or whatever letter of the alphabet you would like. Illuminations are usually of something important.

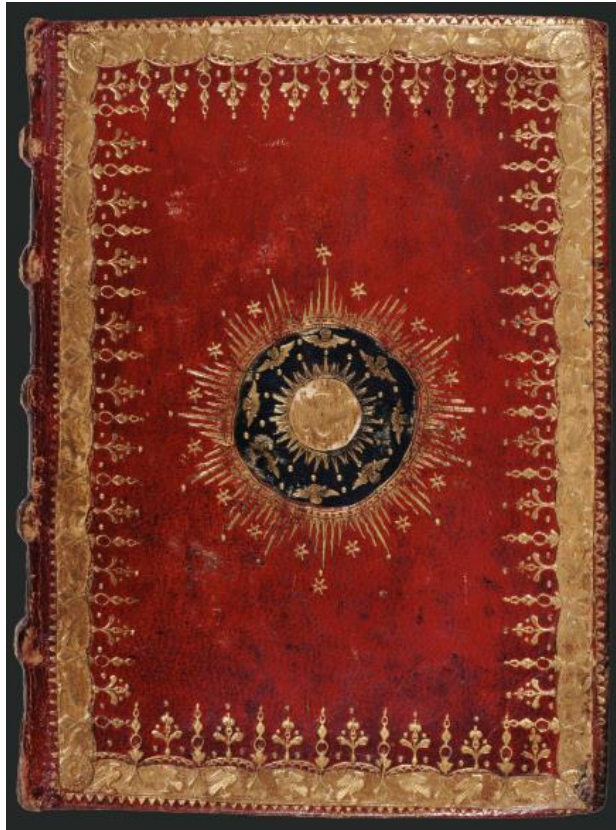
Book of Hours
Tempera, ink and gold leaf on parchment
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What is something that is important to you?

You can use the next page to illuminate your name, or you can use a blank piece of paper.

Don't forget to include something that is important to you in your illumination!

Exploration 2: Scavenger Hunt

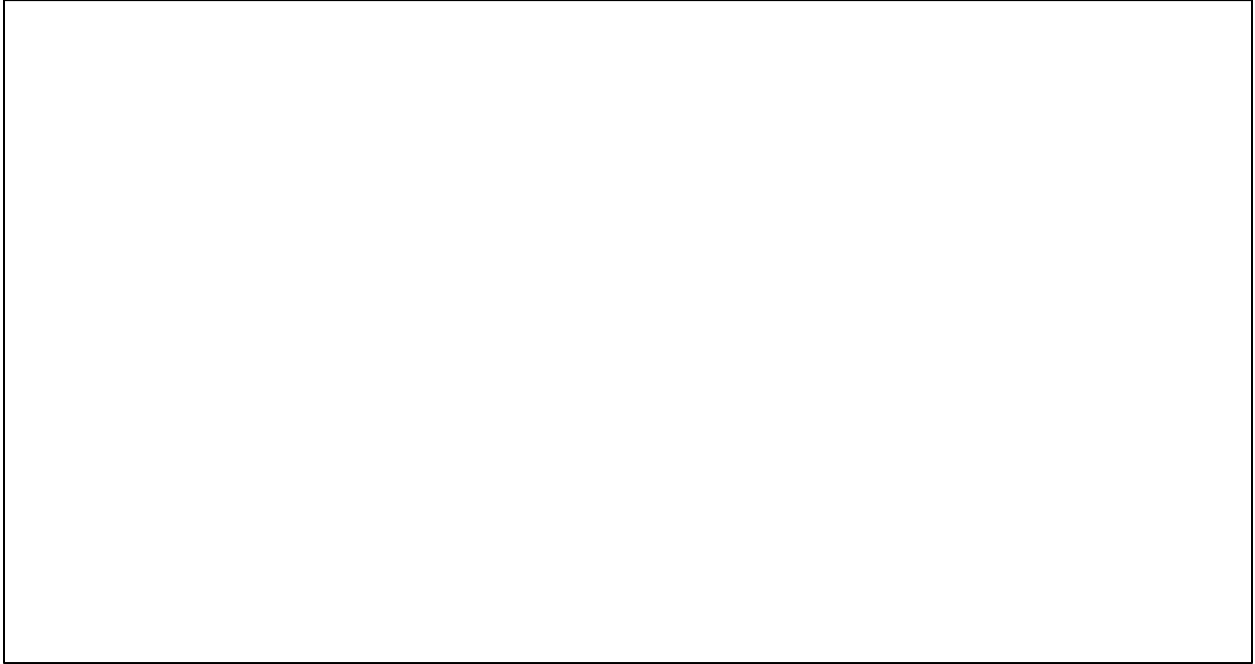


Books of Hours have very, very fancy and beautiful covers. Some are made of leather and others are made of fabric. Sometimes, they have jewels and beads on them. They might have shiny gold on them or tiny carvings.

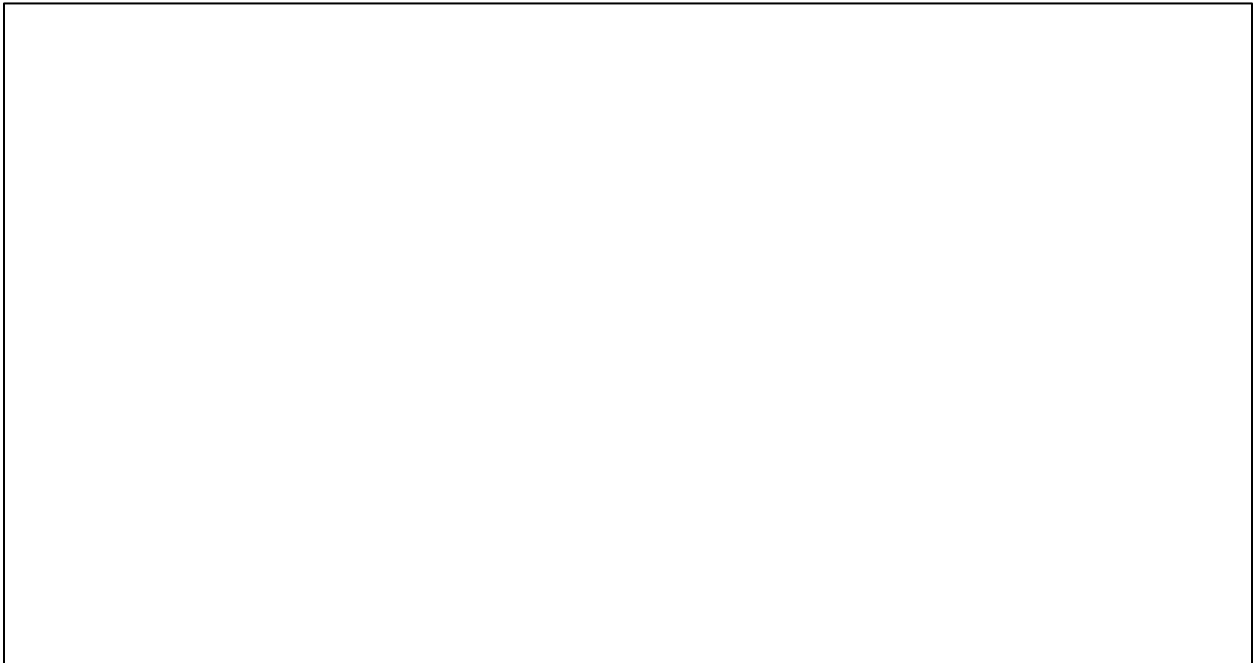
What can you find around you that has similar textures or feelings?

Draw or write about your findings in the boxes provided.

Can you find something that has a very smooth texture?



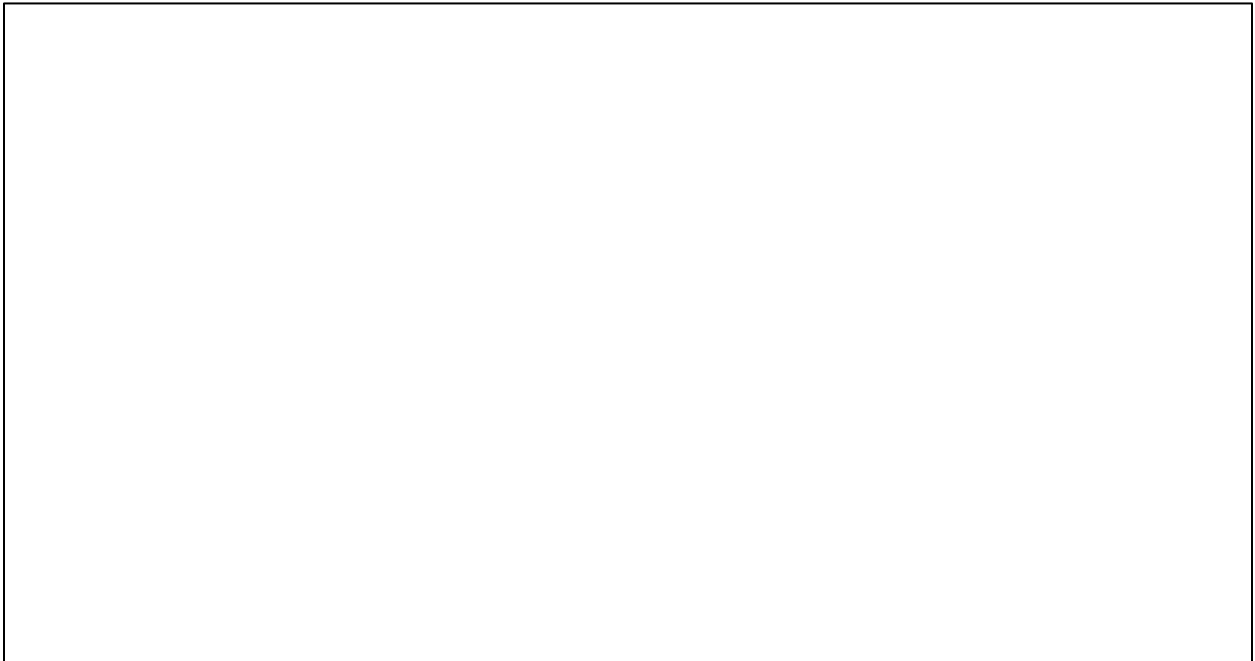
Can you find something that is very shiny?



Can you find something that has a velvety or soft texture?



Can you find something that is made of metal?



Can you find something that is carved out of wood?



Exploration 3: Writing a Song

Some Books of Hours have songs in them. In the Middle Ages, people would write songs about all sorts of things, just like people do today.

What is your favorite song?

What is your favorite animal?

Can you change the words of your favorite song to be about your favorite animal? Write it down and perform it!

Exploration 4: Making Tarte of Wardens

People in the Middle Ages liked to eat sweet treats, just like many of us do today. A common dessert in medieval Europe could include cheese, fruit, honey, and baked treats, like a tart! Today, we are going to explore making a Tarte of Wardens. Tarte of Wardens is a sweet treat from medieval England and is a delicious pear pie! Have you ever had pie before? What kind?

Tarte of Wardens
Yields about 8 slices

You Will Need:

For the crust:

- 1 ½ cups of flour
- 4 tablespoons of butter
- 2 egg yolks
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- about ½ cup of water

For the filling:

- 6-7 pears
- ⅓ cup of sugar
- 2 tablespoons of flour
- ½ teaspoon of cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon of ginger

Directions:

Before starting, ask a grownup to help you with some of these steps.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

For the crust:

1. Combine the flour and the salt.
2. Knead the eggs and butter into the flour and salt until the dough forms fine crumbs.
3. Add the water little by little until the dough sticks together. Don't add too much or it will be too sticky.
4. Cover the dough with a towel and let it sit while you prepare the filling.

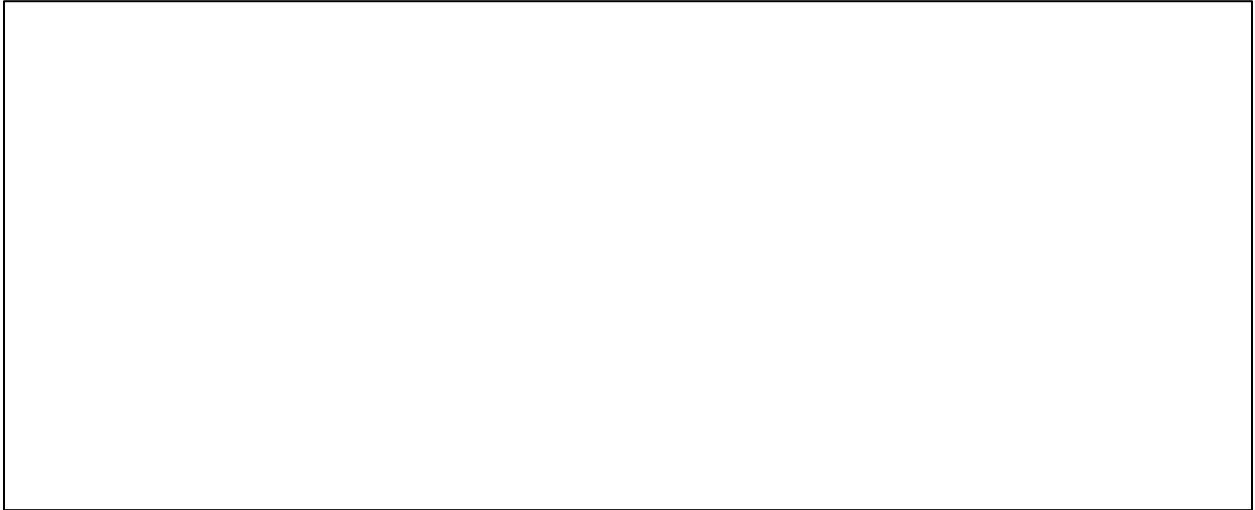
For the filling:

1. Peel, core, and slice the pears.
2. In a small bowl, combine the sugar, flour, cinnamon, and ginger.
3. Sprinkle the mixture over the pears and mix well.

For assembly:

1. Use half the pie crust to make the bottom crust. Roll it out and gently lay it over the bottom and sides of the pie pan.
2. Pour the pear filling into the pie pan.
3. Use the other half of the dough as the top crust. Roll it out and drape it over the filling.
4. Crimp the edges of the top and bottom crusts together and poke a few holes in the top crust for ventilation.
5. Bake for 40 minutes.

What did you smell as the tarte was cooking? You can write about it or draw a picture.

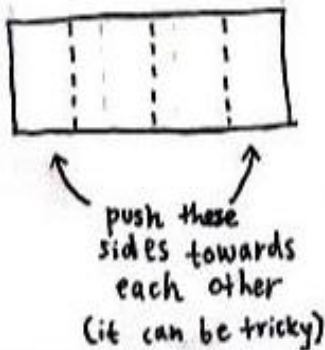
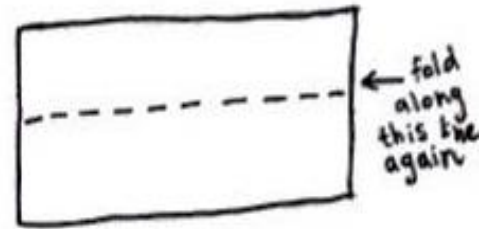
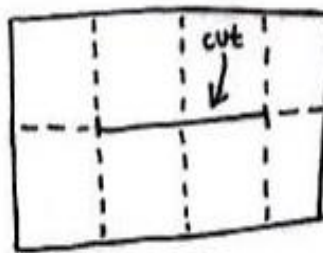
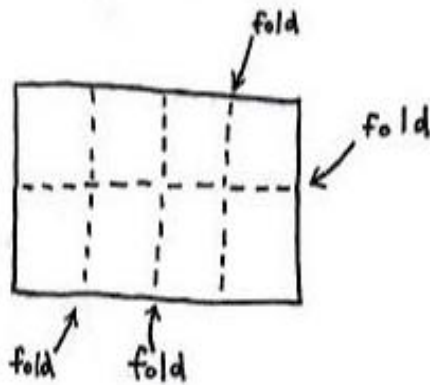


What does the tarte taste like? Have you ever tasted something like it before?



Additional Activity: Making a Book

You can make a book of your own! It might not be as big or as fancy as a Book of Hours, but it is very fun, and you can decorate it however you would like to!



now you have
a little
book!

Sources

“Medieval Books of Hours in the Public Library of Bruges.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Openbare Bibliotheek Brugge, 31 May 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXISnFgFnp4>.

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Credits

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