

# Reading Thematic Overview

## 'The Book of Boy' – Catherine Gilbert Murdock

*The Book of Boy* by Catherine Gilbert Murdock is a captivating story set in the 12th century.

During this period, the Crusades were important military campaigns that shaped Europe and the Holy Land. The novel explores both the reasons for these expeditions and their impact.

### English

*The Book of Boy* by Catherine Gilbert Murdock can be used to explore themes of identity, loyalty, and personal growth, encouraging students to analyse character development and motivations. Through activities such as diary entries, persuasive writing, and group discussions, students can deepen their understanding of narrative structure, descriptive language, and the historical context of medieval settings.

### Music

The book can be used to explore medieval music by studying the historical context and instruments mentioned in the book, such as the lute or harp. Students could create their own compositions inspired by the sounds of the time, learning to incorporate these instruments and understanding their role in the storytelling of the era.

### Geography

Boy and Secundus's quest to recover relics highlights how such items were used to demonstrate wealth and power. Pilgrimage routes played a key role in local economies, as towns thrived on the business brought by travellers. This movement helped shape medieval trade.

Harsh weather conditions play a significant role in the characters' travels, echoing the real struggles of medieval life. Poor weather could lead to bad harvests, famine, and social unrest, showing how fragile survival was in that era.

### Science

*The Book of Boy* can be used to explore topics like medieval medicine and the role of plants in healing, as the characters encounter various natural remedies during their journey. The book also provides opportunities to study the environment of the Middle Ages, discussing the plants, animals, and ecosystems that would have been encountered by the characters, linking to biological and ecological concepts.

### ICT

Pupils create digital journals or blogs based on the boy's journey, using multimedia elements like images and audio to enhance their entries.

### History

Boy's journey mirrors the religious pilgrimages of the Crusades, touching on themes of faith, sacrifice, and redemption. His experiences reflect how deeply religion influenced medieval life and how faith and violence were often intertwined.

The book also highlights the struggles of medieval rulers, who faced challenges from nobles, the Church, and external threats. These power struggles are echoed in Boy's own adventures.

