

## A Call for a Crusade

In 1095, Pope Urban II went back to his home country of France to make a very important speech to the Council of Clermont. It turned out to be a public speech that was to change history and start the crusades.

Instructions: Read the attached historical extracts and answer the questions that follow.

Part of the speech of Pope Urban II (November 27, 1095)

The pope spoke of the holy city of Jerusalem. He told of the pilgrims who had traveled there, and of their sufferings at the hands of the Infidels (the Seljuk Turks). Then he delivered a ringing appeal.

“I beg you – and not I alone but the Lord also begs you. Rich and poor alike, make haste, take up arms, and drive this evil race from the place where our brothers live!”

In the past, the Church had always spoken out against war. How could the followers of Jesus, that man of peace, be encouraged to take up arms? Urban explained that there was a difference between a holy war and the evil wars of the past. Those who fought because they were greedy deserved eternal punishment. But soldiers in this war for God’s religion would live forever in heaven.

There was a silence as Urban finished. Suddenly, a deafening shout rang out across the market square of Clermont. “Deus vult – God wills it!”

Now who would come forth, the pope asked, to join the crusading army? Urban held out his hands. From the back of the crowd, Bishop Adhemar emerged. He knelt before the pope and begged to be the first to join. Red cloth was brought, and eager hands cut from it a cross. The cross was then sewn on the shoulder of Adhemar’s robe. After Adhemar came others, hundreds of them, demanding the cross too. The red cross became the symbol of the Crusades.



Pope Urban II Preaches the First Crusade

## The People's Crusade

Even before feudal lords and knights could organize an army, many people in Western Europe answered Pope Urban's call for help. These people organized the People's Crusade and started for the Holy Land. The People's Crusade was a crowd, not an army. Most of those who started for the Middle East were not trained fighters. Few of these crusaders had weapons or knew anything about warfare. The result was a disaster. Most of the first wave of crusaders were killed or captured.



## The Children's Crusade

Other crusades took place before the main army could be assembled. One of the strangest and saddest was the Children's Crusade. A French shepherd boy named Stephen and a German boy named Nicholas called upon the children to set out on a Crusade. Stephen said he had a vision in which he was told that children might capture the Holy City through love rather than force.

Thousands of girls and boys set out for the Holy Land, although most of them had no idea where it was. They made their way to the seaports, thinking that someone would take them to Jerusalem. Some slave merchants promised to do so, but instead they carried them to the slave markets in North Africa. Few of the children who set out on a Crusade to conquer the Holy Land ever returned home.



## A Call for a Crusade

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why did Pope Urban II call for a Holy War against the Seljuk Turks?
2. Why did Pope Urban II say that this war was acceptable to those who volunteered?
3. What did the pope promise to the people if they joined the Crusade?
4. How were the Crusaders identified?
5. If you had heard Pope Urban's speech at Clermont, would you have gone crusading? Why or why not? Explain.