Key words – Medieval monasteries

There are many specific key words linked to the lives of monks in the medieval monasteries like Fountains Abbey. Try to match up the word on the left with its definition / description on the right.

- **abbey**
  - The man in charge of an abbey; the word means ‘father’

- **abbot**
  - A group (order) of monks who strictly follow the rules of St. Benedict

- **altar**
  - A large, loose hood a monk wore as part of their habit (clothes)

- **Cistercian**
  - A single building where monks or nuns live

- **confession**
  - A man who has taken vows and lives as a member of a religious community

- **cowl**
  - The sacred table in a Christian church

- **lay-brothers**
  - A separate group of men linked to the abbey who worked the land, looked after the animals, and took vows of obedience to the abbot

- **monastery**
  - Admitting / owning up when guilty of doing something wrong

- **monk**
  - A group of buildings where monks (or nuns) live with an abbot (or abbess) in charge
Key words – Medieval monasteries

A pre-visit activity

nave
A man hoping to join the monastery

novice
A vow that monks took promising to be poor and have no possessions

obedience
The man second in charge of an abbey

postulant
The monks walking together in lines

poverty
An honour given to a Christian who is in heaven because they lived a holy life

Prior
The part of the church which goes from the entrance to the crossing

processing
The shaved top of a monk’s head

psalm
A sacred song or hymn from a book in the Bible

saint
A new monk who is training

tonsure
A vow that monks took promising to follow all the rules

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