Uncommon Courtesy: A Study of Chivalry

Courtesy and civility are words seldom discussed in the 21st century, but they were the bywords of a special code of ethics from the Middle Ages called “Chivalry”.

Chivalry was a code of conduct taught to young boys as they grew to become knights. Exactly what rules comprised chivalry depended on where the knight lived. Most areas of Europe had their own guidelines, but no written rules.

A thirteenth century document (L’Ordene de Chevalerie) states that the knight’s duties were as follows: to love God and be willing to spill one’s blood for Him; to possess justice and loyalty, protecting the poor and the weak; to remain clean in flesh and pure in spirit, avoiding in particular the sin of lechery (lusting after women); and remembering that death is before us all; to strive for candor (being sincere in speech) and flee from pride. The knight is also told to never witness a false judgment or treason, never to deny his protection to a lady or maiden, to be abstemious (moderate in his eating and drinking, not overly indulging), to practice valor, and to attend Mass (a Catholic church service) daily.

A knight was sworn to uphold the good and overturn evil, and he was obliged to help the poor and downtrodden, especially widows, orphans, and maidens. He was to be generous, offering hospitality and food to guests, never turning anyone away. He had to be honest, trustworthy, and kind; always keeping his promises and his word. Overall, a knight was to be the extreme gentleman.

Complete the following:

1. A code of conduct taught to young boys and followed by knights was called__________________.

2. List five parts of the code that affected the behavior of knights.
   a. __________________________________________
   b. __________________________________________
   c. __________________________________________
   d. __________________________________________
   e. __________________________________________

3. How should a knight act upon seeing a widow and her small child sleeping on the side of the road in the snow?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

©2004abcteach.com
Match the following, using a dictionary if needed:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>candor</td>
<td>a. to defend or guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>valor</td>
<td>b. politeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>chivalry</td>
<td>c. excellence of manners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>pride</td>
<td>d. to overthrow the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>abstemious</td>
<td>e. conceit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>generous</td>
<td>f. sincere in speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>trustworthy</td>
<td>g. to try hard or exert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>lechery</td>
<td>h. boldness in facing danger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>protect</td>
<td>i. moderate in eating habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>treason</td>
<td>j. lusting after women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>loyal</td>
<td>k. deserving of confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>civility</td>
<td>l. a code of conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>strive</td>
<td>m. a Catholic celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>courtesy</td>
<td>n. unselfish with possessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>o. faithful to one’s oath or king</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write acrostic poems with these words:

V
A
L
O
R
C
O
U
R
E
S
Y
Using the most descriptive language you can, write a scene depicting the meeting of a knight and a maiden in distress. Carefully mention details that will draw a picture in your reader’s mind.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

If you need more space to write, attach an additional piece of paper to this one.
FROM CHIVALRY TO ETIQUETTE

Etiquette is the observance of certain manners for polite society. Some examples of modern etiquette are covering your mouth when sneezing, saying hello politely when answering a phone, shaking hands when introduced to someone, and calling to let a host know whether you will attending a party to which you were invited. Etiquette evolved out of chivalry.

Much of the respect shown to women in the past was derived from chivalry as well. In the first half of the last century, and for untold years before, men were raised to be especially polite to women. When a man and a woman would meet, the man would tip his hat, he would always hold the door for her, he would pull out her chair so she could sit, and would walk on the outside of the sidewalk so she was protected from the traffic. He would plan the activities and pay for all expenses on dates, carry any heavy bags for her, give up his seat and stand so she could sit, help her put on her coat, and do many other actions to show respect. Many women appreciated these courtesies, but many others felt that they were meant to show that women were weak. Partly as a result of this feeling, many of these observances have fallen out of favor in the last fifty to sixty years. Write why you think we should or should not encourage chivalry today.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Answer Key

pg. 2
1. chivalry
2. Any of the characteristics from page one
3. Grade paragraph according to the standards of your classroom.

pg. 3
1. F
2. H
3. L
4. E
5. J
6. N
7. K
8. J
9. A
10. D
11. O
12. B
13. G
14. C
15. M

The remainder of the writing should be graded according to the standards of your classroom.