

***Margery Kempe* discussion questions**

1. How does the book compare to modern memoirs? Why does Kempe never talk about her other 13 children or her mother? What prevents her from learning to read, with all the mentoring she's getting over the years? She says she hungers to hear books read to her.
2. Margery: delusional or blessed? How self-absorbed on a scale of 1-10? What is the purpose of her pilgrimages?
3. How would Margery be received in your church/bible study/book club? Does she fit your concept of a devout Christian? Why wasn't she convicted of heresy? In what forms does she encounter good and evil? Why is she most critical of people who swear?
4. Did the reactions of others to her "weeping, roaring and shrill shrieking" seem culturally different as she travelled? Why did some assist her while others bailed? Why were some authorities fans and others enemies? (The Duke of Bedford was later a judge at Joan of Arc's trial.)
5. Margery's behavior isolates her and she is often friendless. How is this particularly dangerous for her? Why do you think she faces greater personal risk in England than on the continent?
6. The book is unique in describing an upper middle class woman's lifestyle in late medieval Europe. What did you think of her "Material Girl" stage? Why does she get into microbrewing?
7. Margery's husband was amenable to a buy-out. How would you describe his personality? Did he seem to care for her? What does chastity mean to Margery, since she still wants extramarital sex?
8. What's the deal with the erotic visions: getting steamed over Jesus's manhood; marriage ceremony with G-d? These features were consistent with other medieval female mystics. (Mysticism is defined as becoming one with G-d through an altered/ecstatic state of consciousness.)
9. How would you characterize Margery's conversations with Christ? Are they surprising in any way?
10. Bonus question: compare Margery to:

Bridget of Sweden([1303-1373](#))

Mad Joanna of Castille (Juana de Loca) [1479-1555](#). (Isabella's heir)