

Church Perspectives on the Rebellion Against King John and the Magna Carta: Teacher Questions

Question and Answer Table

No.	Cognitive Level	Question	Teacher Answer/Guidelines
1	Low - Recall	Who was the Archbishop of Canterbury appointed by Pope Innocent III that King John initially refused to accept?	Answer: Stephen Langton. Context: Stephen Langton's appointment in 1207 became a major point of conflict between King John and Pope Innocent III, eventually leading to serious consequences for both John and England.
2	Low - Comprehension	What actions did Pope Innocent III take against King John and England between 1208-1209 due to the dispute over the Archbishop?	Answer: Pope Innocent III placed England under an interdict in 1208 (suspending church services, sacraments, and Christian burials) and excommunicated King John in 1209. Context: These were the Church's most powerful weapons against disobedient rulers, causing social distress and undermining royal authority.
3	Medium - Application	Explain how Archbishop Stephen Langton used his position to influence the baronial rebellion against King John.	Answer: Archbishop Langton served as a mediator between the king and the barons and likely helped the barons articulate their grievances. He encouraged them to base their demands on the coronation charter of Henry I, giving their rebellion historical legitimacy. He used his legal knowledge and moral authority as a churchman to guide the process that led to the Magna Carta.
4	Medium - Analysis	Why was "that the English Church shall be free" included as the very first clause of the Magna Carta? Analyze	Answer: This placement demonstrates the Church's significant influence in drafting the document and its bargaining power. It reflects the Church's primary concern of securing its independence from royal control, especially regarding ecclesiastical appointments and Church property. After years of

		what this indicates about the Church's priorities.	conflict with John over these issues, the Church ensured its freedoms were prominently protected in writing before addressing other concerns.
5	High - Evaluation	Evaluate the significance of the Church's role as mediator in the conflict between King John and his barons. How did this position benefit the Church's interests?	Answer: The Church's mediating role was crucial as it positioned clergymen, particularly Archbishop Langton, as neutral arbiters rather than mere rebels. This enhanced the legitimacy of the barons' cause while allowing the Church to shape the Magna Carta to protect its interests. By mediating, the Church could claim to be upholding justice and divine law rather than simply opposing the king. This role strengthened the Church's political position while ensuring its economic and institutional concerns were addressed in the final document.
6	High - Creation/Synthesis	"The Church's involvement in the rebellion against King John represented a watershed moment in the relationship between religious and secular authority in medieval England." Construct an argument either supporting or challenging this statement, drawing on specific actions of Church officials during the rebellion and specific clauses in the Magna Carta.	Answer: Students should develop a coherent argument with a clear position. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \n\nSupporting arguments might include: \n- The Church's decisive role in challenging royal authority established a precedent for institutional checks on monarchy \n- Langton's involvement demonstrated how religious figures could shape constitutional developments \n- The first clause establishing Church freedoms created a model for other liberties \n- The Church's backing gave moral legitimacy to resistance against tyrants \n\nChallenging arguments might include: \n- The Church was primarily protecting its own interests rather than creating a new political framework \n- Tensions between Church and State predated and continued long after the Magna Carta \n- Church involvement was pragmatic rather than revolutionary \n- The document's impact was limited and required many reissues \n\nStudents should reference specific actions of Church officials and clauses from the Magna Carta to support their position.

Teaching Notes

This sequence of questions guides students from basic factual recall about key Church figures in the conflict to complex evaluative thinking about the Church's motivations and legacy. The early questions establish critical context (Langton's appointment, the interdict, and excommunication) that students will need to draw upon when addressing the higher-order questions about Church influence, priorities, and long-term significance.

