

# CONQUES



## THE LITTLE "CURIOUS" DISCOVERING CONQUES

# WELCOME TO CONQUES

Using this booklet, discover the history and heritage of Conques, while walking around the streets. Answer the enigmas according to your knowledge, alone or with your group. You can find clues in the town map available at the Tourist Office.

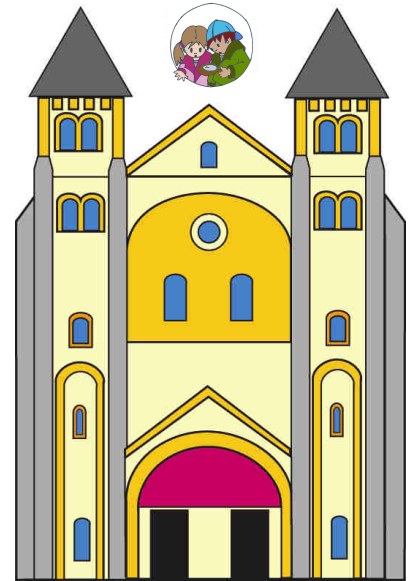
Conques is famous for this monument.

**What's its name?**

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**Write down the correct number on the picture.**

- 1 – Semi-circular arches
- 2 - Buttress
- 3 - Tympanum



## THE STONES USED IN THE CHURCH AND CLOISTER



1. My colour is grey and blue. I have a laminated aspect. You can find me on the walls and the roofs. I was extracted in this location. **My name is** \_\_\_\_\_



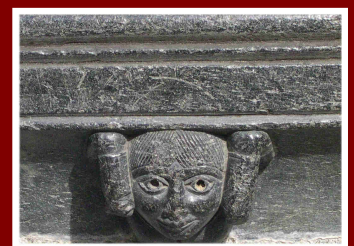
2. My colour is red. My grain looks like sand. I am a sedimentary rock. I come from the area of Nauviale (10 km). **My name is** \_\_\_\_\_



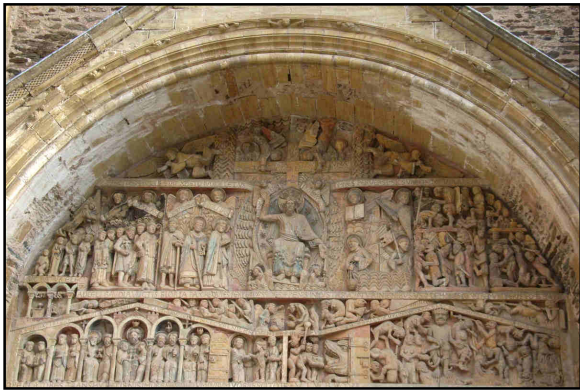
3. I have two colours since I come either from the high plateau of Lunel (yellowish) and the Causse Comtal (grey). I was used in the chaining of the angles, around the openings and for the sculptures. **My name is** \_\_\_\_\_



A stone much noble was also used in the sculpted elements of the central basin in the cloister. I am named serpentine and come from Le Puy de Wolf (Firmi, near Decazeville).



# THE TYMPANUM OF THE LAST JUDGMENT



Above the entrance of the church, you can see a huge sculpture from the 12<sup>th</sup> century counting 124 figures.

**Circle the most important figure in size. Who is he?**



**Put the number of the figures in the correct box**

## PARADISE

1. The hermit Dadon (both hands on a walking stick)
2. King Charlemagne
3. Saint Peter (with the key)



## HELL

4. Sloth
5. The miser (hanged high)
6. Pride (man falling from his horse)



**What are the main colours on the tympanum?**

**Which colour does represent paradise? \_\_\_\_\_**

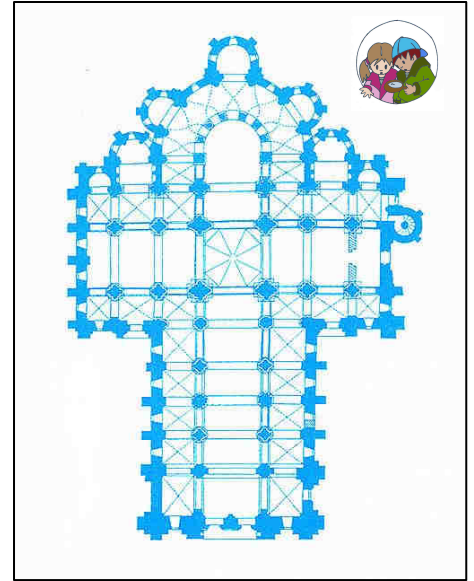
**You can see the "little curious", small figures sculpted around the tympanum? How many are they? \_\_\_\_\_**

# THE ABBEY-CHURCH OF CONQUES

Build from the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, this church is **ROMANESQUE or GOTHIC style?** (Circle the correct answer)

**Put the number of the map:**

- 1 – Crossing of the transept
- 2 - Transept
- 3 – Choir
- 4 – Ambulatory (semi-circular hallway)
- 5 - Nave
- 6 - Sides
- 7 – Apse chapels



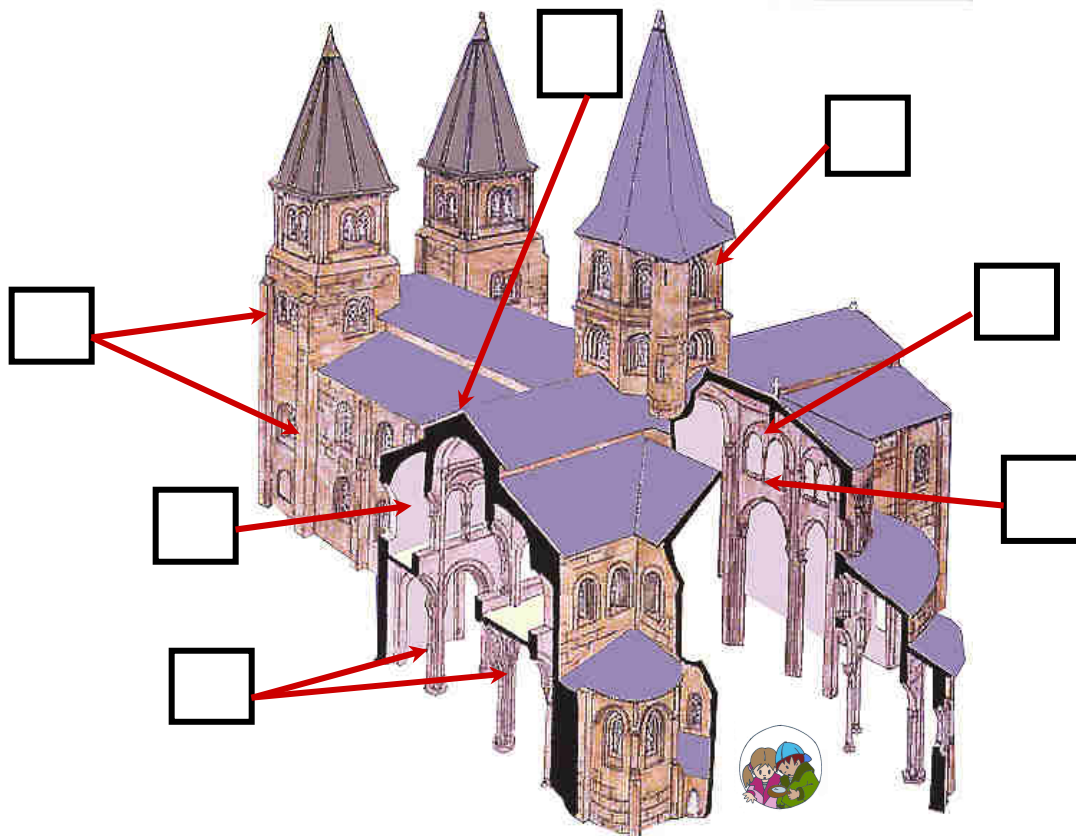
**The ambulatory was used:**

to stretch out the legs

to worship upon the relics set in the choir

**Place the 4 cardinal points (East, West, North, South) knowing churches are in general oriented East.**

**Put the numbers:** Semi-circular arch (1); buttress (2); upper-gallery (3); bell tower (4); barrel vault (5); columns (6); twin arches (7).



# THE WINDOWS BY PIERRE SOULAGES

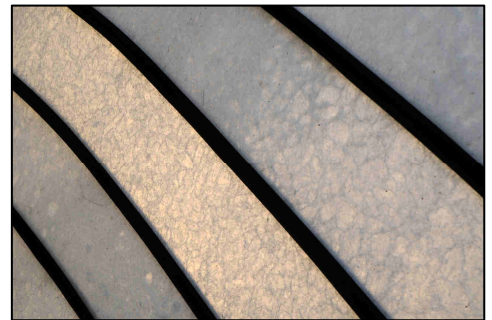
This Romanesque church is decorated with contemporary stained-glass windows created by the artist from Aveyron, Pierre Soulages. This church counts a total of 104 windows.

An oculus is a circular window.

**How many do you count? \_\_\_\_**

**Cross-out the intruders in the list of materials used in the composition of these windows:** *Glass, alabaster, iron, plastic, lead, sheet-metal.*

The research for the creation of this glass required more than 300 tries. The artwork (from design to setting) took 7 years. The windows were set in place in 1994.



**Which are the principal lines of composition in these stained-glass windows?**

- |                 |     |    |
|-----------------|-----|----|
| • Vertical      | YES | NO |
| • Horizontal    | YES | NO |
| • Oblique       | YES | NO |
| • Curb          | YES | NO |
| • Semi-circular | YES | NO |

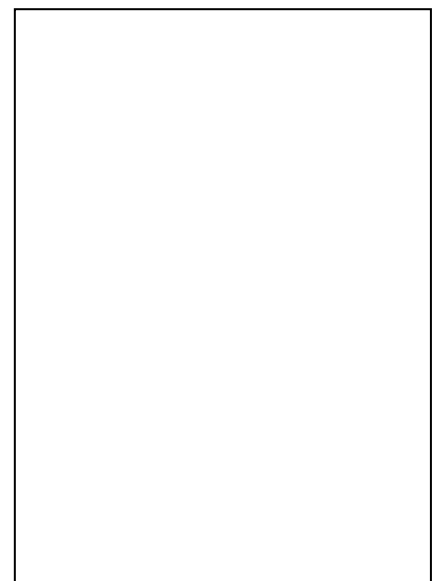
## **A very special glass**

It is made of thousands of crushed grains of glass, from different sizes, melted together. **Draw one of the window or its so unusual grain.**

Originally white, this glass tints itself depending of the sunlight.

**Which tints of colours did you notice?**

**Are these windows transparent or translucent?**



# A MEDIEVAL VILLAGE

(Conques comes from the Latin "Concha")

The history of Conques starts in the 8<sup>th</sup> century with a hermit named Dadon. The monastery was established later on by King Louis "the pious", son of Emperor Charlemagne. It thrives because of the worshipping for Saint-Faith (*Foy* in French). During the 12<sup>th</sup> century a village was built around its ramparts.

**The site has the shape of ...** (circle your choice):

A crater – a shell – a canyon

**The village is located on ...** (circle the right answer):

A highland – a hill side – at the bottom of the valley

## THE HUMAN ACTIVITIES



Many buildings of the village witness the past humane activities, the daily life, the culture of vineyards and chestnut trees. You can identify them with the following enigmas and as you walk around the streets.

**FOUNTAINS:** How many do you count in the village? \_\_\_\_\_

**Their water was used in the medieval past for ...** (circle the intruder):

Bathing – laundry – swimming pool – dish washing – cooking – car wash



**BREAD OVEN:** How many do you count? \_\_\_\_\_

Are they inside or outside the former ramparts? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**SECADOU:** Occitan word to indicate a small building used to dry the



\_\_\_\_\_ and make \_\_\_\_\_

We can find them in the woods but you can also discover two of them in the village.



## THE CIVIL ARCHITECTURE OF THE VILLAGE

Through the small alleys and streets of Conques, you can see old traditional houses. The oldest one dates from the end of the Middle-Ages (15<sup>th</sup> century).

## VOCABULARY HELP

**Corbel:** structural element jutting from the wall to carry a level of a building

**Corbelling:** level of a construction carried by a row of corbels

**Timber-frame:** element of a construction forming the wall frame

**Slabs:** fillings of stone chunks, like slate in Conques, set inside the timber-frames

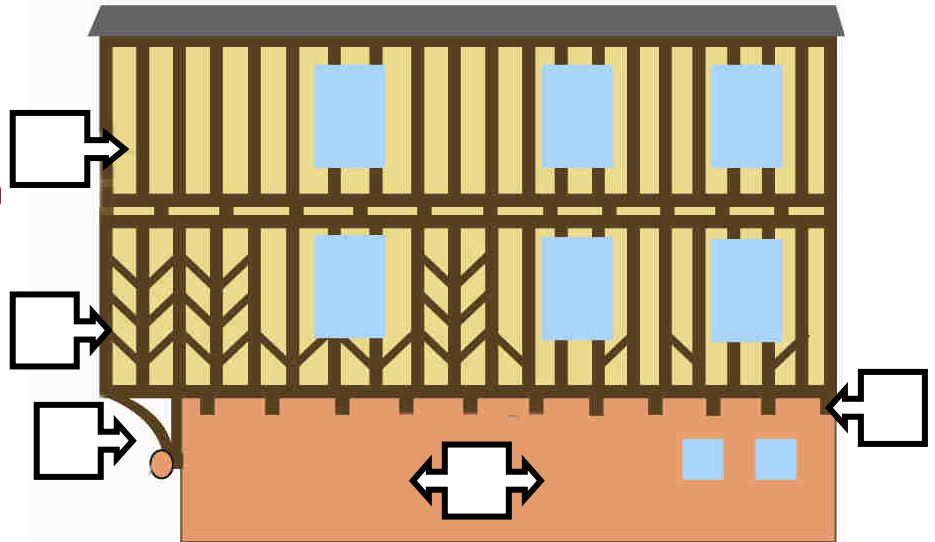
**Basement:** base of the construction at the level of the street

For each word its detail of architecture.



**Observe well around you in the streets and put the correct number in the box.**

- 1 – Row of corbels
- 2 - Corbelling
- 3 – Timber-frame
- 4 - Slab
- 5 - Basement



The castle of Humières (in the “rue du Château”) date from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It’s a private building. It has many crossed windows.

**How many?** \_\_\_\_\_

### THE MEDIEVAL DEFENSE ELEMENTS

During the Middle-Ages, the town of Conques was protected against the attacks by numerous defensive elements. **In the following list, circle the ones you find on your walking tour.**

Door (*porte*) del Barry – Secadou - Door (*porte*) de la Vinzelle – Fountain (*fontaine*) del Barry – Flanking tower – Bread oven – Arrow slit – Fountain of Fumouze – Former battlements

Past the door of La Vinzelle, you can see a medieval defensive flanking tower with arrow slit for both: (two clues with the pictures)



\_\_\_\_\_ and



\_\_\_\_\_

# ON THE WAY TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Conques is a major stop on the route to Compostela since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The pilgrims leave Conques from the bridge crossing the Dourdou River.

**This bridge is named “romain”. Why?** (Cross-out the intruders)

- It was built by the Romans
- It's a French translation for the word “romiu” (pilgrim in Occitan)
- It was build during Romanesque time.

**In which country is located Santiago de Compostela?**

**How long does it take by foot in average to go to Compotela?**

- 1 week
- 2 months
- 12 months

During the Middle Ages, a pilgrim was recognisable by his equipment.

**Cross-out the intruders from the list.**

Defensive stick called *bourdon*

Cape

GPS device

Hat

Shell

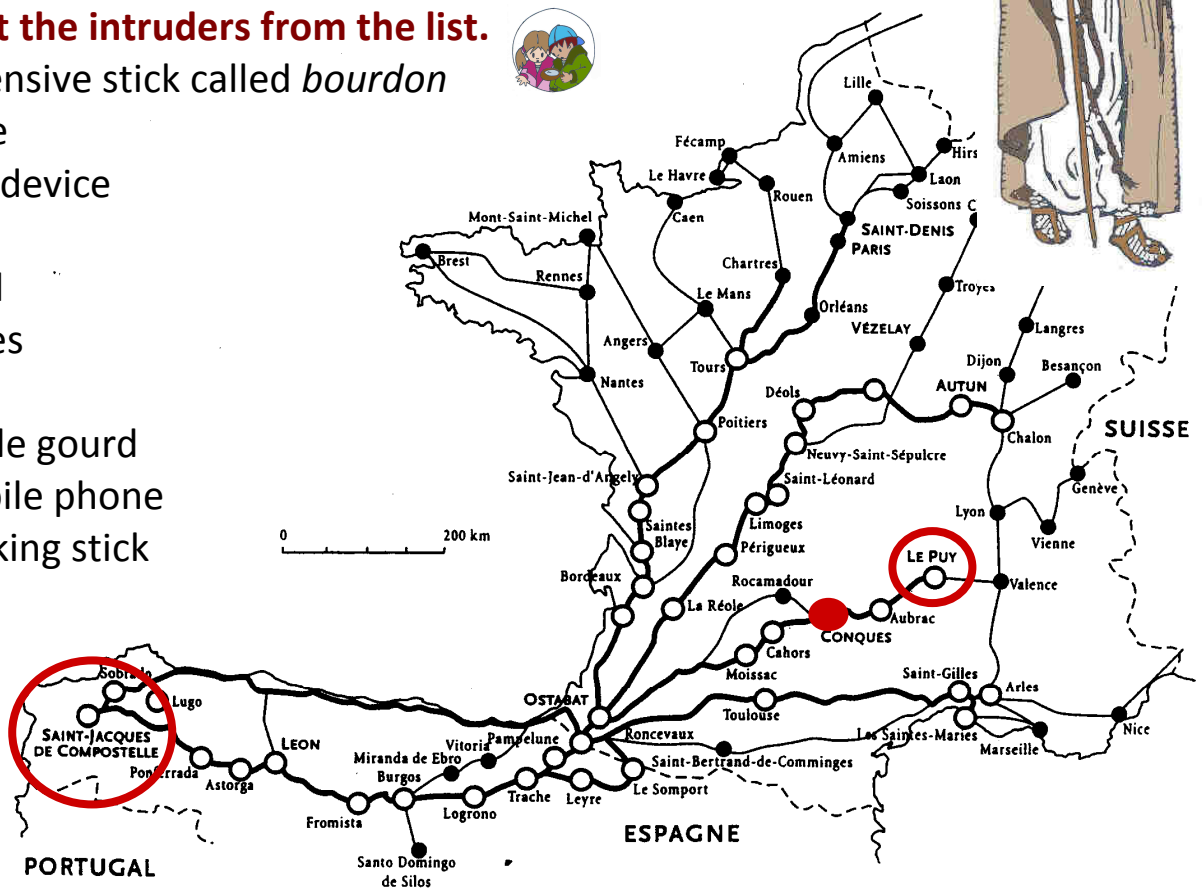
Shoes

Bag

Bottle gourd

Mobile phone

Walking stick





## A TREASURE IN CONQUES!?!

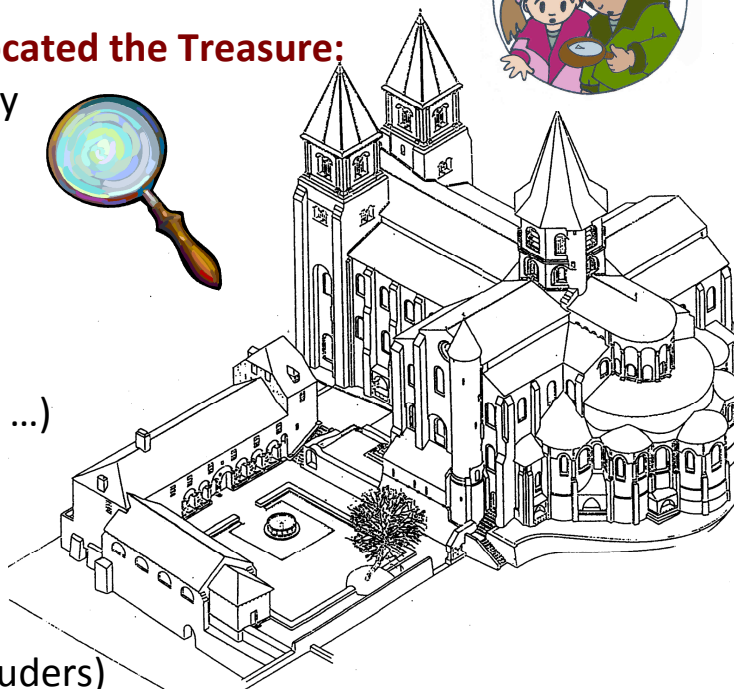
**Indicate on the illustration where is located the Treasure:**

In this treasure, you may discover many reliquaries. These objects were made through different processes.



**Indicate the right order of fabrication (1, 2, 3, 4)**

- \_ Addition of decors (cameos, intaglios ...)
- \_ Insertion of the relic
- \_ Cover of gold or silver
- \_ Making of the inside wood frame



**The relics could be:** (Cross-out the intruders)

- A martyr's bone – An old toy – A religious fabric -
- An out-of date object – A piece of the True Cross

The reliquaries were made in Conques by the goldsmith monks during the Middle-Ages. The residents hid these art pieces during trouble times, including the French Revolution.

## A SHORT HISTORY OF GOLDSMITH'S ART

Many techniques of goldsmith art were used to ornate these reliquaries. The goldsmith art is the art of precious metals.



**Repoussé** – Metal support shaped by hammering from the reverse side

**Cloisonné** – Metal wire bent into shape to form a cell called *cloison* in which is set the enamel

**Champlevé** – Cells carved on a metal object and filled with enamel

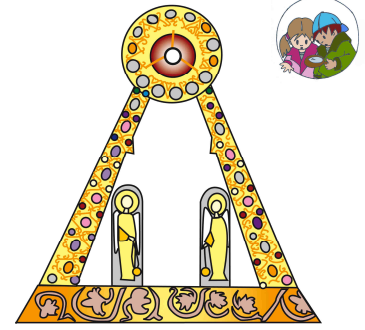
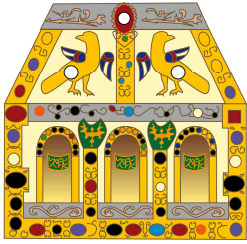
**Intaglio** – Precious stone engraved

**Cameo** – Precious stone carved in relief

**Cabochon** – Rounded and polished stone but not carved

**Filigree** – Thread of metal twisted and forming a decor

Indicate the shape of these reliquaries.



1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Which emperor did give his name to the reliquary #4? \_\_\_\_\_

## THE MOST FAMOUS RELIQUARY OF CONQUES

I am a statue of a young martyr girl. This reliquary was covered of gold and precious stones. Starting during the 9<sup>th</sup> century, my statue has received decors during a thousand year. **You can find me in the Treasure Room under this name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Behind my throne, you may see an engraved rock crystal from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century. **What does it represent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How many rock crystals can you count?** \_\_\_\_\_



## THE STORY OF SAINT-FAITH (*FOY*)

**Discover this story with the words in the list below**

Burnt - Conques - skull - beheaded - relics – statue - Christian - grill

Saint-Faith (*Foy*) was a young girl \_\_\_\_\_ born around the year 290, in Agen, a town located between Bordeaux and Toulouse. She was martyred in 303, put upon a fire to be \_\_\_\_\_. She escaped this torture after a miraculous cloud and following rain on top of the \_\_\_\_\_. But, she later on was \_\_\_\_\_. She was between 12 to 13 years old. In 866, monk from \_\_\_\_\_ went to Agen and stole the \_\_\_\_\_ of Saint Faith. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Saint-Faith was stated in the 9<sup>th</sup> century to shelter remains of the saint (a part of her \_\_\_\_\_).

## SAINT-FAITH'S MIRACLES

The numerous miracles from Saint-Faith attracted a lot of worshippers. Conques became a pilgrimage sanctuary. By tradition, jewels and gifts were offered to ornate the many reliquaries.

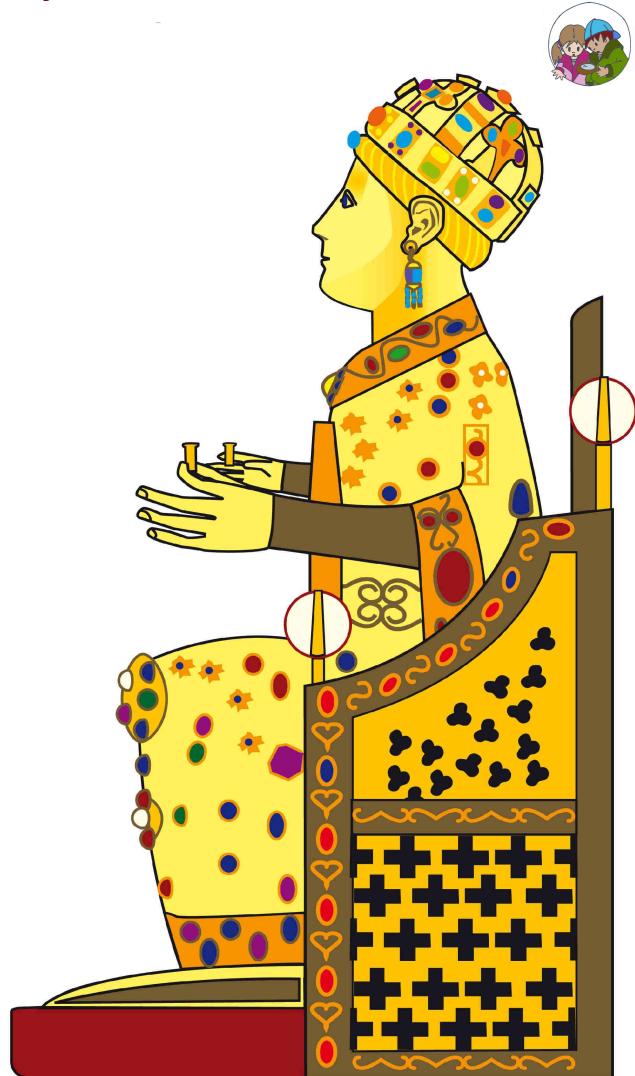
# A GOLDSMITH'S PUZZLING ENIGMA

Observe the Majesty of Saint-Faith with attention.

**Which are the elements from the list you can find on the statue?**

Cross out the intruders

- Eyes made of glass paste
- Filigrees
- Parchment
- Intaglios
- Saffron
- Crown
- Feather
- Natural pearls
- Precious stones
- Leather
- Cabochon
- Throne



**YOUR CIRCUIT IS NOW FINISHED**

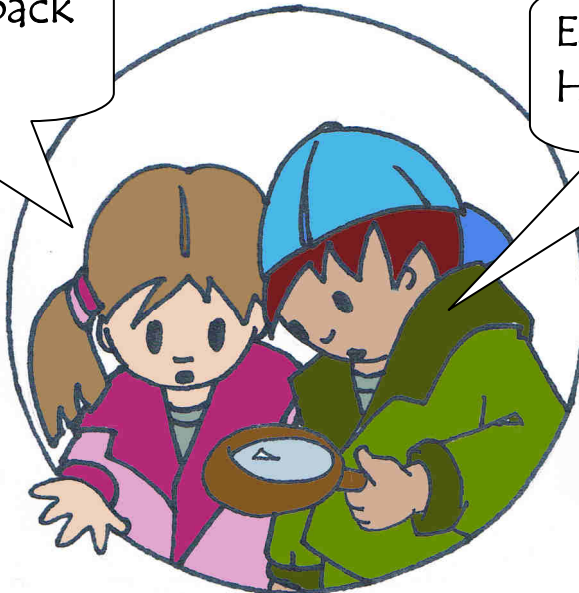
**CONGRATULATIONS FOR YOUR  
PARTICIPATION**

# CONQUES

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I'll like to come back  
to Conques!

Easy!  
Here's the map!



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*Educational Booklet - CONQUES*

