

## **Children in Medieval Christianity: Embodiment and the Senses in Liturgies, Rituals, and Prayers**

This paper explores the patterns of devotional experiences lived by children in medieval Christianity, examining their involvement in liturgies, rituals and prayers in both public and private environments. Through a careful reappraisal of visual, material, and documentary evidence, it will show that children were active participants in religious practices, yet conforming to norms and customs specifically targeted to their young age and the still “imperfect” condition of their mind and body (Isidore of Seville). Indeed, it was a common belief that children needed to follow specific sets of norms in order to learn what it meant to be a Christian. These included cognitive mechanisms based on embodiment and experience, and a carefully regulated use of the senses and perception to stimulate devotion.