

# The Middle Ages Brings Changes to Europe

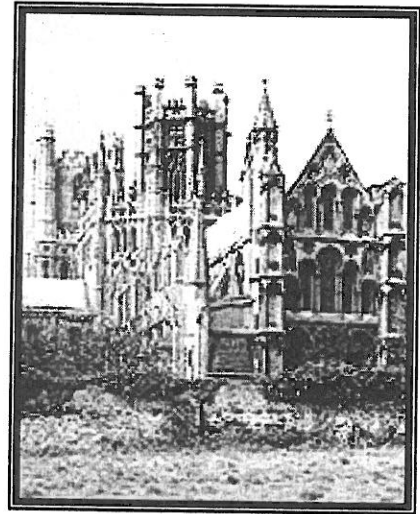
## SECTION 1

### READING FOR A PURPOSE

Look for these important words:

#### Key Words

- |                 |                   |             |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|
| • Middle Ages   | Germanic Tribes   | Chieftains  |
| • Pope          | Scholars          | Vikings     |
| • Plunder       | Shrines           | Turks       |
| • Crusaders     | Crusades          | Charlemagne |
| • Pope Urban II | Holy Roman Empire |             |



Look for answers to these questions:

1. What peoples from northern Europe took over the Roman Empire?
2. Why is the leader Charlemagne considered a great ruler?
3. Who were the Vikings?
4. How did the Crusades change European thinking?

### A Time of Wars

The period known as the Middle Ages lasted from about A.D. 500 to 1500. It began as the Roman Empire fell to groups of people from an area in or near what is now Germany. In time five of these groups, known as Germanic tribes, controlled most of Europe.

The Visigoths, who had conquered Rome, held most of the Iberian Peninsula (where Spain now is located). The Vandals controlled North Africa and the large Mediterranean islands. The Ostrogoths had taken over most of Italy and the western Balkans. The Saxons conquered the southern part of what is now England. The Franks controlled much of the Roman province of Gaul, now France and western Germany,

The Germanic tribes did not govern these large areas as single countries. Each tribe had many leaders, called chieftains. Each chieftain ruled only as much land as his warriors could defend. The Germanic tribes spread fear and destruction at first. Gradually, however, they learned the ways of their more civilized neighbors. Chieftains often preserved or imitated Roman forms of government. Many Germanic people became Christians. They brought new life to the lands of a dying empire.



### Charlemagne

The man who came closest to recreating the Roman Empire during the early Middle Ages looked every bit the king he was. In a time when most warriors were a little over 5 feet tall, he was 6 feet 4 inches. His broad shoulders and straight posture seemed to show his strong will.

The king's name was Charlemagne. The name means "Charles the Great." In 768 he became king of the Franks, the tribe that gave France its name. Later, Charlemagne conquered large parts of Germany and Italy.

Charlemagne had close ties with the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope. Both Charlemagne and his father had helped popes defend Rome. In 800 Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as the head of lands later called the Holy Roman Empire and gave him the title of "Augustus."

In Charlemagne's time, very few people could read and write. Most of those who could were priests. A few were scholars, who worked for kings or nobles. Charlemagne respected learning. He encouraged scholars from all over Europe to come to his court. He set up schools for his nobles and their sons.

He urged priests throughout his empire to teach "all those who with God's help are able to learn." Charlemagne had a strong desire to rule fairly. He dictated many letters to his nobles, giving instructions about government, law, religion, education, and trade. He sent royal messengers to find out how well his government was working. Charlemagne also traveled around his lands to make sure his people were treated justly.

Once or twice a year Charlemagne met with his major officials. Spring meetings called the Fields of May became famous. They were festivals for Charlemagne's followers. In a pasture filled with flowers, Charlemagne set up a small city of tents and consulted with his officials. In his concern for strong, wise government, Charlemagne was like Augustus, the emperor of Rome. Charlemagne's peaceful rule was the high point of the early Middle Ages.

### **The Vikings**

Before Charlemagne's death in 814, fierce warriors called Vikings threatened the security of his empire. The Vikings came from the north, from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. At first the Vikings were interested mostly in plunder, or goods taken by force. They sailed along coasts and far up European rivers in their dragon-headed ships. Wearing leather helmets, the Vikings carried double-edged swords and round shields. These sailors were so tough that they slept on the open decks of their ships even in the freezing storms of the North Sea.



When the Vikings arrived at a town, they usually attacked its church first. They took religious objects made of gold and silver. Then they raided the homes of the townspeople and farms. By the middle of the tenth century, raids became fewer as the Vikings developed other interests. Some Vikings became traders, sailing as far as Constantinople and what is today the Soviet Union. They contributed knowledge of trade routes and sailing to the people they met. Some Vikings were explorers. They made the journey to North America about 500 years before Christopher Columbus did. Other Vikings became colonists, setting up farms and towns in countries they had attacked. Many of these colonists became Christians. The Vikings, like the Germanic tribes before them, became part of Europe's settled communities. The Vikings both enriched and were absorbed by the lands they raided.



### **The Crusades**

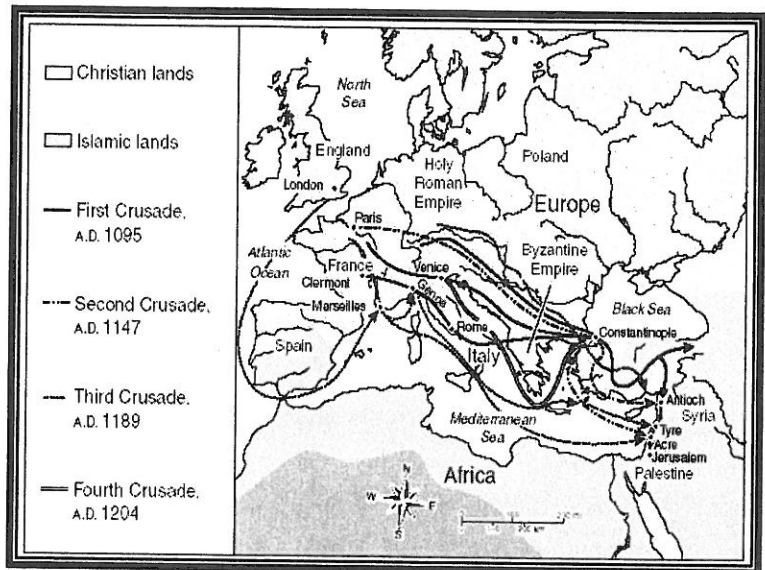
Pope Urban II stared in amazement at the crowd in the town square of Clermont, France, one day in 1095. He saw far more people than he had expected. Not just nobles and armed warriors, but common people, too—men, women, and children—had gathered to hear his words.

Pope Urban spoke to the crowd about the city of Jerusalem and other Christian shrines, or holy places, in the Middle East. Many Christians had journeyed to these sacred sites. Now Jerusalem and the other holy places were in the hands of the Muslim Turks.

The Turks were a mountain people who had been slaves of the Arabs until about the year 1000. Then they began to rebel.

Soon they managed to capture the entire Arab Empire, including Jerusalem. In that holy city they neglected ancient shrines and prevented Christians from visiting them. The Turks often robbed or even killed Christian visitors. Jerusalem, Urban said, must be freed from the Turks. The Christian empire of Byzantium also needed help in fighting these "unbelievers." Who would go to war for this holy cause?

"God wills it! God wills it!" thousands of voices shouted. The nobles and peasants vowed on the spot to rescue Jerusalem and Byzantium from the Turks. The excited volunteers tore strips of cloth from their cloaks. They pinned the cloth strips to their tunics in the shape of a cross. Because these people "took the cross" as their sign, they were called crusaders. The wars they fought were called Crusades.



There were eight major Crusades between 1095 and 1291. Some Crusades were People's Crusades. Whole families left their homes and set out for the Middle East. Not only French but also English, German, and Italian crusaders marched to battle. Even two armies of children took up arms and set out for the Holy Land in what became known as the Children's Crusades. Most of these children died of hunger and sickness or were captured and sold into slavery before they ever saw Jerusalem.



The skilled warriors of the larger Crusades had better luck. They captured Jerusalem in 1099 and held it until 1187. They also took other Middle Eastern lands away from the Muslims. In the thirteenth century, however, the Muslims reclaimed these lands.

The Crusades changed European thinking even more than they changed Middle Eastern land ownership. Some crusaders gained a new respect for the Muslims. They found that the best of the Muslim leaders were civilized and well educated. The crusaders even developed a liking for many parts of Muslim culture. Crusaders learned to season their food with Eastern spices. They began to dress in silk clothing.

When they returned home, taking Eastern goods with them, a demand for such goods developed in Europe. This demand encouraged the growth of trade, which helped cities to grow.

### Reading Check

1. What groups took over most of Europe after the fall of Rome?
2. Which king's rule was the high point of the early Middle Ages?
3. Why did many Europeans fear the Vikings?

### Think Beyond

What do you think was the most important result of the Crusades?

## SECTION 2

### Life on a Manor and Feudalism

#### *Reading for a Purpose*

Look for these important words:

#### Key Words

serfs	page	squire
feudalism	manor	chivalry
vassals	knights	fiefs

Look for answers to these questions:

1. How did people gain protection from danger in the Middle Ages?
2. How did peasants live during the Middle Ages?
3. How did nobles live during the Middle Ages?
4. How were noble warriors of the Middle Ages trained?

#### *Life on Farm and Manor*

Most people in the first half of the Middle Ages lived in constant danger of attack by Vikings, bandits, or warriors from neighboring kingdoms. Because of this danger, a system grew up in which strong people protected weaker ones. In return for this protection, the weaker people gave loyalty, farm labor, and military service. The following story shows how a farmer may have felt about this system.



#### *Loyalty and Protection*

Kneeling, Boniface clasped his hands as if in prayer. He looked up at the lord who stood over him. The lord was dressed in a fine purple jacket, black knee breeches, and leather slippers. Boniface wore a loose tunic. He placed his clasped hands inside the lord's open palms. Next, placing his right hand on a Bible, Boniface said, "Whatever in life I do, I swear to be thy man. Thou art my lord."

The lord gave Boniface a clod of earth. The earth represented Boniface's small farm. When Boniface swore his oath, he gave the ownership of the farm to the lord in return for the lord's protection. By giving Boniface the clod of earth, the lord granted him the right to farm the land. The lord now owned the land, but Boniface thought this was a small price to pay for security. He knew that he, his wife, and their two children would be safer as part of a larger, stronger group.

When Boniface returned home, his wife and children were waiting anxiously. "Things will be different now," Boniface promised them. "I have sworn for the lord. Let Vikings or bandits come. We will be ready!"

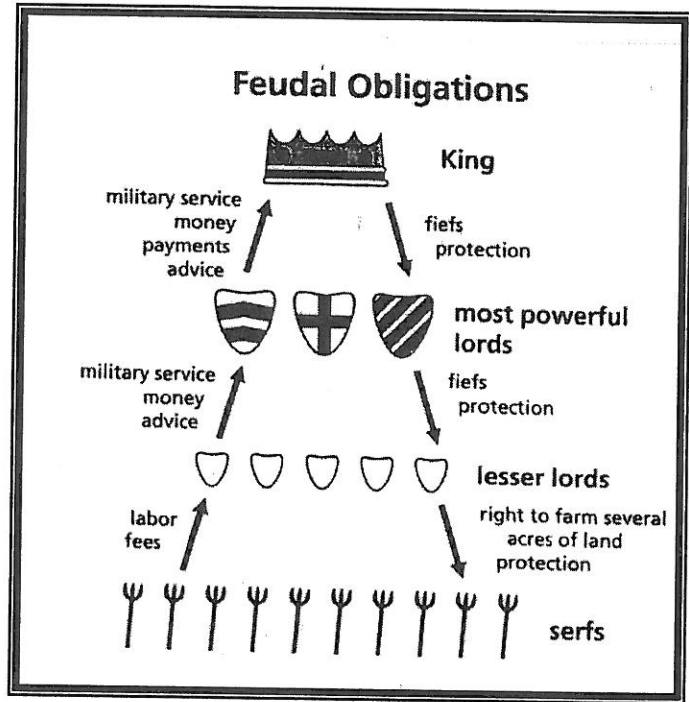
#### **Feudalism**

The system of loyalties and protections in the Middle Ages was called feudalism. It began around 800 and lasted until about 1300. Feudalism can be pictured as a pyramid. Everyone owed loyalty and service to a king, who was at the top of the pyramid.



Below the king came powerful noble families, who controlled most of the land. Lesser nobles, called **vassals**, owed loyalty to the more powerful nobles. In return for military service, the nobles and kings gave the vassals gifts of land. These lands were called **fiefs**.

At the bottom of the pyramid were the peasants, who farmed the land. Some owned their small farms. Many others were **serfs**, who lived and worked on land belonging to nobles or to the Church. Serfs were treated only slightly better than slaves. Their lord could not sell them or give them to someone else, but the serfs were not free. They had to stay on the land all their lives, no matter which lord owned the land.

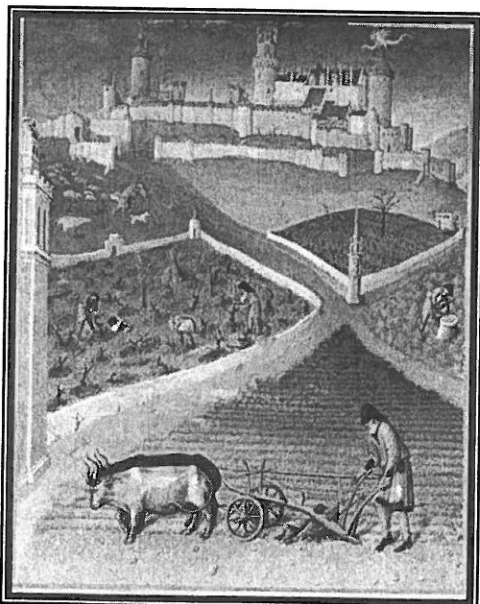


### Life in a Village

Most villages in the Middle Ages were very small. About 200 or 300 people, mainly peasants, lived in each village. Villages were located on a **manor** a large estate or farm belonging to a noble family. Most villagers never traveled from the manor.

The only two large buildings on most medieval manors were the manor house, where the lord and his family lived, and the church. A village usually included the homes of peasants, a mill, barns, fields, and a pasture for the villagers' livestock. Woods often surrounded a village and its lands.

Peasants lived in small cottages made of mud and straw plastered over a timber frame. The roof was made of hay twisted into bundles. The floors were dirt. There were usually two windows covered with oiled paper. The cottages were dark inside and smoky from cooking fires.



Villagers made almost everything they needed. Women wove cloth and sewed. Blacksmiths made farm tools and weapons. Carpenters built houses and furniture. Being able to make or trade for the things they needed, villagers seldom left the manor. Most peasants never traveled more than a short distance in their lifetimes.

Beginning around Charlemagne's time, new farming methods and tools helped villagers grow more food. The kind of plow the Romans had used was not strong enough to turn the heavy soil of northern Europe. Now, however, farmers began to use an iron-tipped plow that dug deeply into the earth. Pulled by oxen, these new plows turned up rich soil over much larger areas of land. More land could be planted and harvested. Instead of planting their fields the same way each year, farmers learned to divide their fields into three parts. They planted one part with wheat or other grain crops. They planted a second part with peas or beans. They left the third part unplanted.

Each year the planting in the fields was changed. The previous year's unplanted field was planted with wheat. The wheat field was planted with peas. The pea field was left empty. In this way the soil would not wear out.

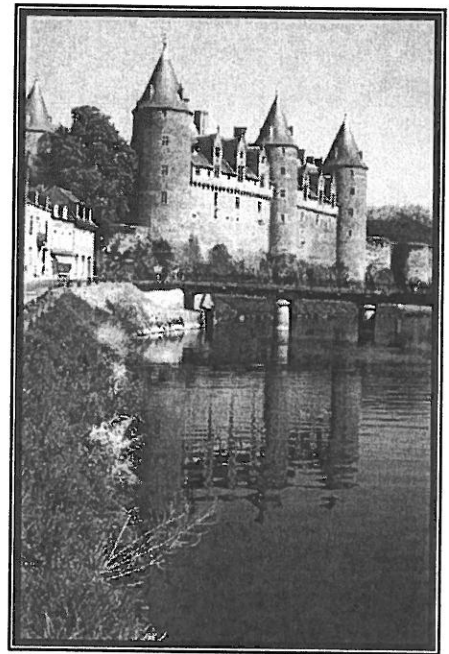
Holidays were almost the only relief that the peasants had from their hard work. The biggest holidays came at key points in the seasons. There was Christmas in midwinter, for example, and Easter in spring. During the holidays the villagers sang, danced, or played a game something like football. Often the lord gave a great feast to which all the villagers were invited.

### Manor and Castle

During most of the Middle Ages, nobles' manor houses were not much more comfortable than the cottages of serfs. Dogs pawed through dirty straw on the floors of the great hall. Cold drafts blew in through glassless windows.

If a lord lived in an area that was raided often, he might build a castle as well as a manor house. The central part of the castle was a thick-walled tower called the keep. People could store supplies in the keep and live there for months if necessary. An open courtyard lay outside the keep. The lord's warriors and their horses stayed there. Villagers could run to this courtyard if the village was attacked.

A high wall surrounded the keep and courtyard. Outside the wall was a deep, water-filled ditch called a **moat**. If the castle's defenders wanted to let someone in, they lowered a drawbridge.



Nobles led a richer life after the eleventh century. Wealthy families began to enjoy fine goods from the east. They dressed in silks, furs, and cloth embroidered with gold thread. They had great feasts. In fine weather they went hunting or boating.

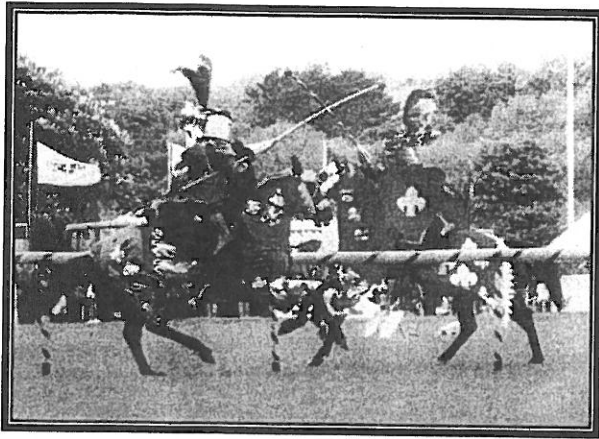


### Knights

Armored horsemen called **knights** became important in warfare after the middle of the eighth century. The training of knights was a major part of the lives of nobles. At the age of seven, a noble's son went to the home of another noble to begin training. First he became a page. He carried messages and waited on the Lord's Table. He learned to ride, to hunt with a falcon, and to use small swords. At about age 15, the page became a squire. The squire was the servant of a knight at the lord's court. He helped the knight put on his armor. He took care of the knight's horse and weapons. In return, the knight taught him advanced fighting skills.

The squire became a knight at about age 21. He promised to fight for his lord, defend the Christian Church, and protect anyone who needed his help. In a special ceremony the lord tapped him on the shoulder with a sword. The young man was then a knight.

Knights became less useful in war during the late Middle Ages. Their armor became so heavy that they could not move easily. Trained foot soldiers fighting with spear like pikes, crossbows, and powerful longbows easily defeated them.



Knights remained an important part of the nobility's social life, however. They fought fake battles at entertainments called tournaments. Nobles also enjoyed songs, poems, and stories about knights. The knights in the stories followed certain rules for honorable behavior. These rules were called the code of chivalry.

The code of chivalry said that knights should protect and honor women. Women in the Middle Ages were treated as helpless beings. They were simply possessions of their fathers or their husbands. Even noblewomen had few rights and little control over their lives.

### Reading Check

1. What system of loyalties governed people in the Middle Ages?
2. Who ranked highest in the society of the Middle Ages? Who ranked lowest?

### ARMOR

*Knights and other soldiers during the Middle Ages wore many different kinds of armor. At first, armor consisted of specially treated leather worn on the legs, chest, and arms. The leather armor offered knights some protection in battle, but it provided no defense against blows from heavy metal swords.*



*Later, leather armor was combined with **chain mail**. Chain mail was a type of armor made of small loops of iron or steel. A suit of chain mail resembled a long shirt that was slit up the middle. The suit offered protection against swords while still allowing a soldier's legs to move. Chain mail was heavy, but it was almost as flexible as cloth or leather.*

*As time went on, another kind of metal armor replaced leather and chain mail. This armor was made of solid metal and fit the shape of a knight's body. Movable joints were fastened to the armor at the elbows, knees, hips, and ankles, allowing the limbs to move normally. Mounted on a horse, a knight fully covered in metal armor was the "armored tank" of the Middle Ages.*

*Although this heavy metal armor could protect a mounted knight from the weapons of foot soldiers, it was awkward to wear. Sometimes the armor weighed as much as 100 pounds. A knight needed help from his squires to put on the armor. Then, wearing the armor, the knight had to be lifted onto his horse with a device similar to a crane. If a heavily armored knight was knocked off his horse, he lay sprawled on the ground, as helpless as a turtle on its back, unable to turn over or defend him.*

*Armor was very expensive and took a long time to make. Only the richest knights and kings could afford to have a suit of armor. In some cases the armor was worn only in ceremonies so that a knight could display his power, wealth, and strength. By the early 1400s fewer and fewer soldiers wore armor. The armored knight had become too heavy, too slow, too expensive to equip, and too easy to defeat.*

**Think Beyond:** *What do you think it would be like to wear a suit of metal armor?*

### SECTION 3

#### *The Church in the Middle Ages*

##### **Key Words**

Monks	monasteries	nuns	convents
Clergy	parchment	Romanesque	Gothic
Cathedrals	Paris	Chartres	

1. What contributions did the Christian Church make to life in the Middle Ages?
2. What role did the Christian Church play in European politics?
3. How did different groups in a town contribute to building large churches?

Every morning, noon, and evening, church bells rang over the villages of Europe. They summoned people to prayer. The bells became a way to tell people when to worship and when to work. They rang in a different way and much longer on Sunday or when there was an attack. If enemies were sighted, the bells called families in the distant fields to safety behind the walls of the manor. The unity of Europe under the Roman Empire was replaced during the Middle Ages by a wider unity under the Christian Church. The idea of "Christendom"—the community of all Christians—was very important to the people of the time.



##### **Monks, Nuns, and Priests**

Christian unity was spread by men and women who gave their lives to religion. The religious life attracted people during the Middle Ages for different reasons. The Church was the only place where someone could get an education, for example. It was also one of the few places in which a peasant might escape a dreary life and even rise to power.

Some religious workers lived together in special communities. The men who did so were called **monks**. Their communities were **monasteries**. The women, who were called **nuns**, lived in **convents**. Together with other religious workers monks and nuns made up the **clergy**. A monastery or convent was like a small village. It had workshops, flower and vegetable gardens, pens for livestock, and places for sleeping, eating, and praying.

Monasteries and convents often owned surrounding lands farmed by peasants and serfs just as feudal lords did.

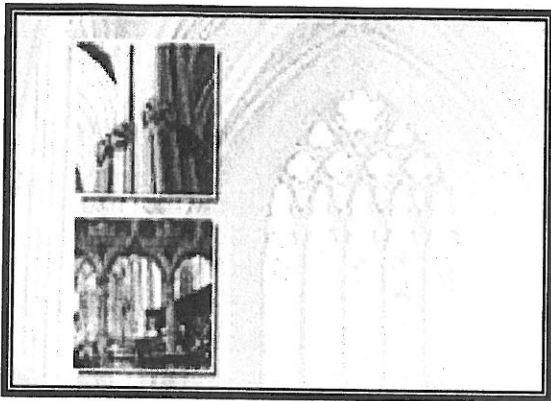
Many monasteries and convents had libraries and places for making books. Workers copied books by hand onto parchment, a paper like material made from sheepskin. They decorated the pages with tiny paintings. Copying a book of average length took three or four months. The Bible might take a year or more. Most books copied by monks and nuns were religious works. However, they also preserved some Greek and Roman writings.

Monks and nuns helped their neighbors in many ways. Some ran hospitals or orphanages. Some gave travelers food and a place to sleep. Some taught school. Some left their communities and spread the Christian religion to distant lands. Not all religious workers lived in their own communities, however. Priests and their helpers lived among villagers and took care of the local churches.

The Christian Church of the Middle Ages was a worldly power as well as a religious power. It could crown kings, as Pope Leo III did with Charlemagne. It could send men to war, as Pope Urban II did when he started the first Crusade. High church officials often owned as much land as the richest noble families.



Sometimes church leaders and kings or nobles helped each other. Sometimes they were bitter rivals. In addition, Church leaders in Rome frequently disagreed with those in Constantinople. These rivalries weakened the Christian unity that the monks, nuns, and priests tried to maintain.



### **Cathedrals**

Because religion was so important to the people of the Middle Ages, most art dealt with religious subjects. The best art decorated the churches themselves.

From the ninth to the twelfth centuries, churches were built in a style of architecture called Romanesque. Romanesque churches featured round-topped arches like those in Roman buildings. The thick walls and small windows of these churches made them seem dark inside. However, they were often beautifully decorated with paintings and with gold objects covered with jewels.

New wealth, religious devotion, and town pride contributed to the building of great churches called cathedrals. Many thirteenth-century cathedrals were built in a new style, called Gothic. The arches in a Gothic cathedral were pointed on top rather than rounded. New ways of supporting the cathedral's heavy roof left large parts of its walls open for glass windows. Large, triple doors welcomed passersby.

Gothic cathedrals such as those in Paris and Chartres, France, may be the finest achievements of art in the Middle Ages. The cathedrals' tall stone towers and pointed arches reach toward the sky like praying hands. Their stained-glass windows show stories from the Bible in jewel like reds, blues, and gold. Wood and stone carvings decorate every space.

Building a cathedral took many years. Almost everyone in town worked on it. The best architects and artists designed it. Nobles and rich merchants helped pay for it. Poor people gave their labor. They made long trips to the building site with carts and wheelbarrows loaded with stones. When the cathedral was finished, the whole town took pride in it.

### **READING CHECK**

1. List three ways members of religious communities helped other people in the Middle Ages.
2. With whom did Church leaders in Rome sometimes disagree?
3. What were the two main styles of architecture used in building churches during the Middle Ages?

### **Think Beyond**

Do you think the Church was more important during the Middle Ages than it is today?

## SECTION 4: THE GROWTH OF CITIES

Look for these important words:

### Key Words

Charter	guilds	apprentice	journeyman
Master	plague	nation-states	Magna Carta
Flanders	King John		

1. How did improvements in trade lead to growth of cities in the Middle Ages?
2. How were craft workers trained in the cities?
3. How did government change in Europe in the late Middle Ages?



### The Growth of Cities

Very little travel or long-distance trade took place during the early Middle Ages. The old Roman roads were in disrepair and overrun by bandits. People usually could not spare enough goods for trade. When they did trade, it was by direct exchange of goods. The coins of the Roman Empire had gone out of use.

Many towns that had prospered in Roman times were nearly deserted during the early Middle Ages. Almost everyone had to live on farms in order to grow enough food. Around the year 1000 the economy began to improve. People grew more food. Travel became safer. By the thirteenth century coins were used again. Large fairs in the countryside attracted many people who came to sell and to trade their goods.

As merchants traveled more, groups of them began to look for safe places on or near their trade routes to spend the winters. They chose spots that had castles for defense. Villages favored by the merchants grew into towns. Slowly the towns grew into cities.

Many people besides merchants were eager to live in the new towns. Craft workers came hoping to find a wider market for their skills. Serfs came, too, fleeing from the hard life of the manor. A law of that time said that a serf who escaped and managed to live hidden in a town for a year and a day was free of all feudal duties.

At first, each town was controlled by the lord who owned the land on which it sat. As merchants grew more powerful, however, they demanded the right to govern their own towns. They forced the lords to give them a document called a charter. A charter granted a town the right to self-government. Townspeople elected officials to a council. The town council taxed trade and provided services for the poor, sick, and homeless. Every town also had its own laws, which were strictly enforced.

### Life in a City

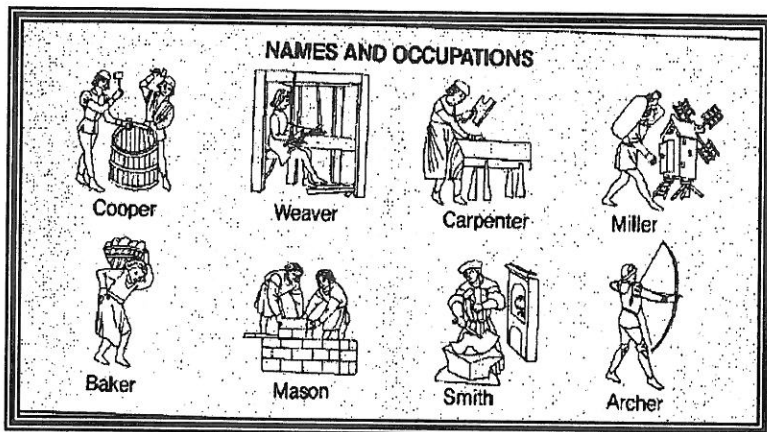
Most cities in the late Middle Ages were crowded, unhealthy places. Wooden buildings were several stories above narrow streets full of people, animals, and garbage.

Even so, life in the city could be exciting. In one part of the city, the sounds of hammering filled the air and the skeleton of a half-finished cathedral rose against the sky. In another part, students strolled, talking about law or medicine with their teachers. In the marketplace, shopkeepers sold wool cloth from Flanders. Flanders was a small country that included parts of what is now France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Shops in the marketplace also contained leather goods from Spain and spices and silks from the east.

In these growing cities people opened their eyes and ears to the products and ideas of the world. Above all, the city of the thirteenth century belonged to the merchants. They became a new "middle class" between nobles and peasants. Many merchants were actually richer than most nobles. The richest merchants usually formed the town council that governed the city.

Merchants often formed groups called guilds. A merchant's guild helped protect its members when they were traveling. It bargained with local lords about rents and taxes. Later, craft workers also organized guilds. A large city was likely to have guilds for bakers, weavers, glassblowers, and many other craft workers. The guilds set the prices that their members could charge. Guild inspectors made sure members' work met certain standards of quality. Workers had to belong to the guilds in order to practice their crafts in the city.

Craft guilds also trained new workers. A young person began as an **apprentice** in a master's shop. Like pages in a noble's court; apprentices ran errands and did chores. Meanwhile they learned the skills of their trade.



An apprentice had to stay in the same shop for a certain number of years. Then he became a journeyman, or day worker. He could hire himself out to other shops for daily wages. As a journeyman he learned advanced skills. Finally the journeyman became a master. He produced a fine work that showed all he had learned. The guild had to approve this "masterwork" before the craft worker could set up a shop.

Guilds helped to ensure quality work. They also gave people a chance to succeed through ability rather than wealth or parentage. However, they discouraged their members from competing or looking for better ways to do things. Toward the end of the Middle Ages, many craftspeople broke free of the guilds.

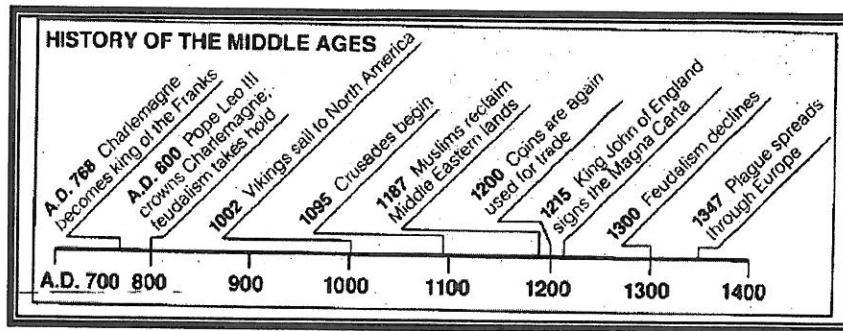
Another kind of guild grew into a new place of learning—the university. Guilds of students and teachers began to appear in the twelfth century. At first, students heard lectures in town squares, in rented rooms, and even in sheds. Later, universities had their own buildings. The universities were part of a new feeling about learning. As in ancient Greece, the idea that people should explore the world of knowledge became popular.

### Disaster and Change

In the fourteenth century, disaster struck the thriving society of Europe. A widespread sickness called the plague, or "Black Death," appeared in the late 1340s. So many people died of the plague that their bodies had to be hauled away in carts and buried in mass graves. The plague killed between one-fourth and one half of the people in Europe.

The few farm workers who survived the plague realized that their skills were greatly needed. They demanded the right to leave their land and go where they would be paid the most. They insisted on fairer treatment from the nobles who controlled their lives. Sometimes they emphasized their demands with revolts.

Some people became dissatisfied with the Church as well as with feudal society. Competition for power between kings and Church leaders shocked many people. Others were frightened because the Church had not been able to stop the plague.



### The Rise of Nation-States

Governments were changing, too. Beginning in the twelfth century, strong kings began to take power away from the nobles, especially in England, France, and Spain. Nation-states began appearing in many parts of Europe. Each nation-state had a strong central government with a single ruler. Sometimes the ruler had to share power with a governing body representing the people. Each nation-state had a system of written laws, paid government officials, and a permanent army.

The people of each nation-state began to think of themselves as members of a single country. They usually shared the same language and culture. They felt pride in their nation. They would go to war to defend its honor or to prove its superiority.

Merchants and other members of the middle class supported the governments of the nation-states. They needed peace and strong government so they could safely carry on trade. The rulers of the nation-states, in turn, usually encouraged the merchants. They needed the money that taxes on trade and business brought. Naturally, the nobles resisted their loss of power. In England, for example, they found ways to limit the king's growing power. They outlined these limits in the English document called the Magna Carta, or "Great Charter."

Powerful nobles forced King John to sign this English document in 1215. The nobles were interested only in protecting their own rights. However, some parts of the Magna Carta became the basis of laws that protected the rights of everyone down to the lowliest peasant. One part, for example, established the right to trial by jury. The Magna Carta stated that everyone, including the king, was governed by the laws of the land. The Middle Ages was a time of great change in Europe. Cities and new kinds of government arose during this time. Toward its end, the Middle Ages gave birth to ideas, inventions, and forms of society that would shape the modern world. You will read more about these changes in the next chapter.

### READING CHECK

1. How did trade affect the growth of cities?
2. What group formed the middle class in the new cities?
3. What sickness struck Europe in the late 1340s?

**Think Beyond:** Why do you think many people supported the growth of nation-state?

## THINKING BACK

- After the fall of Rome, Germanic chieftains ruled Europe. Charlemagne, king of the Franks, was crowned ruler of the Holy Roman Empire.
- Crusaders tried to free the Holy Land from the Turks. Muslim culture changed European thinking.
- Under the Feudal system, vassals received land in return for loyalty and military aid.
- For most people life in farming villages meant hard work. Some lords built castles for protection.
- The Church unified Europe during the Middle Ages. Many towns built magnificent cathedrals as symbols of their religious devotion.
- The economy improved as merchants traveled and traded again and villages grew into cities. Craft guilds set prices, inspected members' work, and trained apprentices and journeymen to become masters.
- The feudal system weakened as nation-states with strong central governments emerged. In England the Magna Carta limited the king's power.

### Check for Understanding Using Words

Write the definition of the words below. Use each word in a sentence.

Apprentice	feudalism	charter	guilds	chivalry
nation states	clergy	crusaders	serfs	plague

### Reviewing Facts

1. What steps did Charlemagne take to improve education and government in his empire?
2. What effect did the Crusades have on European trade?
3. List these groups in order of importance: vassals, nobles, kings, serfs.
4. How did people living on a manor provide for their needs?
5. Describe how each part of a castle was used: keep, courtyard, moat, and drawbridge.
6. Why were people attracted to the religious life during the Middle Ages?
7. What were the great churches of the Middle Ages called? Who built them?
8. What changes during the Middle Ages made the growth of cities possible and improved the economy?
9. List three duties of the craft guilds.
10. What document limited the power of English kings?

### Thinking Critically

1. Describe the training of a knight, and of a craft worker. In what ways were these two kinds of training alike? How are some people trained for jobs today?
2. Manors, monasteries, and convents were self-sufficient during the Middle Ages. *Self-sufficient* means that the people were able to grow or make everything they needed. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this way of life?

### Writing About It

Imagine that you are a shopkeeper and have just received a supply of a new product brought from the east by the crusaders. Write an advertisement for the product. The product could be a new spice or new silk clothing, for example.