

## SECTION 1 NOTES FOR PACKET: THE MIDDLE AGES BRINGS CHANGES TO EUROPE

### **A Time of Wars**

- The period of time known as the Middle Ages lasted from 500AD to 1500AD
- After the Roman Empire fell, groups of Germanic tribes controlled most of Europe
- The main groups were the Visigoths (Spain), the Vandals (North Africa and the Mediterranean islands), the Ostrogoths (Italy), the Saxons (southern England), and the Franks (France)
- The tribes did not govern like countries, they had chieftains
- They only ruled the land they could defend, so boundaries were changing constantly because of all of the fighting
- These tribes eventually mimicked the Roman government and integrated Christianity into its lives

### **Charlemagne**

- The person who literally stood above the rest was Charlemagne, he was 6 feet 4 inches while the average height was 5 feet
- He was known as “Charles the Great”
- He was king of the Franks and eventually took control of Germany and Italy
- Charlemagne was close with the Christian leader the Pope
- He ruled as King of the Holy Roman Empire
- He believed that education was important and set up schools for the nobles and their sons
- He wanted to spread the gift of education to anyone who followed the religion
- Charlemagne prided himself on his fair rule
- He traveled and questioned people to make sure everything was just
- Charlemagne was responsible for uniting most of Western Europe for the first time in 400 years

### **The Vikings**

- Fierce warriors from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark threatened the way of life of the Europeans
- The Vikings were mostly interested in plundering, or taking goods by force
- They Vikings usually attacked the churches first, because they tended to hold the most gold and silver
- They then went after the homes of the townspeople
- The Vikings eventually became traders and sailors and gave up their violent takeovers
- The Vikings, like the Germanic tribes, became part of the settled communities of Europe as they were absorbed into the European culture during the Middle Ages

### **The Crusades**

- ❖ The holy war was based upon the Muslim Turk who had taken over the holy shrines of Jerusalem and others in the Middle East
- ❖ The Turks were known to kill any Christian who wanted to see the shrines
- ❖ The Pope Urban II wanted to free Jerusalem and fight these “unbelievers”
- ❖ The people who fought for the Christian way of life were known as Crusaders
- ❖ People from all over Europe traveled to defend their religion
- ❖ They were successful in driving out the Muslims for a period of time, however the Muslims eventually took control of the area again
- ❖ The Crusades changed Europe in many ways
  - The people found Muslim leaders to be civilized and well educated; respected
  - Seasoning of food with spices was developed and trade prospered
  - Silk clothing was also desired by many rich people
  - Eventually due to what the people brought back to Europe trade flourished which helped cities to grow and develop a new class of people

## NOTES FOR THE MIDDLE AGES PACKET : MIDDLE AGES BRING CHANGES TO EUROPE

### Section 2: Life on a Farm and Manor

- There was constant danger by the Vikings, bandits, and warriors from other kingdoms
- A system grew where the stronger people protected the weaker ones
- The weaker people gave loyalty to the royalty
- The system was called **feudalism**

### **What were Loyalty and Protection?**

- The farmers and the peasants are loyal to the nobles or lords
- That means that they will take an oath to follow and respect their leaders
- Peasants were given land to work on that was owned by the noble
- The peasants were protected while the nobles became rich from crops
- They each addressed the others' needs

### **What is feudalism?**

- A system of loyalties and protections during the Middle Ages
- Based on a pyramid with a king at the top (hierarchical scale)
- This developed the social classes for the time period
- King, Noble, Vassal (lesser noble), Peasants, and Serfs
- Everyone was loyal to the King
- King controlled everything
- Noble controlled most of the land
- Vassals needed protection from the Nobles and King for their little land
- Peasants needed protection
- Serfs belonged to the land

### Life in a Village

- ❖ Villages were very small and were located on a **manor**
- ❖ A manor was a large estate or farm belonging to a noble family
  - Two big buildings were for the nobles and the church
  - Peasants lived in small mud cottages
  - There were blacksmiths and carpenters
  - People never had to leave the village because they had everything they needed
- ❖ Technology made them more efficient farmers (plows)
- ❖ They learned to divide their land into vertical strips to farm throughout the year.
- ❖ The planting of the fields were rotated in order to maintain rich soil year after year
- ❖ The peasants only sign of relief was during holidays when there were feasts

### What were Manors and Castles like?

- The **manors** of the Middle Ages were drafty and had dirt floors
- The windows did not have glass
- The people who lived in areas that were raided often built **castles** for protection
- The **castles** had thick walls and towers
  - They could store food live there for months
  - The warriors and horses stayed there
  - If the village was attacked, the villagers would run their for protection
- There were high walls and moats with a drawbridge
- Nobles were very wealthy and dressed in silks, furs, and clothes embroidered with gold thread

### Knights

- The knights trained very hard from the age of seven
- They were responsible for the protection of the manor
- They started out as a **page** who did menial tasks
- Later at the age of 15 they became **squires**, who were responsible for serving the knight and helping him with his armor, horses, and weapons. In return the knight trained the **squire** in advanced fighting skills
- At the age of 21 the **squire** became a knight and swore allegiance to his lord and to defend the Christian church. He was also responsible to protect anyone who needed his help
- The knights' armor was very heavy, and soon technology was developed that made their use obsolete.
- Crossbows, pikes, and powerful longbows made people more agile and more deadly
- Eventually the knights made their way towards entertainment
- They fought in tournaments like our class trip to Medieval Times.
- **Chivalry** was an important part of being a knight. It meant that knights were required to protect and honor women.

## SECTION 3 NOTES FOR THE MIDDLE AGES PACKET : THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

- ❖ The church bells were used to organize the day between worship and work
- ❖ The bells were also used to alert villagers if enemies were sighted
- ❖ The church provided the organization the people lacked since the fall of the Roman Empire

### Monks, Nuns, and Priests

- The religion was spread and maintained by both men and women who gave their lives for their religion
- The church was the only place where people were able to get an education, therefore the church was a place that a peasant can go and try to rise to power
- The *men* who lived in special communities called **monasteries** were known as **monks**
- The *women* who lived in a special community lived in **convents**, and were called **nuns**
- These two groups made up what is known as the **clergy**
- The monastery and convent were like villages
  - They had workshops, gardens, livestock
  - The villages often owned land surrounding the living quarters
  - These places also possessed peasants and serfs who worked on the land
- The people often learned by practicing copying the Bible on **parchment**; sheepskin like paper
- The nuns and monks provided services for the people in their areas.
  - Services like hospitals, orphanages, shelter for travelers, and even schools
- Some nuns and monks left to spread their religion to other communities
- Religion was spreading and gaining power over a vast number of people

### Cathedrals

- Since religion was so important to people, the churches spared no expense
- Jewels and art decorated the buildings
- The greatest churches were known as **Cathedrals**
- The **Gothic** style which is when arches are pointed instead of rounded was developed
- These buildings took many years of work, were very expensive to build, and the people who helped to create the building took great pride in their accomplishment
- The cathedrals in Paris and Chartres, France were considered by many to be the finest achievements of the Middle Ages

## SECTION 4 NOTES FOR PACKET: THE GROWTH OF CITIES

- There was very little trade during the early part of the Middle Ages
- The manors were self sufficient and the money was worthless
- Eventually travel became safer and trade was on the rise
- Coins were once again used during the 13<sup>th</sup> century
- There were large fairs where people began to trade various goods
- The merchants started to become regulars in towns
- The towns where there were many merchants grew into cities
- There were many people interested in living in these cities
- Serfs left manors in order to prosper economically
- The towns were first under the control of the lords
- The merchants became so powerful that they demanded a charter
- A charter is a paper signed by the lord that gives the town the right to be self governed
- The people elected officials and council members
- The town taxed trade and provided services for the poor, sick, and homeless
- The towns also possessed their own laws which they enforced

### What was life like in the City?

- The cities were crowded and unhealthy
- The streets were filled with animals, garbage, waste
- There was various environments in a city
  - The section where people were apprentices and learned a trade
  - There was a marketplace where the money was made
  - The merchants had control over most of the city
- The merchants were so successful that they richer than some nobles
- The merchants with the most wealth often was the “elected” leader of the city
- Merchants formed guilds to protect its members when traveling and dealing with money
- Craft workers also organized themselves into guilds in order to protect their occupation
- The guilds set the prices of the various trades
- The students of the workers were known as an apprentice in the master’s shop
- The apprentice eventually led to a journeyman, and after their skills were practiced they became masters
- Guilds made sure that the work was quality
- The learning eventually led to schools, and then universities were developed
- Learning was again a major part of everyday life

### **What disasters and changes occurred?**

- ❖ A widespread sickness known as the “Black Death” swept through Europe in the late 1340’s
- ❖ The plague killed so many people that the population was almost cut in half!
- ❖ The farmers who survived realized that they were important in order to feed the population
- ❖ The farmers who were once enslaved, now wanted more respect and more money for their work
- ❖ The church and the nobles lost a lot of control because they could not protect everyone from this disease
- ❖ The people started to realize that the feudal way of life was becoming obsolete
- ❖ There was now a competition for power during the Middle Ages

### **Why was there a rise of Nation States?**

- Governments began to change
- Kings started to take away the power of nobles in England, Spain, and France
- The nation state was created
  - Had a strong central government with one ruler
  - There was a governing body representing the people
  - Each individual nation state had its own system of written laws, paid officials, and army
  - They were almost like a country
- The people of the same nation-state shared the same language, culture, and pride
- These people would defend and die for their nation-state
- The merchants saw an opportunity to support the governments
- They needed a strong and peaceful government so they could safely travel and trade
- The taxes on trade brought the government money to supply services to the people
- The Magna Carta was written to limit a king’s power over people
  - Also known as the “Great Charter”
  - Signed by King John in England in 1215
  - The basis of this document was to protect rights of people
  - This included everyone, peasants and serfs included!
  - It stated that everyone was governed by the laws and had the right of trial by jury
- Change and the development of new ideas provided the people with a chance of growth while the time of the Middle Ages came to an end