The Middle Ages: 500-1450 AD

World History
Middle Ages, Renaissance, Reformation Unit
Standards

• SSWH7: The student will analyze European medieval society with regard to culture, politics, society, and economics.
  a. Explain the manorial system and feudalism; include the status of peasants and the feudal monarchies and the importance of Charlemagne
The Middle Ages

• Period between the Fall of Rome and the Renaissance. (500-1450 A.D.)

• Medieval period, Dark Ages, Age of Feudalism
Effects of Invasions/Fall of Rome

- Trade Disrupted: collapsed businesses, end of cities as economic centers, money becomes scarce.
- Downfall of cities as centers of administration
- Population shift from cities to rural
- Decline of learning: Germanic tribes had no written language; few were literate
- Loss of common language: Latin changed/mixed with Germanic languages; Romance languages (Fr., Sp.) evolved
Middle Ages: Germanic Kingdoms

- 511: Clovis unites Franks into one kingdom
- Clovis allies with Church to spread Christianity
- 700 *Mayors-of-the-palace* rule Franks; Charles Martel had more power than the king in 719.
- Martel wins Battle of Tours, 732 to stop Muslim advance.
Middle Ages: Germanic Kingdoms

• Martel passed his power to his son, Pepin the Short
• Pepin was crowned King of the Franks by the Pope for fighting off Lombards near Rome.
• Start of Carolingian Dynasty
• Pepin’s son’s Carloman & Charles took over in 768
Middle Ages: Germanic Kingdoms

• Carloman died & Charlemagne (Charles the Great) took over in 771.
• He fought Muslims & other Germanic tribes, conquered new lands & became most powerful king in Western Europe
• Reunited Western Europe; crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III for defeating Leo’s enemies; joined German power, the Church & Roman Empire Heritage
Charlemagne’s Achievements

• Limited power of nobility by sending royal agents (missi dominici) to make sure counts were ruling justly.

• He visited every part of the empire often.

• Encouraged education by opening schools.
• Briefly evaluate the achievements of Charlemagne. Were they good or bad? Would they have positive or negative applications in our current society?
Rise of Feudalism in Western Europe

• Invasions by Muslims, Magyars, & Vikings caused people to turn to local rulers for protection.
• Kings (lords) made deals with local rulers (vassals) to grant them land (fief) in exchange for military aid
• Church officials & nobles were vassals of the king but could also be lords with knights serving them for a fief
Feudalism in Europe

- **KING**
  - Land
  - Loyalty and service

- **POWERFUL NOBLES/CLERGY**
  - Land and protection
  - Loyalty and military service

- **LESSER NOBLES (KNIGHTS)**
  - Protection
  - Labor

- **SERFS AND FREEMEN**
  - Protection
Homage & Fealty

- The homage ceremony acknowledged the surrendering of the vassal to his lord. It was symbolized by the vassal kneeling & putting his hands in his lord’s hands.

- Fealty was an oath to be faithful to the lord & not damage him or his property.
Medieval Social Classes

• Those who fight: lords/nobles & knights
• Those who prayed: bishops, priests, nuns of the Church
• Those who worked: peasants & serfs
• Peasants made up the majority of population
• Most peasants were serfs who could not leave the land they lived on. Not slaves but the product of their labor belonged to their lord.
Manorialism: The Economic Side of Feudalism

- Manor: A lord’s estate
- Lord provides serfs with housing, farmland, protection
- Serfs work the lord’s land, animals, maintain estate
- Self-contained: included the manor house, church, fields, mill, peasant housing, etc.
Life on the Manor

- Peasants had to pay a tax on all grain ground at the lord’s mill.
- Marriage only at lord’s consent; marriage tax
- A tithe, or tenth, of income paid to the Church
- Peasants lived in small cottages with dirt floors & often farm animals; straw beds with insects
- Ate mostly bread, vegetables, cheese, grain, soup
- Children worked when old enough
- Life expectancy: 35; few traveled more than 25 miles from their homes
• Write a paragraph to compare/contrast your life in each of these areas with peasant life: Taxes, marriage, church, housing, food, life expectancy, work
Life on the Manor
Knights & Chivalry

• Knights were mounted soldiers; horse soldier (cavalry) became the most important part of an army.
• Knight’s main duty to his lord was to fight (about 40 days of combat required per year)
• Code of chivalry: knights were to be brave & courteous; showed loyalty to God, their lord, & their chosen lady (actually most knights were brutal)
A Knight in Training

- Page: sent to another lord for training at age 7; waited on hosts & practiced fighting skills
- Squire: Age 14; servant to a knight
- Full-fledged knighthood at age 21
- Fought in tournaments or local wars
Women in the Middle Ages

- Powerless like most men but considered inferior by Church & feudal society
- Noblewomen: tutored when young; could command knights when husband was away & inherit estate from him; limited to home or convent
- Peasant women: learned household skills when young, always working in field or home, childbearing, caring for family