

Europe after the Fall of Rome

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. Christianity spread to northern Europe through the work of missionaries and monks.
2. The Franks, led by Charlemagne, created a huge Christian empire and brought together scholars from around Europe.
3. Invaders threatened much of Europe in the 700s and 800s.

The Big Idea

Despite the efforts of Christians to maintain order, Europe was a dangerous place after the fall of Rome.

Key Terms and People

Middle Ages, p. 500
 medieval, p. 500
 Patrick, p. 501
 monks, p. 502
 monasteries, p. 502
 Benedict, p. 502
 Charlemagne, p. 503



Use the graphic organizer online to record information about how events and people in the Middle Ages affected Europe.

If YOU were there...

You're returning to your village in northern Europe after a hard day working in the fields. But as you reach the top of a hill, you smell smoke. Alarmed, you break into a run. Finally, your village comes into sight, and your fears are realized. Your village is on fire! In the distance, you can see sails moving away on the river.

What do you think has happened to your village?

BUILDING BACKGROUND Europe was a dangerous place after Rome fell. Without the Roman government, Europe had no central authority to keep order. As a result, outlaws and bandits became common. At the same time, new groups of people were moving into Europe. Violence was common. Distressed, people looked for ways to bring order and comfort into their lives.

Christianity Spreads to Northern Europe

As the Roman Empire fell, various groups from the north and east moved into former Roman lands. As they moved in, these groups created their own states. The rulers of these states, usually powerful warlords, began to call themselves kings. These kings often fought among themselves. As a result, by the early 500s Europe was divided into many small kingdoms.

The creation of these kingdoms marked the beginning of the **Middle Ages**, a period that lasted from about 500 to about 1500. We call this time the "middle" ages because it falls between ancient times and modern times. Another name for the Middle Ages is the **medieval** (mee-DEE-vuhl) period, from the Latin words for "middle age."

At the beginning of the Middle Ages, many of the kingdoms of northern Europe were not Christian. Christianity was only common in places that had been part of the Roman Empire, such as Italy and Spain. As time passed, however, Christianity

The Spread of Christianity



BIOGRAPHY

Patrick

AD 400s

Patrick was a monk who helped convert the Irish to Christianity. As a teenager, Patrick was kidnapped in Britain and taken to Ireland, where he was forced to work as a shepherd. After six years, he escaped. But later he returned to Ireland to spread Christianity. According to legend, he won favor with the Irish by driving all of the snakes in Ireland into the sea. After Patrick died, he was declared a saint by the people of Ireland.

ATLANTIC OCEAN

North Sea



IRELAND

BRITAIN

Canterbury

Paris

Tours

GAUL (FRANCE)

Lyon

Marseille

SPAIN

Toledo

ITALY

Rome

Naples

Syracuse

Carthage

Caesarea

Constantinople

Black Sea

ASIA MINOR

Nicaea

Ephesus

Corinth

Athens

Antioch

Damascus

Jerusalem

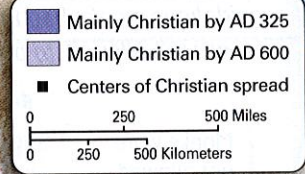
Alexandria

Memphis

EGYPT

Mediterranean Sea

Red Sea



GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

INTERPRETING MAPS

Place How far north had Christianity spread by AD 600?

slowly spread farther north. This spread was largely through the efforts of two groups of Christians—missionaries and monks.

Missionaries

Perhaps the most powerful force that helped spread Christianity into northern Europe was the pope. Over the years, many popes sent missionaries to teach people in northern kingdoms about Christianity. Missionaries are people who try to convert others to a particular religion. Some missionaries traveled great distances to spread Christianity to new lands.

One of the first places to which popes sent missionaries was Britain. These missionaries traveled all over the island, and eventually most people in Britain became Christian. From Britain, other missionaries carried Christianity into what are now France and Germany.

Not all missionaries, though, were sent by the pope. In fact, one of the first missionaries to travel to northern Europe was **Patrick**, who took it upon himself to teach people about Christianity. In the mid-400s Patrick traveled from Britain to Ireland to convert the people there.

Unlike most missionaries, Patrick traveled alone. Although he faced resistance to his teachings, he eventually converted many Irish people to Christianity.

Monks

While missionaries traveled to spread Christian teachings, men called monks were equally dedicated to their faith. **Monks were religious men who lived apart from society in isolated communities.** In these communities, monks spent their time in prayer, work, and meditation.

Communities of monks, or monasteries, were built all over Europe in the Middle Ages. Life in a monastery was strictly orga-

nized. The monks had to follow rules that were intended to help them live as good Christians. These rules outlined the day-to-day affairs of the monastery, including how monks should dress and what they should eat.

Most European monasteries followed a set of rules created in the early 500s by an Italian monk named **Benedict**. His code was called the Benedictine Rule, and those who followed it were called Benedictine monks. But not all monks in Europe were Benedictines. Different groups of monks created their own rules. For example, monks in Ireland were very different from monks in France or Germany.

Even though they lived apart from society, monks had a big influence on Europe. Monks performed many services, both inside and outside of monasteries. Monasteries sometimes provided basic services, such as health care, that were unavailable to many members of their communities. The poor and needy would arrive at a monastery and the monks would give them aid.

In addition to giving aid to people in their communities, monks

- ran schools and copied books for those who couldn't read or write,
- collected and saved ancient writings from Greece and Rome,
- served as scribes and advisors to local rulers.

Monks also helped spread Christian teachings into new areas. Many monasteries were built in remote locations where Christians had never traveled before. People living near the monasteries learned about Christianity from the monks.

Primary Source

HISTORIC DOCUMENT

The Benedictine Rule

The Benedictine Order was the largest group of monks in Europe in the early Middle Ages. In his rule, Benedict listed the guidelines monks had to follow. Here he describes what each monk was allowed to own.

Monks were not allowed to own any property.

An abbot is the head of a monastery.

“For bedding, a mattress, a blanket, a coverlet and a pillow are enough. The beds should be frequently inspected by the Abbot as a precaution against private possessions. If anyone is found to have anything which was not given him by the Abbot, he is to undergo the severest punishment; and that this vice [wickedness] of personal ownership may be totally eliminated, everything necessary should be given by the Abbot; namely, a cowl [hood], a tunic [long shirt], stockings, shoes, a belt, a knife, a pen, a needle, a handkerchief and writing tablets, so that all excuses about necessity are removed.”

—from *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, translated by Abbot Parry

ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

Why do you think Benedictine monks were only allowed a few simple possessions?

READING CHECK

Summarizing How did missionaries and monks help spread Christianity into new areas?

The Franks Build an Empire

As Christianity was spreading into northern Europe, political changes were also taking place. In the 480s a powerful group called the Franks conquered Gaul, the region we now call France. Under a ruler named Clovis, the Franks became Christian and created one of the strongest kingdoms in Europe.

As strong as the Franks were under Clovis, though, they had yet to reach their greatest power. That power would not come until the late 700s, when a leader named **Charlemagne** (SHAHR-luh-mayn) appeared. Charlemagne was a brilliant warrior and a strong king, and he led the Franks in building a huge empire.

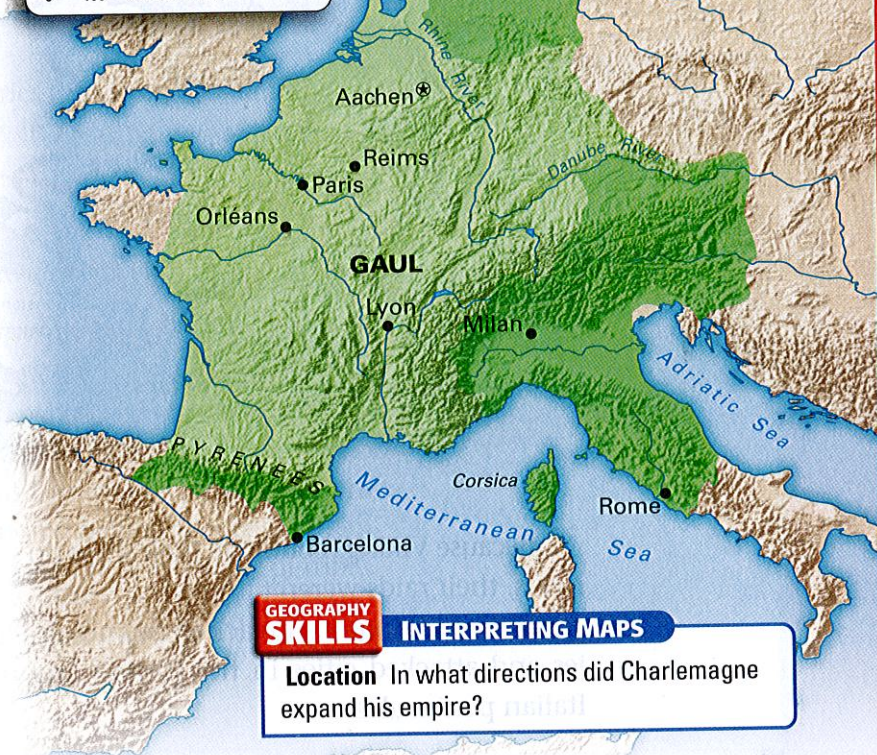
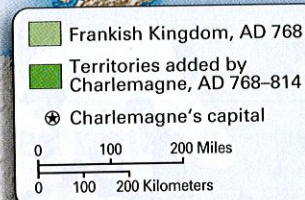
To build this empire, Charlemagne spent much of his time at war. He led his armies into battle against many neighboring kingdoms and conquered them. By the time he was finished, Charlemagne's empire included all of what is now France. It also stretched into modern Germany, Austria, Italy, and northern Spain.

Charlemagne, a Christian king, had conquered parts of the former Roman Empire. For that reason, on Christmas Day in 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Romans. This title symbolized a return to the greatness of the Roman Empire.

Charlemagne didn't spend all of his energy on warfare, however. A great admirer of education, he built schools across Europe. He also brought scholars to teach in his capital at Aachen (AH-kuhn), now in western Germany. Among these scholars were some of the greatest religious scholars and teachers of the Middle Ages. Their teachings helped shape religious and social life in Europe for centuries.

READING CHECK **Finding Main Ideas** What were Charlemagne's major accomplishments?

Charlemagne's Empire



Invaders Threaten Europe

Even while Charlemagne was building his empire, though, new threats appeared in Europe. Invaders began to attack settlements all over the continent. Muslim armies poured into southern France and northern Italy. Fierce warriors called the Magyars swept into Europe from the east, attacking towns and destroying fields. From Scandinavia came perhaps the most frightening invaders of all, the Vikings.

The Vikings raided Britain, Ireland, and other parts of western Europe. They looted towns and monasteries and took prisoners to sell into slavery. The attacks were swift and savage, and Europeans lived in terror of Viking raids.

Invasions of Europe, AD 800–1000



Vikings used their versatile ships to invade many areas of Europe.

Settlements and Invasion Routes

- Vikings
- Muslims
- Magyars

0 250 500 Miles
0 250 500 Kilometers



GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

Movement Which group invaded the most areas?

Because Vikings could sail their ships up rivers, their raids weren't limited to coastal areas. The Vikings also reached inland cities and attacked cities in the Iberian and Italian peninsulas.

READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas What groups invaded Europe in the 700s and 800s?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW After the fall of Rome, northern Europe gradually became Christian. But Europe could still be a dangerous place. Invaders threatened Europeans constantly. In the next section, you will learn about ways people tried to protect themselves from invaders.

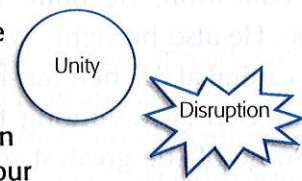
Section 2 Assessment hmhsocialstudies.com ONLINE QUIZ

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

1. **a. Describe** How are monks and monasteries related?
b. Explain Why did missionaries travel to northern Europe?
c. Elaborate Why do you think monks followed such strict rules?
2. **a. Recall** What is Charlemagne famous for?
b. Evaluate What do you think Charlemagne's greatest accomplishment was? Why?
3. **a. Identify** What areas of Europe did the Vikings raid?
b. Make Generalizations Why were people in Europe so frightened of Viking raids?

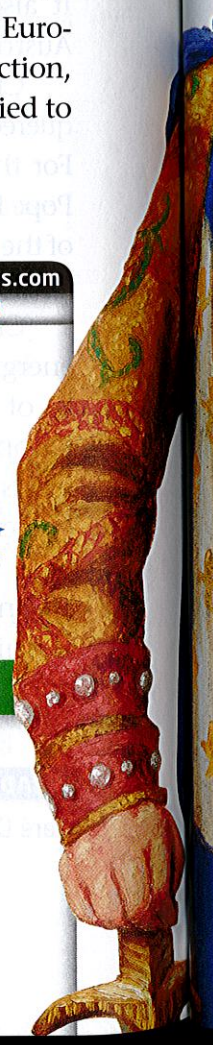
Critical Thinking

4. **Analyzing** Using your notes, determine which events brought unity to Europe and which brought division or disruption. Write your answers in a diagram like this one.



FOCUS ON WRITING

5. **Considering Life Then** Now you see why you might need the protection of knights. Look back at your list and add to it. What services might you hire knights to perform?



Charlemagne

What would you do if you ruled much of Europe?

When did he live? 742–814

Where did he live? Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, ruled most of what are now France and Germany. He lived mainly in his capital, Aachen, near the modern city of Cologne, Germany.

What did he do? Through his wars of conquest, Charlemagne united many of the tribes of central and western Europe into a single empire.

Why is he important? While Europe was still reeling from the collapse of Rome, Charlemagne brought people together. He helped Europeans realize that they shared common bonds, such as Christianity, that linked them. In other words, he helped people see themselves as Europeans, not members of tribes.

Drawing Conclusions How did this change in view affect later European society?

KEY EVENTS

- **771** Charlemagne becomes king of the Franks.
- **773** Charlemagne becomes an ally of the pope after rescuing him from invaders.
- **794** Charlemagne makes Aachen his capital.
- **800** Pope Leo III names Charlemagne emperor.



This painting shows Charlemagne being crowned by the pope in AD 800.