



Teacher's Guide

The Carolingian Empire **Time Compass**

Grade Levels:

4-8

Subject Areas:

Social Studies

Synopsis:

Innovative animation and a tongue-in-cheek approach to ancient history tell of the remarkable achievements of Charlemagne and the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire. The episode tells how warring European tribes predominated 5th century Europe until Pippin and his son, Charlemagne, became protector of the Papal States. Students learn about the social structure of peasants, knights, kings, and clergy in a typical feudal system, comparing European fiefdoms with those protected by the Samurai in Japan. Charlemagne's quest for knowledge resulted in the establishment of universities and the protection of the world's knowledge by monks as the European world again descended into chaos after his death.

Learning Objectives: Students will:

- Describe the accomplishments of Pippin and Charlemagne.
- Name several of the tribes that warred against one another until they were unified by Charlemagne and his allegiance to Christianity.
- Describe the social structure of a feudal system.
- Recall how universities were started and preserved during the Middle Ages.

Vocabulary:

civilization, Samurai, feudal system, fief, Western culture, nobility, clergy, Papal States, universal knowledge, Gothic cathedral, Romanesque churches, stained glass

Pre-Viewing Discussion:

Who was Charlemagne? Why do we know so much about him?

What nationality was Charlemagne? Why was he called an emperor of the Holy Roman Empire?

Where is Oxford University located? How old is this university? Do you know the names of any other universities that have been in existence for centuries?

What happened in Europe during the period known as the “Dark Ages”?

Post-Viewing Discussion:

Although Pippin was a small man, how did he prove that he was a very wise and powerful man? What were some of his accomplishments?

Why was Charlemagne so powerful? What kind of training did he lack? How do we know that he was aware of his shortcomings and tried to do something about them?

What might have happened if Clotilda had not converted Clovis to Christianity?

How did the new style of churches express the optimism of the Carolingian Empire? How did these churches differ from the Romanesque churches that came before them?

Further Activities:

Find further details about the birth, childhood, and early adulthood of Charlemagne.

Construct a model of a typical Gothic Cathedral or draw a floor plan of a Gothic Cathedral detailing the main divisions of the floor space.

Discover if any peasants revolted because of the harsh conditions of their daily lives.

Learn about how trials took place during the Middle Ages. Find examples of a few common complaints and how they were dealt with in the courts of that time.

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