



# THE MIDDLE AGES

500-1500

# THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

- The time period, which lasted from about 500 until about 1500, also known as the medieval times is called the **Middle Ages**.
- Roman Empire falls apart in 400.
- Europe left without a single dominant government.
- Europe broke up into many small kingdoms.
- One thing continued to tie the people of Europe together – religion.
- Everyone in Europe was Christian, and most Europeans felt tied together by their beliefs.
- Christianity was so important that the church gained a great deal of influence.

# THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

- Almost no part of life in Europe in the Middle ages was unaffected by the church and its teachings.
- The most powerful religious leader was the pope, the leader of the Christian church.
- Religious war is called a **Crusade**.
- Pope wanted Europeans to take over the **Holy Lands**, the region in which Jesus had lived.
- There were 8 crusades over two centuries, but they were unsuccessful and did not drive the Muslims from the Holy Lands.
- One good thing that came from the crusades was it increased trade between Europe and Asia.

# FEUDAL SYSTEM

- The system of exchanging land for military service is called **Feudal system**.
- Kings owned the land.
- Kings gave land to nobles (people born into wealthy, powerful families).
- Nobles gave land to knights who promised to help defend both their lands and the king.
- Peasants worked the land for the Nobles in return for a place to stay and protection.
- Kings gained power and disrespected nobles, which in England made the nobles turn on the king in 1215.
- Nobles forced the king to sign the Magna Carta.
- The **Magna Carta** was the first document to protect the rights of the people.

# THE BLACK DEATH

- 1347 the Black Death swept through Europe.
- The Black Death killed a third of Europe's people.
- The kings once again gained power as nation states emerged and the feudal system came to an end.
- The Black Death spread through rats and fleas.