### The Early Middle Ages

#### The Dark Ages

- The term 'Middle Ages' was coined by historians who did not know what to call the time period between the classical era (Rome) and the rebirth of the classical era, (ie. the Renaissance), in Europe.
- The concept of 'The Dark Ages', was introduced by Petrarch (an Italian scholar of the 1300s), and refers to the time period directly after the Fall of Rome until the rise of feudalism – roughly from 500 - 800 CE. It is also called the early Middle Ages.
- The Dark Ages were initially characterized by waves of tribal invasions and migrations (from 400-700). In general this time period yielded few artistic, architectural or technological innovations or accomplishments.

#### The Fall of Rome

- Rome fell in 476 as a result of many factors, but ultimately because of the invasions of the Huns.
- As Rome fell, Western Europe experienced a power vacuum, since there was no state or tribe powerful enough to succeed the Empire.
- Without Rome as a centralizing and unifying factor, various tribes, such as the Lombards, Goths, Visigoths, Vandals, Ostrogoths, Huns, Franks,Angles & Saxons swarmed Europe. It was a chaotic and violent time.

#### A Muslim Europe?

- By 700, Europeans faced a new threat – this time, from the Middle East. Muslim Arabs had rapidly conquered northern and eastern Africa, and had pushed into Spain as well. They were making their way into the rest of the continent, and spreading Islam in their wake.
- In 732, Charles Martel was the ruler of the Franks – a Germanic people with a Kingdom in Central & Western Europe. Martel fought the Muslims at the Battle of Tours in France, and was able to stop their advance into the rest of Western Europe. Historians often consider this battle to be one of the most influential because of the historic implications for Europe.

#### Charlemagne

- Charlemagne was the grandson of Charles Martel, and his name means Charles the Great. He is known for expanding the Frankish Kingdom into an Empire, and creating the Carolingian Dynasty.
- Charlemagne worked to bring culture and learning to his kingdom. He opened Churches and palace schools, and encouraged the development of literacy. The font 'Carolingian' was developed at this time.
- Charlemagne was crowned the First Holy Roman Emperor in 800, loosely reviving the power of Ancient Rome. It was really the first large centralized state Europe had seen since Rome, but it was not to last. According to Frankish custom, the father's possessions were divided among the sons, and Charlemagne's kingdom was divided among his heirs.
Early Middle Ages

1. What did the term "Middle Ages" refer to? 5. What threat did Europe face in the 700s?

2. Who coined the term 'Dark Ages'? 6. Who was Charles Martel?
   What did it refer to? What did he do?

3. What was the Dark Ages characterized by? 7. Why might the Battle of Tours be considered a turning point in world history?

4. When did Rome fall? 8. Who was Charlemagne?
   What happened to Western Europe as a result? (2 things...) What is he known for? (At least 3 things...)

9. What was the Holy Roman Empire? What was its significance?

10. What happened to Charlemagne's kingdom?