Early Middle Ages: The Frankish Empires

Background
- As Rome Declined the Germanic Tribes were rising
    - Goths, Vandals, Saxons, Franks
    - Barbarian struggles intensify
- Power struggle over lands
    - Civil-Wars
    - Vendettas
    - Peasants caught in the middle
- De-Urbanization
    - After fall of Rome former lands move away from cities
    - Cultural shifts
        - Agricultural based
            - Spring-Fall= Working 24/7
            - Winter=Relax
- Misery
    - High Children deaths
    - Parents died
        - Death always around
    - Plague
- Religious Movements
    - Some cultures revert to paganism

Clovis
- 486 C.E. – Frankish King Clovis conquers Roman Gaul
    - Converts to Christianity
        - Means of securing power
        - Roman backing for throne
        - Unifies Frankish people
    - Solidifies Frankish connection to Rome
        - Protectors of faith
    - Allows for Merovingian dynasty to control empire

Carolingian Empire
Charles Martel (686-741)
- Frankish King
- Develops Feudal System
- Spends life reuniting Frankish Empire
    - Uses Christianity as way of "re-culturing" conquered lands
- Worried about Moorish threat
    - Needed money
        - Took it from church
- 732 C.E. - Muslim Army and Frankish Army meet between Tours and Poitiers in France
    - Muslim Army expansion is stopped
    - Hailed as savior of Christianity
        - Christianity remains main religion of Europe
        - Christians assured of their faith
        - Charles Martel receives full honors and ensures strength of Dynasty

- Divides empire among sons

Charlemagne
- Grandson of Martel
    - o Might have killed brother to do so
- Frankish King
- Reunited Western Europe 772 C.E.
    - o Most of old Western Roman Empire (minus Spain and Britain)
    - o Much of reign had to fight off Saxons, Avars, Muslims and Slavs
- Reform Minded
    - o Inspired Carolinian Renaissance
    - o Valued Education
        - ▪ Built schools
            - • Palace school at Aachen
        - ▪ Personally tried to learn to read and write
    - o Tried to make social reforms to improve living standards
        - ▪ Encouraged spread of Christianity
            - • Connected Europe by common faith
    - o Political Reforms
        - ▪ Divides empire into counties
            - • Ruled by Counts
                - o Whom he controlled
- 799 C.E. – Pope Leo III asks for assistance in putting down Lombards in Italy
    - o Pope thanks Charlemagne by crowning him Emperor of the Romans
-
- 814 C.E. – Charlemagne dies leaving son Louis I as king
- 843 C.E. – Treaty of Verdun divides empire between Charlemagne's three grandsons
    - o Empire falls to chaos
    - o Renewed barbarian threats
        - ▪ This time from Vikings