

# The Middle Ages: From the Fall of Rome to the Rise of the Renaissance

## **INSTRUCTOR**

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## Syllabus—2008-2009 Academic Year

### **Recommended/Necessary Text**

Susan Wise Bauer, The Story of the World, Vol. 2, From the Fall of Rome to the Rise of the Renaissance, 2007, Second Edition. We will read all of it in the course of the academic year.

FYI— The above book can also be purchased in CD format—read out loud. There is also an activity book that was developed by Susan Bauer. It is interesting and useful depending on your teaching methods--but not necessary.

### **Schedule**

We begin the week right after Labor Day, reading our assignments. We meet once a month for a (hopefully) spectacular activity that ties into the readings we have been doing. Our first meeting is on September 19th at 10:15 at Matheson Hammock. See our registration materials for details.

### **Monthly Meetings**

Included in this syllabus you will find the topics for the first three meetings. There will be eight meetings altogether. We will decide on the other five meetings together. Possible ideas: building a Viking ship or a medieval castle, or both, a joust, a medieval feast, a medieval market, something a-propos Marco Polo or Genghis Khan, a movie about Christopher Columbus, a pachamanca--how Inca and pre-Inca cultures cooked food, etc

### **Weekly Assignments**

Please read three stories per week in sequence.

#### **Week 1**

Wandering Through the Roman Empire  
The Fall of Rome  
The Celts of Britain

## **Week 2**

Barbarians Come to Britain  
Beowulf the Hero  
Augustine Comes to England

## **Week 3**

Medieval Monasteries  
Writing Books by Hand  
The Beauty of Constantinople

## **Meeting #1: Timeline**

The children will make their own timeline out of a simple chain. They will clip dates onto the chain. Then they will clip cards onto the chain--cards that mention historical events the children already know about, for example, the Battle of Thermopylae, Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, the birth of Jesus Christ, the fall of Rome, etc. Over the course of the rest of the academic year, they will be given pre-printed cards to take home and clip onto their timeline.

## **Week 4**

Justinian, the Just Emperor  
The Empress Theodora  
The Church in the East

## **Week 5**

A King Named Skandagupta  
Monks in Caves  
Muhammad's Vision

## **Week 6**

Muhammad Flees to Medina  
The Koran: Islam's Holy Book  
The Fight for Mecca

## **Week 7**

The Spread of Islam  
The City of Baghdad  
Sinbad in the Valley of the Snakes

## **Meeting # 2: A Day at a Monastery.**

Children and their parents will experience what a day at a monastery would be like. An abbot or abbess will orient all novices to their new duties. They will work the land, cook a very simple meal, bake bread in a wood burning oven, fetch water, make a bed out of straw and a pillow from a stone, make candles, copy and illuminate a manuscript, teach reading, tend to the sick and to injured crusaders, eat in silence, listen to monastic music, etc.

**Week 8**

Yang Chien Unites North and South  
The Tang Dynasty  
The Yamoto Dynasty of Japan

**Week 9**

A Tale of Three Countries: Korea, China, and Japan  
The First People of Australia  
The Long Journey of the Maori

**Week 10**

Clovis, the Ex-Barbarian  
Four Tribes, One Empire  
Islam in Spain and Africa

**Week 11**

Charles the Hammer  
The Greatest King: Charlemagne  
The Viking Invasions

**Meeting # 3: A Fair in the Ancient City of Baghdad**

Children will learn about what a visitor to Baghdad would have found at one of its markets: storytellers, snake charmers, food specific to the area (fried eggplant, anyone?), pilgrims on their way to Mecca, prayers to Allah five times per day while facing Mecca (where is Mecca?), the visit of a caliph, the sale of spices, as well as gorgeous carpets, jewelry, glassware, and luxury fabrics. Did you know the sofa, the ottoman, and the rugs in your house found their way into Western culture from the Middle East? Did you know the luxury fabrics, as well as inlaid woodwork and bejeweled metal work we associate with the Renaissance, came to the West, in part, from the East? We will have a fun fair addressing these concepts.

**Week 12**

Eric the Red and "Eric's Son"  
The Norse Gods  
Thor and the Giant King

**Week 13**

The Vikings Invade England  
Alfred the Great  
The Battle of Hastings

**Week 14**

The English Language  
Serfs and Noblemen  
Stone Castles

**Week 15**

The English Code of Chivalry  
The Samurai: Japanese Knights  
A Command from the Pope

**Week 16**

Recapturing Jerusalem  
Saladin of Jerusalem  
El Cid and the "Reconquest of Spain"

**Week 17**

Richard the Lionhearted  
John Lackland and the Magna Carta

Robin Hood

**Week 18**

Robin Hood and the Butcher  
The Scattering of the Jews  
A Tale of the Diaspora

**Week 19**

The Clever Rabbi of Cordova  
Ghengis Khan, Emperor of All Men  
The Mogul Conquest of China

**Week 20**

Marco Polo Goes to China  
The Forbidden City of the Ming  
The Rus Come to Constantinople

**Week 21**

Ivan the Great and Ivan the Terrible  
The Ottoman Turks Attack  
The Sheep-Rocks

**Week 22**

The Capture of Constantinople  
Suleiman the Law Giver  
The Plague

**Week 23**

A New Way of Living  
Henry V and the Battle of Agincourt  
Joan of Arc

**Week 24**

The Wars of the Roses  
The Princes in the Tower  
Ferdinand and Isabella Unite Spain

**Week 25**

Henry the Navigator, Prince of Portugal  
Gold, Salt, and Ghana  
Mansa Musa of Mali

**Week 26**

The Moghul Dynasty  
Akbar of India  
The Bad- Luck Servant

**Week 27**

Christopher Columbus  
Vespucci and Magellan  
The Mayans of Central America

**Week 28**

The Marvelous City of Tenochtitlan  
The Incas  
The Slave Trade

**Week 29**

Cortes and Montezuma  
Martin Luther's List  
Henry VIII's Problems

**Week 30**

A New Way of Thinking  
Gutenberg's Great Invention  
The Spread of the Reformation

**Week 31**

The Council of Trent  
The Revolution of Copernicus  
Galileo's Strange Notions

**Week 32**

The Queen Who Almost Wasn't  
Good Queen Bess  
William Shakespeare

**Week 33**

Macbeth

Macbeth's Decision

Walter Raleigh and the New World

**Week 34**

The Lost Colony

The New-Found Land

**Week 35**

Jacques Cartier's Discoveries

Spain and England's War

**Week 36**

The World at the End of the Sixteenth