The Crusades: A Jigsaw Activity

If we’re going to understand how the Crusades worked, we are going to have to ditch our modern-day baggage. Imagine that you’re living in Europe at the end of the 1000s. You’ve never left your small town, yet you hear stories that average people like yourself are experiencing unspeakable atrocities in other lands. Your ears are ringing with these horrific tales when your religious leader announces that the war against this enemy will provide you the greatest of spiritual rewards—redemption of sin and entry into Heaven. All you have to do is raise the money for the trip, walk 3,000 miles, and fight an unknown enemy that has military techniques you’ve never seen before.

Would you heed that call to arms? Let’s find out about the people who did, and the culture that influenced carnage in the Holy Land (Jerusalem).

Questions to consider during this activity:

Why did the Crusades start? Who called for them, and what was the purpose of the Crusades?

Who were important leaders during the Crusades?

How many Crusades were actually led to “recover” the Holy Land?

Why did the Crusades eventually end?

Directions:
You will travel from station to station, filling out your activity packet for each station. Some might require you to think critically about the situation, so make sure you’re using your best effort. Each station should take about 15 minutes.

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This packet will be collected as a quiz grade (50 points).
Part I: The First Crusade

Read the excerpt from the speech given at the Council of Clermont, France, by Pope Urban II, challenging Christians to take up the call of a Crusade to recover the Holy Land. Then, complete the questions and activity.

1. How do the traditions of “peace and truce of God” tie in with the call for a Crusade?

2. Who was the person responsible for the call of a Crusade? Why?

3. What was promised to the Crusaders in return for their service? (Give the specific quote from the text). Why was this an effective incentive?

4. Create a slogan to convince people to join the Crusades. Think about the following:
   - If the peasant was to die fighting in the Crusades, his soul was automatically saved.
   - The peasants could be free of bonds to their feudal lords while on Crusade.
   - The Crusade offered peasants an adventure.
Part II: The Third Crusade (The King’s Crusade)

Watch the video “Muslim Saladin Retakes Jerusalem.” Then answer the following questions.

1. What happened at Haten and Acre in 1187/1188? Why was this an important victory for the Muslims?

2. How do you think this made the Crusaders feel? Why?

3. Why were Saladin’s actions at the Church of Holy Sepulchre important in trying to keep an open relationship between Christians and Muslims?

4. Why do you think this was called the King’s Crusade?
Read the following excerpt. Then, create a diagram that shows what happened during the Third Crusade.

In 1187, the Holy City of Jerusalem fell to Muslim forces under Saladin. Three important rulers agreed to lead a Third Crusade. Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany (Holy Roman Empire), Richard I (The Lionheart) of England, and Phillip II Augustus, King of France. When members of the Third Crusade arrived in the East in 1189, they encountered problems. Frederick drowned in a local river. The English and French arrived by sea and captured the coastal cities with the aid of their fleets, but were unable to move inland against the Muslim forces. After Phillip went home, Richard was kidnapped and had to negotiate a settlement with Saladin that permitted Christian pilgrims free access to Jerusalem.
Part III: The Children’s Crusade

Read the following description of the Children’s Crusade. Then, create a quick poster to advertise for or against the Children’s Crusade in the space below. Be sure to be persuasive!
Part IV: Effects of the Crusades

Using the passage, the following sheet, and your background knowledge, answer the following questions.

1. How many people died during the Crusades? Why do you think it’s hard to estimate a range?

2. What effects did the Crusades have on the wealth of the Catholic Church?

3. Do you think feudalism would have continued if the Crusades did not happen? Why or why not?

4. What is one way in which the Crusades strengthened the relationship between Muslims and Christians?

5. What is one way in which the relationship between Muslims and Christians worsened?