Borders and Beliefs

Trace how new kingdoms and church networks reshaped western Europe

SS24.8.1 "Analyze the economic, political, and social consequences of the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. 1a Trace the spread of Christianity in Europe and the wider Mediterranean region and outline the organizational structure of the early..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two causes of change, circle two effects on people or borders, and box one way church leaders linked communities; draw an arrow from each cause to an effect it helps explain.

After One Empire, Many Kingdoms

1. In 476 CE, a Germanic commander removed the last western Roman emperor. Yet the empire's western government had been weakening for decades. Roman armies needed money, while tax collections shrank in areas damaged by war. Some trade routes became less safe, so many towns lost business and people relied more on nearby farms. Eastern Roman emperors still ruled from Constantinople, but in the west, a single imperial government no longer settled disputes or protected roads. For a merchant, a journey might now cross lands controlled by several rulers.

2. Germanic peoples had moved into Roman territory for many reasons, including pressure from other groups and the search for safety or land. The Visigoths established a kingdom in much of Hispania, while the Franks gained control of much of Gaul. Their rulers replaced western imperial authority with separate kingdoms, changing Europe's political boundaries. New kings sometimes used Roman laws and officials, but they also depended on warriors who pledged loyalty to them. A farmer might face a new ruler without moving at all; borders changed around communities.

3. Christianity had spread around the Mediterranean through Roman roads, sea routes, and cities before the western empire fell. Over time, missionaries and Christian rulers helped it spread farther across Europe. In the western church, local bishops led groups of churches, and the Bishop of Rome claimed a leading role among them. Councils of Carthage, meetings of bishops in North Africa, discussed church practices and lists of sacred writings. As western political rule broke into kingdoms, this network of church leaders connected Christians across different borders, even though bishops did not govern every kingdom.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could less safe trade routes change life in a western Roman town?

2. How did the movement of Germanic peoples change political boundaries? Use the Visigoths and Franks in your answer.

3. What helped Christianity spread around the Mediterranean before the western empire fell, and what helped it spread farther across Europe later?

4. How could the church connect Christians across new kingdom borders? Include the roles of the Bishop of Rome and the Councils of Carthage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you travel from a town in Gaul to a town in Hispania after western imperial rule ends. Write a short report to someone at home explaining a change in government, an effect on trade or daily life, and a way the church could connect people across the new borders; explain how two of these changes are related.

ANSWER KEY

Borders and Beliefs

GRADE 8 · SS24.8.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two causes of change, circle two effects on people or borders, and box one way church leaders linked communities; draw an arrow from each cause to an effect it helps explain. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could less safe trade routes change life in a western Roman town?	**The town could lose business as trade became harder, and more people might rely on nearby farms.**
2	How did the movement of Germanic peoples change political boundaries? Use the Visigoths and Franks in your answer.	**The Visigoths established a kingdom in much of Hispania, and the Franks gained control of much of Gaul. Their separate kingdoms replaced western imperial rule in those areas.**
3	What helped Christianity spread around the Mediterranean before the western empire fell, and what helped it spread farther across Europe later?	**Roman roads, sea routes, and cities helped it spread around the Mediterranean. Later, missionaries and Christian rulers helped it spread farther across Europe.**
4	How could the church connect Christians across new kingdom borders? Include the roles of the Bishop of Rome and the Councils of Carthage.	**The Bishop of Rome claimed a leading role among western bishops. At the Councils of Carthage, bishops met to discuss practices and lists of sacred writings, helping church leaders maintain connections across borders.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I traveled from Gaul, where Franks controlled much of the land, toward Hispania, where Visigoths had established a kingdom. I crossed between rulers instead of remaining under one western emperor. With some routes less safe, merchants might find fewer customers in towns, while people relied more on nearby farms. In both places, I could meet Christians connected through bishops. Even though political borders divided the region, church leaders could share practices across kingdoms.

Accept other passage-supported explanations of economic and political change. For the report, look for all three requested effects and a clear connection between two of them.