

Name _____

Date _____

Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation

Martin Luther was born in 1483 in Germany. He joined a monastery when he was twenty-one and became a friar. Luther eventually became upset with the Catholic Church because he felt it was more interested in making money than in helping people. He thought that some of the popes acted like ruthless monarchs instead of spiritual leaders.

During a pilgrimage to Rome in 1510, Luther saw priests that were living like royalty instead of like monks. He knew that priests were making money by selling indulgences. An indulgence is a pardon from a priest for sins committed. Some people believed that buying indulgences would get them into heaven in spite of their sins.

Luther believed that the church was not carrying out the teachings outlined in the Bible. He thought that a person could get into heaven by reading the Bible and having faith in God. Based on this notion, he believed that a person did not have to be a member of a church. He also thought that this meant that the Catholic Church, popes, and priests had no real authority. At the time, the Catholic Church was very powerful and discussing Luther's beliefs was risky.

Luther eventually wrote down the things that he felt needed to be changed in the church. Luther's ideas were called the "95 Theses" and were written in 1517. He then nailed his list to a church door in Wittenberg, Germany. The printing press had recently been invented, which helped Luther's theses spread across Germany. His theses came to the attention of the pope in Rome. Luther was condemned by the pope and the emperor. Luther abandoned the Catholic Church and began a new religion, which is now known as Lutheranism.

Other people sided with Luther and protested against the Catholic Church. New churches sprang up and came to be called "Protestant" churches because they were protesting against the Catholic Church. This period of history came to be known as the Protestant Reformation.

Europe soon became split between the Catholics and the Protestants. If not for the printing press, news of Luther's 95 theses would not have spread as quickly and the Protestant Reformation may never have occurred.

Once the Reformation began, the Catholic Church knew that it needed to make changes. Many bishops, nuns, and priests had already been trying to reform the church from within. After the Reformation, a movement began within the church that was known as the Counter-Reformation. Its purpose was to work against the effects of the Protestant Reformation. The Counter-Reformation was the church's attempt to reduce the popularity of Protestantism in Europe.

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Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation (Cont'd)

St. Ignatius of Loyola became one of the leading figures of the Counter-Reformation. St. Ignatius was born in 1491 in Spain. He was a soldier who was wounded in a battle against France. While recovering from his wounds, he began to study religion. He left the military and became a priest.

Ignatius was unlike the corrupt church officials of the time. He lived in poverty and was devoted to self-discipline. He founded the Society of Jesus, which is an order of priests. Members of this society are known as Jesuits. Jesuits often became missionaries around the world. Ignatius' life of poverty and dedication advanced the Counter-Reformation because he was a good example of how the church wanted its members to live.

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Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. A pardon from a priest for sins committed is called:
 - a. a petition
 - b. an indulgence
 - c. a theses
 - d. mass

2. Luther nailed his list to a church door in:
 - a. Rome, Italy
 - b. Hamburg, Germany
 - c. London, England
 - d. Wittenberg, Germany

3. This man became one of the leading figures of the Counter-Reformation:
 - a. Martin Luther
 - b. George Wittenberg
 - c. St. Ignatius of Loyola
 - d. St. Augustine

4. Members of the Society of Jesus were known as:
 - a. Jesusites
 - b. Jesusians
 - c. Jesuits
 - d. Societarians

True or False:

- ___ 5. During a pilgrimage to Rome in 1510, Luther saw priests that were living like royalty instead of like monks.
- ___ 6. After the Reformation, a movement began within the church that was known as the Post-Reformation.
- ___ 7. Luther believed that a person did had to be a member of a church.
- ___ 8. Luther was praised by the pope and the emperor in Rome.

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