**Causes of the Reformation**

**Reformation**

From: Nicole Gilbertson 2016

**History Standards: 7.9.1**

List the causes for the internal turmoil in and weakening of the Catholic church (e.g., tax policies, selling of indulgences).

**CCSS Standards: Writing,** CCSS RH 2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

**Guiding Question:** What abuses in the Catholic Church caused Luther to demand reform?

**Overview of Lesson:**

1. As a whole group, ask students to consider the definition of “reform.” Develop a class definition and offer some examples of contemporary reform.

Ideas and resources:

* Topics for reform: Healthcare reform, water use and conservation, immigration, school reform, Common Core Standards
* Definition of reform (Webster’s Learners Dictionary): to improve (someone or something) by removing or correcting faults, problems, etc.

1. Discuss how ideas of reform are communicated to the public (newspaper, internet, advertising campaigns, posters, movies, speeches, etc.). Link this spread of ideas to a review of the printing press and the significance of this invention for spreading ideas in Europe.
2. Teacher will introduce Martin Luther as a reformer who wanted to address the wrongs and abuses he saw as part of the Catholic Church in this period. Teachers can have students read pages 504-507 “Luther Challenges the Church” in the textbook or watch the video, “Martin Luther Sparks a Revolution” found at the History Channel website:

<http://www.history.com/topics/reformation>

After reading or watching, have students discuss the following questions:

* Who was Luther? What did he do?
* What angered him about the actions of the Catholic Church?
* What reforms did Luther propose? Why did he propose these reforms?

1. Read the excerpts from the *95 Theses*, in groups or as a class have students rephrase each of Luther’s claims, and answer the questions.
2. As an exit ticket, students should answer the lesson question with a claim supported by one piece of evidence from the textbook, video, or *95 Theses.*

**Note:** Students should keep the *95 Theses* graphic organizer and answers to discussion questions for their final assessment. Teachers should collect the exit ticket response for use on day 2.

**Lesson Handouts:** Martin Luther, *95 Theses*

Martin Luther, 95 Theses, or “Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences” 1517, http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/web/ninetyfive.html

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Original Translation | Contemporary Translation | Summary of Luther’s argument (in your own words) |
| 21. Therefore those preachers of indulgences are in error, who say that by the pope's indulgences a man is freed from every penalty, and saved; | 21. The preachers who say a person’s soul is saved through the sale of the Pope’s indulgences is wrong; |  |
| 36. Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon. | 36. Every Christian who is truly sorry for his errors has the right to be forgiven, without buying indulgences. |  |
| 37. Every true Christian, whether living or dead, has part in all the blessings of Christ and the Church; and this is granted him by God, even without letters of pardon. | 37. Every Christian, whether alive or dead, deserves all of the benefits of belief in Jesus Christ and the Church; this is given to him by God, not by members of the Church through the act of a pardon, or indulgences. |  |
| 46. Christians are to be taught that unless they have more than they need, they are bound to keep back what is necessary for their own families, and by no means to squander it on pardons. | 46. The priests should teach Christians that unless they have more money than they need, they should keep their money to spend on their own families and not waste it on buying pardons, or indulgences. |  |

Discussion Questions

What does Luther argue about pardons, or indulgences? Use an example from the *Theses* to support your answer.

Why does Luther believe that pardons are wrong? What evidence does he use to support his claim.

Exit Ticket

What abuses in the Catholic Church caused Luther to demand reform? Answer the question by developing a claim and using evidence from the *95 Theses* to support your answer.