

Key Stage 3

Reform: How Does Religion Change?

LESSONS 1-2: HOW WAS CHRISTIANITY CHANGED FOREVER?

These initial two lessons introduce students to Luther's original objection to the Church, which ultimately led to the Protestant Reformation. This is a highly selective slice of the reasons for reform and the impact of the Reformation. The aim is to introduce students to the big ideas driving reform, to enable them to reflect on change more generally, and to contribute to a rich and textured understanding of Christian belief and practice.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

LESSON 1: A MAN CALLED LUTHER

Students will find out about the reasons for Luther's protest against the established Church and his eventual excommunication. The lesson begins with suggestions for gaining a sense of the centrality of the Church in medieval life, to better understand Luther's determined struggle to reform Christianity. Faith and religion were not extras in Medieval Europe; they lay at the heart of political and community life.

By the end of these lesson students will:

- **know** that the Church and God pervaded all aspects of medieval life in Europe
- **understand** why Luther objected to 'indulgences'
- **reflect on** what Luther stood up for

At the end of this lesson students will be able to answer the question:

'What did Luther stand up for?'

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1: THE CHURCH IN MEDIEVAL LIFE

LESSON CONTENT

- a. Start by painting a picture of medieval life, which was hard but colourful and communal, by using all or some of the following stimuli:
- First page of this BBC history resource: www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zm4mn39/revision/1
Note that society was separated into ‘those who fight, those who pray and those who work’. Discuss how society is grouped today – into rich and poor, by occupation, culture or ethnicity, etc.
 - This BBC History clip explains the feudal system: www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zdvdm3/video. God was seen to be the source of all power in this system.
 - Show images of medieval monasteries, towns and villages, such as an engraving of the town Luther was born in: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mansfeld#/media/File:Mansfeld-1650-Merian.jpg, the city where he studied and entered the monastic life: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erfurt#/media/File:Schedel_erfurt.jpg, or his monastery at Erfurt: www.luther2017.de/en/experience/places/the-augustinian-monastery-in-erfurt/
- b. Ask students to put their heads down and listen to the Guided Story found on pages 7–8, describing Luther’s journey to become a monk.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- a. These stimuli are suggested to help students understand that religion was at the heart of medieval life, which helps them understand what Luther risked by standing up to the Church.

2: LUTHER'S 95 THESES

LESSON CONTENT

- a. Put students into groups of four. Print the 'Luther Mystery Squares' on p. 9, cut the information into squares and place inside an envelope for each group. Ask groups to use the information to answer the question: how did a university lecture notice change Christianity forever?
- b. Give groups time to read and discuss. Listen to answers to the question around the room. Ask groups to identify three key pieces of information that sum up the story. You are looking for understanding of Luther's objection to indulgences.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- a. Scholars are not sure if Luther did announce his protest like this, but the image of a monk nailing a notice to a church door has caught the popular imagination.

3: WHAT DID LUTHER STAND UP FOR?

LESSON CONTENT

- a. Read the article, 'Luther Burns!' on p. 10, as a class. Ask students to identify what stance the article takes towards Luther. Does the author seem to approve or disapprove of Luther's actions? Ask if the article seems to support the established Church. Identify whether this article supports Luther, or the established Church.
- b. Give groups time to answer the 'Luther Burns!' questions on p. 11. Listen to groups' answers to question 4: 'Summarise what Luther was standing up for in ten words'.
- c. As a class answer the question: what did Luther stand up for?

FURTHER INFORMATION

- a. This article covers a turbulent period in Luther's life, 1517– 1521. The article is written from the point of view of the established Church, which we now call the Catholic Church, but which in Luther's day was the only church in Europe.
- b. You could set unanswered questions for homework.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

LESSON 2: FAITH OR WORKS?

In the previous lesson students found out about Martin Luther's sixteenth-century protest against the established Church in Europe. Today we distinguish this established Church, or the Catholic Church, from the churches following Luther, or the Protestant churches. In the previous lesson students read a newspaper with a strong establishment bias, and picked out a view positive towards Luther. In this lesson students will read two more articles and identify any bias, as well as draw out two views of events covered; what we would now call the Catholic and Protestant views.

By the end of these lesson students will:

- **know** a definition of the Reformation
- **understand** the difference in views of 'faith' and 'works' in reaching God
- **reflect on** how events are viewed differently depending on different viewpoints

Students will be able to answer the question: 'How was Christianity changed forever?'

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1: REPORTING THE REFORMATION

LESSON CONTENT

- Recap the view identified in the 'Luther Burns!' article from last lesson (p. 10). Ask students to remind you if the article supported Luther or the traditional Church.
- Read the article on p. 12, 'Luther's Struggle', to the class. Give groups time to answer the questions. Once groups have finished, ask them to suggest whether this article is pro- or anti-Luther, and to give reasons why from the text.
- Read the article on p. 14, 'Return to Eden?' to the class. As before, give groups time to answer the questions before asking for their suggestions as to which view the article supports.
- Draw two columns on the board. Write at the top of the columns the phrase, 'How can Christians reach God?' Ask students to enter information, either in groups or as a class, reflecting: 1) the Protestant answer to this question and 2) the traditional, or Catholic, answer.
- Ask groups to summarise the ideas in each column into one short answer to the question (max. ten words).

FURTHER INFORMATION

- 'Luther Burns!' supports the traditional Church.
- 'Luther's Struggle' supports Luther's view.
- 'Return to Eden?' is balanced, presenting both sides fairly.
- You are looking for words like 'faith' and 'works' and an understanding of the support offered by the priesthood, as opposed to individual devotion.

2: TWEETING THE REFORMATION

LESSON CONTENT

- a. Hand out the 'Tweet Sheet' on p. 15. Give students a minute to read over the events in squares. Explain that students will consolidate their learning by Tweeting these key events.

To model the task, ask the class to vote for one event on the Tweet Sheet. Make sure all students know what the event entails. Ask groups to compose a Tweet of no more than 140 characters to report on the event, from EITHER a Catholic OR a Protestant viewpoint.

Come back together and listen to several versions. Ask those listening to identify whether the event is viewed from a Catholic or Protestant viewpoint – suggest students look out for whether the event is viewed positively or not, or how people involved are presented.

- b. Students in groups now choose as many events as they want and compose their Tweets of 140 characters from either a Protestant or Catholic viewpoint. They do not have to stick to the same viewpoint each time.

Extension: create hashtags for each Tweet.

- c. Pass the Tweet Sheets around, ask other students to identify the view of the Tweets; Protestant or Catholic?
- d. Vote for the three Protestant and three Catholic Tweets which best sum up Protestant and Catholic positions.
- e. Explain that Luther's protest set off the Reformation. Using the information studied so far, ask groups to define 'Reformation', as if for a dictionary. Look up three different dictionary definitions of Reformation and compare to groups' attempts. Adjust class definitions if necessary.

Extension: create a definition of the Reformation from a Catholic or Protestant perspective.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- a. The Tweet Sheet identifies key Reformation events studied so far. Its purpose is to consolidate the significance of these events as well as explore how the same situation can be viewed differently when taking different viewpoints.

- b. Suggest students decide how a Protestant would view the event, and how a Catholic would view the event, by referring to the columns of Protestant and Catholic views created in activities 1d and e.

- e. E.g. www.dictionary.com
www.merriam-webster.com
www.oxforddictionaries.com

3: HOW WAS CHRISTIANITY CHANGED FOREVER?

LESSON CONTENT

- a. Ask for evidence of the ways modern Christianity is changing. Listen to students' ideas. Ask students to what degree they think change comes from within religion or without?
- b. Answer the key question as a written exercise: 'How was Christianity changed forever?'

FURTHER INFORMATION

- a. Such as women bishops, or Christian banners on gay pride marches.
- b. Include keywords: indulgences, salvation, faith, works, Protestant Church, Catholic Church.

Luther guided story

<<Put your heads down and listen...>>

Imagine you are riding a horse through a mountain pass. It is Germany, the year is 1505. You are 23 years old. You live in a bustling town but to travel between the towns and villages you take roads through the open country, villages and farms. As your horse trots on you pull your cloak about you. A storm is building up. You are becoming spattered with rain and are keen to reach home before the storm breaks. You are cold and weary. Your horse needs a warm stable and a good feed. As you climb into the mountains the rain feels icy and the wind whips up.

You are returning to your hometown after a spell at university. Your father sent you to study law, thinking it would make you a rich man when you graduate. You would hesitate to disobey your father but you are miserable studying law. The university simply seems to be a place for rich young men to drink beer all night. You are not interested in the law or the incessant parties but have recently become interested in the teachings of some theology professors. You have been spending time with them discussing the Bible and philosophy. In fact, you have been neglecting your studies in law and your father will be furious when the tutors inform him.

Your new theology teachers have led you to question all forms of authority, including the Church and the great philosophers. You have found this exciting, but recently it has not satisfied you. What you really want to know about is God and how humans can give their minds, hearts and loyalty

totally to God. But your theology teachers dismiss this question, only giving you more dry, dead philosophy.

You know there is a God, of course you do, everyone does. God is everywhere and all life belongs to God. But knowing this as a statement of fact doesn't help you to understand the mind of this creator and judge who holds the keys to heaven or hell. Must you obey your father to please God? Or your teachers? Or the Church? Or must you reach God directly?

Suddenly your horse stops, you reach down to pat his flank, feeling him trembling. The scrubby trees are waving madly in the wind which whips rain into your eyes and seems to scream through the mountain. Your horse does not want to go on, you don't blame him, but you must reach home. Suddenly a jagged burst of lightning flashes and illuminates the path and rocky walls. Your horse bolts forward, you cling on, both trembling all over. After a few paces your horse rears up, almost throwing you to the ground. Another burst of lightning lights up the mountain. You see the whites of your horse's eyes in the flash. He is terrified. He rears again, throwing you this time, and gallops away into the darkness. Although a rational part of your brain knows this is only bad weather, most of your brain is utterly terrified. In the dark and rain you huddle against a rock, too scared to search for your horse, paralysed. When the thunder rumbles out over the valley you sink to your knees in utter terror. You start to pray. You call

the name of St Anne, mother of Mary, asking for God's protection. You offer the only thing you have to give to God: yourself.

Your prayer seems to give you courage and you set off wildly into the night. Soon you reach the top of the pass and head downwards. You scramble down, repeating your promise to God, your cloak whipping around you. As the ground evens out the thunder and lightning seem to recede. A gentle rain still spatters around you, but the wind has dropped and you no longer fear for your life. At the bottom of the pass your horse is stamping his feet as he waits. Your heart is beating like it will

burst out of your chest and you feel boiling hot even in the icy rain.

On horseback once more, with nothing lost and no bones broken, you investigate your promise. Although you made it in a moment of fear, you find you still mean what you said. You know all life belongs to God, and it seems very sensible now to devote your life to serving God.

Your father will hit the roof, but you feel strangely calm as your horse trots into the outskirts of the town. You will simply have to explain that no one can change your mind. God has made the decision for you.

Luther Mystery squares

<p>In 1517 Martin Luther, a friar who taught Theology at a German university, posted his lecture points on a notice board.</p>	<p>‘Indulgences’ = money, goods or work accepted by a priest to lessen the time spent in purgatory.</p>	<p>Purgatory = the state of waiting for souls who are not destined for hell but are not good enough yet for heaven.</p>
<p>A network of churches and monasteries maintained the Church’s influence in every town and village.</p>	<p>The Church in Rome held huge power over the kings and princes of Europe.</p>	<p>It was believed that souls could wait in purgatory for a thousand years.</p>
<p>Luther’s protest inspired many others. New Protestant churches formed all over Europe.</p>	<p>Luther objected to indulgences in his 95 Theses. He argued that one could not buy a place in heaven.</p>	<p>Luther argued that the Church in Rome had become bloated and corrupt.</p>
<p>Luther argued that ordinary people needed faith in God alone to reach heaven, not the interference of a priest.</p>	<p>The Church threw Luther out in 1520 for refusing to retract his criticism.</p>	<p>Luther went on to found a new church; the Protestant Church, after the period of protest.</p>

Luther Burns! **Wittenberg, 1521**

Martin Luther, 'brother Martin' no more, was kicked out of the Church entirely by his Holiness Leo X, on January 3rd of this year of 1521. We have received reports from Wittenberg that the former friar has publically BURNT the papal letter confirming his excommunication!

Who is this errant, heretical priest? It was just over three years ago that Luther, teaching at the University of Wittenberg, accused the Church of corruption. Luther's fans report that he nailed his 95 arguments to the door of a church, but this has never been confirmed. However, the talkative priest certainly had 95 points to make, which we reported on in the summer of 1517.

Across the whole empire good Christians are making donations to the Church in Rome to support building works on the great chapel of St Peter, for the glory of God and the benefit of all believers. The Pope has affirmed that such indulgences would lessen the time a Christian might spend in purgatory, and could even help someone on their way to paradise. However Luther objected, calling the Church corrupt for taking people's money. Luther's objection was that only God could know if we are fit for

heaven, and no amount of donations made to the Church could change that. However we are assured by our holy father the Pope that all good works, including the donating of indulgences, can help move our souls towards God.

The problem with Luther is he will not stop. Men have been burnt at the stake for less. Does he have no fear? Readers will remember that in 1519 Luther publically argued that the Church could make mistakes and the Pope was not infallible! The Pope is the representative of St Peter on Earth and his presence is a gift from God. Luther seems to think that simple, uneducated people can work out for themselves how to please God, without the loving guidance of the Church. This might be possible for a trained priest and theologian like Luther, but what of the ordinary peasant who cannot read German, let alone Latin or Greek? Would Luther remove for them the support and nurture of the Church?

The man clearly has no fear. He would not retract his challenge to the authority of the Church and has lost everything; his position as a friar, his job as a teacher, his church, his community, his path to God. He stands alone.

‘Luther Burns!’ Questions

1. Why did Luther accuse the Church of corruption?
2. What is his objection to indulgences?
3. Why doesn't Luther think ordinary people need the Church?
4. Summarise what Luther was standing up for in ten words:

Extension: what is the double meaning of the headline?

Luther's Struggle **Wittenberg, 1524**

Since being excommunicated in 1521, Martin Luther hasn't stopped. When this paper interviewed the courageous former friar and teacher after his excommunication, Luther repeated the words he had given in his defence to the Church: 'here I stand, I can do no other'. His brave words reflect his refusal to be silenced.

But Luther doesn't see it as bravery, he sees his protest as simply the only option. We caught up with him in Wittenberg, after the publication of his popular German Bible. We discussed why he made the translation and his reaction to its popularity. Luther is delighted that so many ordinary people want to hear the Bible themselves in a language they understand. For Luther it is simple; ultimately everyone will stand before God ready to be judged. How can they be judged worthy or unworthy if they cannot understand the words of our Lord? Luther cannot accept that the Church continues to force German people to listen to the Bible in Latin, a language they do not understand. It is a matter of their salvation, and for that matter he cannot rest.

Some may argue with Luther that priests and the Church have the ordinary folk's best interests at heart, and they are trained to educate and guide them to salvation. The priest studies Theology in order to guide his flock, the schoolmaster teaches the village children, the farmers provide

wheat and cattle. It is simple division of labour. Luther's real fear is that lazy and corrupt priests do not adequately educate their flock, risking their eternal damnation. For something as important as salvation, people must be self-reliant.

Luther isn't the only priest asking these questions. The Czech Priest **Jan Hus** argued in his pulpit that the priests of Rome were becoming lazy and corrupt and also spoke out against indulgences. Hus was burnt as a heretic in 1415. Hus was influenced by England's **John Wycliffe**, a priest and Theology professor who also attacked the Church in England for being too interested in money, riches and power. Like Luther, Wycliffe translated large parts of the New Testament into the local language, English. Like Luther, he argued people need direct contact with the scriptures themselves, rather than through the corrupt and greedy priesthood. He was declared a heretic in 1415. After he died, his bones were dug up and burnt, and the ashes thrown into a river, away from consecrated land.

It seems the questions asked by Hus, Wycliffe and now Luther will not go away. Why should priests mediate between individuals and God? Why can't Christians hear the scripture and pray to God in their own words? If we are judged as individuals, why are Christians not permitted to think as individuals? The debate continues.

‘Luther’s Struggle’ Questions

1. Why did Luther translate the New Testament into German?
2. Why could it be risky for ordinary people to rely on priests to mediate between them and God?
3. Why might some people find comfort in a priest’s guidance in matters of religion?
4. What did Luther risk in standing up to the Church?

Return to Eden? **Geneva, 1542**

It has been 20 years since Luther's protest against the Church and 'Protestant' movements are still popping up all over the Christian world. Here we report on a new community in Geneva founded by the Lutheran sympathiser John Calvin.

Over the years the debate has been fiercest around the question of 'faith' or 'works'. As readers will recognise, these are opposing views of how humans can gain a place with God. We know as Christians that salvation is possible, but because the exact route is not clear different opinions flourish.

The Church in Rome has always taught that Christians earn their place in heaven through their 'works'; prayer, obedience to the Church, pilgrimage, charity and the buying of indulgences. However Luther and Calvin argue that it is only through 'faith' that we can justify our worthiness to God. Individual Christians must show God their devotion, without a priest getting in the way. They argue that the Church risks peoples' chances of reaching God and heaven, if corrupt priests and empty ritual stand between them and God.

Calvin's Protestant community in Geneva is an attempt to live according to Protestant principles. How is it different to a traditional community? Calvin has created a new set of duties for ministers: to teach, to care for the poor, sick and elderly and to provide the sacraments. He is trying to empower people with their own understanding, so they can be guided by their own conscience as to what is right. Calvin wants his people to understand the words of scripture for themselves, for their own faith journey.

Calvin is convinced he has created something new, but not everyone wants change. People who prefer to stick to the traditional ways find the Protestant reforms quite scary; they understand the idea of proving to God they are worthy of heaven through their good 'works'. The Pope is the representative of St Peter on Earth, who was Jesus' favoured disciple. Traditionalists prefer to rely on the authority they know and trust rather than take risks. Is there a future for the new Protestant way? This depends on confidence in 'faith' alone, in following your own conscience, without a mediator. One thing is for certain, the Protestant presence is growing.

‘Return to Eden?’ Questions

1. What names are given to the two opposing views of how humans can gain a place with God after death?
2. How can Christians earn a place in heaven through their good ‘works’?
3. What authority is invested in the Pope?
4. Why could ‘faith’ alone be seen as the only reliable way to God?
5. How did Calvin attempt to empower his community?

Tweet Sheet

Luther posts notice objecting to indulgences	Luther excommunicated	Luther publically burns Papal notice of his excommunication

Luther’s German Bible published	Jan Hus burnt as a heretic	Wycliffe publishes English Bible

Calvin founds Protestant community in Geneva	Church declares: good works enable salvation	Faith alone can ensure salvation