

Follow-up Discussion

- Explain the nature of the Trinity from both the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic perspectives. How does this view fit in with a monotheistic view of God?
- Describe the strengths and weaknesses of having a hierarchical church organization. Is this type of structure necessary? Is there an alternative? Explain.
- What prompted the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325 C.E.? What resulted from this council? Whose position did the bishops endorse? Explain.
- Looking at history, speculate on the likelihood of the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches seeking reunification in the future. Explain.
- Christianity has its roots in Judaism, yet historically there have been numerous conflicts between these groups (i.e. the Inquisitions, the Holocaust). Make an argument as to why this may be and support it with historical evidence.

Follow-up Activities

- Have students examine stained glass windows, paintings and sculptures that are typical of various Christian churches (e.g. Cathedral at Canterbury, England; Cathedral of Notre Dame, France; Pisa Cathedral, Italy; Ljeviska, Serbia and Gracanica, Serbia). Then, have them research and present the role of art and architecture in Christianity and its impact on the Renaissance both in Eastern and Western Europe.
- Map and diagram the four major crusades along with each country's religious affiliation at the time. Have students compare and contrast this map to a present-day map of eastern and western Europe. Have them suggest and present a list of similarities and differences between the past and the present with regard to national boundaries, religious conflicts and current events (draw attention to Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia).
- Develop a chart listing the important feast days within the Catholic or Orthodox Church, the time of year they occur, the history behind them and the traditions associated with each.
- Divide the class into two groups. Have each group research and present the religious rituals and practices in daily life of both Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christianity.

Internet Resources

<http://ra.nilenet.com/~russmonk/russorth.htm>

Russian Orthodox Christianity — Includes historical information, dates on the Julian Calendar, a description of worship and more.

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www.geocities.com/Athens/7076/orthodox.html

What Is Orthodox Christianity? — An excellent description of the theology, doctrine and history of Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

<http://crusades.boisestate.edu/>

History of the Crusades — A fully virtual course offered for college credit through Boise State University containing information about each of the major Crusades, general history and related topics.

www.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/encyclp.htm

The Catholic Encyclopedia — Notre Dame's Jacques Maritain Center presents articles from the Catholic Encyclopedia.

Suggested Print Resources

- Broderick, Robert C. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1987.
- Brown, Stephen F. *Christianity: Facts on File*, 1991
- Clendenin, Danile B. *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective*. Baker House Books, 1994.
- Dues, Greg. *Catholic Customs and Traditions*. Twenty-Third Publishers, 1998.
- Lossky, Vladimir. *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997.
- Nardo, Don. Ed. *The Rise of Christianity*. Greenhaven Press, 1988.
- Ware, Kallistes T. *The Orthodox Way*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995.

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ORTHODOX AND ROMAN CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY

The study of world religion is the examination of the specific beliefs, customs and traditions of a particular religion as well as its impact on world culture and history. The *Religions of the World* video series and its accompanying Teacher's Guides are designed to supplement World Cultures and History curriculum. These teaching aids are meant to invite classroom study and dialogue and challenge students to make connections between the past and the present. Questions and insights are likely to develop and will reveal striking similarities and vast differences among the world's major religions as well as the unique perspective of its many individual cultures.

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Historical Overview

Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christianity have their roots in the first century of the Common Era and are intrinsically tied to the development of world history. From the public ministry of Jesus to the legendary battles of the Crusades, examine the interwoven histories of these two distinct branches of Christianity. Through the centuries, the practices, customs and traditions of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians have diverged radically. Only recently have these two branches of Christianity made overtures to heal the rift between them that has lasted into the 20th century. Today, there are over one billion people throughout the world who follow the teachings of Orthodox or Roman Catholic Christianity.

Time Line

30 C.E. — The death of Christ in Jerusalem and his Resurrection; these events date the beginning of Christianity.

49 C.E. — The Council of Jerusalem, the first Church Council, determines that converted gentiles do not have to fully practice Judaism in order to be Christian.

70 C.E. — The Romans destroy the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, which marks a shift in the religious focus of Christianity elsewhere.

135 C.E. — Jews are banned from Jerusalem, thereby initiating the concept of a “New Israel,” with Christians believing they are to replace the Jews as God’s chosen people.

312 C.E. — Constantine becomes a Christian.

324 C.E. — Constantine becomes the sole emperor of the Roman Empire. Shortly thereafter, he founds a new city, east on the Bosphorus River, which he calls Constantinople.

325 C.E. — The first great Ecumenical Council held by Roman Catholics at Nicea. This council settles questions on the nature of the Trinity.

364 C.E. — The formal split of the Roman Empire into two parts by Constantine. This division eventually leads to a split in Christianity; the eastern portion becomes the Orthodox Catholic Church and the western part becomes the Roman Catholic Church.

410 C.E. — Visigoths conquer Rome. In the absence of little political power or unity in the West, the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, begins to exert more and more religious and secular power.

787 C.E. — The Second Council of Nicea settles the controversy over icons.

800 C.E. — Charlemagne becomes the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and is crowned by Pope Leo III.

863 C.E. — Communication is broken off between the heads of the western and eastern branches of the Catholic church.

1054 C.E. — The great schism begins as the Pope of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicate each other’s branch of Catholicism. This breach endures for over nine hundred years.

1095 C.E. — The Crusades begin as western Europe attempts to save both Constantinople and the Holy Land from the control of expanding Islamic influences. There are four major crusades, and each ultimately fail.

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1204 C.E. — The Roman Catholic crusaders take over Constantinople, the holy city for Orthodox Catholic Christianity.

1453 C.E. — The Ottoman Turks capture Constantinople. The power of the Orthodox Catholic Church then shifts to Russia, where Moscow is known as the Third Rome.

1521 C.E. — Martin Luther is excommunicated as the Protestant Reformation begins within the Roman Catholic Church.

1563 C.E. — The Council of Trent meets in response to the Reformation and establishes the overall direction of the Roman Catholic faith until the Second Vatican Council in 1962 C.E.

1870 C.E. — The First Vatican Council meets to officially sanction the doctrine of Papal Infallibility.

1962 C.E. — The Second Vatican Council reforms both the spirit and direction of the Roman Catholic Church, banning anti-Semitism, encouraging the use of local languages in the liturgies and stressing ecumenical efforts.

1965 C.E. — The Great Schism of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches ends with the lifting of the mutual excommunication between the two churches.

Vocabulary

Jesus Christ — A teacher and prophet who lived in the first century of this era and whose life and teachings form the basis of Christianity. Christians believe Jesus to be the son of God, the Messiah.

Protestant — One who protests the actions of another individual, group or institution. In this case, it applies to the movement against the Roman Catholic Church in Europe during the Reformation.

Pope — The Bishop of Rome and the successor to St. Peter, who has become the pre-eminent bishop within the Roman Catholic Church.

Episcopal — The network of bishops who serve as successors to Christ’s Apostles as both leaders and teachers of the Faithful.

Diocese — A church community of a specific geographic region under the leadership of a bishop.

Messiah — The Expected One who will free and elevate the Jews to a new level of devotion in practicing God’s law. The Christians believe Jesus Christ is the Messiah. The Jews still await the coming of the Messiah.

Hellenists — Individuals trained in the philosophical and theological heritage of Greece. Their conversions to Christianity greatly influenced the development and interpretation of early Christianity.

Gentiles — Individuals who are non-Jews, many of whom convert to Christianity.

Gnosticism — A religious tradition from Greece which stresses the spiritual over the physical. The term comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning “knowledge.”

Heresy — A belief or action determined by the majority of believers to be outside the accepted limits and interpretations of the approved religious theology.

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Icon — A painting or representation of a sacred figure that helps focus the believer’s attention on suitable religious thoughts during prayer.

Inquisition — An inquiry to detect and identify heretics in order to purify them of their incorrect beliefs.

Infallibility — The Roman Catholic Church doctrine specifying that God, through the Holy Spirit, will not permit the Pope to make a theological error when speaking on matters of faith or morals from the throne of St. Peter in Rome and in an official and formal capacity as the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Have students develop a web or chart of what they know about Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christianity. Discuss how much the class knows about each and what they should focus on during the program.
- Use an outline map of the world to color in those modern countries who are predominately Catholic, labeling Roman Catholic countries “RC” and Orthodox countries “OC.”

Focus Questions

1. Which major events tie the years 1054 C.E. and 1965 C.E. together?
2. What are the three main branches of Christianity today?
3. What are the main issues that separate the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches? What are the main similarities between them?
4. What was the relationship between the Jewish faith and Christianity at the time of Christ?
5. Why did the Romans persecute the Christians?
6. What are two monumental actions made by Constantine and how are they significant?
7. What was the Arian heresy? How did the bishops respond? What was Athanasius’ argument?
8. How did the fall of Rome to the Visigoths in 410 C.E. change the growth and evolution of the Roman Catholic Church?
9. What are the Orthodox and Roman Catholic views on the concept of the Trinity?
10. What are the two initial goals of the Crusades? What are three significant results of the Crusades?
11. Who are the Cistercians, the Dominicans and the Franciscans? Why are these groups, among others, important to the Roman Catholic Church?
12. Why did the Roman Catholic hierarchy come under attack after the 13th century?
13. What is the significance of the Inquisition?
14. What did the Council of Trent decide for the Roman Catholic Church?
15. What does Papal Infallibility mean?

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