Medici

Godfathers of the Renaissance

Program 3: The Medici Popes

Grades: 6-12

Subject(s): History, Language Arts, Visual Arts

Estimated time of Completion: at least two 55-minute periods

Objectives:
- Understand Italian politics and warfare of the Renaissance
- Understand the origins and effects of the Protestant Reformation
- Contrast Renaissance and Medieval attitudes
- View film and understand how images and sounds are used to convey information and mood
- Use reading strategies to focus viewing
- Use writing as a way to learn
- Participate meaningfully in class discussions

Materials Needed:
- Copy of Part 3 of *The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance* (To purchase visit PBS Shop for Teachers).
- Viewing Guide 3
- Comparison Chart: Medieval Europe and Renaissance Italy
- Venn diagram on Characteristics/Skills of Rulers
- Map of Vatican

Procedures:

1. Introduce the program by asking these questions before showing the film. (Keep this short so that you can finish the film in one day if possible.)

Connecting Questions:
- Why do people today become religious leaders?
- Why would Lorenzo de Medici want his son and nephew to become high officials in the church?
- What would you do if your parents decided that you were to become a religious leader, regardless or your interests or ability?
- What religious leaders in the U.S. have abused their positions?

- What would it be like to live in a U.S. in which Congress or president could tell you what religion you had to practice and what you must believe?

Focusing Questions:
- In what ways did the Medici popes continue the family's talent for art patronage? What was different? What effect did art patronage have on the effectiveness of the papacy?
- What mistakes did Popes Leo X and Clemens VII make? What effects did their mistakes have on Florence? The church? Europe?
- How were political decisions made in Italy during the Renaissance? By whom?

4. Show the film. Depending on time constraints, either (a) complete the entire film in one period and have students complete the viewing guide for homework or as they watch the film or (b) break up the film into two parts and discuss the film midway with discussion and completion of the viewing guide at midpoint and at the end.

5. Either in whole class discussion or small discussion groups that report back to the rest of the class or as an individual written assignment, have students answer these closure questions:

Closure Questions:
- Would you answer the focusing questions now?
- What questions do you have?
- How was Niccolo Machiavelli's political handbook, "The Prince", influenced by what was going on in Italy and in his own life?
- What is the connection between Machiavelli and the Medici?
- What have you learned about papal elections during this period?

Assessment:
1.   Observation of responses to class discussions.
2.   Written responses to viewing guide, Venn diagram, and closure questions.
3.   Products created for any extension activities.

Extensions and Adaptations:
1.   Have students make lists of leadership positions in the U.S. (CEOs, heads of labor unions, facilitators of cooperative learning groups, etc.). Then have students complete a Venn diagram. In one circle put characteristics/skills that people want in a good leader. In the other circle put characteristics/skills that a leader needs to stay in power. In the intersecting sections, put characteristics/skills that are needed both to wield power well and to keep power. Discuss Machiavelli's attitude toward using and keeping power. How has the situation changed today?
2.   Have students view "A Child's Machiavelli: As If Le Petite Prince were written by

Machiavelli". (Available here) Have them make a list of Machiavelli's main ideas based on the Web site.

3.   Have students read one of the many etext versions of The Prince and summarize Machiavelli's main precepts. Have groups do summaries of specific chapters or sections and then combine them.

4.   Have groups do comparisons of presidential elections and scandals in the past 50 years looking for examples of Machiavellian behavior. You might also have them look for examples of times when Machiavellian ruthlessness would have been more effective. (One example: Barone, Michael. "Bill, Meet Niccolo." U. S. News & World Report 18 Sept. 1999.)

5.   Noemie Emery's review of Machiavelli on Modern Leadership: "Why Machiavelli's Iron Rules Are as Timely and Important Today as Five Centuries Ago by Michael A. Ledeen" (National Review 26 July 1999;go to an online version. This discusses Ledeen's acceptance that evil deeds can lead to good outcomes while the moral act may create evil—as Machiavelli suggests. Ledeen cites examples from contemporary history. For example, President Jimmy Carter's refusal to use assassination as a tool against terrorists because he considered it murder resulted in many innocent people being killed in bombing raids. Have students read the review and report on ways modern history justifies Machiavelli's ideas.

6.   The Catholic Church condemned Machiavelli's works. Argue that this is or is not the reason: The church in those days was against unification since its power both at home and abroad rested on control of Italy, which was easier if Italy was in turmoil.

7.   Take the Who Are You? quiz on the PBS Web site. Discuss what the terms actually means and the ways in which you agree and disagree with Machiavelli's description of a savvy ruler.

8.   Machiavelli's writing shows the Renaissance spirit because his work is sprinkled with Latin phrases and examples from Classical sources. He also uses a scientific, medical analogy when he refers to cutting out seditious citizens from the body politic. In what other ways does Machiavelli's work show the influence of the Renaissance?

9.   Conduct research on the Vatican Museum and art collection and complete a virtual tour of the Vatican. Go to the Vatican Web site. The material can be overwhelming. It is best to have students focus on one artist, one room, one type of art, one subject, etc. You might also give students a map of the floor of the Vatican and have them plot their trip as they move around, noting their favorites or pieces associated with the Medici or pieces by particular artists, etc. (Without parameters, the tour will turn into a whirlwind clicking of the mouse with nothing really noticed or savored.) A copy of the map provided by the Vatican at its Web site is included. You may right click on the map at the virtual tour and copy the map, then zoom in and print it for your students. Print further instructions on the map before copying it for students. You might stipulate which sections are to be visited; provide lines where students are to write in the name of one piece from each section, etc.—depending on what your purposes are.

10.   Visit the Uffizi Palace, which is now an art gallery housing the Medici collection. Go to the Uffizi Web site.

11.   Design a diptych or triptych (panel with two or three folds with related paintings on each panel) or a painting with sections like the panels of the Sistine Ceiling of pivotal events in your life, the life of your family, or the history of the your state or the U.S.

12.   Design a webquest or a virtual tour, using the Internet. For example, students could use tourist Web sites to plan a trip to Florence (Firenze). Those sites also include links to museums and local historical attractions. They could design a virtual museum trip to see their favorite art attractions in Florence or go on such a virtual tour already on the web.

Go to the Teaching Links which include brief synopses; the links work now but the urls may not be functioning by next week.

The best thing to do is to go to trackstar.hprtec.org/. You can do a search to find links to sites of interest to you, then copy and paste them into your own track that you establish for free. You can also add instructions for students. You simply give your students the track number; they can access the links you have set for them. You can also have students design a track around a specific topic.

To find out more about the National Standards applicable to this educational plan click here.