

Picture Books of The Past:

Celebrating M&G's Collection

The High Renaissance: The Age of Man



homeschool
Days

To the Parents:

Today's lesson focused on the High Renaissance, the period between 1500 and 1520. However, since artistic developments are also influenced by the broader culture, the timeline below focuses on the Italian Renaissance, which brought an "explosion of knowledge" in antiquity, astronomy, medicine, religion, mathematics, music--and, of course, art. This rebirth of knowledge was largely due to the printing press. Books suddenly became readily available; as a result, literacy increased. In addition, painters and inventors were now able to print visual images of their work for others to study and refine.

As historian Margaret Aston notes in *Panorama of the Renaissance*, "The invention of printing changed the whole intellectual world forever. Without it, classical learning would have been confined to a coterie of scholars; the reformation would have been a quarrel between theologians; popular literature would have been impossible; scientific discoveries would have languished unread."

Fun Activities

- Visit David Hawcock's website to learn more about [Leonardo's Working Inventions Pop-Up Book](#).
- You can also explore several [3-D interactive models of Leonardo da Vinci's inventions](#) at PBS.
- Enjoy this M&G video on [Martin Luther's Musical Legacy](#).

Due to the changing nature of web resources, M&G strongly urges you as the parent to preview these sites before your child accesses them. The fact that these sites are available on this handout does not imply that M&G endorses their content from the standpoint of morals, philosophy, theology, or scientific hypotheses.



Exploring The Renaissance!

(1450-1520)

Rediscovering Antiquity

As noted in the lesson, the brilliant innovations and dazzling creations of da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael highlight the lofty ideals of Renaissance humanism, including an admiration for classical learning. The most famous pictorial illustration of the era's admiration of secular antiquity is **Raphael's *Stanza della Signatura***. Click [HERE](#) for a closer look at this fascinating work.

1513–Power Politics



One reason for the decline of the Catholic Church during this period was the unholy alliance between politics and religion. The papacy became a political office to be bartered for power and prestige. The secular rulers of government were no better. Life “at the top” was uncertain at best and no one knew that better than

Niccolo Machiavelli who at the height of his political influence in the Florentine government was summarily dismissed in 1512 and exiled when his rivals from the Medici family returned to power.

His earnest hope of returning to political office never came to fruition. However, during his retirement he produced the classic for which he is remembered—a **political satire** titled, *The Prince*. In this work “he argued that if a ruler wished to retain

1450–A Renaissance Man

Leon Battista Alberti

represents the **ideal Renaissance man** one who is skilled in all the arts. He was a gifted and prolific writer whose books covered an astonishing range of topics, including architecture, archeology, mathematics, ethics, sculpture, and painting. He also wrote comedies, played musical instruments, sculpted and painted. But his greatest contribution was his book on painting titled *De Pictura* which contains the first written exposition on the principles of perspective. It was this work that provided Renaissance painters with a theoretical background that enabled them to achieve the mastery of space we still admire in their backgrounds, buildings, and overall composition.



1517–The Reformation

Martin Luther was born November 10, 1483, in Eisleben, Germany, to Hans and Margarita Luther. According to biographers, his first spiritual crisis occurred while he was a student at Erfurt University.

On July 2, in 1505, while traveling back to school following a visit home, a terrific storm came up, and

power, his decision-making should be based on the expediency of actual circumstance, not on moral or ethical ideals” (Margeret Aston, *Panorama of the Renaissance*).

According to Machiavelli, “Any man who tries to be good all the time is bound to come to ruin among the great number who are not good. Hence a prince who wants to keep his authority must learn how not to be good, and use that knowledge, or refrain from using it, as necessity requires.” (Machiavelli, *The Prince*)

1543 - Heliocentric Theory



While in Rome Polish astronomer **Nicolaus Copernicus** observed a lunar eclipse. This event set him on a course of study that eventually inspired his **groundbreaking model of the universe** which shows the planets rotating around the sun—not the earth.

Although this idea (called the Heliocentric theory) can be traced back to the Greeks, it was not accepted by the Catholic Church at the time. Nevertheless, Copernicus’ model began to take hold and eventually became widely accepted.

To learn more, click [HERE](#) and check out *Journal of Discovery* by Peter Riley, published by Silver Dolphin Books, Pop-up edition.

M&G Educational Mission:

Through tours, events, and publications, the Museum & Gallery seeks to partner with educators in fulfilling all of the National Visual Arts Content Standards. By integrating art into the core curriculum, M&G’s goals are to teach children to value the arts, to communicate through the arts, to become creative problem solvers through the inclusion of STEAM-related concepts and fully-developed STEAM units, to understand history and culture in light of the arts, to improve literary interest and understanding through visual storytelling, to critique the arts, and to develop an aesthetic awareness of the arts. Through fulfilling the mission, M&G is able to help develop citizens who have the ability to think, feel, and understand the world in which they live.

a sudden bolt of lightning struck him to the ground. Luther writes that at that moment he saw all the leering woodland fiends spring from their lairs. Fearing they would seize him by the hair and drag him into hell, he cried out, “Saint Anne, help me! I will become a monk!” Two



weeks later he entered the Augustinian Cloister. According to Luther, his first year at the monastery was all peace. But soon thereafter, he began to be plagued with bouts of depression and fear of damnation. To this depression was added his disillusionment in the Catholic Church.

In 1510, Luther was sent to Rome on business for his order. At that time, Rome was considered by many to be the eternal city, the haven where weary souls could find spiritual help. Luther made the trip, fully intending to reap what he believed would be enormous spiritual encouragement. The reality was far different. He writes that “the abysmal ignorance, frivolity, and levity of the Italian priest” stunned him. He completed his business and returned to Erfurt even more troubled in spirit.

In 1512, he was transferred to Wittenberg University and soon after became a professor of theology. A year later, his personal struggle intensified when he began a series of lectures on the Psalms, Romans, and Galatians. It was during this time of biblical study that the light of God’s word dawned on the great Reformer. From that moment, Luther sought to draw others to this light. But as church history records, it was to be a difficult journey.

Click [HERE](#) to learn how the English painter Edward Matthew Ward pictured Luther’s spiritual awakening. From the posting of his 95 theses in 1517 until his death in 1546, Luther would be at the forefront of the Reformation battle. But in the midst of all the strife (including excommunication) he kept his faith, his courage, and even his humor.