

E. The Reformation and Religious Wars (1517-1648)

1. Even though Europe had evolved into separate kingdoms, Catholic Christianity was a religion they all had in common. This made them into a community called “Christendom.”
2. The leader of the Catholic Church, Pope Leo X wished to construct a huge church in Rome, called St. Peter's, that would serve as the symbol of the greatness of Catholic Christianity.
3. In order to pay for this project, Leo authorized the sale of special “indulgences” to Christians throughout Europe. (Indulgences were special privileges you could earn by buying them, including a way you could pay to help someone you loved get to heaven.)
5. A monk named Martin Luther was furious when he heard of the sale of indulgences. To Luther, it wasn't right to pretend you could be a good Christian by giving the Church money.
6. Luther wrote down his objections to the sale of indulgences in an essay that became known as the “Ninety-Five Theses”. (He had ninety-five separate objections!)
7. When the pope told the Holy Roman Emperor to arrest Luther and stop him from teaching others his beliefs, known as “Lutheranism,” he found that Luther was protected by German aristocrats, and then he ran into other problems.
8. Starting in 1534, the pope found that his religious authority over England was rejected by King Henry VIII, because he refused to cancel Henry's marriage. Henry then created a law called the “Act of Supremacy” that made him the leader of the Church of England. This made another kind of Christianity, known as “Anglicanism.”
9. To make matters worse for the pope, in 1536, John Calvin, a one-time Lutheran from France, moved to Switzerland, where he published a book called the “*Institutes of the Christian Religion*,” which announced his own version of Christianity: “Calvinism.”
10. Calvinism was widely accepted in Switzerland and the Netherlands, and when the Netherlands declared its independence from the Holy Roman Empire in 1567, Spain invaded Netherlands and there was the *Eighty Years' War* (1568-1648). At the same time, Spain assembled a massive fleet known as the “Spanish Armada” for the invasion of England. When the Spanish Armada was defeated in 1588, both England and Netherlands began to build their own fleets to compete with Spain and to create colonial and trading empires in America and Asia.
11. Although Spain continued the fight, Sweden and Denmark were also converted to Lutheranism and lent their armies to support the cause of the Lutherans in Germany. Finally, France, which had remained Catholic, send money to support of the Lutherans against the Catholic Holy Roman Empire. The explanation for this is that France's king and religious leaders believed that nationalism was a more important reason for deciding who to help in the wars of religion than which form of Christianity either side believed in.
12. With Spain finally exhausted, the nations involved in the various wars all sent ambassadors to a peace conference in 1648 where they redrew the map of Europe, in both a political and religious sense.
 - a) Two new Calvinist countries were recognized: Netherlands and Switzerland.
 - b) In the Holy Roman Empire, the rule became “*cuius regio, eius religio*” (the ruler chooses the religion) which allowed Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Catholicism.
 - c) The pope was not asked for his opinion. The rules of Europe did not believe in a single religious leader anymore.



By the “Act of Supremacy” passed by the English parliament in 1534, king Henry VIII became the head of the *Church of England*.