

### **Program 1: The Birth of a Dynasty**

**Grade Levels: 6-12**

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

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

Applicable National Standards

#### **Instructional Objectives:**

- Contrast Renaissance and Medieval attitudes
- Understand the origins of the Renaissance
- Appreciate genius in art and engineering
- 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 1 of *Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance* (To purchase visit PBS Shop for Teachers)

Viewing Guide 1 (Print page 1 and 2 on separate sheets; hand out separately to build suspense over Cosimo's fate)

Comparison Chart: Medieval Europe and Renaissance Italy

#### **Procedure:**

1. Introduce the series, have students read page 1 of the Viewing Guide 1, and ask these questions before showing the first film.

#### **Connecting Questions:**

- What do you already know about the Medici family and the Renaissance?
- Where is Florence or Firenze, as it is known in Europe?
- The Renaissance starts in the quattrocento (14th century); what century is that? What years does that include?
- What does the title *The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance* suggest about the series and the family?
- How does a family become rich and powerful?

#### **Focusing Questions:**

- As you watch, see how the Medici rose from poverty and insignificance.
- Also notice this: Why were art and architecture so important to the rise of the Medici?

- In what ways are accepted beliefs challenged?
2. Play 29.48 minutes of the film. Stop at the point where the Albizzi have Cosimo summoned to the palace of government, and he is “at the mercy of his enemies.”  
NB: Give students only page 1 of the viewing guide, so they won’t know what happens to Cosimo. Have students complete page 1 of the viewing guide.

3. Leave time for a tie-up discussion:

Questions after viewing the first half:

- Do you have answers to the focusing questions now?
  - What do you have questions about?
  - What do you like about the way the film presents the information?
  - What is going to happen to Cosimo?
4. Each segment of the film lasts 55 minutes; at the next class meeting review the first part by discussion or by going over the viewing guide for the first half of Program 1.
  5. Then play the rest of the tape. Have students complete page 2 of their viewing guides. (You may want students to read questions before viewing the tape or you may not. Reading ahead focuses their viewing but can ruin suspense.)
  6. 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:**

- What was unique about Cosimo, Brunelleschi, and Florence?
  - How did Cosimo, Brunelleschi, and Florence contribute to the birth of the Renaissance?
  - What problems do you foresee for the Medici family? Why?
  - In what ways were the ancients and the great writers from the East and Orient different from the Christian thinkers of the Middle Ages?
  - In what ways does our society discourage or punish people for thinking, believing, and acting differently from the majority?
7. Have students begin adding to the chart comparing Medieval Europe to Renaissance Italy. Have them add to this as they view additional programs and do extension assignments.

### **Assessment:**

- Observation of responses to class and small group discussion.
- Written responses to viewing guide and closure questions.

- Products created for any extension activities.

### Extensions:

1. Design a university. (The Renaissance gave rise to changes in the great universities of Europe. As universities became more secular, curriculum evolved.) What courses would be taught? What degrees offered? What courses would be mandatory? How would the courses be taught? What sort of students would you want to attract? What qualifications would your professors need to have? Design a brochure advertising your university. Use computer technology if possible.
2. Examine the Medici family tree on the PBS Web site, then map your own family tree for at least three generations, including two sentences of text for each person, with dates of birth and death (if appropriate) as well as a brief description of important facts about each person. Include a family insignia like the balls used by the Medici. Include photos or drawings and address this question: If your family could form a dynasty famous for something, what would it be and why? Use computer technology if possible.
3. For a frightening look at the superstitions believed by most Europeans during the Middle Ages and through much of the Renaissance, look at the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), a handbook on the evils of women and a manual on catching witches. Report on the five most bizarre beliefs, including at least two that have to do with human anatomy. (Available at many libraries, e-text libraries and Web sites, including this one: [www.malleusmaleficarum.org/](http://www.malleusmaleficarum.org/))
4. Research the Platonic ideal and the metaphor of the cave. According to Plato, what is the world really like? Make a poster or brochure that explains his beliefs. Design your own metaphor or image to explain what the world is really like.
5. Other research topics for reports, booklets, online presentations, or oral presentations: Niccolo Niccoli; Poggio Bracciolini; Filippino Lippi; Fra Filippo Lippi; Valerius Catullus; Crusades preached by Calixtus III; Pazzo de Pazzi; Dante Alighieri; Giotto di Bondone; Petrarch; John VII Paleologus; Knights of St John of Jerusalem; Knights of Santa Stefano; Trade guilds; Neo-Platonism; Italian warfare; Libraries of Lorenzo, Vatican, San Giorgio Maggiore, San Bartolommeo; Duomo (Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore); Renaissance architecture or painting; Bank of Medici; Gutenberg press; Diet of Worms; Battles of Agudello, Anghiari, Barga, Fornovo, Imola, Lepanto, Marignano, Monteuolo, Pavia, Ravenna.
6. Research one of the people in # 5 above and then write diary entries for a pivotal period in that person's life, covering at least a week and giving details that make the reader understand what was so important about that period in the person's life.
7. 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 url<sup>3</sup>

# Medici

## *Godfathers of the Renaissance*

may not be functioning by next week.

The best thing to do is to go to: [trackstar.hprtec.org](http://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](#).