Chapter 12  The Reformation of Christianity

Section 1

MAIN IDEAS
1. The Catholic Church faced challengers who were upset with the behavior of Catholic clergy and with church practices.
2. Martin Luther urged reform in the Catholic Church, but he eventually broke away from the church.
3. Other reformers built on the ideas of early reformers to create their own churches.

Key Terms and People

Reformation  the reform movement against the Roman Catholic Church
indulgence  a document sold by the church, excusing people from penalties for a sin they had committed
purgatory  in Catholic theology, a place where souls went before going to heaven
Martin Luther  priest who criticized the church abuses and started the Reformation
Protestants  those who protested against the Catholic Church
John Calvin  reformer who taught that common people should have a say in church policy
King Henry VIII  English king who started the Church of England

Section Summary
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH FACES CHALLENGERS
By the late Renaissance some people began complaining about the Roman Catholic Church. This led to a movement called the Reformation.

During the Middle Ages the Roman Catholic Church had become one of the richest institutions in Europe, partly because it was exempt from paying taxes. Now many claimed that the church had grown too rich. Some criticized priests for not even knowing basic church teachings. Others felt that church officials were too involved in politics and neglected religious duties.

The sale of indulgences was a serious problem. The church claimed the indulgence did not forgive a...
person for sins, but reduced the punishment that a person would receive for sins in purgatory.

**MARTIN LUTHER URGES REFORM**

In 1517 a priest named Martin Luther nailed a list of 95 complaints about the church to the door of a church in Wittenberg, Germany. The document criticized many church practices, especially the sale of indulgences. Luther’s complaints angered Pope Leo X, who branded Luther a heretic and excommunicated him.

Luther’s ideas eventually led to a split in the Catholic Church. Luther thought that anyone could have a direct relationship with God. He called for a priesthood of all believers. Those who sided with Luther and protested against the church became known as Protestants. Some of those who followed Luther’s teachings founded their own church and became known as the Lutherans. Luther’s ideas appealed to some nobles. The support of these nobles soon made Lutheranism the dominant church in northern Germany.

**OTHER REFORMERS**

William Tyndale, an English professor, thought that everyone should be able to read the Bible. Tyndale’s translation of the Bible into English led to his execution. John Calvin taught predestination, the idea that God knew who would be saved even before they were born. King Henry VIII of England started a new church, the Church of England, because the pope would not allow him to divorce and remarry.

**CHALLENGE ACTIVITY**

**Critical Thinking: Drawing Inferences** Imagine how you might feel if you were Martin Luther, pinning his complaints to the church door. Think of something you care strongly about and write a list of things that you would like to change. Your list does not have to contain 95 items, but it should have at least 10. 

Underline the sentence that tells how the pope responded to Luther's protest.

Define “Protestant.”

Why did King Henry VIII start a new church?

HSS Analysis Skills CR 2, CR 4