

**FILL IN THE BLANK**

Your student was instructed to fill in the blanks in the following narrative about the life and beliefs of Martin Luther. NOTE: This narrative is based on material presented in their readings. Some chronology of events may differ from other resources on Martin Luther.

Martin Luther was born in 1483 in the country of Germany. At the age of fourteen, he was sent away from home because his parents were too poor to support him. He attended a Franciscan school for poor boys and it was common for young students to beg or sing for their food.

At the age of eighteen, Martin attended a university where a life-changing event happened to him. While returning to the university from a visit with family, Martin was knocked down by a lightening bolt during a thunderstorm. He immediately cried out to a saint to save him and pledged he would become a monk. He did! He left law school and entered the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt.

As a monk, Martin tried very hard to do all the right things to be good and holy. He faithfully fasted, prayed, read the Bible, and even went without blankets in his icy cold cell in order to rid himself of his sins. However, it seemed the harder he tried to keep God's commandments perfectly, the more he was aware of his sins and his inability to be cleansed from them.

From the monastery at Erfurt, Martin was sent to Wittenberg, Germany, to be a professor. While studying the Bible, Martin learned that he didn't have to earn God's forgiveness by working hard to be holy. Christ had earned it for him by dying on the cross for his sins. Martin realized that salvation was not possible through any works he did but through faith in Christ's work on the cross.

With this truth from the Bible, Martin became troubled with the worldly and sinful behavior of many church officials. In particular, he was quite concerned that a monk named John Tetzel was selling indulgences (a monetary payment that took away punishment for sins) near Wittenberg. In response to this troubling practice, Martin wrote down his concerns, called the Ninety-Five Theses, and nailed them to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517.

At the Diet (trial) of Worms, the emperor Charles V, along with church leaders, demanded that Martin take back (recant) what he had written. With God-given courage and humility, Martin refused to take back anything he had written because his conscience was ruled by the Word of God. Consequently, Martin was declared an outlaw, and his life was in danger.

While fleeing back home to Wittenberg, Martin was kidnapped and brought to a fortress called Wartburg. The kidnappers, however, were actually friends sent by the Duke of Saxony (Frederick the Wise) to protect Martin. For a year Martin lived and worked under the Duke's protection. Among many other projects, Martin translated the New Testament into German so that the common people could read it.

Within a short time, Martin's efforts ushered in the era known as the Protestant Reformation. By God's grace, the Reformation impacted not only all of Europe but had far-reaching effects to many countries beyond!