

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: **1/31/20**

## Eastern Orthodox Church

**Aim:** How did religion in the Byzantine Empire impact people's lives?

**Do Now:** What is a core belief of Christianity?

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**The Great Schism:** In the Western Roman Empire, there were many problems with the government so the Christian church took control of many aspects of life in order to claim the chaos. However, in the Byzantine Empire, the emperor was still in charge and it was peaceful. Both the Western Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire were Christian, but they had disagreements over who should be in charge of the Christians. The Pope believed he was the only one who could speak for God and felt he should make all the decisions for the Christians and have power over all church leaders, even the ones in the East. The Byzantine emperor disagreed with the Pope and wanted to be in charge of the Christians in his land. These disagreements about Christianity between the East and the West ultimately led to a split in Christianity in 1054 AD, known as the Great Schism. In the West, Catholicism became the dominant religion, but in the East, the church became known as the Eastern Orthodox Church.



1. Why did the church in the East and West disagree?

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2. What was the result of the disagreements between the East and the West concerning Christianity?

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**Instructions:** You have been provided two “diary entries” from the perspective of a Catholic in Western Rome and a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire. Use the diary entries to fill in a Venn diagram in which you compare the two different sects of Christianity.

Diary Entry #1-From the perspective of an Eastern Orthodox Christian

[Written in Greek]

After hearing today’s Church service conducted in Greek, I was inspired by the word of God to follow the true path of his teachings. Did you know that there are Christians in Western Rome that still believe in the authority of the Pope? Those silly Western Europeans, I hope they are happy in their dark Ages. All of their kings are constantly fighting with the Pope. It’s such a waste of time!

In the Byzantine Empire we do things much simpler. Our great emperor, Justinian, made the role of the emperor both political and religious. The emperor is the representation of God on earth, not the Pope. The Emperor is able to appoint church officials and the head of the Church. He does not get involved in political matters, like the Pope. I don’t trust the Roman Catholics. I fear they might stab us in the back. They still conduct their services in Latin. How can anyone trust Latin if they don’t speak it or understand what they are saying?

The Roman Catholics should know that the Byzantine Empire prides itself on many things. We try to follow the glory that was once Rome and Greece. We borrow their ideas and adapt it to our own culture. We modeled our churches after Roman architecture. However, we took it one step further and built domes to show our faith in God. I heard that the Western Europeans build cathedrals that are very showy and flashy. Unlike the ugly stain glass they use in Roman Catholic Cathedrals, our churches have mosaics that showcase art. We create mosaics out of stone or other materials to make a picture or design.

The Roman Catholics are also so strict with their treatment of priests. Our priests are allowed to marry. We believe that marriage helps them become connected to God. I heard that priests in the Roman Catholic faith are banned from the sacrament of marriage.

I don’t want to keep the Almighty emperor waiting, so now I must go.



Diary Entry #2-From the perspective of a Roman Catholic

[Written in Latin]

Dear Diary,

Today was a day just like any other. As a good practicing Roman Catholic Christian, I showed my respect for my God and Pope.

However, those Orthodox Christians don't even believe in the Pope! Can you believe that? Instead they treat their emperor as the living God on Earth. I guess he has absolute power. In Western Rome the pope has power over kings. In the Byzantine Empire the emperor appoints a patriarch, or the head of the church. The patriarch is the religious head of the church. Even worse, they allow their priests to marry. Those crazy Byzantines, they even conduct their Church services in Greek! What was so great about Greece anyway? They built some columns and wrote some plays!

I heard in the Byzantine Empire they consider themselves the heirs to the Roman Empire. Rome fell - get over it! They want to keep preserving Roman and Greek culture.

And what's the deal with the Dome Architecture? All their churches have domes on the top. Apparently they think the domes are less showy than our cathedrals and reflect the true nature of a church. But Domes are just as showy as our cathedrals! Also the Byzantines are missing out on some cool art. The Byzantine Empire only uses mosaic art. They piece together a few pieces of stone to create an image. Why use stones when you can use stained glass? It is so much cooler and more beautiful to look at.

Well, it's time to go; the church bells are calling me. It is time to pay my respects to the almighty God and the Pope.

**Instructions:** You and your partner will create a mock debate between a representative from the Roman Catholic Church from the West and the Eastern Orthodox Church from the Byzantine Empire. Each representative must respond to his or her opponent twice. Fill in your responses in the space below.

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**Eastern Orthodox Representative:**

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**Roman Catholic Representative:**

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**Eastern Orthodox Representative:**

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