

The Reformation

PLAY 1:

Religion in Europe before the Reformation

The Pope called a meeting of the Clergy (leaders in the Church).

Characters:

The Pope (greedy & proud)

Archbishop 1 (clever)

Archbishop 2 (stupid)

Bishop 1 (sincere)

Bishop 2 (crafty)

Priest 1 (humble)

Priest 2 (presumptuous)



Pope: As you know, I am the Pope. I am the head of the Christian Church and I live here in the Papal States...

Bishop-2: ...in the Vatican...

Pope: ...in the Vatican, in Italy.

Bishop-2: Yes, and God had chosen you to rule the Church here on earth.

Pope: That's correct. Now, there are 2 things on the agenda today.

Priest-2: And what could that be?

Pope: Shush, and let me continue. I have appointed you (point to archbishop 1) and you (point to archbishop 2) to help me to control the church, because I can naturally not be in 2 places at the same time. So, Archbishop of Canterbury, what is your role in the church organisation?

Archbishop-1: I represent you in England, because, as you have just admitted, you cannot be in two places at the same time. So, I help you to govern the Church, in England.

Pope: Very good! And you, Archbishop of York, what is your role in the church organisation?

Archbishop-2: Uhm? Seeing that I am also an archbishop, I guess I have the same job as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Pope: That's right. So, how is it going with the Church in England?

Archbishop-1: Very good.

Archbishop-2: Yea, not too bad - everything is under control.

Bishop-1: Excuse me, but where do we...

Bishop-2: ...fit into the picture?

Pope: Who are you?

Bishop-1: We are the...

Bishop-2: ...Bishops. (On our way up - waiting to be promoted!)

Archbishop-1: You each govern a diocese in England.

Archbishop-2: What is a diocese?

Archbishop-1: It is an area.

Pope: Yes, I remember, Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus divided England into dioceses to make it easier to govern the church in England. But that was ages ago, in 669 AD.

Archbishop-2: Oh yes, it's coming back to me now.

Priest-1: I am so sorry to interrupt, but...

Pope: Who are you?

Priest-1: I am just an ordinary priest. I am the only person in my village that can marry couples, bury the dead or baptise babies. And I need to urgently get back to my village to marry a lovely couple this afternoon!

Priest-2: Same here, I also need to get back to my village quite urgently. I am also a priest. And this afternoon I have to bury a man that died yesterday. And tomorrow I also have to baptise a new baby.

Archbishop-2: What's that? What is baptise?

Bishop-1: Don't you know? It's a ceremony that welcomes babies into the Christian faith.

Priest-2: Yes, I put a few drops of water on the baby's head, give it a name and, wha-lah!

Pope: Okay, okay, I am actually more interested in the second thing on the agenda, and that is the tithes.

Archbishop-2: The what?

Pope: The tithes. A tenth of the income of the villagers.

Priest-1: Back in my village, we call the villagers of my church “the congregation”.

Priest-2: We are not so fancy - we just talk about the Parish People.

Archbishop-2: So, what is the parish?

Archbishop-1: Each diocese is divided into smaller areas called parishes.

Priest-1: Yes, usually it consists of a village and the surrounding countryside.

Priest-2: Every parish has its own priest - and we, as priests, have a very important job: we have to teach the people about God and we have to encourage them to believe in Jesus.

Priest-1: That’s right. Most of the villagers believe in heaven and in hell. After death you either go to heaven or to hell. If you believe in Jesus you go to heaven...

Priest-2: ...and if you don’t believe that Jesus died for your sins, then you go to hell - not a very nice place.

Priest-1: But heaven is a lovely place. But we really need to hurry up now, because I have to go and prepare for this afternoon’s wedding.

Pope: No, no, no, no, no! I am still talking about the tithes! I am very interested in the tithes. I need the money to decorate the Papal Palace. I want to make it look magnificent!

Archbishop-1: Are you not supposed to help people with that money, rather than making your home beautiful?

Pope: Who cares about the people? I am much more concerned about my power and wealth. You deal with the people and I’ll deal with my palace.

Bishop-1: You definitely can’t have the tithes from my diocese, because we are currently building a beautiful and impressive cathedral in my area - it is to show our love and respect for God.

Bishop-2: Here are the tithes from my diocese. You can have it.

Priest-2: Very good. So, can we go now?

Pope: No, I need more money. Get more money from you congregations to support me, the Pope.

Priest-1: But, don’t you care about the people?

Pope: Actually, I am more interested in my own wealth and power.

Archbishop-2: As he said before. Didn’t you listen?

Bishop-2: I have an idea.

Bishop-1: An idea for what?

Archbishop-1: To make more money - to raise funds for the Pope?

Bishop-1: What do you propose?

Bishop-2: Sell *indulgences*.

Bishop-1: Sell what?

Archbishop-1: Indulgences?

Archbishop-2: What are indulgences?

Pope: Yes, what do you mean?

Bishop-2: It simply is a piece of paper that says that your sins have been forgiven and that you may go to heaven.

Archbishop-2: Like a type of certificate?

Bishop-2: Yes.

Priest-1: That's not right.

Priest-2: No, definitely not! It is making forgiveness just a matter of money.

Bishop-1: I agree. People need to go to the village priest to confess their sins.

Archbishop-1: (to Archbishop-2) That means to tell the priest what they have done wrong and to ask him to forgive them.

Bishop-1: Yes, and then the priest needs to give them a penance and tell them that God has forgiven them their sins.

Archbishop-2: A penance?

Archbishop-1: That is a punishment.

Bishop-1: So, they confess their sins...

Archbishop-1: ...which is to tell the priest what they did wrong.

Bishop-1: ... Then the priest give them a penance...

Archbishop-1: ... which is a punishment...

Bishop-1: ... like hitting themselves 10 times...

Archbishop-1: ... and then the priest tells them that God has forgiven them.

Priest-2: Precisely! Selling indulgences would really not be the right thing to do!

Bishop-2: It will ensure that the Pope gets more money!

Priest-1: It would be like selling tickets to go to heaven! You can't do that!

Pope: I think it is a great idea! That is exactly what I am going to do! Oh, my Papal palace, the Vatican, is going to look so good! I am going to use the money to employ the best artists ever. Fantastic! That's a great idea! And you, my dear Bishop (pointing at Bishop-2) will from now on be Archbishop of York. Congratulations! You can all go now - we will meet again in 3 months' time.

☚ the end ☛

