*Luther post 95 Theses Time Line activity:*

*Goal: put the events in the correct order and answer the comprehension questions*

**Background**:

From 1514 Luther was not only theology professor at Wittenberg University but also the priest at the City Church in Wittenberg. So he was also responsible for the salvation of his parish.

Luther observed that many people in Wittenberg were not coming to him for confession any more. Instead, they were going other towns to buy Indulgences (primarily the Peter's Indulgence).

Buying indulgences, which quasi replaced confession and allowed people to buy their salvation, was completely repulsive to Luther. He strongly believed that one lived a life of humility in order to receive God's grace.

The Dominican monk, Johann Tetzel, sold indulgences in the region around Wittenberg in a very ostentatious manner. Many stories started poping up about him such as, that Tetzel could redeem the sins of the deceased. Further sayings of Tetzel, such as, "When the money clangs in the box, the souls spring up to heaven", also brought protests from Luther.

**October 31, 1517, "Nailing the 95 Theses to the Door of the Castle Church"**

Prior to October 31, 1517, Luther had preached against the indulgence trade. After reading an instruction manual for indulgence traders, he wrote a letter to his church superiors hoping to get rid of this abuse. In this letter he included [95 Theses](http://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html) which were to be used as the basis for a discussion on the topic. In addition, Luther hammered his theses to the door of the [Castle Church](http://alt.wittenberg.de/e/seiten/schlossk/sk01.html) in Wittenberg.

 **Reactions to the 95 Theses**

Luther sent his 95 Theses to a few bishops and some friends; therefore he did not expect or receive a prompt response. By the end of 1517, however, several copies of the 95 Theses had been printed. Some humanists and princes passionately approved of the theses, but parts of the Roman Church completely rejected them. The most vehement voice against the theses was Tetzel, who supposedly categorized Luther as heretic and threatened to have him burned at the stake.

At first the bishops reacted mildly, they informed the Pope of the 'rebel within the ranks' and instructed Luther's direct superior to take a moderate roll in calming him. A few bishops actually welcomed Luther's ideas for reform.

**Events up to 1519**

With increasing pressure, Luther felt compelled to explain and clarify his theses in writing. In 1518, Luther said that he only wanted the end of selling indulgences and was not striving to unhinge the papacy with his theses.

The avalanche, however, was now unstoppable. The Papal Court reacted drastically to the alleged heretic and in 1518 an inquisition was begun in Rome, and when Karl the V was elected Holy Roman Emperor, the fight against Luther and his followers continued.

Step 1 Sort the Mixed Up Events:

Step 2: Answer the following comprehension questions

1. What is symbolic about Luther burning the Papal Bull and the other Catholic works?
2. Why would the German Princes support Luther and the Reformation movement?
3. Upon what does Luther hang his defence and reasoning for not recanting?
4. Why would Elector Friedrich the Wise organize a kidnapping of Luther?
5. With Luther hiding, what could happen to the Reformation movement?
6. Why would it be so important to Luther that pastors in schools be well educated?
7. What did Luther see wrong with the Peasants’ War?
8. What was important about the Bible being translated by Martin Luther?
9. Would it be an issue that Luther and other Reformer did not see eye-to-eye on certain doctrinal issues?