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**THE HISTORY CHANNEL® PRESENTS**  
***The Crusades: Crescent & The Cross:***  
**A 2 Part Original Documentary**

For thousands of years, the holy lands of the Middle East have been the focus of intense political conflict. These lands have been the sites wars of epic proportion between three of the great religions of the world – Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The deepest crevasse in these territories was created in wars between Christians and Muslims that began with extreme sacrifice in the name of Christ and Mohammed. At stake for the followers of both religions was the sacred land of Jerusalem, and control over the broader region surrounding it. Of all Middle Eastern cities in the Middle Ages, Jerusalem has suffered from the most troubling past. For Jews, it was the site of the Temples of Herod and Solomon, to Muslims, it was the city where Mohammed ascended to heaven and to the Christians it was the city where Jesus Christ, their Messiah, was crucified. What happened to the Holy City? Who could attempt such a war of such widespread, yet personal fanaticism, let alone win one?

The violent past of Jerusalem began with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the time that Christianity laid its foundation in the city. After 400 years of Roman occupation, Jerusalem saw Christianity become the leading political and religious force. However, in the 7th century, the Holy City was seized by leaders holding a different faith, Islam. Over the course of several hundred years, a series of wars raged throughout this region. Though these wars always carried elements of religious conflict, they were chiefly battles to establish territorial control of these highly coveted lands. Through viewing the *Crescent and the Cross*, students will be able to build their knowledge of this vital era in world history and will discover the complex reasons why so many millions of people were willing to give their lives in the service of these wars.

*The Crusades: Crescent & The Cross* details the history of Jerusalem from the Roman leadership in the time of Christ through the Islamic-lead years to the heroic warriors and tragic stories of three chaotic and devastating Crusades. Spanning hundreds of years and in the name of almighty leaders' ideals, the Crusades were carried out by zealous popes, kings, warriors, knights, men, women and children. Their personal stories of leadership, triumph, heroics and demise will be chronologically detailed, revealing an accurate and captivating portrayal of the infamous Crusades. Also, with expert opinions, interviewees from all different faiths, translated scripts, maps of cities, trips to ancient battlefields and castles, and extensive reenactments, the world's most infamous conflict of religious zeal, fanaticism, and violence comes to life.

### **Curriculum Links**

*The Crusades: Crescent & The Cross* would be useful for World History and Politics, Global Studies, Religion and Political Science courses. It is appropriate for high school students. Due to the sensitive nature of the topics covered in this program, we recommend that teachers view it in its entirety before screening it to students. This documentary fulfills several National Standards guidelines as outlined by the National Council for History Education including: Values, Beliefs, Political Ideas and Institutions, Conflict and Cooperation, Human Interaction with the Environment and Comparative History of Major Developments.

### **Footnotes to History**

WERE YOU AWARE that until the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, when Crusaders returned from the Middle East with knowledge of them, windmills were generally unknown to Europeans? Thereafter, they became prevalent in England, France, Germany and Holland.

### **Vocabulary**

Using the dictionary at [www.merriamwebster.com](http://www.merriamwebster.com), an internet resource such as [www.history.com](http://www.history.com), or an encyclopedia, students should define or explain the significance of the following terms:

Admonish	Empathetic	Reverberate
Arduous	Insolence	Seize
Bereft	Jocund	Zeal
Calamitous	Meander	
Cognizant	Pestilence	

### **Comprehension Questions**

1. Why did the Crusades begin? What was so important about Jerusalem? Who was in control of it at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century? What did Pope Urban II have to do with the First Crusade?
2. Briefly explain the relationship between Urban II and Emperor Alexis I. Though devout enemies, was it surprising that they united under their religion? Why would Urban II agree to help Alexius?
3. When the Crusades arrived outside Constantinople, why was Emperor Alexius I furious? What was he expecting to receive when he called for aid from Urban II? What did Alexius finally do? How did he eventually “manipulate” Duke Godfrey of Guillon and his brother Baldwin?
4. Why did the Crusaders want to seize Antioch prior to moving on toward Jerusalem? What would have been the likely result if they had not taken Antioch? How did Bohemond finally make entry into Antioch, fostering the eventual Christian takeover?
5. How did the Crusaders take Jerusalem in the First Crusade? In what year? What tools (of divine intervention, perhaps) helped them overcome the massive walls that surrounded the city? Was the First Crusade a success? Explain.
6. What is a Jihad? Was Jihad founded after the First Crusade? What is a Crusade? Are meanings of Jihad and Crusade the same today as they were prior in the 11<sup>th</sup> century?

7. What were the 2 competing Muslim doctrines in the 12<sup>th</sup> century? How did they differ? Did the two sides agree to fight together or were they deeply divided? Why did city states appear in the Muslim world after the fall of Jerusalem?
8. Who were the Knights of Templar and the Hospitallers? What was their role in the Crusader army after the First Crusade?
9. Who was Zengi? Why was his takeover of Edessa so important to the Muslims?
10. Who was Saladin? What was his strategy prior to attacking the Crusaders? Why did he think his strategy was so vital to the livelihood of Muslim success?
11. Why was the Third Crusade launched? Who called for it? When did it begin?
12. Who is Richard I? How did he become known as Richard the Lionheart? Why did Richard turn back prior to attacking Jerusalem on the Third Crusade?
13. Discuss the extremely violent behavior of the three Crusades. Was one side more barbaric than the other? What did the continual massacres of innocent people do to the opposing side? \*Note: Discuss Richard the Lionheart's massacre at Acre in your answer.

### **Extended Activities**

#### **1. A Crusade without Propaganda and Politics? No way!**

Propaganda is a common form of advertisement, persuasion, and manipulation that has been used for centuries in not only in politics, but all other facets of daily life. Propaganda was one element that helped stir the Crusades from a desire into a reality. Pretend you are Pope Urban II, Pope Gregory XIII, or Peter Bartholomew and make a dramatic poster either promoting the Crusades or encouraging your Crusaders to continue fighting. Then, share your work with your classmates by telling them your strategies for rallying your Crusader army.

#### **2. Mapping Out an Era**

Spanning hundreds of years and thousands of miles, the Crusades changed the territorial boundaries of many regions and cities. Using an online search engine like [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) or an encyclopedia, find maps of Jerusalem and its surrounding cities just prior to the First Crusade. Take this map or make a copy on your own and show how the territorial boundaries of the region changed by the end of the Second and Third Crusades. Feel free to look back at your notes or online, but do not just copy a map of the Middle East hundreds of years later. Be sure to understand who was involved and what happened to the four main Crusader states (founded after the First Crusade), independent Muslim cities, and Jerusalem.

#### **3. Understanding the Religious Past of Jerusalem**

After watching this program, it is evident that Jerusalem is held as sacred ground for the three great religions of the world: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Using an online search engine like [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), research the past of these religions and find out what happened in Jerusalem long before the Crusades. Who possessed the religious and political rights to the city? Did

any of the religions possess them? Discuss and answer in a well written 3-page paper that distinguishes the influence of the three religions in the city. Be sure to include the founders and leaders of each religion and how they became martyrs for centuries.

### **Understanding Primary Sources**

The Crusades marked an era of violence, discontent and religious fervor. However, the Christians and the Muslims did not always agree within their own ranks. Many Christians did not like violent massacres and it took the Muslims hundreds of years to unite under Saladin's reign. Read the following passage written by a Christian chronicler and answer the questions below in well-written paragraphs either in groups during class or for homework:

*For the Knights of the Templ[ar] with the pope's approval claim for themselves the administration of churches, they occupy them through surrogates, and they whose normal occupation it is to shed human blood in a certain way presume to administer the blood of Christ. Not of course that I would call those – almost alone men – who wage legitimate war 'men of blood', since even David was called a man of blood not because he engaged in wars which were legitimate but on account of Uriah, whose blood he criminally shed. For as is provided by the canons, none of the power of the ecclesiastical sphere may be seen to be ascribed by laymen, even if they are religious men. Above all it would be a sign of true religion if they refrained from the administration of those things which by God's prohibition it is not permitted for them to touch.*

*Still it is entirely wicked that, enticed by the love of money, they open churches which were closed by bishops. They travel around to churches, they praise the merits of their own Orders, they bring absolution for crimes and sometimes they preach a new gospel, falsifying the word of God because they preach living not by grace but by a price, by pleasure and not by truth. And in the end, when they convene in their lairs late at night, 'after speaking of virtue by day they shake their hips in nocturnal folly and exertion'. If one moves in this fashion towards Christ, then the doctrine of the Fathers which teaches that the narrow and steep path heads towards the true life of man is false and vain.*

*-Christian Chronicler 1159*

1. What is the chronicler saying in his passage above?
2. What does internal strife and disagreement symbolize? What was the status of the Crusades in 1159? Do similarities exist between this passage and the situation at the time?
3. Compare and contrast this Christian writing to the internal strife that plagued the Muslims before Saladin could unite them. Is this internal Christian writing more or less severe than the internal problems of the Muslims. *\*There can be more than one correct answer, so long as they are supported properly.*
4. Do you think this Chronicler's opinion was passed up the Crusader chain of command or was it just a personal reflection? Explain your reasoning.

5. Does a Jihad or Crusade justify actions that may be ordinarily condemned? Do you agree with the author of this passage that Christian violence is not acceptable?
6. Can you compare this internal crevasse with political problems today? How does the media expose these types of views and question today's leaders? Did public scrutiny exist during the Crusades? Explain.
7. The United States currently faces a staunch enemy in Al Qaeda in the Middle East. Is Al Qaeda's self-declared Jihad equivalent to the Christian-led Crusades? How has social order and acceptability influenced the way of life in the modern world relative to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries?

## **Resources**

### **Books:**

Allen, S.J. and Amt, Emilie, eds. *The Crusades: A Reader*. Broadview, 2003.

Asbridge, Thomas. *The First Crusade: A New History, the Roots of Conflict Between Christianity And Islam*. Oxford, 2005.

Hillenbrand, Carole. *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*. Routledge, 2000.

Madden, Thomas F. *The New Concise History of the Crusades, Revised Edition*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

Riley-Smith, Jonathan. *The Crusades: A Short History*. Continuum, 2005.

Riley-Smith, Jonathan, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*. Oxford, 2001.

Saunders, J.J. *A History of Medieval Islam*. Routledge, 1990.

### **Websites:**

General background information on the Crusades:

[http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/mil/html/mh\\_013500\\_crusades.htm](http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/mil/html/mh_013500_crusades.htm)

An extensive bibliography for additional Crusades sources:

<http://www.unf.edu/classes/crusades/crusadesbibliography.htm>

A course syllabus with colorful maps related to the Crusades:

<http://www.uca.edu/divisions/academic/history/crusades.htm>

Extended background information and links to Crusades and Medieval history resources:

<http://www.ku.edu/kansas/med/crusades.html>