



Teacher's Guide

The Byzantine Empire **Time Compass**

Grade Levels:

4-8

Subject Areas:

Social Studies

Synopsis:

Innovative animation and a tongue-in-cheek approach to ancient history provide a sound introduction to the Byzantine Empire, the schism between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the Crusades. Episodes featuring the Time Compass review the history of money and the invention of gunpowder. Students learn that Mehmed II was successful in his siege of Constantinople because the Turks had learned about gunpowder from the Chinese. They also learn how Mehmed's success and the closure of trade routes to the East forced explorers, like Christopher Columbus, to seek alternative routes to the riches of the East.

Learning Objectives: Students will:

- Understand the importance of the spread of Christianity to the success and ultimate demise of the Byzantine Empire.
- Describe the contributions of emperors and Popes to the creation of the Byzantine Empire and the progress of the Crusades.
- Gain a basic understanding of why the two Christian churches were at odds with one another.
- Explain how a knowledge of gunpowder added to the military successes of the Ottoman Empire.
- Understand that money and power are linked in the rise and fall of civilizations.

Vocabulary:

civilization, cupola, orthodox, civil wars, Israelites, Mongols, siege

Pre-Viewing Discussion:

Have you ever heard of the city of Constantinople? Where was it located? Why was it such an important city?

Several centuries ago, Constantinople was given a new name. Does anyone know this name? What country has a famous city called Istanbul?

What do Christians who live in the Middle East call their church? Are there many Roman Catholic churches in Turkey or other Middle Eastern countries? Does anyone know why?

Since Constantinople, or Istanbul, as it is called today, is situated on a point of land that joins Asia with Europe, can you imagine the activities that took place there? Do you think the city would be a rich city? Why, or why not?

Post-Viewing Discussion:

Why was the Emperor Constantine such an influential leader? How did the Emperor Justinian advance Constantine's successes even further?

Why did the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox churches separate from one another? Do you think it would have been better if they'd stayed together? What historical events were highly influenced by this split in the Christian church?

Why were Mehmed II and his soldiers so successful at the Siege of Constantinople?

Has money made world trade easier or harder? What were the key events in the history of money?

Further Activities:

Find historical accounts of how Constantine or Mehmed II became such successful leaders.

In the last few years, Hagia Sofia has been the site of a major reconstruction project. Discover what the artists and builders, who were engaged in the restoration, have discovered about the history of this church and the people who have worshipped there.

Locate photographs and drawings of religious icons that are associated with the Eastern Orthodox Church. Report on the religious significance of some of these icons.

Research firsthand accounts written by Crusaders who made the long journey to liberate Jerusalem.

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Turkey (Beyond Our Borders Series)