



Martin Luther

(1483 – 1546)

A Man of BOLDNESS

Martin's Story

The Luthers were one of the most highly respected families in the German town of Mansfield. Hans Luther, a hard-working and successful business owner, and his wife, Margarete, strictly disciplined their children. They were determined to raise children who would be successful as well.

Martin was born in Eisleben, Saxony, Germany, on Nov. 10, 1483. His parents sent him to school when he was 4 years old. When he grew up, Martin attended university. In the university library, he noticed a book he had never seen before — a Bible! The book would change Luther's life.

Hans and Margarete took pride in their son's achievements at the university. They looked forward to the day when he would become a distinguished lawyer.

Martin was a brilliant student and an obedient son, but he feared he was not good enough to escape God's wrath and judgment. While caught out in a violent thunderstorm one night, he was overcome by the thought that he could die with no assurance of heaven. He then vowed to God that if he survived the storm, he would join a monastery. Martin's parents were very disappointed, but he kept his vow.

Martin followed the rules of the monastery and distinguished himself as a university professor. But he feared God's judgment, and he struggled to understand the truth about salvation. Finally, after reading the Book of Romans many times, the Holy Spirit helped him understand that salvation is given by God's grace through faith in His Son, Jesus.

The church, at that time, told people that they could reduce the punishment for their sins by paying money to the church. Martin spoke boldly against the selling of these "indulgences." He posted his 95 Theses on the door of a church in Wittenberg, Germany, in 1517. As a result, the church was determined to punish him.

Martin stood firm in his belief in the truth of the Bible, proclaiming with boldness at his church trial, "To go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other."

Key Bible Verse:

"... Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. (Ephesians 3:11-12)

Key Word: BOLDNESS

Boldness: Courage, confidence, bravery

Monastery:

A place where monks live together in a community

Monks:

Men dedicated to religious practice, often living as a group apart from society

Theses:

Statements of opinion to be discussed



The Reformation

Martin Luther was not the only one who thought that the church of his day had drifted away from the Bible's teachings, but his boldness and persuasive written arguments brought the church's corruption into the open. He was able to spread his ideas quickly because of the recent invention of the printing press.



Protestant

Martin's desire was for the church to change its ways. But the "Reformation" he helped start soon divided the church into two separate groups: Catholics and Protestants. The new denominations that formed were called "Protestant" because they began with protests against the Catholic Church.



Outlaw

Four years after Luther posted his 95 Theses, he was excommunicated. He was condemned as a heretic and an outlaw. Fearing for his life, supporters "kidnapped" him and hid him in Wartburg Castle, where he began translating the New Testament into German.



The Most Important Book

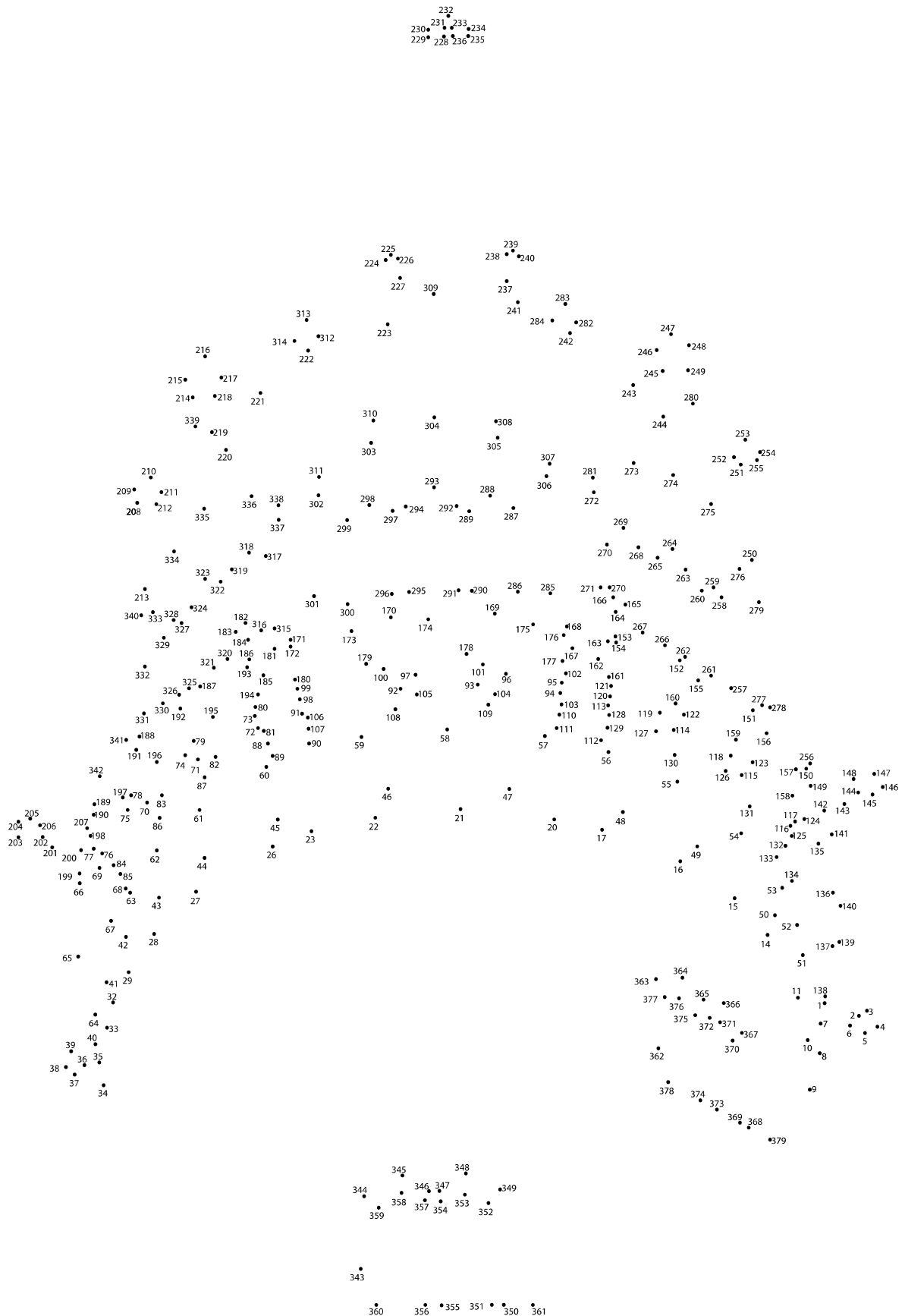
Martin published more than 50,000 pages of Christian materials in his lifetime, yet he once said he hoped all his books would disappear and "the Holy Scriptures alone be read."



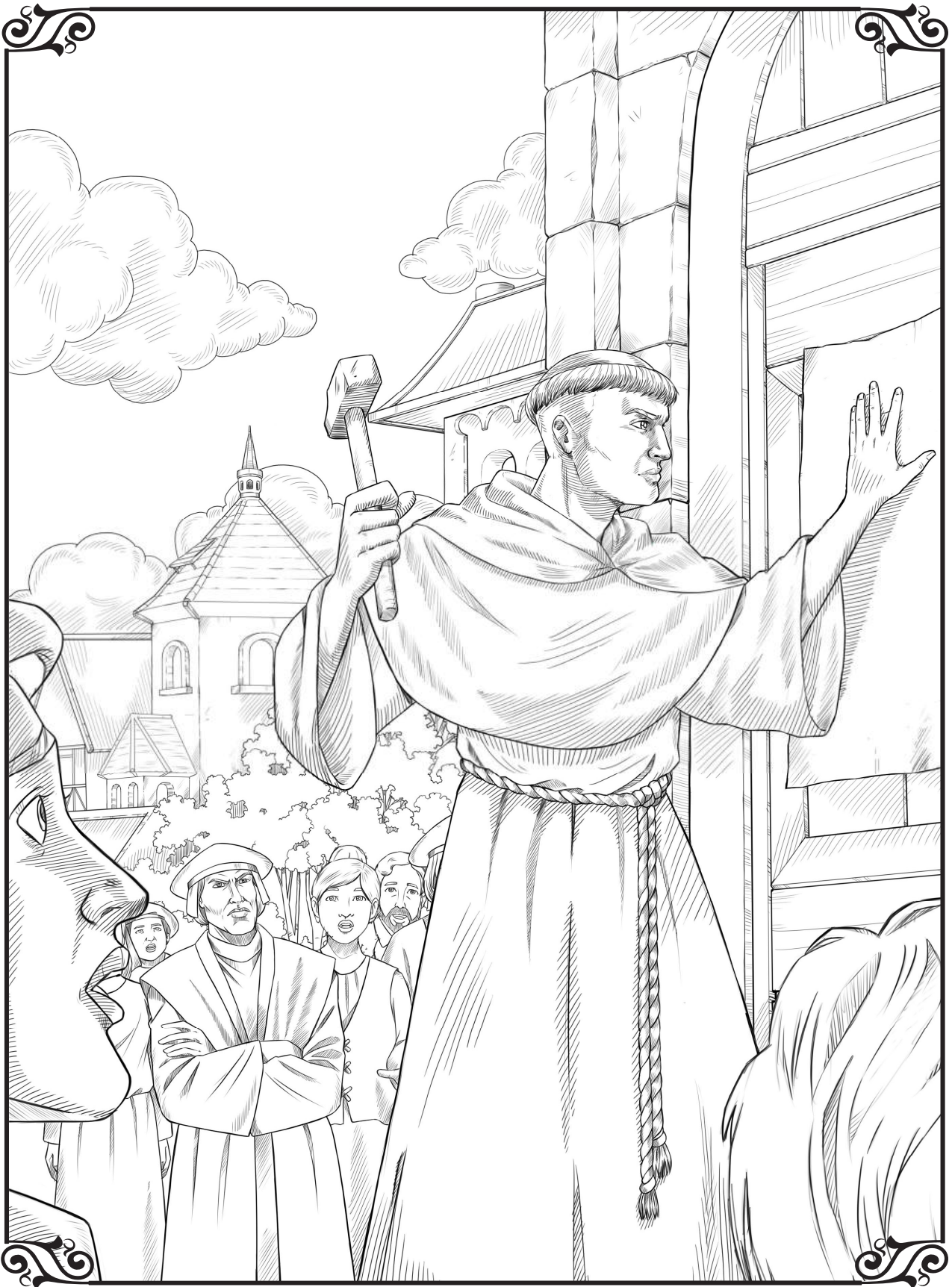
Marriage and Children

Martin helped Katharina von Bora, a former nun, escape from her nunnery in an empty fish barrel belonging to a fish merchant. Katharina was 16 years younger than Martin. No longer a monk, Martin later married Katharina and they had six children. They also cared for Martin's sister's six children.

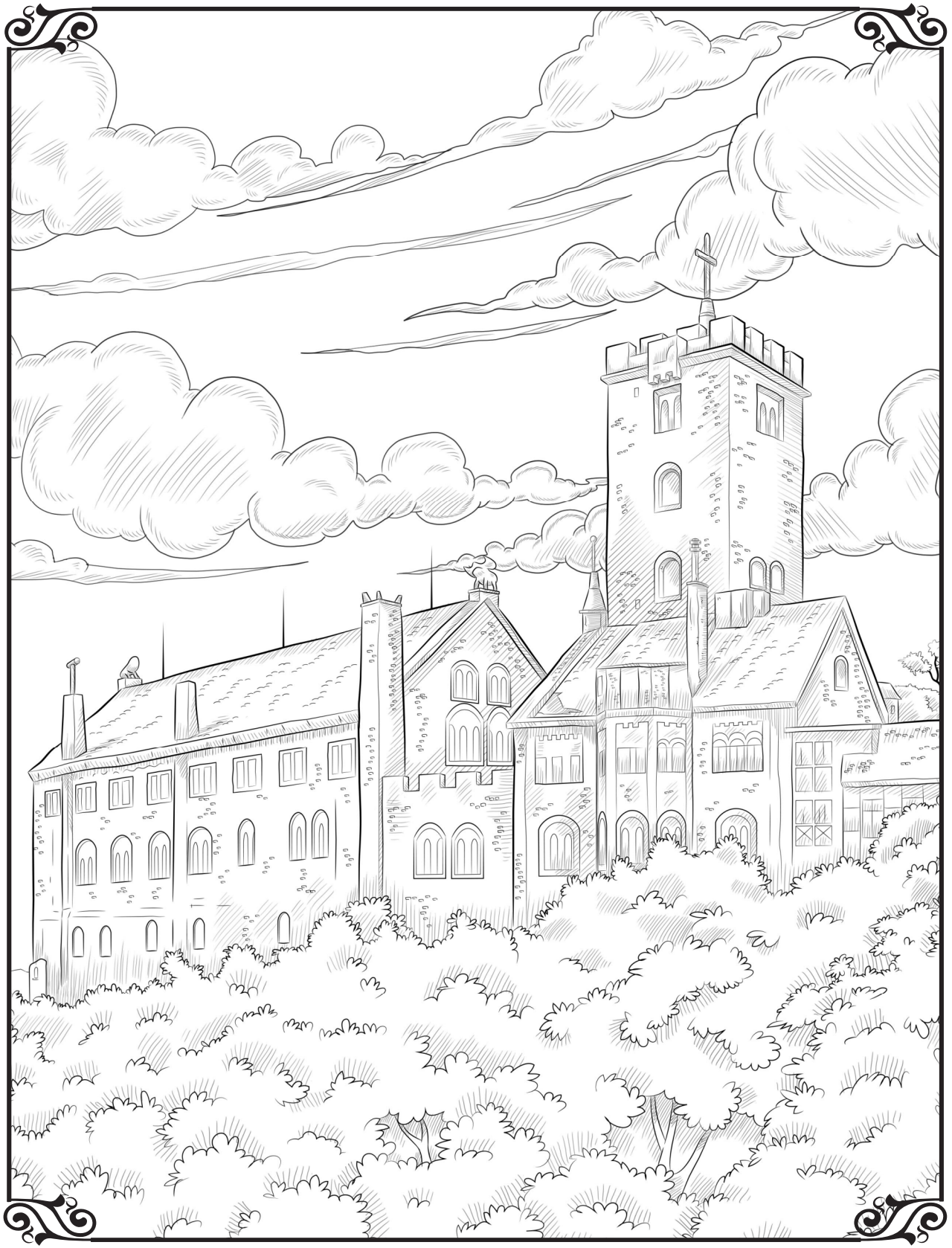




The great tower of Wittenberg’s All Saints’ Church, more commonly known as the Schlosskirche (Castle Church) in Wittenberg, Germany, where Luther nailed his 95 Theses in 1517.



Martin nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the church.



Wartburg Castle in Thuringia, Germany, where Martin Luther was taken for his safety in May 1521. It was here that Luther translated the New Testament from Greek into German.

Post Nine Theses



Martin Luther posted 95 theses on the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church. The theses were statements he believed to be true and very important.

The following are three of the theses he posted:

- “When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said ‘Repent,’ He called for the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.”
- “The true treasure of the church is the holy gospel of the glory and peace of God.”
- “And let [Christians] thus be more confident of entering heaven through many tribulations [see Acts 14:22] rather than through a false assurance of peace.”

Can you write nine theses that you believe are the truth of the Bible?

First write three true statements about Jesus. Then write three theses that tell how God wants us to act toward other people. Finally, write three truths from Matthew chapters 5–7.

When you have finished, make another copy of your theses and ask your parent or teacher where you can post it.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

What Do You Think?



Martin Luther believed that only God's Word deserved more praise than beautiful music. "The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through music," Martin said.

As a boy, Martin loved music and learned to play the lute. When he was a teenager, he made money going from house to house and serenading people.

The sale of indulgences was not the only thing Martin wanted to change about the church. Before his time, there was no congregational singing in church. Martin changed that. He also encouraged the people to sing in their own language rather than in Latin, as was the custom. His changes were considered to be very bold actions.



Hymn Writer

Martin wrote many hymns. One of his most well known hymns is "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

What do you think?

Do you like singing along with a group in church, or would you rather that a few people did all the singing?

Martin made big changes in the way music was used in church services. If you could change something about the music in your church services, what would it be?

Martin believed that music is a gift from God and a way to teach His truth. What are your three favorite Christian hymns or songs? What is at least one truth each song teaches?

What do you think is the purpose of songs that are not Christian songs? Do you think it's beneficial for Christians to play, sing, or listen to songs that don't teach Christian truths? Why or why not?



Martin Luther boldly stood up for the truth when he knew he could be punished for doing so. “Boldness” is courage, confidence, and bravery. Someone who is not bold may be timid, shy, lacking in confidence, uncomfortable, or fearful.

To Think About:

Can someone feel timid and act boldly at the same time? Are there times when you are timid? Are there times when you are bold?

Put an “**S**” on the line in front of any situation in which you would be shy or timid, and a “**B**” in front of the ones in which you would be bold.

- ___ 1. Speaking, reading, or reciting in front of a group
- ___ 2. Talking to someone about your faith in Chris
- ___ 3. Asking your parents to go on a church mission tri
- ___ 4. Meeting a famous person
- ___ 5. Raising your hand and answering a question in a group activity or class
- ___ 6. Signing up for a difficult class in school
- ___ 7. Competing in a sport or other competition against a close rival
- ___ 8. Waiting for a bad storm, tornado, wildfire, or hurricane to pass
- ___ 9. Taking a test
- ___ 10. Singing or playing a solo

To Think About:

Is it wrong to be timid or uncomfortable in any of the situations on the list? Is it wise to be timid in some situations? The Bible tells us about a situation when Christians can always be bold.

And Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

When we come to God in prayer through faith in Christ (John 14:6), we do not need to be nervous or timid. We have His assurance that He hears our prayers and understands our needs. If one of our needs is boldness in various situations, or wisdom to know when to be bold, we can ask God for that.

“... in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.” (Ephesians 3:12)