Reform and Response

How Catholic leaders used policy to pursue religious goals

MWH.C.2.3.E "Explain the purposes and policies of the Catholic Counter-Reformation."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two purposes of the Counter-Reformation, circle three policies, and number each circled policy to match the purpose it served.

Changing the Church, Defending Its Beliefs

1 In the sixteenth century, Protestant reformers challenged Catholic teachings and criticized problems within the Church. Some objected to clergy who lacked training, while others attacked financial abuses linked to indulgences, which reduced the punishment due for sins already forgiven. Catholic leaders responded with a movement often called the Counter-Reformation, or Catholic Reformation. They wanted to renew religious life inside the Church and defend Catholic beliefs against Protestant challenges. These aims were related but not identical. Improving how priests served people addressed internal weaknesses; clearly stating Catholic teachings helped the Church maintain its identity as religious divisions spread across Europe.

2 The Council of Trent, which met in sessions from 1545 to 1563, turned these goals into official policy. It reaffirmed Catholic teachings that Protestants disputed, including the authority of both Scripture and Church tradition and the importance of seven sacraments. This clarity aimed to strengthen a shared Catholic identity. The council also called for seminaries to train future priests and required bishops to oversee their dioceses more closely. Such rules aimed to improve the quality of local clergy. Church leaders also moved to stop financial abuses tied to indulgences, seeking to restore trust without abandoning the practice itself.

3 Catholic leaders used other methods to spread and protect their faith. The Society of Jesus, approved in 1540, opened schools and sent missionaries across Europe and beyond. Jesuit teaching and preaching sought to deepen Catholic commitment and win converts. Authorities also used the Index of Forbidden Books to restrict works judged dangerous to Catholic belief, while church inquisitions investigated suspected heresy. These policies sought to limit the spread of teachings leaders considered false. Unlike schools, restrictions and trials could silence dissent and punish people for their beliefs. Together, these measures show that reform involved education as well as control.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did the Council of Trent reaffirm teachings about Scripture, tradition, and the sacraments?

2. How were seminaries and closer oversight by bishops meant to improve the Church?

3. What purposes did Jesuit schools and missions serve?

4. What did the Index and church inquisitions seek to prevent, and what could be a consequence of using them?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a bishop whose town has poorly trained priests and growing debate about Protestant ideas. In five or six sentences, propose two different policies from the passage, explain how they work together to address both problems, and identify a possible drawback of your plan.

Reform and Response

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two purposes of the Counter-Reformation, circle three policies, and number each circled policy to match the purpose it served. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the Council of Trent reaffirm teachings about Scripture, tradition, and the sacraments?	**It aimed to defend disputed Catholic teachings and strengthen a shared Catholic identity.**
2	How were seminaries and closer oversight by bishops meant to improve the Church?	**Seminaries would train future priests, while bishops would supervise their dioceses more closely, improving the quality of local clergy.**
3	What purposes did Jesuit schools and missions serve?	**They aimed to deepen Catholic commitment and win converts through teaching and preaching.**
4	What did the Index and church inquisitions seek to prevent, and what could be a consequence of using them?	**They sought to limit teachings leaders considered false. Restricting books and investigating heresy could silence dissent and lead to punishment for beliefs.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask the bishop to establish a seminary so new priests can learn Catholic teachings and serve parishioners well. I would also use the Index of Forbidden Books to limit writings that church leaders judge dangerous to Catholic belief. Better-trained priests could explain Church teachings, while the Index would reduce the reach of opposing texts. Together, these measures address weak local leadership and the spread of disputed ideas instead of treating them as the same problem. However, restricting books could silence people who disagree, even when debate might help a community examine its beliefs.

Accept other accurate policy choices if the response explains how two policies address the town's distinct problems and identifies a plausible drawback. Students may describe a purpose in their own words.