Lorenzo de Medici
Student Worksheet

Introduction:

During the Renaissance era, many individuals and families contributed their talents and wealth to government or supporting the arts, and achieved great power as a result. One such example was Lorenzo de Medici, who exercised such power and authority that he was called "the Magnificent." De Medici was especially well known for his patronage of the arts, supporting artists such as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. In 1489, his son, Giovanni was made a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church at age 14. Upon Giovanni's elevation, his father wrote him warning the boy to avoid vice and luxury.

All Web links for this lesson can be found at:
http://www.socialstudies.com/worldlinks.html

Directions:

Lorenzo De Medici: Paternal Advice To A Cardinal (C. 1491)
Go to http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/lorenzomed1.html, read the letter, then answer the following questions:

1. Why did Lorenzo de Medici write this letter to his son?

2. In his letter, de Medici notes that the de Medici family "ought to esteem ourselves highly favored by Providence… for the many honors and benefits bestowed upon our house…” How does he suggest to his son that these honors may be repaid?

3. How does de Medici describe Rome? What warnings does he give his son about people who Giovanni would probably meet?

4. How does de Medici describe other members of the College of Cardinals?
5. What suggestions or advice does de Medici give his son regarding clothing, furnishings in his home, and punctuality?

6. How does de Medici suggest that his son should conduct himself as a cardinal?

7. In your view, do you believe it was fair and responsible of de Medici to get his son appointed a cardinal at age 14? Should parents push their children into such positions of responsibility in order to further the family’s position in society or wealth?