

The Artios Home Companion Series

Unit 21: Medieval Spain

Teacher Overview

DURING THE LATE Middle Ages, the country of Spain began gaining power and recognition under the rule of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.



King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain

Key People, Places, and Events

Isabella of Castile
Ferdinand II of Aragon
Spanish Inquisition

Vocabulary

Lesson 1:
none

Lesson 2:
pious
expel

Reading and Suggested Assignments

Based on your student's age and ability, the reading in this unit may be read aloud to the student and journaling and notebook pages may be completed orally. Likewise, other assignments can be done with an appropriate combination of independent and guided study.

In this unit, students will:

Complete two lessons in which they will learn about **the rise of Spain** and **King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella**.

- Watch the videos found on their **HCS Class pages** for this unit.
- Visit their **HCS Class pages** to check for additional resources.

Leading Ideas

God orders all things for the ultimate good of His people.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

– Romans 8:28

Speak truly, seeking to make peace.

Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace.

– Zechariah 8:16

Believers are called to set a good example for others.

Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

– 1 Timothy 4:12

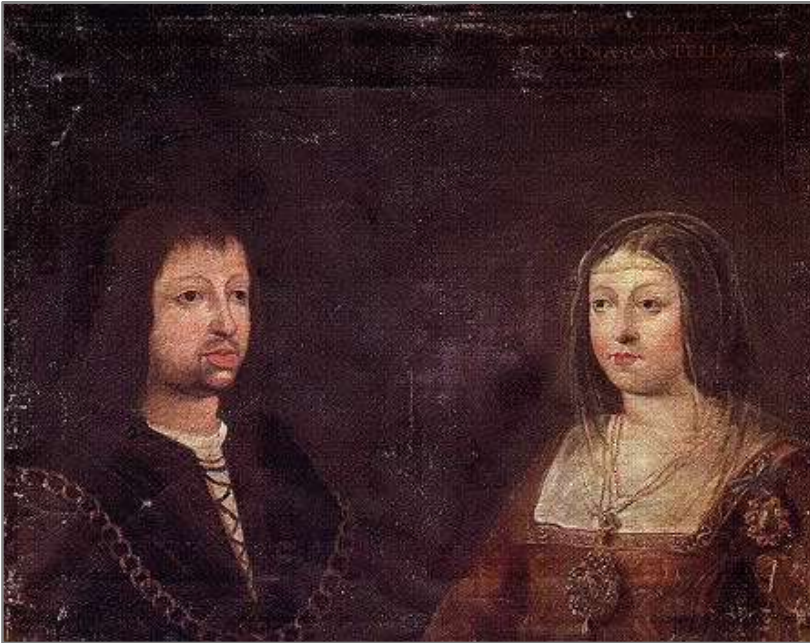


Tomb of Holy Roman Emperor Ludwig (Louis) IV the Bavarian, Frauenkirche, Munich

Lesson One

History Overview and Assignments The Rise of Spain

ONCE SPAIN FINALLY drove out the Arab Moors after eight hundred years of fighting, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella wanted all of Spain to be united. They believed they could unify the country through a national religion. To achieve that unity, they launched a war against the Muslims, and an investigation to root out enemies of the Christian faith. This investigation was called the Spanish Inquisition, and it became one of the bloodiest times in Spain's history.



Wedding portrait of King Ferdinand II of Aragón and Queen Isabella of Castile, who married in 1469, Artist unknown (15th century)

Reading and Suggested Assignments

- Read the article: *The Moors Driven Out of Spain*.
- After reading the article, summarize the story you read by either:
 - Retelling it out loud to your teacher or parent.
 - OR
 - Completing an appropriate notebook page.

Either way, be sure to include the answers to the discussion questions and an overview of key people, places, dates, and events in your summary.

- Watch the videos found on your **HCS Class pages** for this lesson.
- Be sure to visit your **HCS Class pages** to check for additional resources.

Discussion Questions

1. What were the roadblocks Spain faced in becoming a unified nation?
2. What did Ferdinand and Isabella believe would unite all the people of Spain?
3. What institution was established to accomplish that goal? Do you think this was the right way to share Christianity with the people of Spain?

Key People, Places, and Events

Isabella of Castile
Ferdinand II of Aragon
Spanish Inquisition

Adapted for Elementary School from the book:

The Story of Europe

by Henrietta Elizabeth Marshall

The Moors Driven Out of Spain

Driving Out the Moors

Arab Muslims called Moors had invaded Spain in the 8th century, and they took over almost all of it. The Moors did not force the people to become Muslim like other Arabs did, though. They mainly wanted the Christians' gold. The Moors let Christians remain Christian if they paid a tax. Nearly all the nobles paid this. Many of the common people became Muslim too, especially the slaves, for if a slave became Muslim, he was freed.

Although the Moors took over most of Spain, a small group in the northeast mountains held out against the Arabs. Mountains have always been a shelter for people in hiding, and the Moors could not pry them out. As time passed, they grew strong and drove the Moors southward, beginning what became known as the *Reconquista*, or "Reconquest."

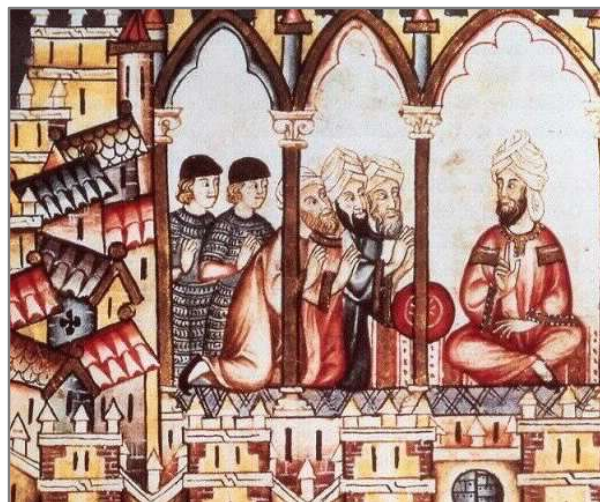
Over time the Spanish formed small kingdoms like Navarre, Leon, Aragon, and Castile. Castile got its name from the castles that were built for protection.

The kingdoms were small, and they often battled each other. In time members of the royal families married each other, and soon some of the kingdoms joined together. The Kingdom of Aragon was formed in the 12th century. Eight little states joined to form the Kingdom of Leon and Castile in the 13th century.

Portugal became a kingdom in the 12th century. It was much smaller than it is now. King Alfonso I and others who came after fought against the Moors. Alfonso III won the south part of Portugal in 1250.

Small Spanish states joined into kingdoms. They began to beat the Moors and win back their land. They did this very quickly. By 1265 the Moors only had

Granada in the south. It was not a free kingdom, though. The King of Castile ruled over the King of Granada.



Castilian ambassadors in Spain attempting to convince a Moorish king to join their alliance

The kings of Aragon and of Castile ruled together. They did that for over two hundred years, but there was no real unity. The two kings sometimes fought each other. Their kingdoms were only small states. People did not speak the same language, and they had different ways of doing things. It was hard to make them into one country.

The Spanish Inquisition

Queen **Isabella of Castile** married King **Ferdinand II of Aragon** in 1469. The two crowns joined, but this was not enough. Ferdinand and Isabella wanted all Spain to be united, and they wanted the country to have one religion.

Queen Isabella established a court of justice called the **Spanish Inquisition** for the Catholic Church. It was formed to seek out *heretics* (people who did not believe what the Church proclaimed) and remove them. It grew, and it became brutal. But the

world did not think it was cruel, because it used methods that were considered proper at that time. This court was used to judge those who were accused of believing wrong teachings or of doing harm to the Church or its members. There had to be strong proof against them, but the court was not perfect and made many mistakes. People were questioned and could either argue their innocence or confess what they had done.

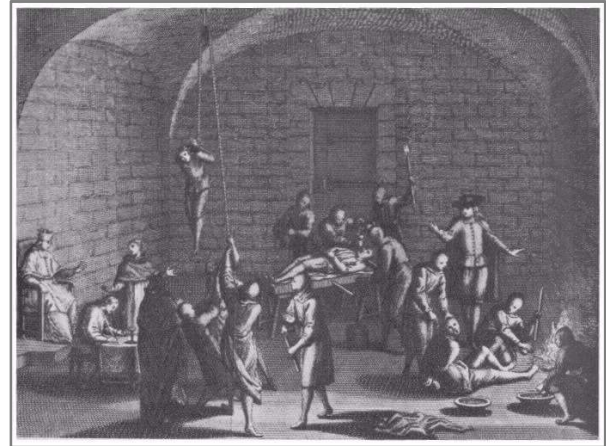


Queen Isabel I of Castile, by Luis de Madrazo

Sometimes the court was sure the person had done wrong and tried to get the person to confess. In those cases, government would step in and use torture. That was considered acceptable at that time. Fines and prison, trips to holy places, or wearing shameful or humble clothing were penance punishments given to people who had done wrong, but a lot of people were burned to death or terribly tortured.

The Spanish rulers were excited about their faith. They became so excited that they wanted nothing more than for their whole country to be Christian. They told the Jews they could become Christian, and if they did

not want to do that, they had to leave Spain. The Muslims who were still in the country had to do the same. Most of the Jews and Muslims decided to leave. This proved to be a great loss to Spain, because many of them were smart and were hard workers. They controlled much of the trade and making of products. This made things hard for a while.



Inquisition Torture Chamber, by Bernard Picard

Queen Isabella was a great and wise ruler. But much later, people would think she did wrong. She was a ruler of the 15th century, and all of Europe was strong in support of Christianity. Persecution of heretics was seen as a glorious work for Christ. So for the glory of God, Isabella did what she had been taught was right for a good ruler and a good Christian.

This persecution lasted hundreds of years, and torture was still in use as part of it early in the 18th century.

Spain as a Part of Europe

Spain had been at war for nearly eight hundred years. It had not done much with Europe and was not touched by things that had happened in Europe. It did not have a feudal system and was never a part of the Crusades because it had been busy fighting the Moors within its own country. So it had not been influenced by the changes in religion that had taken place in other countries.

But Spain finally became important in Europe during the time of Ferdinand and

Isabella. They financed the voyages of Christopher Columbus across the Atlantic Ocean, and the royal family joined with other countries of Europe through marriage. King Ferdinand sent representatives to live at the courts of other

states. This helped build friendships with other countries and built trade. Arguments that used to lead to war were resolved by talking. This was a step toward international understanding and decrease of wars.



The Surrender of Granada in 1492, by Francisco Pradilla Ortiz: Muhammad XII before Ferdinand and Isabella

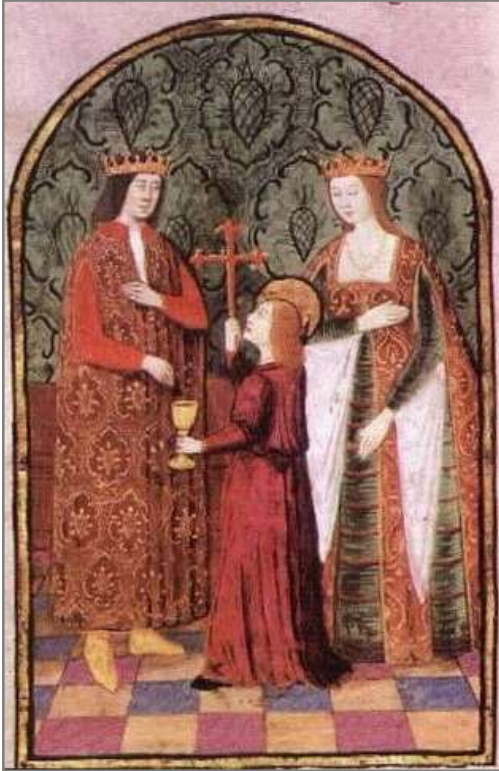
Lesson Two

History Overview and Assignments

Ferdinand and Isabella

“I will assume the undertaking for my own crown of Castile, and am ready to pawn my jewels to defray the expenses of it, if the funds in the treasury should be found inadequate.”

– believed to have been spoken by Queen Isabella about funding the voyage of Christopher Columbus



King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain

Key People, Places, and Events

Isabella of Castile Ferdinand II of Aragon
Black Death Christopher Columbus

Vocabulary

pious expel

Discussion Questions

1. What were some unhappy things about Isabella’s childhood?
2. Why did royal children become engaged at a young age during this time?
3. What was Queen Isabella known especially for during the war with Granada?
4. What did she do in 1492 that made Christopher Columbus very happy?
5. Who was Ferdinand and Isabella’s heir? What was said about his kingdoms?

Reading and Suggested Assignments

- Read the article: *Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain*.
 - After reading the article, summarize the story you read by either:
 - Retelling it out loud to your teacher or parent.OR
 - Completing an appropriate notebook page.
- Either way, be sure to include the answers to the discussion questions and an overview of key people, places, dates, and events in your summary.
- Define the vocabulary words in the context of the reading. Write the words and their definitions in the vocabulary section of your history notebook.
 - Watch the videos found on your **HCS Class pages** for this lesson.
 - Be sure to visit your **HCS Class pages** to check for additional resources.

Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain

by Mary E. Hall

Isabella

In the mountainous region of Spain that was once called the Kingdom of Castile, a girl named **Isabella** was born to the royal family in April of the year 1451. She was called an *infanta*, because that was the name for princesses in that kingdom. Isabella had two older half-sisters and a half-brother, and soon she had a younger brother too, named Alfonso.

Isabella did not have a very happy childhood, though, partly because many of her family members died while she was growing up. Some died from the terrible plague called the **Black Death** that killed many people of Europe during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Her father, King John II, died when Isabella was only three. Her older sisters had both already died too, so her older half-brother Henry became the King.



Around the middle of the 14th century, the Black Death ravaged Germany and Europe. Illustration from the *Dance of Death*, by Michael Wolgemut (1493)

Another reason Isabella's childhood was unhappy was that King Henry wanted to keep the family fortunes for himself, so he didn't provide much for his younger siblings. Isabella's mother took her, along with her little brother Alfonso, away to live

in another castle, in a little town called Arévalo. This castle was not very pretty, and Isabella's mother did not have much money, but she made sure Isabella received good schooling and was well trained in the teachings of Christianity. Some of the things Princess Isabella was taught included reading, mathematics, history, music, dancing, chess, and embroidery. She was a smart and capable student, and she learned well. One of the things she was carefully taught was that a royal lady must keep from showing any sadness or fear. This might have been hard for young Isabella, but it became important in her life later on.

When King Henry's wife had a daughter, Isabella and Alfonso were brought back to the royal palace in Segovia. This was done by the King's orders, partly so that his family would have other family members in the royal household, and partly so he could watch over them, because he had many enemies and wondered all the time who might be plotting against him.

At the palace the young prince and princess finished their schooling. Although Isabella was now surrounded by dazzling luxury, she remembered her early lessons well and continued to honor God.

Isabella was promised in marriage at a very young age, as was the custom at that time for royal princesses, to a prince named Ferdinand from a nearby kingdom. He was a young cousin of hers. But King Henry broke his promise a few years later, promising Isabella to a different nobleman so he could make an alliance with him. This nobleman died, and a new agreement was made, promising her this time to the King of Portugal. Isabella was thirteen by this time, and she refused to marry such an older man. A different match was arranged when she was sixteen, but this suitor was such a vile and wicked man that Isabella refused to eat or come out of her rooms. Thankfully for the

pious infanta, the dreaded suitor fell sick and died on his way to meet her.

King Henry was not well liked as a ruler, and his subjects often rose in arms against him. Isabella left the palace for the shelter of a monastery. The nobles who did not like King Henry offered to fight for Isabella if she wished to seize the crown, but she refused. She did agree to become King Henry's heir, though, when her younger brother Alfonso died.



Isabella in the *Rimado de la Conquista de Granada*, from 1482, by Pedro Marcuello

Ferdinand

A year younger than Isabella, **Ferdinand** grew up in the royal family of the Kingdom of Aragon, to the east of Castile. Not much is known about his childhood, but as heir to the throne he was schooled on the art of government by his father and carefully selected teachers.

Young Ferdinand greatly enjoyed music, and he later became a patron of the arts. He was not known to be very friendly, but he was wise and courageous. He, like Isabella, was taught to always show strength, and never sorrow or fear.



Ferdinand, by an unknown painter, c.1520s

The Catholic Rulers

Once Isabella became heir to Castile's crown, many noblemen suddenly wanted to marry her, but Isabella chose her very first betrothed, her cousin Ferdinand, and she made a secret agreement with his father to marry him. Fearing that her brother would oppose her wishes, she set out on a journey, saying that she wanted to visit her brother Alfonso's tomb in Ávila. Meanwhile, Ferdinand came over from Aragon dressed as a servant, and the two were married in October of 1469. It was a good match for both of their kingdoms, but they also loved each other very much.

Five years later, King Henry died, and Ferdinand and Isabella were declared King and Queen of Castile. Others made claim to the throne, though, and a war had to be

fought before Isabella was officially accepted as Castile's queen. Four years after Henry's death, Ferdinand also became King of Aragon. He and Isabella agreed to rule their kingdoms with equal power, and together they put many reforms into place.



Fernando and Isabel, the Catholic Monarchs. The youth to their right almost certainly is their son Don Juan, Prince of Asturias. The girls to their left are more of a mystery, but it could be the three infantas (princesses), although their ages are not correctly depicted.

Now most of Spain was united, but the Muslim Moors still ruled over the rest. The King and Queen launched the brutal Spanish Inquisition to root out heretics, but they wanted even more to rid Spain of the Muslims.

War Against the Muslims and Expulsion of the Jews

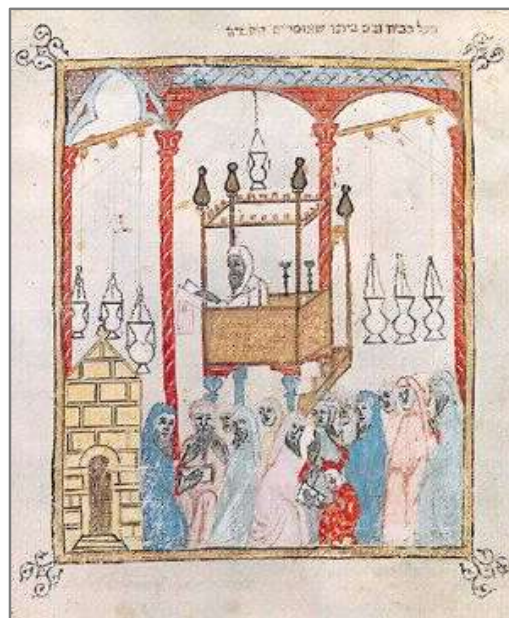
In 1481, Ferdinand and Isabella's armies went to war against the Moors of Granada. They wanted to reclaim the land the Muslims had taken and believed that it would honor God to make all the country Christian again. After ten years and many fierce battles, all of Spain finally came under Christian rule in 1492, and Ferdinand and Isabella became known as the Catholic Rulers of Spain. Taking over the Muslim lands brought riches to the Spanish rulers.

During the war, Isabella was often seen with the armies, rallying them on and giving support. She is known especially for setting up the first army camp hospitals with

surgeons on hand to treat wounded soldiers.

Queen Isabella's priest, a man named Torquemada, was glad that the Muslims had been conquered or driven out, and he wanted very badly to **expel** the Jews from the country as well. They were a hardworking and wealthy people, and they were hated by the Spanish Christians because they refused to honor Christ as Lord.

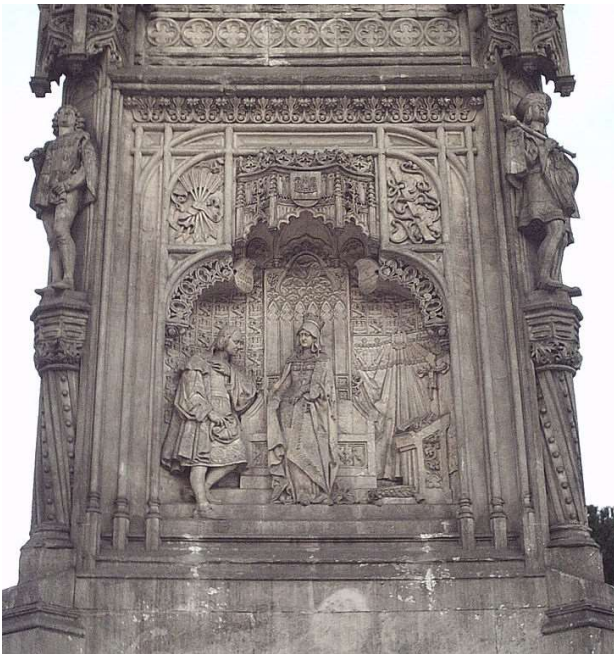
When the Jews offered thirty thousand ducats to be allowed to stay, Torquemada burst into the room, pulled a crucifix from his robe and exclaimed, "Judas Iscariot sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver. Your Highnesses would sell him anew for thirty thousand. Here He is. Take him, and barter Him away!" So finishing his fiery speech, he threw the crucifix down onto a table and stormed out of the room. The King and Queen, overawed, signed the expulsion edict. The order drove out more than 40,000 practicing Jews from Spain, and the rulers became even richer than they were before by taking over their lands and possessions.



A Jewish service in a Spanish synagogue, from the *Sister Haggadah* (c. 1350). The Alhambra Decree brought Spanish Jewish life to a sudden end.

Agreement With Christopher Columbus

Just three months after conquering Granada in January of 1492, Isabella decided to use some of Castile's new riches to send **Christopher Columbus** on his voyage to reach Asia by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean. After many years of seeking support from one ruler after another, Columbus was overjoyed. His voyages brought fame and more riches to the Catholic rulers, but Isabella would not allow him to bring natives from the Americas to become slaves in Spain.



Monument to Columbus, statue commemorating New World discoveries, Isabella at the center, Columbus on the left, a cross on her right. The emblems of Ferdinand and Isabella, the yoke and sheaf of arrows, are those of the Catholic Monarchs. Plaza de Colón, Madrid, Spain, built between 1881–1885 (CC BY-SA 3.0 by Luis García (Zaqarbal) : [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Monarchs_of_Spain#/media/File:Monumento_a_Col%C3%B3n_\(Madrid\)_02.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Monarchs_of_Spain#/media/File:Monumento_a_Col%C3%B3n_(Madrid)_02.jpg))

Legacy

Ferdinand and Isabella had seven children. Only five of them lived to grow up, but they married royalty throughout Europe, providing many alliances for Spain. When Isabella died in 1504, she was mourned with great sorrow by her people.

Ferdinand lived for eight more years. During this time he remarried and had a son, but the child died soon after being born.

Ferdinand and Isabella's heir was their grandson, who became Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, whose vast holdings in both Europe and the Americas was the first group of kingdoms called "the empire on which the sun never sets."



Isabella and Ferdinand with their daughter Joanna, unknown artist (c.1482)