With one visit to Vatican Splendors, your students will experience 2,000 years of history as they see over two hundred works of art and historically significant objects including a brick from Saint Paul’s tomb, gold statues of Saints Peter, Paul, John, and Andrew, and Michelangelo’s calipers. Together, the artifacts form a great mosaic of the history of the Church and its impact on art, history, and culture.

The Vatican has served as a repository for historical objects—such as reliquaries, maps, documents, vestments, and liturgical items, as well as cultural objects from around the world—all presented in this exhibition, which help connect students with important moments in history. From the sights and sounds of the grand Basilica to a touchable cast of Saint John Paul II’s hand, the exhibition is a multi-sensory experience that leads students on a journey through the ages of artistic expression and religious iconography.

Vatican Splendors includes many artifacts which have never before left Vatican City. The collection features renaissance art along with work from the baroque period. The eleven galleries walk you through the history of Christianity focusing on the Catholic Church and the amazing religious art that came out of Rome. An impressive focus in the exhibition is on the Basilica to which Michelangelo and Bernini contributed artistically.

**DURING YOUR VISIT, STUDENTS WILL:**

- Trace the history of the Catholic Church as it grew around the world.
- See distinct artifacts and artworks associated with the church.

**AFTER YOUR VISIT, STUDENTS WILL:**

- Think about how religion influences society.
- Understand that religion plays a role in history.
QUICK TIPS

• The exhibit is located on the upper level of the Nicholas and Athena Karabots Pavilion. Enter the exhibit via the main Bartol Atrium. Your students will walk up a ramp to the entrance of the exhibit.
• On average, most groups will spend about 60 minutes in the exhibit, if carefully examining all of the displays. Restrooms are located in the Bartol Atrium. There are no restrooms inside the exhibit.
• An optional audio tour is available for $5.00 per person. If you would like to add this option, please contact our Group Sales team at 215.448.1200 (Option 3).
• No food or beverages are allowed in any of the exhibit galleries.
• Non-flash photography is permitted in the exhibit.
• Running through the exhibit is not allowed. Designate a meeting location within the exhibit when you arrive in case someone gets separated. Please do not congregate at the entrance/exit, however, so as to enable other guests to enter and exit easily.

HOW TO PREPARE

Students should know that the artifacts on display are priceless works never before seen in Philadelphia. The exhibit is not to be touched.

Students should also know that many people consider the objects on display to be sacred and worthy of adoration. They should behave accordingly, showing respect to others who may be in the exhibit.

Chaperones and students should know that the museum encourages conversation around the displays and children should ask questions and discuss what they see. Museum etiquette suggests that the conversation be kept to an appropriate indoor volume level.

Note that there is a gift shop near the exhibit which features items related to the exhibition at many price levels—from small souvenirs to collectible items. You do not have to pass through it, but it will likely attract your students’ attention. Be prepared to direct your students accordingly to allow them time to shop or to proceed directly past to your next destination.
ABOUT THE EXHIBIT

The Vatican Splendors exhibit features eleven smaller galleries. As you progress through the galleries, you will be exploring the 2,000 year history of the Catholic Church.

1. FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHURCH

Our journey begins with Emperor Constantine’s declaration in 312 AD that Christianity would be legal and his decision to build Basilicas directly over the tombs of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. As a result of these changes, Roman Christians no longer had to practice their faith in secret, and Christian art began to flourish.

2. RISE OF CHRISTIAN ROME

This gallery explores the Middle Ages and Byzantium period when Rome grew as a Christian city fostered by the papacy.

3. RENAISSANCE

Visitors learn how Christian art drew upon the art of Ancient Rome for inspiration, and the style created that combined Christian and non-Christian images. During this period, the Ancient Basilica was in extreme disrepair; however, the Filarete Doors—the ornate entry to the Ancient Basilica—were saved and used in the newer Basilica.

4. MICHELANGELO & THE SISTINE CHAPEL

This section explores the fiery relationship between Pope Julius II and Michelangelo during the painting of the Sistine Chapel.

5. THE NEW BASILICA

In 1506, Pope Julius authorized the construction of a new Saint Peter’s Basilica. Michelangelo was one of many architects who worked on the new building. The famed artist Bernini also contributed much to the new basilica, as well as to the city of Rome as architect, painter, and sculptor.

6. ART IN THE SERVICE OF THE FAITH

During the period in which the Renaissance was at its height, the Protestant Reformation was born, and the Catholic Reformation followed. The Council of Trent met from 1545 to 1563 and established guidelines that art should be created in the service of faith to deliver the message of Christianity in ways accessible to ordinary people. This gallery presents this story with objects developed during this period of change.
7. ART OF THE LITURGY

As ritual instruments essential to the adoration of God, liturgical objects (implements used in the celebration of the Mass) are often rich and splendid. Artists have seized the opportunity to create objects that are as beautiful and expressive as they are durable and practical.

8. DIALOGUE WITH THE WORLD

For centuries, the Church has engaged the world through missionary outreach, teaching activities, and religious dialogue with both Christians and non-Christians. The Catholic Church’s interaction with the world’s diverse societies and religions are reflected in devotional art, most commonly provided as gifts to the Vatican, over many years.

9. PAPAL PORTRAITURE

Popes are traced back to the apostles of Jesus, particularly Peter, who is recognized as the first pope. Over the 2000 years of the papacy, a very large collection of papal portraits has been collected and conserved. Early pontiffs were portrayed in mosaics, in frescos, and on sarcophagi. The tradition of portraiture was begun by John VII (705–707 AD), who commissioned images of himself for churches.

10. ART IN THE MODERN PAPACY

From its humble beginnings, the Vatican collections now span 4,500 years with objects dating back to ancient Egypt and Assyria, through the European Renaissance and Baroque eras, and forward to the present day. For hundreds of years, the Church has collected, sponsored, and conserved buildings, frescos, paintings, sculptures, liturgical instruments, and other works.

11. THE ROAD TO SAINthood

This gallery showcases artifacts associated with Pope Saint John Paul II, one of the most beloved popes.
TRY THIS!

WHERE IN THE WORLD?
Prepare for your visit to Vatican Splendors by orienting your students to the geography of Italy and the location of Vatican City. Use Google Maps to look at the region.

1. Go to maps.google.com.
2. Enter “Vatican City” in the search box.
3. Use the map’s view controllers to switch back and forth between satellite and map views, comparing features of each.
4. While in satellite view, zoom in until the street view option is available. “Walk” around the Piazza San Pietro. Notice the architecture.
5. Zoom out until the entire city of Rome and then the country of Italy is visible. Note how tiny Vatican City is in comparison.

ABOUT VATICAN CITY
Known officially as the Vatican City State (or Stato della Città del Vaticano), the Vatican is a country within a country with the Pope as its head of state. It is the world’s smallest principality, just 108 acres nestled within the city of Rome in Italy. Vatican City has its own diplomatic corps and security force, the Swiss Guard. The small state even operates its own radio station, has one newspaper and a post office with its own stamps. Despite its small size, Vatican City State has profoundly shaped world history for centuries.
TRY THIS!

THE SISTINE CHAPEL
In the exhibit, students will see reproductions of the Sistine Chapel’s ceiling, one of the greatest treasures in Vatican City. Construction began in 1475 during the reign of Pope Sixtus IV, for whom the chapel was named. The architecture is simple in comparison to Saint Peter’s Basilica. The chapel is rectangular in shape, constructed to the exact dimensions of the original Temple of Solomon as given in the Bible. It is topped with a rounded half-barrel roof.

A number of talented contemporary artists of the period were commissioned to decorate the interior of the chapel with frescos. In 1508, Pope Julius II (nicknamed Julius the Terrible) commissioned Michelangelo to repaint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Their fiery relationship sparked one of the supreme masterpieces of all art.

Michelangelo never considered himself to be a painter. A talented sculptor, an ingenious architect and a tolerable poet, he would say, but never a good painter. So when Pope Julius II insisted that Michelangelo paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, he resisted. But the Pope would not budge—he was to undertake this massive project.

Creating frescos is a difficult and physically exhausting process. With his characteristic energy, Michelangelo threw himself into the project. For four years, he lay on his back on scaffolding fifty feet in the air, creating a series of beautiful images that retell the key stories of the Bible. He struggled to paint this nearly ten thousand square foot ceiling which was irregularly rounded and sometimes even leaking. But out of this great challenge emerged one of the world’s greatest pieces of artwork. Contrary to his own opinion of himself, Michelangelo was as gifted a painter as he was a sculptor.

You can simulate Michelangelo’s experience in your classroom.

Have your students lie on the floor under their desks and tape paper to the bottom of the desks. Try painting a heavenly scene. If painting is too ambitious, try drawing with crayons.
VATICAN SPLENDORS
SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR K-12 CLASSROOMS AND LIBRARIES

**Elementary School**

*Kids Explore America’s Catholic Heritage*
by Judith Cozzens
ISBN 0819842087

**Middle School**

*Christ the King Lord of History*
by Anne W. Carroll
ISBN 0895555034

*Religion in the Renaissance*
by Lizann Flatt
ISBN 0778746178

**High School**

*Catholics in America*
by James T. Fisher
ISBN 0195111796

*Communion of Immigrants*
by James T. Fisher
ISBN 0195154967

**Recommended Website**

Vatican Museums
www.museivaticani.va/3_EN/pages/MV_Home.html
CURRICULAR STANDARDS

AN EXPLORATION OF THE VATICAN SPLENDORS EXHIBIT CAN HELP STUDENTS ACHIEVE LEARNING OBJECTIVES AS CALLED FOR BY THE NATIONAL STANDARDS.

**Benchmarks for Science Literacy**

Grades 3–12
7. Human Society
7a. Cultural Effects on Behavior
7b. Group Behavior
7c. Social Change
7f. Social Conflict

**National Core Arts Standards — Visual Arts**

AS7: Perceive & analyze artistic work
AS8: Interpret intent & meaning in artistic work
AS11: Relate artistic ideas & works with societal, cultural, & historical context to deepen understanding

**Common Core English Language Arts**

Grades 3–5
Reading Informational Text

Grades 6–12
Literacy in Science & Technical Subjects

**National Standards for History**

Grades 3–4
Topic 4: Standard 7A

Grades 5–12
World Era 3: Standard 1 & 3
World Era 4: Standard 4
World Era 5: Standard 2
World Era 6: Standard 2 & 4
World Era 7: Standard 6
World Era 9: Standard 2

**National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies**

Grades 3–12
Theme 1: Culture
Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, & Institutions