



2024

SCHOOL TRIP RESOURCE

For the student Renaissance Challenge

**“The unique program that
makes history come alive”**

**South FL Parenting Kids Crown Award, 2018 – Best Family
Event**

IMPORTANT NOTE OF CONDUCT

The festival and its participants are happy to have you here and have done their part to ensure that you enjoy a day of fun and learning.

It is important that students understand many of the activities they participate in will involve independent performers and artisans.

These performers and artisans have numerous obligations throughout the day and at times may be in a hurry to get to their next performance or to speak with a patron. Please remind students to be respectful of their availability during these times. Please understand this is what they do for a living and we ask that you and your students are sensitive to this by not asking for special discounts, running through crowds or disrupting performances.

Thank you for your cooperation and enjoy your day at the 2024 Florida Renaissance Festival.

NOTE: The Florida Renaissance Festival also hosts a Scout Patch Program which is different from the student “Renaissance Challenge” held on School Day. The Scout Patch Program is not available during School Day. Students who may also be involved in scouting must attend a *non-school* day to participate in the Festival’s Scout Patch program.

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USING THIS PACKET

This packet is designed to provide basic information about educational activities at the Florida Renaissance Festival. It changes each year, so please be sure to download the workbook for the current program. This packet includes:

This activity enables students to learn more about the history of the Renaissance Era. Students are provided with a match-up list of twenty-six items for which they may seek assistance from village denizens assigned as guides. These specific guides are identified as those pinned with a small white rose. This interaction enables students to gain a better knowledge of the politics and culture of the time.

If you would like to participate in this activity:

- Provide copies of the match-up list for each student. Refer to the Renaissance Match-Up portion of this packet for the list of questions.
- Ensure that students have a pen or pencil and possibly a clipboard to record their answers.
- After the festival, teachers are urged to review the questions and answers with the students and encourage further discussion. The answers are located in the Renaissance Match-Up Answers at the end of this packet.

1. Festival Encampments

The Festival is pleased to host several living history encampments that provide a face-to-face representation of an era that can't be experienced through books. Encourage your students to visit each encampment, ask the performers questions and participate in the available activities. Refer to the Festival Encampments portion of this packet for more information.

2. Performances and Activities

There are tons of exciting, entertaining and educational performances and activities taking place throughout the day. Upon arrival, be sure to review the schedule and highlight performances you would like your students to attend. Refer to the Festival Activities portion of this packet for a summary of performances and activities. We strongly recommend the following performances and demonstrations:

- Anger of the Mistress (Trebuchet Demonstrations)
- Birds of Prey
- Jousting Tournament
- Blacksmithing
- Historic Glassworks Glass Blowing

3. History Corner

We have included several small articles about Medieval and Renaissance times in this packet. Feel free to use these in your classroom.

INCLUDED FESTIVAL VISIT ACTIVITIES

ENCAMPMENT VISIT

The festival hosts several encampments all staffed by volunteers. They are eager to give you a glimpse into daily Renaissance life. Take a tour of our many special historic encampments and learn more about history

JOUSTING

Watch brave knights challenge each other on the jousting field. See the show schedule for times

HISTORICAL GLASSWORKS

Watch a master craftsman create beautiful and functional pieces of art out of glass using the same techniques as artisans did during the Renaissance. Refer to your schedule for location and show times.

STAGE SHOW ENTERTAINMENT

During the Renaissance, there was great cultural achievement, particularly in the area of music and drama. Musical literacy was expected among upper class society, and many composed their own music. The laborers would sing while working and the townspeople would sing or play music after meals. The lute, virginal, viola, recorder, bagpipe, and the fiddle were favored instruments of that time. A popular form of entertainment in the countryside was the simple ringing of church bells. Everyone loved to listen to music, but since there was no access to a recording studio, it was enjoyed live. In the major towns, official musicians, or “waits,” gave free public concerts and the wealthy hired musicians to play during dinner. Check the schedule and pick shows that appeal to you.

RED LYON SMITHING – BLACKSMITH

The people of Scandinavia would tell tale of Dwarves, legendary metalsmiths who lived in great halls deep within the earth. They smelt metal ore in magnificent forges and created objects of wondrous beauty. The blacksmiths of Brandr forge are much like these dwarves of legend, both in skill and stature. Come see them work metal as easily as a baker works his dough, molding iron into shape. They offer a deep knowledge of the metal lore, as well as the history of Scandinavian seafaring explorers- who we today call “Vikings.” See the schedule for their show times or visit any time for a pleasant and educational conversation.

FESTIVAL ENCAMPMENTS

The festival hosts several encampments all staffed by volunteers. They are eager to give you a glimpse into daily Renaissance life. Take a tour of some of these areas:

ANGER OF THE MISTRESS TREBUCHET

At the heart of the bustling Renaissance festival grounds, an awe-inspiring demonstration unfolds as a towering trebuchet takes center stage. The air crackles with anticipation as onlookers gather, their faces alive with wonder. With meticulous precision, the crew adjusts the colossal wooden contraption, its ropes taut and ready to release its payload. As the massive arm swings and the counterweight drops, a collective gasp escapes the crowd. The trebuchet unleashes a deafening whoosh, launching a giant projectile through the sky in a graceful arc before crashing down with a thunderous impact in the water. Spectators marvel at the sheer power and engineering marvel of this medieval siege weapon, transporting them back in time to an era of grandeur and innovation..

THE MERCHANTS OF BRITTANY

The Merchants of Brittany encampment is based on historic organizations known as merchant caravans that flourished in Northern Europe from the 12th through the mid-17th century. Visit the headquarters area of one of these! This caravan travels through Brittany and France, and also routinely meets with other caravans such as the Hanseatic League from Germany. Its members represent a variety of different merchants, artisans, crafters, performers, and travelers who are traversing between fairs and cities across the countryside. Traveling together for support and safety, these caravans also consisted of many support personnel, such as: mercenaries for protection, hunters to provide food, cooks, blacksmiths, weavers, cobblers, and livestock handlers. The level of knowledge, skills, and labors that the members of these caravans possessed and used in their daily lives was amazing. Care to join them for a trip?

HER MAJESTY'S ROYAL ARTILLERY

H.M. Royal Artillery is freelance artillery battery that is employed by the King. Known as "Keepers of the Peace" they open the festival every morning, at his Majesty's command, with a cannon shot. In the evening, promptly at sunset they close the faire with a small arms and cannon demonstration. As a historic reenactment group, they are dedicated to teaching and demonstrating the safe use of muzzle-loading black powder cannons and small arms. Once a day during faire, and by his Majesty's permission, they conduct a live fire black powder mortar demonstration.

The current arsenal consists of 14 cannons and over 70 different small arms. As acknowledged black powder experts with over 110 years of combined experience with muzzle-loading weaponry of all types, one of their main endeavors is education. Stop by their encampment to learn about the fascinating history of black powder and the weapons that used it.

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE ENCAMPMENT

During the 16th and 17th centuries, at the height of its power under the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire was a multinational, multilingual empire controlling much of Southeast Europe, parts of Central Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa.

With Constantinople as its capital and control of lands around the Mediterranean basin, the Ottoman Empire was at the center of interactions between the Eastern and Western worlds for six centuries.

During various conflicts throughout Europe, great capitols rose and fell often losing great libraries and other repositories of knowledge and cultural histories, leading to the period known as “The Dark Ages”. The Ottomans held and protected the accumulated knowledge of the greater world for centuries. As Europe entered into the Renaissance the Ottoman Empire began to share the arts, sciences, and histories that they had so carefully maintained. It was through their influence that much of the cultural histories of great countries remain. The Ottomans were artists, scholars, and philosophers of the highest caliber, generous with their knowledge and diplomatic with their strength. Visit their encampment near our grand plaza.

PORT ROYAL BUCCANEERS

Piracy is older than recorded history but the pirates we are most familiar with are those from a time called The Golden Age of Piracy. Visit the Port Royal Buccaneers for a taste of what life was like during this time.

THE ADRIAN EMPIRE

The Adrian Empire is dedicated to the study and re-creation of Western European culture between the the year 793 and 1625. Our members work to re-create the arts, skills, and culture of this range of the Medieval and Renaissance eras. Local chapters usually meet on a monthly basis and hold tournaments of combat, archery, and the arts. Occasional regional as well as two annual national “wars” are also held which include both tournaments and group battle scenarios. At all of our events, we strive to wear period garb, set up period encampments or settings, and comport ourselves with chivalry and honor.

HISTORY CORNER

ARCHERY AND THE BEGINNING OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Evidence points to the bow and arrow emerging from Africa about 15,000 years ago. Most of this is speculation, so we must look to the Stellmoor bow. The Stellmoor bow is the oldest known bow on record. It was found in Germany and dates back 10,000 years. Next came the Holemegourd bows that were found in Danish bogs. These bows date back 8,000 years. All were wide-limbed flat bows, commonly called European flat bows.

The oldest known bows that were made in the English longbow design are the Neolithic yew bows. Some of these were flatbows like the European ones but a large majority of them were circular and longer. The Scandinavians were the first to use them, but some speculate that the English longbow was first made and used by the Welsh. Though the yew longbow was used long before an Englishman picked one up, the English get the credit for it for the way they used it in war.

PIRACY

Piracy is older than recorded history but the pirates we are most familiar with are those from a time called The Golden Age of Piracy. This period started soon after the discovery of the New World and continued for about 250 years. During this time many people from different cultures left their homes to seek out a better life in the Americas. While this led to the eventual forming of the United States, it was many bloody years before that came to be. At that time the Caribbean and outlying areas around the un-named Florida peninsula were a hotbed of activity involving France, England, and Spain. They saw the New World as an unending source of revenue and quickly gathered up islands in the Bahamas and Caribbean to establish a powerful base of operations in the blossoming Americas. It was only a matter of time before the ships laden with plundered gold and treasures were in turn attacked by local settlers and criminals. In time, many of these early raiders would grow in infamy into the historical icons we would come to know as buccaneers, corsairs or simply pirates.

Unlike the noble gentlemen who were awarded rank and ship station by their influential families, pirate captains were chosen by the crews. This democratic outlook on pirate hierarchy led to the creation of extremely profitable and powerful captains and crews. If a captain did not live up to expectations, he was relieved of command, and another was chosen. This usually meant death for the displaced captain, but it was to be expected. Pirates lived a fast, hard lifestyle not unlike today's celebrities. At any given time, they could either be dirt poor or living like kings. Few pirates learned to save their quickly earned fortunes, but instead squandered it faster than they could steal it.

Crews would spend more time on the high seas than in port.

Their shortcomings aside, pirates were still some of the best sailors and jacks-of-all-trades around. They were required to have basic sailing and survival skills while maintaining both their fighting prowess and their weapons. A pirate was responsible for his own safety and that of his brothers. If his guns and blades were not in top shape, he would fail at his duties to his captain and crew, which in turn could mean death. On the other hand, a pirate wounded in battle was offered a better share of the plunder. The idea behind this was, "fight hard, pay well," and "fight harder, pay better!" A scar was considered a badge of honor and a peg leg symbol of respect.

Pirates preyed upon ships headed to Europe until the mid-1800s. Millions in gold were lost to the raiders as they prowled the Gulf Stream. High bounties for their heads and military convoys led to the eventual downfall of the Caribbean pirates. As their reign ended as unopposed lords of the sea, a nation was born.

The development of the New World heralded the end of major piratical activities for the Bahamas and the Caribbean. Their influence on our society will live on in stories, songs and legends. It is their enduring spirit and zest for life that attracts so many. It is why writers speak of them as heroes and brigands in the same sentence and why movies portray them as men of honor as well as cutthroats. After all this time, we can't seem to let their rebellious and adventurous reputation sail away into obscured history.

THE LONDON MASTERS OF DEFENSE

One of the more obscure areas of Renaissance martial arts is that of the London Masters of Defense. During the 1500s, "The Corporation of Masters of the Noble Science of Defense" or the "Company of Masters" was an organized guild offering instruction in the traditional English forms of self-defense. Training consisted of the use of swords, staves, and other weapons. It also included wrestling, pugilism (boxing) and disarming techniques. In keeping with the Renaissance spirit, these English masters of defense rigorously studied and openly plied their craft, which was not the case in previous centuries. An edict from as early as 1286 in England forbade private fencing schools within the city of London---ostensibly to "control villainy" and "prevent criminal mischief" said to be associated with such activities.

Centered in and around London, the English guilds essentially followed the centuries-old practice of the traditional Medieval master-at-arms but adapted to the changing times. Each public school or "Company of Masters" had special rules, regulations and codes which were strictly upheld. For example, no student could fight for real with another student or harm a master. No master could challenge another. No master could open a school within seven miles of another or without prior permission from the ancient masters (senior faculty). No student was to raise his weapon in anger or be a drunkard, criminal, or traitor. Furthermore, no one could reveal the secret teachings of the school. Most of the rules were to preserve the school's status, prestige, and economic monopoly on the trade.

The English fighting guilds, following the format of colleges of the age, had four levels of students: Scholar, Free-Scholar, Provost, and Master. Only four ancient masters were allowed at any one school. New students were recruited, paid a tuition and apprenticed before graduating. There was also a system of fines and penalties for violations of regulations and custom. For students' advancement, the schools of defense held public tests called "Playing the Prize." When the time came to test their skill and advance to the next grade (after years of apprenticeship) the student, depending on level, would have to fight a series of test bouts.

The fight itself taught in the "schole" consisted of traditional English weapons dating back to the early Middle Ages. For a scholar taking the challenge, the weapons judged upon were the longsword and backsword. For a free-scholar, there was a choice of any three weapons- commonly longsword, backsword, and short sword w/ buckler shield. For a provost, there was a choice of any four weapons- usually the same as the free-scholar but including at least one polearm. Provosts playing for their "Master's Prize" would face an agonizing ten bouts with eight weapons each, including a single dagger, quarterstaff, and two-handed sword. It took an average 14 years from apprenticeship to attain a Master's title, although this timespan varies according to the records.

The weapons used varied greatly in style. The backsword was a single-edged "cut & thrust" blade with a compound, swept-hilt. The short sword was the contemporary name given to a form of narrower, lighter weapon of similar style. The buckler was a small, maneuverable, hand-held metal shield for punching and deflecting blows. The longsword would be an older Medieval hand-and-a-half or "bastard" sword or even two-hand or "great" sword. Some of the other weapons were the Morris-pike (a long metal-tipped staff), flail, sword & offhand dagger, and sword & offhand gauntlet. Starting around 1580, the rapier, and rapier & offhand dagger were added. Of Hispanic-Italian origin, the civilian rapier with its vicious, deceptive manner of "foining" ("thrusting"), was considered a dastardly "foreign" weapon.

* Excerpt from “The London Masters of Defence - Playing the Prize in Elizabethan England” by John Clements

The introduction of the rapier was gradual, but eventually won against common prejudice. The rapier was as long as the most common swords, much lighter, and could be far deadlier on account of its speed. It became a very common sidearm for civilians, as it was light and easily worn at the hip. The rapier, however, was far less practical on battlefields than it was in single combat/duels; rapiers used on the battlefield were made in the same style but with wider, heavier blades. Typically, only military officers would equip themselves with such a blade, having trained with fencing masters.

BLACKSMITHING

The blacksmith was a figure shrouded in mystery and fear, but above all, was held in respect. It was believed that everything was composed of four elemental substances---earth, air, fire, and water. The blacksmith was the only person to work with all four. The forge held the fire, which could reach an excess of 2500 degrees Fahrenheit, to soften and weld the iron. The bellows forced the air into his forge, driving in oxygen and causing the fire to burn even brighter and hotter. The material blacksmiths worked with was iron, also known as “the black metal.” It was smelted from a rock of the earth known as iron “ocher” or iron ore. Finally, water was used to quench and temper the hot iron, giving strength to this hard-wrought work.

As civilization became more advanced, the need for the blacksmith was even greater in Medieval and Renaissance England and around the world. Anything made of iron, including nails, tools, and door hinges, would have been produced by the blacksmith. The scythes and plowshares for farming, horseshoes, weapons and armor for warfare and the caldron and cookware for everyday life all came from the blacksmith’s forge.

The origin of the craft is lost in history, but it is believed to have started some 6,000 years ago in the Caucasus region and expanded from there. The tools of the craft have changed very little. If you have any questions, feel free to ask the village blacksmith. There is also a wealth of information on the subject. Below are a few books and their ISBNs.

THE ART OF BLACKSMITHING: ISBN 0-7858-0395-5

THE COMPLETE MODERN BLACKSMITH: ISBN 0-89815-896-6

PRACTICAL BLACKSMITHING AND METALWORKING: ISBN 0-8306-2894-0

Visit Red Lyon Smithing to witness the glory of the blacksmiths craft for yourself.

GLASSBLOWING

Glass as a material is well over 5000 years old. Over the centuries, glass has had a different value and importance to different cultures. Glassblowing is just one way of working with glass and a mass production technique was mastered by the Romans. During this time, glass became as common in Rome as it is today. There was also very fine glass and most of it was inexpensive and affordable to all.

During the Dark Ages and into the Middle Ages, production of glass in Europe was limited. As a result, it became more expensive and valuable. Throughout the noble classes and within the church, it was often used to flaunt one’s power by showing that they could have valuable and delicate things.

During the Renaissance, the tradition of glass being used to show one's wealth and status continued. However, with trade in Europe re-establishing and with the rise of a wealthy merchant class, glass once again became more affordable. At this time, Venice was known to produce the finest glass in the world, reaching the peak of the craft. It is important to remember that hand-made glass during most of history was an *industry*. This is somewhat different than the "arts and crafts" view of hand-crafted glass today. However, you can still see glassblowing as it was done throughout history; visit the glass-blowing booth of Historical Glassworks here at the Florida Renaissance Festival.

JOUSTING

Jousting in its original form has generally been credited to a Frenchman named Geoffroi de Prueli. The "sport"---more of an occupation at the time---spread from France to Germany, then to England and finally into southern Europe during the 10th to 12th centuries. Jousting tournaments were held as military exercises between various nobles. Such tournaments, starting peacefully, often turned into bloody battles between jealous champions. Gradually these petty local wars became more sports-oriented and sophisticated and less a matter of life or death.

Winning such tournaments was one way for a knight to make a quick name for himself and win riches beyond his dreams. Knights were considered gentlemen and were required to abide by the ideas in vogue at the time---chivalry and fair play. Much of the credit for this fair play code has been credited to the 13th-century tale of King Arthur and his Round Table.

The death of several nobles and at least one king, King Henry II of France in 1559, brought about the demise of the man-to-man style of jousting. It was also during this time that gunpowder was introduced into Europe from the Orient. Guns made warfare by horse-mounted lancers obsolete overnight. Cecil Calvert, a.k.a. Lord Baltimore, of the colonies is reported to have been the first to introduce jousting here in America

A NOBLEMAN'S TABLE

The Hollywood image of a royal banquet in the Renaissance is often portrayed by huge piles of meat with bones thrown to the dogs over the King's shoulder. In reality, a Renaissance banquet was a carefully choreographed performance, involved large numbers of servants at every step, and often lasted for several hours.

The table was laid according to a precise set of regulations. The main table had three separate tablecloths, with the last laid in such a way that it had folds, known as "estates," placed in it to make it easier for the tallest guests to get their feet under the table. The highest-ranking noble's place was set first and the attendant made sure that nothing the nobleman would use was touched by the naked hand. Plates, or "trenchers", the lord's knife and spoon, plus the nobleman's bread (held in a linen wrapping called a "portpain") and salt were then covered with a counterpane before the diners were allowed into the room. After handwashing, each diner was given a napkin to be placed over their left shoulder and the servants started facilitating the meal.

The most important of these servants were the "kerver," or carver, whose job was to carve the food into pieces so the nobles could eat using just a spoon and their fingers. Each meat had a different method of carving and serving and there were strict rules on what should and should not be served to the nobles.

The nobles were seated at the table according to their status and the kerver and kitchen staff brought the meal to them. The best foods were served to the highest-ranking diners, while the lowest-ranking diners may not even receive a small taste of some of the meal.

Other servants served wine and ale, carried the food from the kitchens to the great hall or washed the nobles' hands before and after the meal.

Finally, after the nobles had left and the servants had eaten their fill from what the nobles left untouched, everything was cleared away and preparations began for the next meal.

Fun Facts:

- Each meat served had a different term describing how it was carved, including 'to splat a pike' and 'to unlace a coney' (a rabbit).
- The crust of a pie was known as a coffin and was hardly ever eaten; it was opened and its contents were served to the diners.
- Plates were only just coming into normal usage and forks were only used in Italy. Instead of plates, trenchers (stale squares of bread) were used.
- On fasting days (days associated with religious events) only fish was served. However, as fish included anything that swam in water, such delights as beaver tail could be on the menu.

BREAD AND BAKING

Bread was a vital part of meals and the baking of bread by peasants was often done in a communal oven shared by the whole village. Because of the time and fuel required to heat an oven, a small village may only bake bread a few days of the week.

A castle or manor would have its own ovens and bread was baked fresh daily. The baker would be responsible for both fine white breads, known as manchets, for the nobleman's table in addition to coarse whole-grain breads used by the staff. Stale bread was used as plates, or "trenches" for the nobles. This and breadcrumbs were also the primary thickener for sauces and stews called "pottages."

Ovens were made of brick or clay and the heating of the oven and baking of bread involved several steps. First, a fire of extremely hot coals was placed into the oven and the door was sealed to allow the oven to heat properly, which took several hours. Once heated, the ashes were removed, and the dough was placed inside. Because the temperature wasn't controlled, it took a skilled baker to know the art of using such an oven. If the door was opened too often, the oven cooled too fast and the bread didn't bake, so the baker had to have a feel for the temperature and associated time required.

Fun Facts:

- Fresh, hot bread was considered unhealthy.
- There were strict laws about the weights of the loaves and who could sell bread. There were harsh penalties for those who violated these laws.

MOVIE SUGGESTIONS

Below are suggested movies to help students better understand the Medieval and Renaissance eras.

For Younger Students:

- Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (G)
- Disney's *Robin Hood* (G)
- Disney's *The Sword in the Stone* (G)
- Disney's *Cinderella* (G)
- Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* (G)
- Disney's *Snow White* (G)
- Disney's *A Kid in King Arthur's Court* (G)
- *The Prince and the Pauper* (Assorted ratings)
- *Galileo: On the Shoulders of Giants* (G)
- *Leonardo: A Dream of Flight* (G)

For Older Students:

- Medieval
 - *Robin and Marian* (PG)
 - *Lion in Winter* (PG)
 - *Henry V* (PG13)
 - *Hamlet* (Assorted ratings)
- Renaissance
 - *Ever After* (PG)
 - *Romeo and Juliet* (1968 version) (PG)
 - *The Taming of the Shrew* (Unrated)
 - *Anne of the Thousand Days* (PG)
 - *Lady Jane* (PG-13)
 - *A Man for All Seasons* (G)