

# Catherine de Medici: Mother of Kings

## Childhood and Family

Born 1519 to Lorenzo de Medici and Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne  
Dependent on Pope Clement VII

## Marriage

Marries Prince Henry 1533  
They become Dauphin and Dauphine in 1536

## Credibility through Motherhood

First child, son Francis, born 1544  
Ten children between 1544 and 1556; five survive, including four sons  
Mary Queen of Scots joins royal nursery in 1548  
Becomes Queen Consort of France in 1547  
Crowned in 1549  
Henry II dies in jousting accident in 1559

## Queen Mother of Francis II, 1559-1560

Francis and Mary young, inexperienced, willing to be guided  
Guide family takes control, Catherine works with them  
Able to send Diane de Poitiers from Court  
Known as "The Queen, my Lady Mother"

## Relationship with Elizabeth I, 1560-1582

Catherine wants Elizabeth to marry one of her sons  
Both pragmatic about religion, but religion still divides them  
Catherine presents herself as mother figure, Elizabeth believes she holds superior role

## Queen Mother of Charles IX, 1560-1574

Negotiates with Antoine de Bourbon for role in new government  
Privy council appoints Catherine "Governor of France" in 1560  
She presides over council, decides policy, controls state business  
Attempts to achieve reconciliation with Huguenots through marriage with Navarre family  
Backfires and leads to St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572  
Charles names Catherine as his Regent when he knew he was dying

## Queen Mother of Henry III, 1574-1589

Henry was her favorite son, but he relies on her help less than Francis and Charles did  
She travels through France and other countries as diplomat to promote Henry's policies  
Henry III can't have children and heir is Huguenot King of Navarre, which sparks concern  
Catholic League and Huguenots both rebel against Henry III to gain control  
Religious wars increase throughout Europe; execution of Mary Queen of Scots and Spanish Armada  
Henry III gives in to Catholic League and has Duke of Guise and other Huguenots killed in 1588  
Catherine is devastated by Henry's actions and says "I see him rushing toward his ruin"  
Catherine dies January 1589, Henry is stabbed to death later that year, ending Valois dynasty

