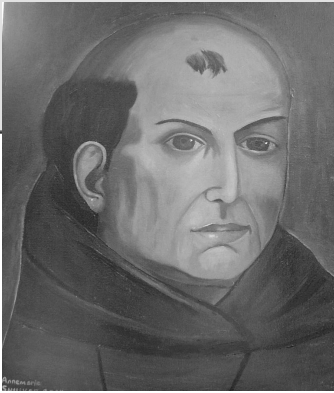


UNIT STUDY



Blessed Junipero Serra
Original painting by homeschool graduate
Annemarie Sullivan

The California Missions

Lesley Rice

The Founding Fathers of the United States had some great ideas for organizing a just society. However, they weren't the only people thinking about such things during this time period. Even as Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and friends were beginning to lose patience with George III, a diminutive Spanish priest was walking up and down the west coast of the continent, setting up an experiment in Catholic political and social principles.



A sketch of Mission San Diego

By the time Father Junipero Serra began founding the California Missions, Spanish colonization of the New World had been going on for 200 years. With the Church playing a major role in the enterprise, the issue of how to properly order the new society was addressed continually. In fact, many of the missionaries involved over those 200 years had given up on the corrupt European societies and hoped to found a Catholic utopia in the New World. Father Serra used the best and most successful of these experiments in his plans for the California Missions.

Father Serra was one of a large number of Franciscan priests sent to the Spanish colonies in the mid 1700's to replace the Je-

suit missionaries during the time when the latter order was suppressed by the Church. Prior to leaving Spain in 1749 (at the age of 36), Serra had taught theology at the Lullian University on the island of Majorca. He worked for several years in southern Mexico, then moved to Baja California ("Lower California"—now located in northern Mexico) to take over existing Jesuit missions. A few years later, he was sent to found a series of new missions in Alta California ("Upper California"—now the state of California in the U.S.) to secure the region for Spain, in the face of an influx of Russian colonists moving in from the north.

Serra and his companions (accompanied by a handful of soldiers) founded the first new mission, Mission San Diego de Alcalá, in 1769. Shortly thereafter, he sailed up to



Mission San Carlos Borromeo

the Bay of Monterey and founded Mission San Carlos Borromeo in what is now Carmel, California. This mission, served as Father Serra's headquarters. He is buried in the sanctuary of the church. At its peak, the California Mission system boasted twenty-one missions, with tens of thousands of Indian neophytes and booming trade. Serra

Unit Study—The California Missions

himself founded nine missions before his death in 1784, with the rest started by his successor, Father Fermín Lasuén.

When founding a mission, the priests gained the natives' confidence with gifts of food, cloth and other items. The Indians were also attracted by the pageantry of the Mass—held out of doors until a chapel could be built. Indians who chose to become part of the mission were taught Catholic catechism, farming and other skills (weaving, tanning, carpentry, etc.). They built and decorated the mission church and other buildings. Many became highly skilled artists, musicians or singers.

Sometimes the soldiers mistreated the Indians, but the friars dealt with such behavior harshly, and Spanish law set forth penalties for infringing on the rights of the natives. Father Serra was a particularly vocal defender of the Indians, and traveled on foot to Mexico City several times (in spite of his painful, chronically-infected leg) to com-



plain about abuses by soldiers and government officials. He returned from one trip with a bill of rights for the Indians.

According to the California Missions' original charter, they were eventually to have become self-sufficient Christian Indian towns, with ownership of the land and business enterprises reverting to the Indians. However, Mexico declared independence from Spain in 1810. The missions were secularized in 1834, and the Spanish priests were deported. Most of the missions fell into decay. The mission Indians, badly treated by Mexican colonists, dispersed.

The United States took control of California after the Mexican-American war. Unfortunately, the Americans treated the natives even worse. The new California legislature passed laws permitting forced indenture of natives and denying them citizenship. These laws were finally overturned in 1867, four years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued.

Celebrate the Feast of Bl. Junipero Serra (July 1)

- ✿ Make mission models from one of the many paper kits available (see resources) or handmade with clay, cardboard, sugar cubes, etc. For additional suggestions, see *Live Again Our Mission Past* in the resources section.
- ✿ Prepare traditional Mexican dishes.
- ✿ Write one or more days' entries in a missionary friar's journal.
- ✿ Pray for Father Serra's canonization.
- ✿ Listen to the music of Ignacio de Jerusalem, a mission-era Mexican composer. A previously unknown work of his was found several years ago in the archives of Mission Santa Barbara. Historians were surprised by the level of culture in the missions evidenced by the find, and the fact that the music was obviously used for highly-skilled Indian orchestra members. Obtain at a public library or music store.
- ✿ Learn the Our Father in Spanish.
- ✿ If you live in California, consider making a pilgrimage to the Carmel Mission to pray at the grave of Bl. Junipero Serra.

The California Missions—Unit Study

Abraham Lincoln gave the missions (but not the mission lands) back to the Catholic Church after the Civil War.

In the early 20th century, Catholic Californians, proud of the state's Spanish and Catholic heritage, rebuilt the missions. Most now function as parish churches. La Purisima Mission is a state park, reproducing mission life in great de-



Mission Santa Barbara

tail, including crops, gardens and livestock.

Father Serra was beatified in 1988. For Father Serra to be canonized, another miracle must occur through his intercession.

Lesley Rice (formerly Payne) is editor of Heart and Mind. She is a long-time parishioner of Mission San Diego de Alcalá, where she was married in July of 2004.

Look for an expanded version of this unit study, with detailed lesson plans and additional resources on the Archives page of the Heart and Mind web site in April of 2005. Visit www.heart-and-mind.com.

Unit Plan

Here in California, every 4th grader studies the California Missions, builds a model of a mission, takes an obligatory field trip to at least one of the missions, makes tortillas and adobe, and practices crafts of a local Indian tribe.

If you are teaching one or a group of elementary students, I would recommend doing any or all of these, plus reading the chapters on the California Missions from *Evangelization of the New World* by Dr. James Leek (see resources). You might do this unit as a completion activity to that book. Add to this whatever extras from the resource list appeal to you—music, movies, virtual field trips, kids' activity books, a pilgrimage to a mission, etc.

For high school students studying the missions as part of American History, I would start with *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America* by Lewis Hanke for background on the Spanish colonial enterprise. Other good high school age books include *Indian Life at the Old Missions* by Edith Buckland Webb and *The Man Who Founded California* by M.N. Couve de Murville (see resources). In addition to the virtual field trips listed in the resources section, high schoolers might enjoy the more complicated mission models from Bellerophon Books (*California Missions to Cut Out*) and the architectural/mathematical analysis of the missions in *Measured Drawings of the California Missions*.

All age groups can study the music of the period. My kids loved listening to the California Mission Music recording by the John Biggs Consort (see resources). Using the accompanying booklet and some other resources, they learned to sing along to the Mass parts in Latin and the Our Father in Spanish.

And everybody loves to make tortillas and adobe!

Resources

General Missions Info:

The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America by Lewis Hanke. I'm so happy this is back in print! This book is ideal for high school students or parents who want to study the Spanish Conquest in depth. It is absolutely the best book for understanding Spanish motivation, methods, triumphs and mistakes in colonizing the New World. Hanke, the first Latin American Studies professor back in the 40's, is realistic, balanced, humorous, charitable and interesting. Did you know that King Charles V of Spain, then the most powerful man on earth, suspended the Conquest pending investigation of allegations of abuse of the Indians? Did you know that Fray Bartolome de las Casas and several other social/political theorists were commissioned by the king to conduct four experiments to determine the most just and effective ordering of society (de las Casas tried an agrarian system somewhat akin to G.K. Chesterton's Distributism)? Father Serra's mission system appears to be a synthesis of the best parts of these experiments, and might be considered the best application of hundreds of years of Spanish sociological theory and experimentation. Order from Southern Methodist University Press. Call (800) 826-8911 or visit www.tamu.edu.



The Man Who Founded California by M.N. Couve de Murville. Ignatius Press biography of Father Serra written by the archbishop of Birmingham, England. Includes beautiful photos and illustrations. Order from Ignatius Press. Call (800) 651-1531 or visit www.ignatius.com.

California Missions: A Virtual Tour. The most extensive California Mission site ever! www.californiamissions.com. They sell two volumes of mission-era music (from the liturgy and daily life), A Choir of Angels I and II. Order from the web site or call (800) 39-ANGEL.

The Sunset Books edition of ***California Missions*** is a sympathetic presentation with excellent photographs. It is available at most bookstores and libraries.

Enrichment Resources has a number of California Missions resources, mostly aimed at fourth grade classrooms in California, who study the California Missions every year. They sell a wonderful book, ***Measured Drawings of the California Missions***, which can be used to integrate art, history, science and math into the study. Also available: paper mission models, mission posters, reference fact cards and clip art. Call (800) 404-6400 or visit www.enrichmentresources.com.

Projects and Layouts (California Missions) by Libby Nelson and Kari Cornell. Great book or projects relating to the California Missions. Order from Lerner Publications. Call (800) 332-1132 or visit www.lernerbooks.com.

Paper models of the Missions: www.papermodelsonline.com.

Live Again Our Mission Past by George Ruska and Bara Linse. Wonderful teachers' resource, full of information, arts-and-crafts projects, plays and other ideas. Especially good for support group projects and families who co-op. To order, send \$20 to Art's Publications, 80 Piedmond Court, Larkspur, CA 94939.

Song of the Swallows by Leo Politi. This is a story for younger children about the return of the swallows to Mission San Juan Capistrano on the Feast of St. Joseph each year. Available at most bookstores and libraries.

Evangelization of the New World by Dr. James Leek. This is a Catholic social studies textbook for approximately grades 4 to 6. It covers the conquest of the New World, colonization, the California Missions, Father Kino, Mother Katherine Drexel and more. To order, send \$29.95 plus \$2 S&H to St. Paul's Publishing Company, 14780 W. 159th St, Olathe, KS 66062 or visit www.stpaulspub.com.

Bellerophon Books has a number of great Missions resources, including several volumes of ***California Missions to Cut Out***, ***California Missions: The Earliest Series of Views Made in 1856*** and ***Saints of the California Missions***. To order, call (800) 253-9943 or visit www.bellerophonbooks.com.

The Life and Times of Fray Junipero Serra by Msgr. Francis Weber. Short vignettes on Fr. Serra's life and mission history. Order from EZ Nature Books, (800) 455-0666.

Father Serra: A Pictorial Biography by Martin Morgado. Order from EZ Nature Books, (800) 455-0666.

Indian Life at the Old Missions by Edith Buckland Webb. This is the classic 1952 work describing the lives of Indians at various California Missions in great detail. Wonderful anecdotes and great pictures. Order from Blackburn Press. Call (973) 228-7077 or visit www.blackburnpress.com.

"An Artificial Storm," April 1994 Catholic World Report article on Father Serra's canonization cause and the short-lived controversy that arose after he was beatified. Request a back issue from Ignatius Press at (800) 651-1531.



California Missions Studies Association: Lots of info, links to archaeology, original source documents, etc. They have a great illustrated glossary of mission-related terms. www.ca-missions.org/links.html

Old Catholic Encyclopedia entry on the California Missions: www.newadvent.org/cathen/03177b.htm

Your Mission: The Last Mission. A teacher in the Napa School District devised this project in which a group of students collaborate to decide where to build a new mission. This would work with a support group or learning co-op. Visit http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/activity/the_last_mission/

Go on a virtual field trip. This site has video clips of many of the missions. www.virtualguidebooks.com/ThematicLists/CaliforniaMissions.html

Photo tour of Father Serra's hometown on the island of Mallorca. www.sanjuancapistrano.net/mission/mallorca/index.html

“Historians and the Spanish Occupation of San Diego” by Ronald J. Quinn. The Journal of San Diego History, Summer 1999 (Volume 45, Number 3). This is a great article describing the motivations and management of the Jesuit and Franciscan missions. Why did the Jesuits branch out into the areas of Baja and Alta California, where there was not many resources, people or possible future business ventures to enrich the Crown? According to this article, it was because they were trying to get “away from it all” to set up a self-sufficient, ideal Christian culture among the new native converts. The Spanish government didn't like this, so they suppressed the Jesuit order and sent in Fr. Serra and other Franciscans instead.

Brother Timothy Arthur Secretary-Director for **Father Serra's canonization cause.** You can contact him at Old Mission Santa Barbara, 2201 Laguna Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93105, (805) 682-4713 for more information about the Serra cause. He sells some classic books and can get you a relic of Bl. Junipero Serra.

California Missions Music. After hearing the beautiful Choir of Angels CD's (see above, I still like this old live recording by the John Biggs Consort. To order, send \$15 to Consort Press, 1214 Alviria Drive, Ojai, CA, 93023 or visit www.consortpress.com. You can also order the score (with lyrics) for \$3.

An Uncommon Mission: Father Jerome Tupa Paints the California Missions. This lovely book includes Fr. Tupa's watercolors of the missions, some photos and background info, as well as prayers inspired by the missions.

Baja California Missions:

Before he came to Alta California, Father Serra worked in the missions a few hundred miles south in Baja California (now northern Mexico) for many years. One of our family's goals is to some day do a tour of the remains of these missions. ***Las Misiones Antiguas*** by Ed Vernon is a beautiful exploration of the missions of Baja California, including GPS coordinates to find the abandoned mission sites (you'll need that to find these ruins in the middle of the desert). Order from Viejo Press, 729 Woodland Dr, Santa Barbara, CA 93108, phone 805 969 4123, or on-line at www.bajacaliforniamissions.com. Cost: \$44.95 plus S&H; \$9.95 for map.



El Camino Real at La Purisima Mission

Take a virtual tour of the Baja California missions: visit www.davidksbaja.com/bajamissions/.

My kids and I have gone out of our way over the years to find pieces of “**El Camino Real**,” the King’s Highway, connecting the California Missions. You can see a portion of the original dirt road at several of the missions, including a portion going through La Purisima State Park north of Santa Barbara (the park has been renovated to look like it did in the mission era). But the highway started 700 miles south of San Diego in Loreto, the administrative center of the California missions. For details of the original route and maps and instructions to help you find it if you are adventurous, start at www.vivabaja.com/ECR/.

For a detailed, scholarly analysis of the California Missions, download “**Two Californias, Three Religious Orders and Fifty Missions: A Comparison of the Missionary Systems of Baja and Alta California**” by Brian A. Aviles and Robert L. Hoover, from the summer 1997 issue of the Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly. This is an interesting, detailed and sympathetic portrayal of the mission system.

“**The History of Baja California**,” short on-line article at www.bajaquest.com/mexico1/history.htm.

Saints and Demons in a Desert Wilderness by Dave Werschuld spotlights the mission efforts in Baja California, including the experiment the Spanish crown allowed with complete Jesuit control of the area (this is part of how they got into trouble with the king). To order visit www.bajamission.com or send \$17.50 to Bajamissions, P. O. Box 12; Pacific Grove, CA 93950. Free map of the Baja missions with orders.

Videos:

The Mission. This beautiful, powerful portrayal of Jesuit missions in South America starring Jeremy Irons and Robert de Niro has some scenes of violence (and a tiny bit of sex) that you might not want the younger kids to see. The soundtrack is also a must-have. You can rent or buy this movie anywhere (and don’t forget to check the public library). Also available from Ignatius Press Call (800) 651-1531 or visit www.ignatius.com.

Seven Cities of Gold. The classic 1955 movie about the California Missions starring Anthony Quinn. If your library does not have this video, you can order it from Amazon.com or a similar on-line retailer.

Inside the California Missions. This is a nice documentary on the California Missions. Order from the Mission San Buenaventura gift shop. Call (805) 648-4496 or visit www.sanbuenaventuramission.org.

Landmarks of Faith: The California Missions. Great video on the California Missions. You can buy this individually or as part of a three-video set covering the Catholic history of Maryland and of New Mexico. The only place I could find to order from was www.marianland.com, 3350-A Hwy 65, PMB 412, Sugar Land, TX 77478 (no phone number was given).



Recipes

Flour Tortillas

2 3/4 c flour

5 T shortening

3/4 tsp salt

about 1/4 cup very warm water

Rub shortening and flour together in large mixing bowl until it has the consistency of corn meal. Dissolve the salt in the water. mix about 2/3 cup water into the flour. Add a little more water as needed. Knead dough until smooth. It should be medium-stiff in consistency—not firm, but not as soft as most bread dough. Divide the dough into 12 portions and roll each into a ball. Cover with plastic wrap and let sit for at least 30 minutes.

Heat an ungreased griddle or heavy skillet over medium heat. Roll out dough on a lightly floured surface, turning over and rotating until you have a 7-inch circle. Cook 30 to 45 seconds, turn and cook another 30 to 45 seconds. Stack cooked tortillas in a towel to keep warm.



Atole

From *Live Again Our Mission Past*

This thick, hot drink, is not unlike thin mush. It was a favorite for Mission Fathers and Indians and is enjoyed all over Mexico today as it was in the past.

Mix 1 cup of corn flour (masa) or rice flour with
2 cups of cold water and
a pinch of salt.

To this add 2 cups of boiling water. Cook it, oh, so slowly; for 1 hour.

There are many ways to make atole:

For plain atole —serve as is.

For spicy atole—add a little chile.

For fruit atole —add some fresh or canned fruit

For sweet atole —add a little brown sugar with cinnamon

For chocolate atole —add cinnamon, sugar and grated Mexican or bitter chocolate to the atole and you have made champurrados ~ or a “full bodied” hot chocolate.