

May 24, 2018

California Mission Foundation
P.O. Box 23035
Santa Barbara, CA 93121
(805) 963-1633

Dear Gonzalo Sarmiento and California Missions Foundation Committee,

It is with great pleasure I write this letter to summarize our school's mission field trip to San Gabriel Mission on May 16th, 2019; where two classes and six adults attended. Upon arriving, we were greeted by three docents. We were assigned a docent who was a direct descendent of the Tongva tribe. She shared historical events and a photograph of her great, great, great, great grandmother in the mission's museum. Earlier, one of my students asked, "Will we see Native Americans at the mission?" I told him, "Perhaps, but Native Americans dress like everyone else does every day." He was thrilled to meet her and learn personally about her story.

We started our tour in the chapel. The docent pointed out the picture of "Our Lady of Sorrows" that was on display up by front alter, and described to us the arrival of the Spanish to the area. The paintings on the interior were used to explain how they used the natural resources. One student commented, "I can go home and make that color too." From baptismal font to bells, tallow vats, and cooking areas the children were completely engrossed in the experience. Each student had studied one of the 21 missions and completed a project. Armando was our class expert and explained about the wine making room saying, "Wine wasn't the only thing they made. They made candles and soap, too."

Ms. Chism, one of our chaperones, commented, "The restoration at this mission really takes you back to that time." The tour included a Tongva hut and details about the tribe's contributions then and now. The gift of the bells was fascinating, because several of my students are of Mexican decent and loved hearing they had a feature at the mission. The children finished their visit by visiting the gift shop and a class photo with the statue of Father Junipero Serra.

There is a small local park nearby, Smith Park, which the children walked to and ate their sack lunches. This mission's quality of restoration and close location to our school make it a must see for all fourth grade classes in the area. Thank you for providing this opportunity to our students at Cole Elementary in Highland, California.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Sikes

Fourth Grade Teacher/AVID Lead

San Bernardino City Unified School District

Click here to see the students' YouTube PowerPoint of the "All Aboard the Bus" Field Trip experience
<https://youtu.be/dEzdKsSMzs4>

