

4TH GRADE FIELD TRIP: SAN FERNANDO REY DE ESPANA MISSION

Last Friday, 4th grade had the amazing opportunity to visit the San Fernando Rey de Espana Mission! Students and parent chaperones got to tour the mission and hear about what life was like for those who lived there, what natural disasters impacted the mission, and other historical facts regarding California's history.

“I wanted students to get the opportunity to actually see and experience what a mission is like and not just read and learn about them during our social studies time,” 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Roseberry commented. “I also challenged the students to think about the effectiveness of the missions and critically think about if the missions were ultimately beneficial or harmful to the Native American communities. I think getting to see what kinds of environments these people were living in with their own eyes gave them a new perspective and challenged their thinking.”

As students entered the mission, they observed the layout and structure of the San Fernando mission, and were taught about what would have happened in each area of the mission.

Students were led into the church where they learned about Spanish California history and about the mission's goal of converting the Native Americans to Catholicism. Students also got to pause and sing a chorus from the song “Waymaker” in the resounding church, listening to the echoes of their voices and reflecting on the nature of Jesus.



Ben Wolpe, a 4th grade student, reflected on his time at the mission, *“Going to the mission was important because it is important for us to know what happened in the past. It was interesting to see how they worship God and how it is different from what we do. They forced the natives to believe in Roman Catholicism, but I think they could have helped people learn about God in a better way.”* Students discussed the importance of showing compassion, humility, respect, and love for others, and how that could have changed the way the missions achieved their goal and helped the Native Americans feel cared for as they were taught new ways of life.

As students further explored the mission, they got to see artifacts from Native American tribes, a library of books brought by the Spanish priests, and learned about the architecture of the mission. Milena Kalinova, a 4th grade parent commented, *“I am learning so much about California history!”* Another parent commented on wanting to return to the San Fernando mission and explore other missions in California.

Overall, the trip to the mission deepened 4th grade’s understanding of California history, challenged their thinking on the effectiveness of the missions, and continued to prepare students for their Mission Brochure projects in class. We are excited to see where their journey through California history takes them next!

WHAT OUR STUDENTS HAD TO SAY

“We learned about life at the mission at San Fernando. I thought the church was really cool because it looked different and it was cool to see something I have seen in books in real life.” Jayla Cabrera, 4th grade student

“On our field trip I learned that some of the priests were kind to the Native Americans, but other missions treated the natives badly and only told them to work for them. I think it was wrong of them to treat the natives like slaves. I know that God wants us to speak to others kindly and encourage others and treat them like they are God’s children.” Angelos Yennaris, 4th grade student

“My favorite part of our field trip was probably the church because I liked all the decorations and I liked what we talked about when the missions came to California.” Amy Fiske, 4th grade student

