

# Mission San Buenaventura

4<sup>th</sup> Grade

Good Shepherd School

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# Map of the California Missions



# Introduction

Imagine working extremely hard and having to rebuild a church 3 times within a couple of years. This is what happened at Mission San Buenaventura. Russian and English rulers started sending ships to the western coast of North America, but Spain got worried that it would lose the land that Cabrillo and Vizcaino claimed over a hundred years before. Spain took measures to permanently control the land of California. In Alta California, New Spain's viceroy chose Captain Don Gaspar de Portola to lead a group to establish religious settlements, or missions. Portola sent two ships and land expeditions from New Spain to what is now San Diego. Junipero Serra accompanied him on one of the land groups. Along the way, Fray Serra Founded Alta California's first mission. The missionaries decided to teach the indians Christianity, in addition to, how to farm. [Mission San Buenaventura has many interesting facts in their history.](#)

## History

[Mission San Buenaventura has lots of facts about their history.](#) It was the 9<sup>th</sup> mission founded and it's located near the beach in Ventura. Ventura is 70 miles north of Los Angeles and 20 miles south of Santa Barbara. Father Junipero Serra, Franciscan missionary and President of all missions, established this mission. It was established in 1782 on March 31. The important people involved in this mission were Father Junipero Serra, Pedro Benito Cambon, Captain George Vancouver, and Father Rubio. Father Junipero Serra was the founder of the mission. Pedro Benito Cambon designed the water system. Captain George Vancouver noted the beauty

of the gardens at the mission. Cambon also was the one left in charge after Father Serra left. Father Rubio was the resident priest and made extensive changes to the mission.

## Structure

After Father Junipero Serra founded mission San Buenaventura, he died. All the missionaries were wondering how they were going to get the mission built. They finally decided that they were going to ask the Chumash, that were nearby, for help. Even though the Chumash didn't have to help, they still did. They made almost every single building there was. Most of the buildings were constructed between 1790 and 1810. The first buildings that were built were temporary shelters that were made of wood and reeds. Those shelters were used until permanent adobe structures were finished.

To make adobe structures, the first thing the neophytes had to make was the adobe bricks. A neophyte is a person who is a new convert to religion. Adobe is a mixture of clay, water, and straw. The neophytes dug a big hole in the ground and put the clay in it. The clay became very sticky once the water was added. Then, the straw was added to make the bricks stronger. The only way the neophytes could stir it was to stomp on it. Once it was all done, it got poured into wooden molds. Then they got shaped into bricks.

After that was done, they decided where they were going to put up all the buildings. The courtyard was in the middle of everything, along with the fountain. The workshops, the bell tower, the church, and the Friars' Quarters were around the courtyard and the fountain. The

cemetery was behind all the buildings and was next to the church. The church had to be rebuilt three times because of earthquakes and fires.

## **The Role of the Native Americans**

The tribe that was present at the mission at the time was The Chumash. They really helped build the buildings at mission San Buenaventura. Even though they didn't have to, they still did it. Every day, at sunrise, they woke up and went to their church to pray. A little after sunrise, the breakfast bell would ring. An hour after that, they would be sent to work. They worked on growing crops, weaving baskets, making weapons, and hunting. They would have to work for five hours until they could sit down and have their meal. Two hours later, everyone would have to get back to work. Then they would get to stop working and eat dinner. Once they were done with dinner, they would get freetime. The latest the women could stay up was 8:00 and the latest the men could stay up was 9:00.

The Indians at the mission were treated very badly. Most of the Chumash hated the schedule and tried to run away. Some succeeded in running away but some did not. If they were caught, they would be brought back and beaten up by the Spanish Soldiers. If they were caught multiple times, they would either beat them to death, or make them do work all day without getting to rest or eat.

The Mexican government wanted to end the mission system and so all the California missions were secularized. In 1833, the Padres were released from control over the missions. In March of 1836, there was a battle over who controlled the missions. Official secularization of

mission San Buenaventura occurred in June of 1836. In 1845, mission San Buenaventura was rented to Don Jose De Arnaz and Narciso Botello. Then it was illegally sold to Arnaz. Most of the mission's property was broken up and sold. After California became a state of the union, it got most of their possessions returned. That was what happened at mission San Buenaventura after it was secularized.

## **The Mission Today**

There are many things at mission San Buenaventura today such as statues, fountains, a gift shop, a museum, gardens, and more at San Buenaventura. All of that is on one side of the church. The church is in the front of all the buildings. On the other side, there is a museum, gift shop, fountains, and a garden. Inside of the church there is a big statue of Junipero Serra. There is also some baskets that were woven by the Chumash women in the back of the church.

Right next to the mission, there is a school called Holy Cross. Holy Cross is a private school that goes from preschool through eighth grade. They have mass every day of the week at the San Buenaventura church. All the students sing and pray together at the mass. They also have a gift shop, which is one of the many different unique things at the mission.

There are a ton of different things to do at mission San Buenaventura today. In the museum, you can look at pictures, things they made back then, and things they wore back then. It also had some really nice carvings. The gift shop isn't very big, but it has some really unique things that you can buy. There are some really nice collectables, statues, and souvenirs you can get there. Mission San Buenaventura is a really nice mission to visit.

# Conclusion

Mission San Buenaventura had some really unique things occur in the past. The church at the mission had to be rebuilt three times. The Chumash really helped at the mission even though they didn't have to. Every morning, at mission San Buenaventura today, they have church. Mission San Buenaventura is very fun and interesting to learn about.



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