High School Field Trip Lesson Plan
San Antonio Missions National Historical Park

Introduce Field trip when working on Spanish Colonialism Unit to help students understand the history of the Spanish Colonial Missions in Texas.

Overview
By attending a field trip to San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, students will experience place-based learning within the historical mission site. Students will learn about social implications of Spanish colonialism on the indigenous population of the area. (Guiding Question: How would you feel if you were an Indigenous person faced with moving into the mission?)

Lesson Objectives
Students will attend a field trip to San Antonio Missions National Historical Park to experience place-based learning within the historical mission site.
A. Students will learn about the history of the San Antonio Missions and how the missions impacted local, Texas, and United States history.
B. Students will understand the geographic and political motivations for the missions to be established in the San Antonio area.
C. Students will understand how the indigenous people of the area were affected by Spanish Colonialism.
D. Explore the Mission site as a Primary Source of information on life within a mission complex.

Background Information
Why missions? By the 1600’s the Spanish were expanding into present day Mexico and New Mexico. Spain wanted to establish the new lands in their name. While many Europeans were settling on the east coast of present-day United States, many Spanish were hesitant to leave Spain. The Spanish caste system was based upon the place of your birth; the further you were born away from Spain, the lower you were in society.
Many Spaniards were fearful that coming to the new world and having children would leave those children in a lower class than their parents. This made it very hard for the Spanish to form colonies in the New World. The crown realized this problem and tried to find a solution. That solution was the mission process. The Spanish crown would finance Franciscan Friars to come to the new world to convert indigenous people to the catholic faith. The mission would provide food, safety, and permanent homes to the indigenous people. In return, the friars would convert the local people into good Spanish citizens; meaning the indigenous people must (1) learn to speak Spanish, (2) become Catholic, and (3) learn a vocational trade to help support the mission community.

Why San Antonio? The indigenous population of the San Antonio region were family bands rather than tribes. The bands lived in groups of 20-40 people who were migratory hunter/gathers. They would move often, looking for new food sources. During the early 1700’s cyclical drought led to food scarcity. Around the same time, Lipan Apache started to move into the area, competing for the limited resources often by force. The fear of European diseases moving in from the south made the small bands fearful for their survival. The Spanish government was concerned that France was moving westward toward present day Texas. In order to stop the French encroachment, Spain set up missions in Eastern Texas to establish their territory. Unfortunately, these missions were not very successful; the indigenous population in that area were willing to trade with the Spanish, but not interested in the catholic teachings. The Spanish eventually moved the missions to the area along the San Antonio River where the native bands were more receptive to the teachings and the safety the missions offered. The first mission, Mission San Antonio de Valero, known as the Alamo, was founded in 1718. By 1720, the Spanish were ready to expand in the area and founded Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo (Mission San José). Soon Mission Concepción, Mission San Juan, and Mission Espada were transferred from east Texas and re-established along the San Antonio River.

What made this a community? The missions were highly successful from 1747-1775. At its peak productivity, Mission San José had nearly 400 inhabitants. Life for the indigenous people was very structured compared to the life they lived outside the walls. Their lives were run by the church bells, telling them when to eat, work, and sleep. Young children were expected to attend school until they were big enough to learn a trade. The mission was highly successful, having productive crops, converted peoples, and an established community. However, European diseases devastated the indigenous population. By 1824, the mission holdings were redistributed to the inhabitants and the churches were secularized. The people of the region underwent massive change in the 19th century. During those years they were under the rule of: the Spanish, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the United States, the Confederate States, and the United States. The people of the area often turned to the church as the one constant in decades of government change.
113.42. **World History Studies**

((1) History. The student understands traditional historical points of reference in world history. The student is expected to:

(D) identify major causes and describe the major effects of the following important turning points in world history from 1450 to 1750: the rise of the Ottoman Empire, the influence of the Ming dynasty on world trade, European exploration and the Columbian Exchange, European expansion, and the Renaissance and the Reformation;

(30) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to:

(A) use social studies terminology correctly;

§113.43. **World Geography Studies**

(8) Geography. The student understands how people, places, and environments are connected and interdependent. The student is expected to:

(A) compare ways that humans depend on, adapt to, and modify the physical environment, including the influences of culture and technology;

(9) Geography. The student understands the concept of region as an area of Earth's surface with related geographic characteristics. The student is expected to:

(A) identify physical and/or human factors such as climate, vegetation, language, trade networks, political units, river systems, and religion that constitute a region;
(16) Culture. The student understands how the components of culture affect the way people live and shape the characteristics of regions. The student is expected to:

(A) describe distinctive cultural patterns and landscapes associated with different places in Texas, the United States, and other regions of the world and how these patterns influenced the processes of innovation and diffusion;

(B) describe elements of culture, including language, religion, beliefs, institutions, and technologies;

(18) Culture. The student understands the ways in which cultures change and maintain continuity. The student is expected to:

(A) analyze cultural changes in specific regions caused by migration, war, trade, innovations, and diffusion;

(B) assess causes and effects of conflicts between groups of people, including modern genocides and terrorism;

§113.46. **Sociology**

(2) Foundations of sociology. The student understands how society evolves and cause and effect of social and institutional change. The student is expected to:

(A) differentiate types of societies such as hunting and gathering, agrarian, pastoral, industrial, and post-industrial;

(3) Culture and social structure. The student examines world cultures. The student is expected to:

(A) identify the elements of culture to include language, symbols, norms, and values;

(B) explain how the elements of culture form a whole culture;
113.50 Ethnic Studies: Mexican American Studies

(6) Geography. The student understands the impact of geographic factors on major events related to Mexican Americans. The student is expected to:

(A) locate places and regions of cultural and historical significance in Mexican American history;

Learning Target

I can explain the significance of the establishment of Catholic missions, and the influence of the Spanish culture on Texas.

Success Criteria

I can explain the purpose of Catholic missions, towns, and ranches during the Spanish Colonial Era.
I can summarize examples of Spanish cultural influence on Texas.
I can summarize how settlers adapted and modified the environment of Texas.
I can compare life of American Indians before missions to their lives in the missions.
A. Hand out the pre-program document titled A Mission Dilemma. Allow time for students to read the document and answer the questions at the end. Feel free to modify the provided questions for your students.

B. Ask students to share their answers. Differentiate: Partner/Pair students to support learning.

C. Wrap up and check for understanding. How might this scenario apply to today compared to how it might have occurred 300 years ago?