

## Let's Visit a California Mission | Lesson Plan

What was the purpose and significance of California missions?

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Students will understand the cultural, religious, and historical significance of California missions through the story of Otto and Smidge.

### Learning Objectives:

- Identify the main characters and setting in *Otto's Tales: Let's Visit a California Mission*.
- Recognize the sequence of events in the story.
- Understand the historical significance and purpose of California missions.
- Identify key vocabulary related to California missions.

### Key Vocabulary:

- **California mission:** A series of 21 religious outposts or missions established along the coast of California. They were built from 1769 to 1833. The goal of the missions was to settle the territory that is now the state of California and spread Christianity to the Native Americans in the region.
- **Missionary:** A person who travels to a foreign country on a religious mission, typically to do charitable work or convert people to their faith.
- **El Camino Real:** Spanish for "The Royal Road," a route that connected all 21 missions along the California coast
- **San Juan Capistrano:** The seventh mission founded by Junipero Serra to settle the territory and spread Christianity to the Native Americans. This mission is considered the "Birthplace of Orange County" and the "Jewel of the California Missions."
- **Father Junipero Serra:** A Catholic priest who personally founded 9 of the 21 California missions. He was on orders from Spanish King Charles III to explore the territory of what is now the state of California and settle it.

**Educational Standards:** CCRA.R.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2

**Academic Subject Areas:** English Language Arts, American History

### What You'll Need

- Video: *Otto's Tales: Let's Visit a California Mission* (Watch [Here](#))
- Book (optional): *Otto's Tales: Let's Visit a California Mission* (Purchase [Here](#))
- Coloring Page: *Otto's Tales: Let's Visit a California Mission* (Click [Here](#))

### Lesson Plan (45 mins.)

Warm-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Begin by showing students a picture of a California mission, such as San Juan Capistrano or San Diego de Alcalá.



2. Ask them to observe the picture and identify the features of the mission, such as the bell tower, chapel, courtyard, or gardens.
3. Ask students to share what they know about California missions, such as their purpose, history, or cultural significance.
4. Use their responses to introduce the topic of California missions for the video.

Watch and Complete: (25 mins.)

1. Play the video *Otto's Tales: Let's Visit a California Mission* for the students.
2. Pause at opportune moments in the video to ask questions and check for understanding of key vocabulary words and their meaning.
  - Identify the main characters and the setting.
  - Where do Otto and Smidge land by mistake instead of Los Angeles?
  - Describe what a Spanish mission is.
  - Describe what El Camino Real is.
  - How many missions are there? Where are they located?
  - What does the year 1776 have in common with both Mission San Juan Capistrano and the United States?
  - Who founded the mission?
  - What are some things the priests taught the Native Americans?
  - Discuss the places the characters visited in the mission, such as the chapel and the courtyard.

Wrap-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Allow students to color a page featuring a California mission.
2. On the same page, students can dictate or write 1-2 sentences describing the purpose of the missions and why they are important in the history of our country.
3. Understand the historical significance and purpose of California missions.
4. To assess comprehension, ask students to retell the story in their own words. Here are some assessment questions:
  - Can you name all the characters in the story?
  - Where did Otto and Smidge go?
  - What problem did they face, and how was it resolved?
  - Can you name some places they visited in the mission?

**Don't have time for the complete lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 mins.)**

After watching the video, distribute the coloring page and allow students to discuss their favorite character or part of the story.