

## Diorama of a California Mission

**Due Date:** January 2, 2007

**Assignment:** Create a mini California Mission that demonstrates understanding of Mission life. There is no need to include people. However, extra points will be awarded for tools, baskets, grinding stones, wheelbarrows, early farming, and ranching equipment. These items can be hand made. Please do not feel you need to spend a lot of money. I am hoping it will be a fun, creative, and inexpensive, family project.

Some of the most common materials used to build the models are: sugar cubes, cardboard, plywood, Styrofoam, clay, joint compound, celluclay, paper mache, or salt dough.

If you go to a craft store you will discover that some companies sell mission building kits. Canyon Foam Designs *Mission Model Kits* are sold at many Michael's and JoAnn Fabric Stores.

For decorating or detailing the model once it is built, anything goes. Kids have used everything from dried pasta to frosting to toothpaste! Be creative!

Here are a few basic tips on constructing the project:

1. Start with a base (22" x 24") of either plywood or cardboard. Cardboard works well for complete cardboard missions, but use the plywood if your models will be made with dough, clay, or sugar cubes.
2. On the base, draw placement lines for the church walls, courtyard walls, bell tower walls, fountains, and walkways.
3. Regardless of the material, walls should be constructed to be about three inches tall.
4. You may want to leave the roof off, or only make a half-roof so that you can add desired features inside the buildings (i.e. padre's quarters, baptism fountain, candle making area).
5. If you choose to add a roof, tiles can be made by gluing elbow macaroni, rigatoni, or lasagna to cardboard, and then painting them a brownish red.

If you choose to use a salt dough, this is something that can be made at home for very little cost. Below is a recipe that is very easy to make. Once the desired shape is made, the dough can be baked for a very sturdy material. If there are any rough edges, a piece of fine grade sandpaper can be used to smooth out the spots.

### **Ingredients**

4 cups flour

1 cup salt

1-1/2 cups hot water (from tap)

\*Food coloring, powdered drink mix, or tempera paint (optional)

Mix the salt and flour together, then gradually add the water until the dough becomes elastic. If your mixture turns out too sticky, simply add more flour. If it turns out too crumbly, add more water. Knead the dough until it feels like Play-Doh. Get out rolling pins, cups, bowls, rulers, cookie cutters, plastic utensils, and let the fun begin!

\*If you want colored dough, mix food coloring, powdered drink mix, or paint into the water before adding it to the dry ingredients. Or you can paint your creations after they are dry.

The dough can be air dried, but it will take approximately 36-48 hours. You can also bake your pieces at 300 degrees for about 1 to 2 hours. Baking times will vary depending on the size and thickness of the object, but make sure the structure is firm. If the dough starts to darken before baking is complete, cover it with aluminum foil. Painted keepsakes will need to be sealed on all sides with clear varnish or floor wax for a glossy finish.

To store your salt dough, wrap it tightly in plastic wrap or place it in a sealed container in the refrigerator. It's best if you use it within 24 hours.

There are also two good books to use to help you build your Mission.

- *Projects & Layouts (California Missions)* by Libby Nelson, Kari A. Cornell
- *California Mission Projects & Activities* by Linda Lyngheim

Also, a good website to visit to get Mission building supplies is:

[www.createamission.com](http://www.createamission.com).

Good luck on the project and hopefully these tips will help you out!

**Helpful Websites on the Missions are:**

<http://www.missionscalifornia.com/>

<http://www.missionsofcalifornia.org/missions/index.html>

California mission Internet Trail

[http://www.escusd.k12.ca.us/mission\\_trail/MissionTrail.html](http://www.escusd.k12.ca.us/mission_trail/MissionTrail.html)

California Mission Sketches by Henry Miller, 1856

<http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf3p3006vt>

California mission Interactive Website

<http://www.tsoft.net/~cmi/index.html#Buttons>

History of Missions

<http://www.californiamissions.com/morehistory/index.html>

Directory of California Mission Websites

<http://www.ca-missions.org/links.html#specificmissions>

You can link directly to these sites from Ms. Black's Website and see past projects.