

# Mission San Xavier Tours for Students Teacher Resource Guide



We encourage you to look over the online educational resources provided and talk to your students about Mission San Xavier prior to your visit. In addition, please remind your students that San Xavier is an active parish church and they will need to be respectful, reverent and courteous throughout their visit, as parishioners may be praying, mediating or worshipping in the church.

For teachers, there is a teacher's guide to terms and a timeline of the Mission. For students, there are activities including a crossword puzzle, a word search, a treasure hunt and a short quiz. In addition, there are suggested topics for classroom discussion and writing.

**Patronato San Xavier | P.O. Box 522, Tucson, AZ 85702 | (520) 407-6130 | [patronatosanxavier.org](http://patronatosanxavier.org)**  
*Patronato funds and directs ethical conservation, conducts scientific research and interprets the significance of Mission San Xavier del Bac, a National Historic Landmark in the community of Wa:k, part of the Tohono O'odham Nation. Patronato is a non-sectarian non-denominational 501 (c) 3 and does not receive sustaining support from any government or religious organization.*

## Mission San Xavier Timeline

1692 Father Kino first visited the community of Wa:k.

1711 Father Kino died at Magdalena, Sonora.

1761-1765 Father Espinosa, a Jesuit priest, constructed the first church on the Wa:k site.

1767 King Carlos III of Spain expelled all Jesuits from New Spain.

1768 The Spanish Franciscans took over the mission.

1783 Construction began on the present church.

1797 Construction stopped although the East Tower was incomplete.

1821 Mexico gained independence from Spain. All Spanish-born people were ordered to leave.

1854 The Gadsden Purchase placed the Mission within the United States of America.

1859 The Santa Fe diocese began repairs on the church and nearby buildings.

1887 The magnitude 7.6 Sonora earthquake damaged Mission San Xavier.

1906 Bishop Granjon began major repairs to the church.

1939 Lightning struck the west bell tower.

1963 Mission San Xavier was designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

1978 Patronato San Xavier was established to fund and direct ethical conservation, conduct scientific research and interpret the significance of Mission San Xavier del Bac.

1989 Leaking walls forced emergency restoration of the west transept.

1992 The Patronato began interior conservation work in the church.

2012 St. Kateri Tekakwitha was canonized as first native American saint of the North Americas.

## Teacher's Guide to Terms

**Tohono O'odham** literally means "People of the Desert." The Wa:k O'odham people inhabit the land today. They were preceded in the area by the Hohokam and the Sobaipuri, with whom they intermingled, and by the Clovis people.

**Wa:k (Bac)** is the name of the village where Father Kino founded the Mission in 1692. Wa:k is on the banks of the Santa Cruz River, which in the 1600s flowed with water almost year-round allowing for the irrigation of crops. Bac was the Spanish pronunciation of Wa:k.

**The Pimeria Alta** (Upper lands of the Pimas) was an area of the Sonora and Sinaloa provinces of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. It took its name from the Pimas, the name given by the Spanish to people residing in the area. Father Kino founded 24 missions and visitas in the Pimeria Alta.

**The Society of Jesus (Jesuits)** is a Catholic order of priests and brothers founded by St. Ignatius Loyola in 1634. St. Francisco Xavier was one of six original members. Father Kino, founder of the Mission San Xavier del Bac, was a Jesuit missionary. Jesuits remained at the Mission until 1767 when they were recalled to Spain by King Carlos III.

**St. Francis of Assisi** founded the Franciscan order of priests (Franciscans) in 1209. Franciscan missionaries were sent to the Pimeria Alta in 1768 to take over the missions, and they remained until 1824 when they were recalled to Mexico. Franciscans returned to San Xavier in 1913.

**The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo** was a treaty between Mexico and the United States at the end of the Mexican American War. With the signing of the treaty Mexico ceded a great amount of land to the United States to cover debts from the Mexican War of Independence from Spain.

**The Gadsden Purchase.** In 1854 the United States purchased the land from the Gila River, south of Phoenix, to the present day border between Mexico and the United States. The United States wanted this land to build a southern transcontinental railroad route to California.

**Milagro** is a Spanish word meaning miracle. Milagros are small metal charms, often resembling body parts such as a leg or heart, or other representative items that are pinned or laid on the coverlet of Reclining San Xavier by the faithful when they petition the saint to intercede with God to heal a condition or aid in a recovery.

**Adobe bricks** are sun dried blocks of mud made of sand, clay and lime. Adobe is not a very durable building material because it absorbs moisture from rain, which then loosens

the dirt and sand causing it to decompose. The Tohono O'odham add prickly pear cactus juice to adobe bricks in order to make them more sustainable.

**Kiln dried bricks** are blocks of mud that are baked in an oven. The brickwork of San Xavier is kiln dried brick that was baked in an onsite kiln when the church was built. It is far more durable than adobe brick. The entire church is constructed from kiln-fired brick with the exception of the doors and windows.

**The Moors** were Muslims from North Africa who occupied large portions of Spain between 711 and 1492. Moorish architectural influences can be found throughout southern Spain, and Mission San Xavier incorporates Moorish architectural features into its design.

**Cruciform cross.** While Mission San Xavier shows the influence of Moorish architecture, it is clearly a Catholic church as it is constructed in the shape of a Roman (Cruciform) cross.

Saint James the Greater, Santiago, is the patron saint of Spain. He is credited with bringing Catholicism to Spain. Saint James carried a cockleshell with him in order to baptize people into the Catholic Church.

**Baroque-style architecture** emerged from the Counter Reformation in Europe in the 16th Century. The Catholic Church settled on this form of architecture to counter the influence of Protestant churches in Europe. It is very ornate and elaborate. Baroque artwork features religious icons and tells the story of how Christianity got its start and how it grew and spread.

**Soto Coro** means under the choir loft. It is the space at the back of the church. The Retablo is the ornate panel behind the altar at the front of the church. It is a Baroque interpretation of heaven.

**Kateri Tekakwitha** was the first Native American in the North Americas to be canonized as a saint in the Catholic Church. She lived in the 1600s, the daughter of a Catholic Algonquin mother and a Mohawk Indian chief. She has been credited with curing a young boy suffering from MRSA. She was canonized in October 2012.

# The Treasure Hunt

Los tesoros en Español | The treasures in English

## En Español

## In English



Padre Kino

Father Kino



Padre Kino sobre el Caballo

Father Kino on horseback



Un mapa de las Misiones de Padre Kino

A map of the missions of Father Kino



Los Milagros

Miracles

**En Español**

**In English**



El escudo de los Franciscanos

The shield of the Franciscans



La concha Santiago

Cockleshell of Saint James



La puerta original de la Iglesia

Original door of the Church



La manilla de la puerta con una culebra

The door handle with a snake



Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Our Lady of Guadalupe

**En Español**

**In English**



El hombre en el laberinto

The man in the maze



La Fuente Baptismal

The Baptismal Font



Una puerta pintada

A painted door



Nuestra Señora de Dolorosa

Our Lady of Sorrows



Kateri Tekakwitha, la  
primera santa de los indios

Kateri Tekakwitha, the first  
Native American Saint

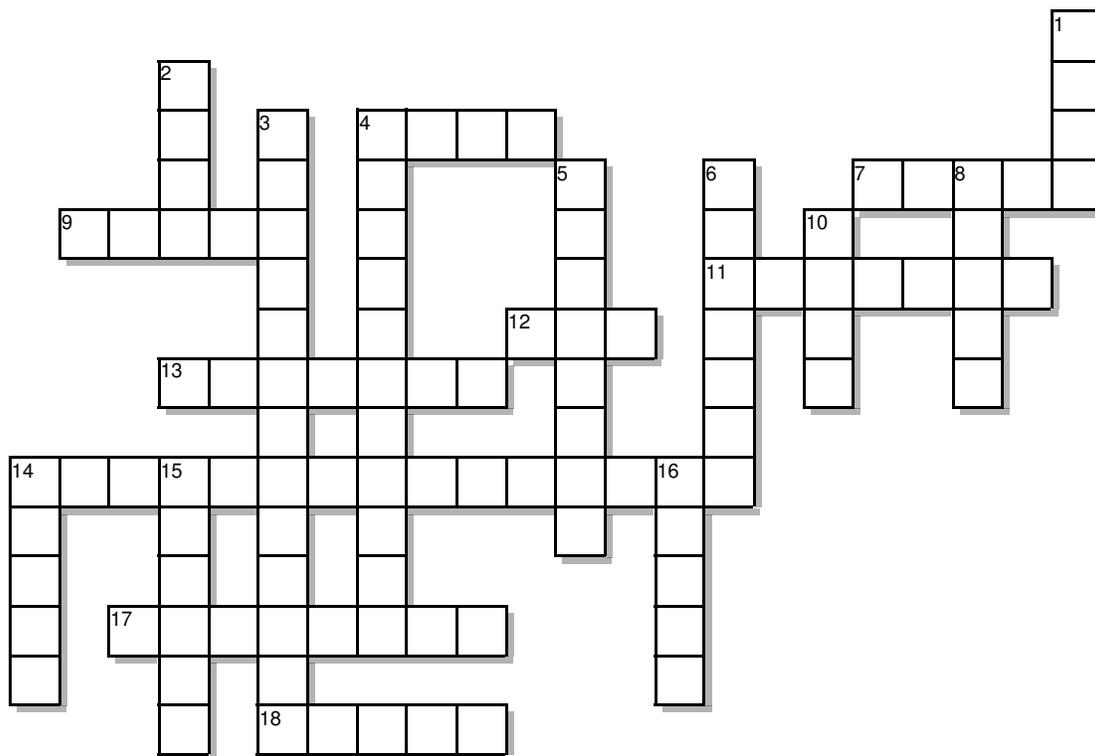
## 10 Question Quiz

1. Who lived in the Pimeria Alta before the Spanish came? What three crops did they grow? Bonus: What special term did they use for these key subsistence crops?
2. Who was the Jesuit missionary who established the Mission of San Xavier? What did he bring with him that changed the lives of the native people?
3. Who was Saint Frances Xavier?
4. At the time Father Kino established Mission San Xavier, what European country claimed ownership of this land? Bonus: What did they call their holdings in the New World?
5. When did this land become part of the United States and why? What was this agreement called?
6. What direction does the church face? Why?
7. What is the purpose of the artwork on the façade? Bonus: What is this style of design called?
8. What are milagros and why are they pinned to Reclining San Xavier?
9. What is unusual about the lions on either side of the altar? Bonus: What do the lions symbolize?
10. Who was Kateri Tekakwitha. Why is she important to Native American people?

## Answers to the 10-Question Quiz

1. The Tohono O'odham (Wa:k O'odham) people lived in the community of Wa:k along the banks of the Santa Cruz River. Their three principal crops were corn, beans and squash, known as the Three Sisters.
2. Father Francisco Eusebio Kino came to Wa:k in 1692. He introduced winter wheat, which gave the Tohono O'odham a source of food when their corn supplies grew lean. He also introduced metal tools and livestock, such as horses, cows, sheep and goats. This brought about a huge change to people's lifestyle as it changed their way of transportation, diet, clothing, and gave them draft animals to assist with their farming.
3. Saint Frances Xavier was a Jesuit missionary. He was one of the original Jesuits, a monastic order of the Catholic Church. When he was sick as a boy, Father Kino prayed to San Xavier and then later emulated him in becoming a missionary.
4. Spain claimed ownership of the Pimeria Alta, as well as vast territory in south America, Central America, Mexico, California, Florida and elsewhere. All this land was known as Nueva España.
5. This land became part of the United States in 1854 under the Gadsden Purchase. The United States purchased this land from Mexico to build a southern Transcontinental Railroad.
6. The Mission church faces south. At the time the church was built, anyone coming to the church would likely have come from the south and been drawn by its beautiful profile.
7. The artwork on the façade invites people into the church. The artwork was also used by the missionaries to teach the Tohono O'odham, who had no written language, about Christianity.
8. Milagros, meaning "miracles" in Spanish, are small metal charms. People pin milagros to the shroud of Reclining San Xavier when praying for him to intercede on their behalf in matters of healing or recovery.
9. The have smiles on their faces and their front paws look like human hands. Lions are symbols of strength and protection.
10. Kateri Tekakwitha, known as the Lily of the Mohawks, is the first Native American to have been canonized as a saint in the Catholic Church. She lived in the 1600s in upstate New York and Canada. Pope Benedict canonized her October 21, 2012. She is the patroness of ecology and the environment, people in exile and Native Americans.

# Mission San Xavier del Bac



## ACROSS

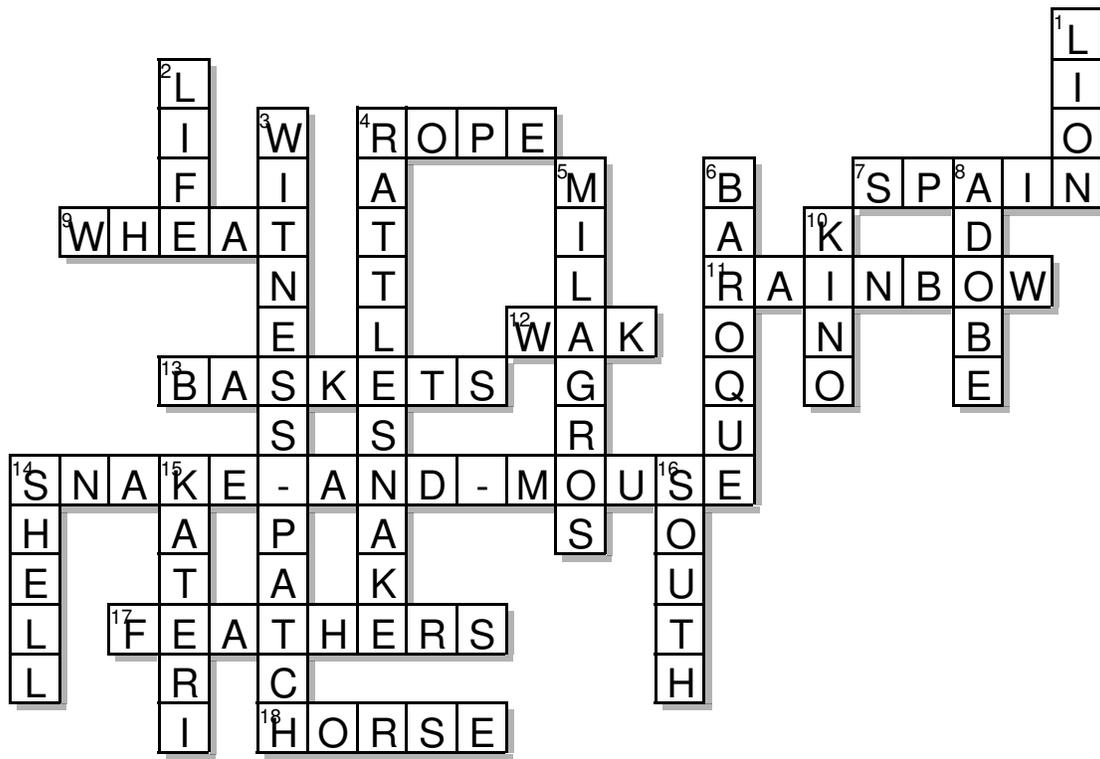
- 4 The Franciscan symbol found around the interior of the church holding the faithful together.
- 7 The country that sent the Missionaries into this area.
- 9 A crop Father Kino introduced into this area.
- 11 The colorful symbol over the front door of the church.
- 12 The village located in this area when the Missionaries arrived.
- 13 The Tohono O'odham used agave to weave and make these.
- 14 Design on the inside door handle of the sanctuary.
- 17 The Tohono O'odham flag has 11 of these.
- 18 The animal that changed the west, never seen in this area prior to the arrival of the Spanish.

## DOWN

- 1 The animal that appears on the Spanish flag and is represented in statues at the altar.
- 2 The Man in the Maze symbolizes this.
- 3 The dark rectangular area on the painting in the west transept.
- 4 Design on the outside door handle of the sanctuary.
- 5 The small charms in the shape of various body parts that many people pin to the cover of the reclining San Xavier.
- 6 Type of architectural design of the church.
- 8 Mud bricks used in construction of the earlier church.
- 10 The Jesuit priest who first came to this area and started the Mission.
- 14 The symbol which stands for St. James, baptism, and pilgrimage.
- 15 The first and only Native American saint.
- 16 The direction the Mission church faces.

**WORD BANK:** ADOBE, BAROQUE, BASKETS, FEATHERS, HORSE, KATERI, KINO, LIFE, LION, MILAGROS, RAINBOW, RATTLESNAKE, ROPE, SHELL, SNAKE-AND-MOUSE, SOUTH, SPAIN, WAK, WHEAT, WITNESS-PATCH

# Mission San Xavier del Bac

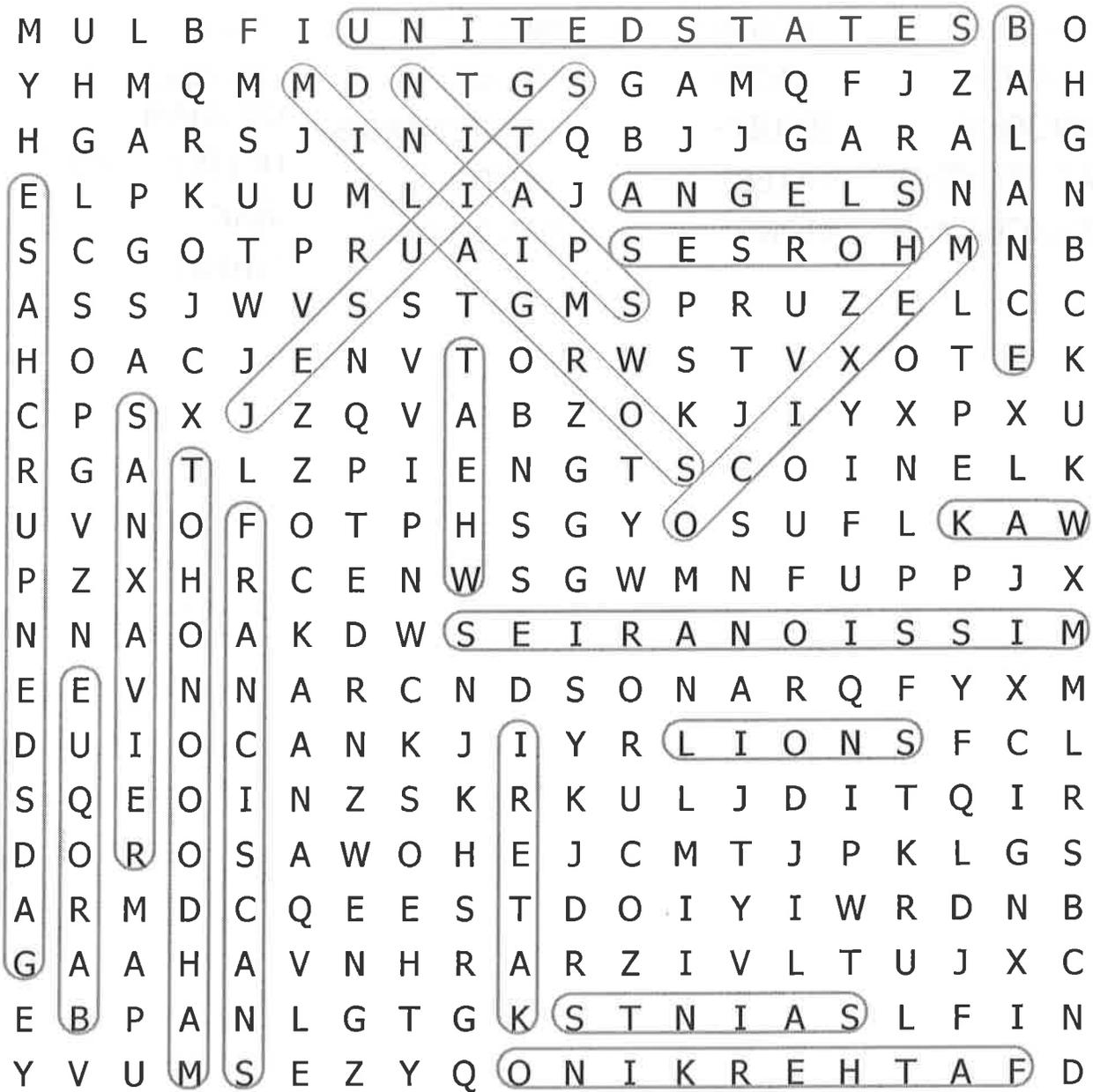


M U L B F I U N I T E D S T A T E S B O  
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## WORD LIST:

|             |          |              |               |
|-------------|----------|--------------|---------------|
| ANGELS      | GADSDEN  | MEXICO       | SPAIN         |
| BALANCE     | PURCHASE | MILAGROS     | TOHONO        |
| BAROQUE     | HORSES   | MISSIONARIES | OODHAM        |
| FATHER KINO | JESUITS  | SAINTS       | UNITED STATES |
| FRANCISCANS | KATERI   | SAN XAVIER   | WAK           |
|             | LIONS    |              | WHEAT         |

# San Xavier



## The Mission & The Patronato

### Mission San Xavier

Mission San Xavier has inspired countless people across centuries since its foundations were laid in 1783. This National Historic Landmark is a premier example of Mexican Baroque architecture and along with the majestic saguaro, is one of the most recognized icons in Arizona.

Today, this active Mission remains a working parish and the spiritual home for many Southern Arizonans. Host to tens of thousands of visitors annually from around the world, in October 2015, the Mission was named to the global World Monuments Fund “Watch” list that includes 50 cultural heritage sites in 36 countries that are at risk from the forces of nature and the impact of social, political and economic change.

### Patronato San Xavier

Absorbing the beauty and inspiring art of Mission San Xavier today is a far cry from the way you would have experienced it 40 years ago.

Details now readily seen—vibrant colors, rich murals and glints of gold on the Retablo Mayor—were barely discernible because two centuries of candle smoke, dust, water seepage and general neglect had rendered the interior walls of the Church almost black. Sensing the imminent destruction of the interior of Mission San Xavier, a group of community leaders formed Patronato San Xavier to restore and preserve the interior and exterior of the Mission forever.

Much remains to be done. Once the East Tower is completed, future projects include: The ornate facade, the East Wing (built with beams and adobe from the first church built at the Mission), the Mortuary Chapel, the adobe walls, and the 19th century administrative wing. Patronato also is building a permanent endowment to provide for on-going preservation and maintenance needs at the Mission.

Learn more: [patronatosanxavier.org/restoration-and-preservation](http://patronatosanxavier.org/restoration-and-preservation)