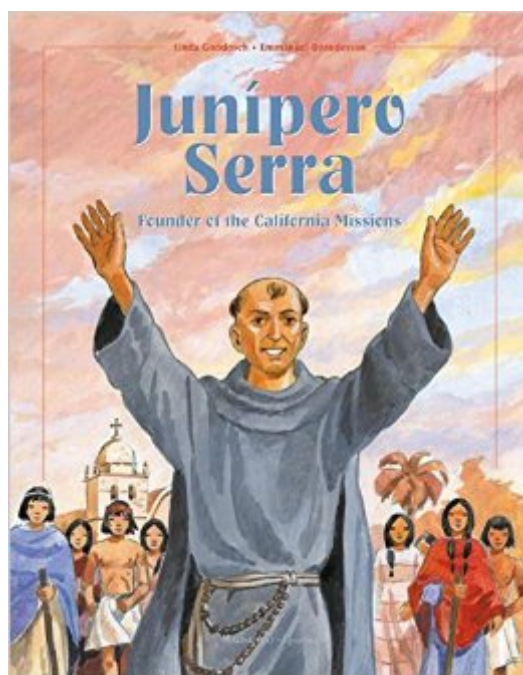


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# Junipero Serra: Founder Of The California Missions



## Synopsis

In 18th-century Spain, daring stories of missionaries spreading the good news of the Gospel in the New World ignited the imagination of a devout young boy. Miguel Serra's dream soon became a reality. As Franciscan friar Jun -pero Serra, he traveled to the New World and tirelessly preached the love of Christ to the natives living in the unchartered wilderness of California. His motto was, "Always forward, never back." Pope Francis will canonize Father Serra on September 23 during his historic visit to the USA. Join the "founding father of California" on his amazing journey and experience the saintly missionary zeal that led to the establishment of the 21 Catholic missions in California. His presence and work are still very much alive through these beautiful missions that are visited by millions of people every year.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

## Customer Reviews

Jun -pero Serra is also a 12" x 9" hardcover for children from Ignatius Press. In fact, it shares the same illustrator (Emmanuel Beaudesson) as Let's Pray the Rosary, so you know right off the bat that the book is going to have lovely artwork inside. The book begins with a homily by Pope Francis on Jun -pero Serra in May 2015 preparation for his canonization in September 2015. Then, we start with Serra's early life, his tiny stature, and the fear that he would not live long after birth. However, he grew up and was a hard worker. He was also a quick learner and impressed his

Franciscan teachers. He later became a priest and a teacher, but he dreamed of being a missionary. He eventually realizes that dream and he travels to the Americas. The book traces out his history and mission success in Upper California, San Diego, and San Carlos. The book concludes by speaking of Serra's statue being in Washington D.C., John Paul II making him Blessed, and Pope Francis making him a saint. This is a fascinating book about a saint who had an impact on the United States, so it is definitely worth checking out. However, due to the sheer volume of words in this book, I'd recommend it for ages 8 to 9 and up!

As we all know, St. Junípero Serra was canonized by Pope Francis on September 23, 2015 during our Holy Father's apostolic visit to the United States. As a Californian with a love for both the missions and Father Serra, my heart was warmed by the canonization, but I knew of many for whom it brought up issues of concern. This conflicted feeling of mine is one of the many reasons why I truly enjoyed reading the new book *Junípero Serra: Founder of the California Missions* by Linda Gondosch (Author) and Emmanuel Beaudesson (Illustrator). While the life, valor and faith of St. Junípero Serra deserve to be known and cherished, it's impossible to look at the story of the California Missions without acknowledging the hurt that was done to some of California's native sons and daughters. One of the reasons I enjoyed reading this new children's biography from Ignatius Press and Magnificat is that the book does not shy away from history. In sharing St. Junípero's dramatic calling to the priesthood and his passion to share his faith in mission territories, it also spells gently and in child-friendly fashion out some of the wrongdoings and conflicts of that time. We learn of Father Serra's passion to bring Christ to those living in this part of the world, but we also see him advocating for and ministering to those whose way of life was being shaped and changed. The book is well researched, detailed yet accessible, and filled with eye catching illustrations which draw us into the life, adventure and true caring of St. Junípero Serra.

*Junipero Sera: Founder of the California Missions* is a well written history of the man canonized by Pope Francis during his recent visit to the U.S. The story is fascinating by itself, but Gondosch makes it appealing to children by telling many interesting incidents that happened to St. Junipero. I was amazed at St. Junipero's persistence in following his goal of bringing Christianity to Native Americans in spite of great physical hardships and personal illness. Gondosch did not forget the negative side of St. Junipero's story. She talks about the ill treatment of the Native Americans, and how the Spanish wanted to change their ways. But St. Junipero was always their advocate. Gondosch wrote this book for children, and was always careful to explain terms that they

might not understand. She made the book appealing by showing the human side of this man. And she made the book interesting enough that adults can enjoy it and learn the story of this interesting new saint.

Very good book!!

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