LOC TPS World History/AP World History Jesuits in China  
9-12 Grades  
AP World History Period 4

Paige Solomon, Norfolk Collegiate  
This activity is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.

45 – 60 minutes  
Description of activity: Students analyze sources related to Jesuit activity in China. They examine the methods used by the Jesuits to convert the population and compare them to methods used elsewhere (especially the New World). Finally students identify and explain a new historical interpretation of the reaction of the Chinese to the Jesuits.

Activity Goals  
Focus Question: What impact did Jesuits have in 17th century China?  
Context: This activity fits into a study of overseas exploration by Europeans and their contact with the Chinese in the 1500s-1600s.

Objectives: Identify and explain the approach taken by Jesuits to spread Catholicism in China. Assess the degree to which they were successful in their efforts.

Virginia SOLs  
STANDARD WHII.1a, b, c, d, e, f  
The student will improve skills in historical research and geographical analysis by  
a) identifying, analyzing, and interpreting primary and secondary sources to make generalizations about events and life in world history since 1500 A.D. (C.E.);  
b) using maps, globes, artifacts, and pictures to analyze the physical and cultural landscapes of the world and to interpret the past since 1500 A.D. (C.E.);  
c) identifying geographic features important to the study of world history since 1500 A.D. (C.E.);  
d) identifying and comparing political boundaries with the locations of civilizations, empires, and kingdoms from 1500 A.D. (C.E.) to the present;  
e) analyzing trends in human migration and cultural interaction from 1500 A.D. (C.E.) to the present;  
f) analyzing the impact of economic forces, including taxation, government spending, trade, resources, and monetary systems, on events from 1500 A.D. (C.E.).

STANDARD WHII.4b  
The student will demonstrate knowledge of the impact of the European Age of Discovery and expansion into the Americas, Africa, and Asia by  
b) describing the influence of religion.

AP World History Historical Thinking Skills causation, author’s purpose, synthesis
Key Concepts 4.I. VI; 4.2.III.B

Assessment: Analysis questions, Formative assessment questions or task option, Summative assessment in the form of an AP style Short Answer Question.

Activity Details
Primary Sources: see below
Procedure: Students will investigate and examine the primary sources. They will answer the analysis questions provided and then respond to the formative assessment questions. Ideally, the teacher would discuss the sources before asking students to complete the assessment tasks. As an alternative to simply answering the questions, students might wish to work in pairs or groups of three and tape a news report, podcast, or an Explain Everything in which they report their conclusions. They could include a few specific sources as evidence supporting their arguments. The final step (especially appropriate for AP students) would be to have students complete the summative assessment as a short answer question.

What you will need before implementing: This lesson would be most effective with computer access for all students. The documents, directions, and chart should shared digitally with all students (in Google Doc.s or another format). This activity could be accomplished with paper copy of the materials for each student.
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/vatican/romechin.html#awwhrwte
Read “How Rome Went to China”

http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/vatican/romechin.html#mamtjic
Read “Missionaries and Mandarins”

Why did the Jesuits study Chinese language and culture?
Do you think this helped them gain acceptance at court?

Chinese

Eight-part cosmological map. Flat printed sheets. Part 1, Adam Schall von Bell
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/vatican/romechin.html#obj5

Who created this? What was his role/position?
What purpose did he likely have in creating this?
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Chien-chieh tsung-hsing t’u (Map of the main stars in the visible realm)
Adam Schall von Bell
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/vatican/romechin.html#obj7

Why was this document produced? What was its purpose?

Folding red-colored letter of praise for Father Tseng (Alvaro Semedo)
1637
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/vatican/romechin.html#obj11

What was the fate of the Chinese official (Father Tseng)?
What can this tell us about the degree of acceptance of Catholicism by the Chinese court?
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Arte de la lengua mandarina.
Francisco Varo, Edited by Pedrodo Piñuela. In Spanish and Latin.
1703
Canton
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/vatican/romechin.html#obj14

What can this source tell us about the methods used by the Jesuits in China?

Sabatino de Ursis
Preface dated 1612
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/vatican/romechin.html#obj8

Considering that this was published in a book with other technical advances and the high level of skill evident in the engraving, what can you surmise about the audience and the intent of the publisher?
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*Wan-kuo ch‘üan-tʻu (Complete map of all nations).* In Chinese.

China.
Giulio Aleni
c. 1620
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/vatican/romechin.html#obj1

Record your observations of this map.
Who created this map and for what purpose?
Why did the Chinese not like this map?
Why might it have been revised numerous times in the late 1500s and early 1600s?

"An Illustrated Explanation of Geography"
Giulio Aleni
1620
China
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/vatican/romechin.html#obj2

What was the subject of this book?
Why do you think it was produced?
Formative assessment questions:
As an alternative to simply answering the questions, students might wish to work in pairs or groups of three and tape a news report, podcast, or an Explain Everything in which they report their conclusions. They could include a few specific sources as evidence supporting their arguments.

1. What European learning and technology did they introduce to the Chinese?
2. Describe the approach Jesuit missionaries to China took in their attempt to convert the Chinese to Christianity.
3. How did the Chinese react to the Jesuit missionaries?
4. To what extent were the Jesuits successful in China?
5. To what extent did the Chinese benefit from their interactions with the Christian missionaries?
Summative assessment task:
SAQ - three points are possible.
A. How was their approach to converting the indigenous population different in China than the New World?
B. What accounts for that difference?
C. Read the excerpt from “Jesuit Missionaries and the Transmission of Christianity and European Knowledge in China” by Hui Li

“While it is undisputed that the Jesuits had a remarkable ability to adapt, a mere focus on accommodation leaves out other influential factors that contributed to Jesuit success and failure in China. The political situation in late Ming and early Qing China, the treatment of the Jesuits by the emperors, and the social problems China was facing played important roles. During the late Ming period, the Jesuits were able to befriend scholar-officials who supported and protected them. After 1670, however, the Jesuits depended on the patronage of the emperor instead of the Chinese literati.16 They had a difficult time separating themselves from the Portuguese and Spanish merchants who had left a bad impression of Europeans on the Chinese. As Ricci wrote to his former teacher Fabio de Fabii, “The Chinese place absolutely no trust in any foreign country, and thus they allow no one at all to enter and reside here unless they undertake never again to return home, as is the case with us.”17 In addition, it is important to realize that the converted Confucian scholars in the late Ming period were mostly those scholar-officials who were not against Confucianism, but rather ones who believed that Christianity could be used to supplement Confucianism. These scholars also believed that the science the Europeans brought was originally from China, but had been lost by the 1600s. These scholars argued that they were now, with the help of the West, rediscovering and recovering what was originally theirs. The Chinese author Yu Sanle placed greater emphasis on the Jesuits’ role in scientific transmission than on the history of the Catholic Church in China. Yu remarked that the establishment of the Catholic Church in China led to the introduction of science. In other words, the establishment of the Church was the precedent and the cause that directly led to the transmission of scientific knowledge.18 Certainly the Jesuits themselves never saw their mission that way. Matteo Ricci had made it clear in his journals that his ultimate goal in undertaking such
a difficult journey to China was to convert the Chinese, and in the words of fellow Jesuit China missionary Nicola Trigault, “to garner into the granaries of the Catholic Church a rich harvest from this initial sowing of the gospel seed.”19 Jonathan Spence’s book on Ricci’s memory palace also demonstrated that the images and Chinese characters that Ricci put into his memory palace were for teaching the Chinese about Christian principles. However, Yu’s view shows that the areas in which the Jesuits’ contribution was greatest, science and mathematics, were the ones that the were most valued by the Chinese. In fact, when the Kangxi emperor allowed the missionaries to return from exile in Canton in 1671, he refused their request to spread Christianity, but continued to use their Western methods in areas of science and mathematics.20 In 1692, Kangxi issued the Edict of Tolerance of Christianity in 1692 for the Jesuits’ contributions to cartography, astronomy, and military developments. Because they had not done anything suspicious, they were allowed to stay in China and Christianity was to be tolerated in China, just as the Buddhist monks or Daoist priests were tolerated in China.21 This edict indicated that the Chinese valued the Jesuits’ knowledge of science over their religion, and that this tolerance of Christianity was issued as a reward for their introduction of useful Western science to the empire.”

**Identify and explain the argument Hui Li put forth in this excerpt explaining the reaction of the Chinese court to the Jesuits.**