**Aim: What motivates exploration?**

**Topic: Age of Exploration (1492-1600’s)**

**Introduction: The Spanish Reconquista**

Before Spain could begin conquering new lands, Spain first had to reconquer its own country! In 711 A.D. Spain was conquered by North African Moors (Muslims). For the next several hundred years, Spanish Christians slowly began started to reconquer the country, this became known as **The Reconquista**. In 1496, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella married and used their combined armies to defeat the Moors, and then used the Holy Inquisition to get rid of all non-Catholics from Spain. By 1492, Spain was now a united country with a strong military and a very powerful and wealthy King and Queen.

**1) What was the Reconquista?**

**2) Explain how Spain was able to become a unified and powerful country.**

**Document #1: Exploration Made Possible**

Around 1400, Europeans began to use bigger and more devastating guns and learned to mount them on their ships. These ships were faster due to the use of triangular sails, which were first used by Arab sailors. These sails along with cartography (science of map making), the magnetic compass (invented in China), and the astrolabe made exploration over the rough Atlantic possible. But technology alone does not explain why the Europeans began to expand outward.

**1) How did technology contribute to the Age of Exploration?**

**Document #2 – Journal excerpt from Bernal Diaz, Conquistador**

The soldiers who went to explore for Spain were known as **Conquistadors.** Bernard Diaz, a conquistador stated the reasons for becoming a conquistador was, *“To serve God and His Majesty, to give light to those who were in darkness, and to grow rich as all men desire to do so.”*

1. **Who were the Conquistadors?**
2. **According to Bernal Diaz, why did the conquistadors explore?**

**Task: Read the article below and create a chart that lists the evidence of exploration for Gold, God and Glory.**

The time period when countries such as Spain began exploring and conquering lands in the Americas (known as “**The New World”)** is known as **The Age of Exploration.** However, the Age of Exploration actually started in the Renaissance. The values of competition and inquiry during the Renaissance, spurred by improvements in navigation, led to an increase of both warfare and outward expansion. The Crusades made Europeans want products (especially spices) from the Middle East and China. These spices came from Asia via the Mediterranean Sea. However, in 1453, the Byzantine Empire finally fell to the sieges of the Ottoman Turks. After years of attacks, the capital city of Constantinople, which had been the main trade center between East and West, had fallen to the Ottomans (and renamed Istanbul). The Mediterranean came under the control of Muslim and Italian merchants. Prices for goods that were traded through here became expensive because of the new taxes and tariffs. Western European merchants wondered if they could find another trade route to the East. Seeking to cut out the middlemen, the Spanish explorers sought new trade routes to the Indies, which accidently led to the discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus (and named “The Americas” after explorer **Amerigo Vespucci)**.

 The Spanish Reconquista had negative consequences for Jews and Muslims of Spain, but it benefited Spain greatly. The country was united for the first time in history. However, after all of this war, Ferdinand and Isabella needed to fund their new country and the war they just had. As lords had done in Italy and Central Europe, these rulers now wanted to get rich off of the trading that developed from the **Commercial Revolution**. Seeking to open up new trade routes to make the country richer, explorers were sent overseas, beginning the **Age of Exploration**. The desire to explore and the will to fight for their country was nothing new for the men that went on these voyages. For 700 years the men of Spain and their rulers had been full of a spirit of conquest. The nation was built on militarism. With no one left to fight in Spain, the veterans of Spain’s wars took their talent and fighting spirit to the New World. These soldiers were now known as **Conquistadors.** While some explorers were looking for profits and combat, some were also looking for converts. Many priests from Ignatius Loyola’s Jesuit Order went with the Spanish explorers to find new souls to convert to Catholicism to help maintain the authority and power of the Catholic Church, and to convert people from polytheism to Christianity to “save their souls.” These people were known as **missionaries.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Gold! (Money)** | **God! (Religion)** | **Glory! (Military Honor and Fame)** |
|  |  |  |

**Which of these three do you think was the main reason for exploration? Explain.**