


Feast Day

MARY MACKILLOP
today

Class Activities Years 7 – 10

The activities below have been developed in line with the Australian Curriculum and focus on Mary MacKillop and The Mobile Kindy in Fiji. You may wish to use all or some of these activities to deepen students' understanding of Mary MacKillop's Feast Day.

Who is Saint Mary MacKillop?

 **Teacher's Tip:** you can either read this text aloud to your class or listen to the podcast below.

Mary Helen MacKillop was born in 1842 in Victoria to Scottish immigrant parents and grew up with seven brothers and sisters. At the age of twenty-four, she dedicated her life to God and took on the name “Mary of the Cross.”

Mary was an ordinary woman with an extraordinary dream and a big heart. Her dream was to give the poorest families and most neglected children access to education and safe shelter by opening schools. With what little resources they had, Mary and Father Tenison Woods turned an old stable into a school in Penola, South Australia.

In 1866 Mary and Father Tenison worked together to set up the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart (the Josephites). This was the first religious order to be founded by an Australian.

As a passionate educator, Mary broke through the prejudice of the early 19th century to educate all—regardless of gender, race, faith, or wealth—while ministering to the vulnerable with compassion. She and the Sisters of St Joseph went wherever the need was greatest. They gave up everything to live and teach amongst the people they served.

Podcast: ABC's Fierce Girls: Mary MacKillop – the girl who became a saint (13 minutes) <https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/fierce-girls/mary-mackillop-the-girl-who-became-a-saint/11658006>


 **Teacher's Tip:** Use the questions below to generate discussion with the class.

1. What did Mary do that was important?
2. Why does having access to a good education matter?
3. How did Mary seek justice for others?
4. How can we all aspire to be more like Mary MacKillop in our daily lives?

What is The Mobile Kindy in Fiji?

In Fiji, people from remote islands often come to the city in search of work and end up living in informal 'squatter' settlements - where houses are cobbled together using whatever materials can be found. In these communities, many young children go without access to quality education. Often, the fees of pre-primary services are unaffordable for families, and children don't have any formal identification to enroll.

The Mobile Kindy visits these settlements to give these children access to quality early childhood education. Community-based volunteers are trained to be teachers and given the skills they need to teach basic early childhood classes. Parents also participate, and learn many new skills to help their children, such as health and sanitation, child development, child protection and positive discipline.

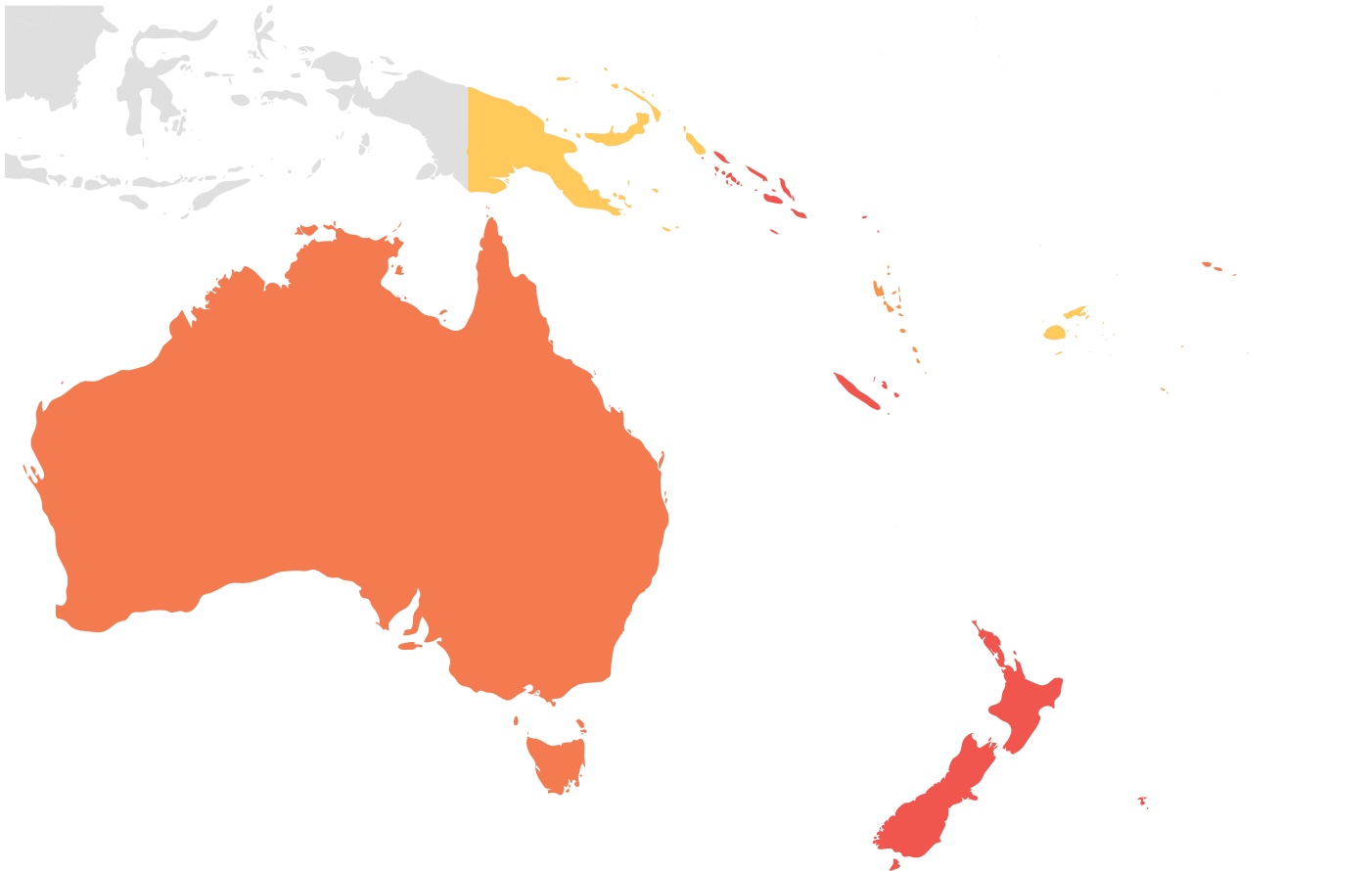
 **Teacher's Tip:** Play the video of the Mobile Kindy in Fiji and out the Student Worksheet and have students write a paragraph for each question.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4Rts6Hk4wQ>



Student Worksheet

Activity 1



1. Can you identify Fiji on this regional map? Circle Fiji on map.
2. Can you name Fiji's closest neighbors?

Activity 2

Look up information about Fiji and The Mobile Kindy project on the websites listed below to answer the following questions:

Websites

Fiji information: <https://www.marymackilloptoday.org.au/what-we-do/where-we-work/fiji/>

Mobile Kindy: <https://www.marymackilloptoday.org.au/what-we-do/our-projects/fiji/>

1. What are the biggest challenges faced by Fiji?

2. What does it mean to live below the poverty line?

3. What is the big challenge in education? Why does this matter?

4. What are the long-term implications of educating children at an early age?

5. What is the health crisis that is happening in Fiji?

6. What happens when people do not go to school or drop out from school?

7. Can you explain how Mary MacKillop Today and Child Benefit are empowering local communities in Fiji to overcome these challenges?

8. Why is there an important distinction between giving communities money and empowering communities through education?

9. How does this work relate to Mary MacKillop and The Sisters of St Joseph?

Lana's Story




Lana lives in a farming settlement in Fiji with her husband and five children. She helps to support her family by working on a local farm and growing vegetables for her family to eat and sell.

Lana volunteers with the Mobile Kindy program because she wants to learn to be a good teacher for her community. Her favourite part of the Mobile Kindy program is leading library sessions. During the recent coronavirus lockdown, Lana was able to continue leading library session and ensure the children in her community didn't miss out on education.

At the Mobile Kindy, Lana also learns how to teach and shows other parents how to help their own children with homework. Many of the parents in Lana's community didn't go to school, so it is hard for them to understand their children's homework. Lana always encourages other parents to come along to Mobile Kindy so they can also learn how to help their children.

Lana says that the Mobile Kindy is so important for her community as it ensures all young children and their parents can attend early childhood education sessions in a safe environment.

*Name has been changed for privacy reasons.

 **Teacher's Tip:** Read out Lana's story to the class and use the questions below to generate discussion with the class.

1. How is Lana empowered by this program?
2. How does Lana earn an income?
3. How did COVID-19 impact your ability to learn? Do you think it would have been more difficult for people in Fiji to continue learning?
4. Why is it important for parents to attend the sessions as well as children?
5. Why is pre-school/early learning education important?
6. Does anything surprise you about Lana's story?

Curriculum Links

The learning activities are broadly linked to the Australian Curriculum in the following areas:

Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia

- Collaboration and engagement with the peoples of Asia support effective regional and global citizenship.
- Australians play a significant role in social, cultural, political and economic developments in the Asia region.

General capabilities key ideas

Sustainability

World views are formed by experiences at personal, local, national and global levels, and are linked to individual and community actions for sustainability.

Intercultural Understanding

Intercultural understanding stimulates students' interest in the lives of others. It cultivates values and dispositions such as curiosity, care, empathy, reciprocity, respect and responsibility, open-mindedness and critical awareness, and supports new and positive intercultural behaviours.

Personal and Social Capability

Students gain an understanding of the role of advocacy in contemporary society and build their capacity to critique societal constructs and forms of discrimination, such as gender inequality. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:

- appreciate diverse perspectives.
- contribute to civil society.
- understand relationships.

Ethical Understanding

In developing and acting with ethical understanding, students:

- explore rights and responsibilities.
- consider points of view.

Geography

Year 7: Investigating the extent to which people in their place are socially connected or socially isolated and its effect on liveability (ACHGK046)

Civics and Citizenship

Year 7: The values and beliefs of religions practised in contemporary Australia, including Christianity (ACHCK06),

Year 8: How groups, such as religious and cultural groups, express their particular identities; and how this influences their perceptions of others and vice versa (ACHCK053),

Year 9: How and why individuals and groups, including religious groups, participate in and contribute to civic life (ACHCK079).

Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australian, regional and global contexts (ACHCS089)

Year 10: Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australian, regional and global contexts (ACHCS102)

Government and Democracy

Year 10: The Australian Government's role and responsibilities at a global level, for example provision of foreign aid, peacekeeping, participation in international organisations and the United Nations (ACHCK091)