

Be *Fierce* for *Fair*

MARY
MACKILLOP
today

Liturgy of the Word - Primary

Prayer Space

Set up a space that is visible for all students. If they are seated on the floor, ensure the prayer space is low to or on the ground. Drape the space with prayer cloths. Place a candle (real or battery operated), a cross, a Bible or lectionary with the place marked with today's reading, and an image of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop in the prayer space.

You may also like to add some items that help students remember what Saint Mary did and how the Sisters of Saint Joseph and Mary MacKillop Today continue her work. This could include a small blackboard and chalk, a small stack of books, a set of rosary beads, and a photograph of Maria — a nine-year-old girl from Timor-Leste whose story is at the heart of this year's campaign.



I cannot see, but I can learn just like my other friends.

- Maria, nine years old, Timor-Leste

Feast of Saint Mary MacKillop - 8 August



Liturgy of the Word - Primary

Acknowledgement of Country

Begin with an Acknowledgement of Country appropriate to your school's location.

Introduction

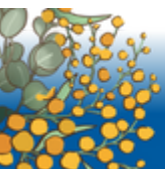
Today is the Feast Day of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop. It is a day we come together to celebrate the life and work of Australia's first saint — a woman who worked tirelessly for others, especially for families who could not afford to send their children to school.

In Penola in 1866, with the help of a priest, Father Julian Tenison Woods, and two of her sisters, she opened her first school. That same year she began the Sisters of Saint Joseph, a religious congregation which continues its work today. Throughout Australia, New Zealand, and in places like Timor-Leste, the work of Mary MacKillop carries on through an organisation called Mary MacKillop Today.

Mary MacKillop Today works alongside communities to create change by building practical skills for women, men, and children. One child who shows us what this work looks like today is Maria. She is nine years old and lives in a remote mountain village in Timor-Leste — just one hour's flight from Australia. Maria has a visual impairment. Every day, she walks to school along narrow dirt paths and across rivers to reach her classroom. She is in Year 3.

Through Mary MacKillop Today's Inclusive Early Education Project, Maria now has access to trained teachers, adapted learning materials, and a classroom environment that enables her to fully participate in school. Her father Silveiro, who is also a teacher, received training through this project. Her classmates walk alongside her every day.

If Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop were living in our world today, we could not only imagine her doing this work but speaking out about it courageously. Mary MacKillop Today has chosen Fierce for Fair as the theme for Mary's Feast Day. As we celebrate and reflect on Mary's life, let these words guide our prayer.





Opening song

Beneath a Cross of Stars – Andrew Chinn, St Mary MacKillop – Gary Pinto, Let Our Light Shine – Michael Mangan, Never See a Need – Michael Mangan, In the Footsteps of Jesus – Andrew Chinn.

Opening Prayer

Leader: Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross. In the name of the Father...

Loving God,

Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, a woman of great faith, courage, and commitment, fixed her eyes on you as her source of strength. May her faith remind us to be faithful to you. May her courage be a guiding light, and may her commitment remind us to Be Fierce for Fair in a world where many need your help.

We ask this in Your name.

All: Amen.

Leader: Let us listen to God's Word.

You may choose to read both the Reading and the Gospel, however it is likely that you will choose one. The Reading or Gospel could be read as below, or told using Liquid Pictures, Echo Mime, or simply acted out with gestures.

Reading

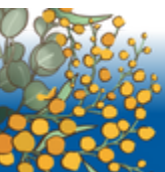
Colossians 3:12-17

Reader: A reading from St Paul's letter to the Colossians:

God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So always do these things: Show mercy to others; be kind, humble, gentle, and patient. Do not be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, then forgive him. Forgive each other because the Lord forgave you. Do all these things; but most important, love each other. Love is what holds you all together in perfect unity. Let the peace that Christ gives control your thinking. You were all called together in one body to have peace. Always be thankful. Let the teaching of Christ live in you richly. Use all wisdom to teach and strengthen each other. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Everything you say and everything you do should all be done for Jesus your Lord. And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus.

The word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.





Gospel

Matthew 6:25–34

Reader: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew:

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

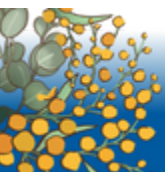
And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith?

Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

‘So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.’

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



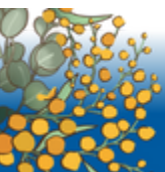


Reflection Ideas

Reflect on the life of Mary MacKillop in light of today's scripture passages. Below are suggestions for how this could be done:

- Read Mary's Letter (included below). Mary MacKillop was a great letter writer. Imagine she wrote this letter. It tells students something about her life and challenges them to never see a need without doing something about it.
- Use the Reflection on Maria's Story (included below) to help students see and understand how Mary MacKillop's work lives on today through the lives of children like Maria in Timor-Leste.
- Read a picture book. Some titles include: Meet Mary MacKillop by Sally Murphy; Saint Mary MacKillop: Beneath a Cross of Stars by Andrew Chinn and Jill McLaughlin RSJ; Saint Mary MacKillop Friend of Jesus by Judith M Steer RSJ; The Gift of Mary MacKillop by Colleen O'Sullivan RSJ — this reading might be best done by a staff member.
- Students lead a reflection they created using Be Fierce for Fair statements, for example: Be Fierce for homelessness. Be Fierce for refugees. Be Fierce for the lonely.
- Have a class write a poem that reflects on Mary MacKillop's life. Types of poems include an Acrostic Poem, a Bio Poem, or an I Am Poem.
- If you are a Josephite school, share some of the school's history and how Mary MacKillop's legacy continues to live on in the life of the school today.

All reflections could have quiet music playing in the background. When the music concludes, it will indicate the time of reflection has ended. If possible, use the instrumental version of one of the songs you are using in the liturgy.





Prayers of the Faithful

Leader: Let us turn to God in prayer. Ever generous God, You inspired St Mary MacKillop to live her life faithful to the Gospel, bringing hope and encouragement to those in need. With confidence in your generosity, we pray:

Reader: For Pope Leo XIV and leaders in our Church that they lead with courage and justice.
Lord, hear us.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader: For the Sisters of St Joseph and the work of Mary MacKillop Today, that they continue to be inspired by Mary MacKillop, reaching out in love to all those in need.

Lord hear us

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader: For our school community that we may courageously walk in St Mary's footsteps seeing a need and doing something about it.

Lord hear us.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader: For all those in our community who are sick, that they will receive your healing touch.

Lord hear us.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Leader: For our own intentions... (pause)

Lord hear us.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader: We make these prayers and those in our heart in Your name.

All: Amen.

Final Blessing

Leader: Let us stand for a blessing

Through the example of Saint Mary of the Cross, may we learn to recognise God's will for us and trust in God's wisdom.

All: Amen.

May her life of service inspire us to serve others.

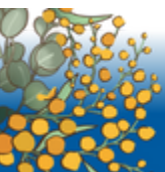
All: Amen.

May we share in her courage, see with the eyes of God's love, and learn from her actions.

All: Amen.

And may God bless us. In the name of the Father...

All: Amen.

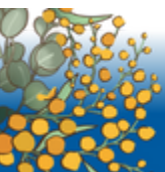




Closing Song

Suggestions:

- Hearts of Courage – Timothy Hart
- Beneath a Cross of Stars – Andrew Chinn
- Never See a Need - Michael Mangan
- Go Make a Difference – Steve Angrisano
- In the Footsteps of Jesus – Andrew Chinn
- Do Something – Matthew West





Mary's Letter

My Dear Friends,

When I was small my parents lived in a large house in Melbourne, but we had to move when my father lost his job. We moved to a farm near my grandparents' home.

It was often difficult to go to school. When we couldn't go, my father would teach us. There were many of us. I have seven brothers and sisters. We all grew up loving God and each other, even when times were hard. When I was eight years old, I was able to attend a school run by Miss Kane. It was wonderful. I loved to read and write.

By the time I was fifteen years old, I went to work so that I could help my family. My first job was as a governess and I loved it. It was one of the jobs I had that prepared me for what was to come. I also worked in a printing press shop, which I really didn't like, but it helped me too.

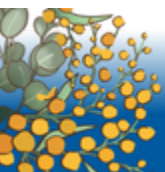
Many years ago now, in 1866, five years after I met Fr Julian Tenison Woods I received a letter from him asking me to be the first teacher in a school in Penola, South Australia. I accepted and my sisters Annie and Lexie joined me. My brother John was a carpenter, just like Jesus was, and he converted an old stable into a school. Imagine that, Jesus was born in a stable and our first school was once a stable! That was pretty special. I still thank God, for those early years.

Throughout the years, I had many young women who wanted to help me when I saw a need. Teachers and women who could travel across the country and teach children whose families couldn't afford to send them to school. We opened many schools across Australia. If we saw a need, we went there.

I, and the other women became known as the Sisters of St Joseph. We couldn't have done what we did without God's help. We prayed together every day. When we all ended up in different parts of Australia, I either visited them or wrote letters, just as I am writing to you.

I pray that what we have started will continue. Children all around Australia and the world need our help. They might need yours one day too. I hope you will help them. Let's pray for each other.

All my love,
Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop





Reflection on Mary MacKillop Today's Work in Timor-Leste

What does Timor-Leste - one of our closest neighbours, a nine-year-old girl, and Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop have in common?

People who follow in Mary MacKillop's footsteps are working in Timor-Leste to make sure every child, including children with disability, has the chance to learn, belong, and thrive.

Mary MacKillop worked tirelessly for those who were poor, especially families who could not afford to send their children to school. In Timor-Leste today, the Sisters of Saint Joseph and Mary MacKillop Today carry on that work — making sure children like Maria can reach their classroom and fully participate in learning.



Maria is nine years old and lives in a remote mountain village, just an hour's flight from Australia. She has a visual impairment. Every morning, she walks to school along narrow dirt paths and across rivers. Her cousin Aguida walks beside her. Her father Silveiro is her teacher. Her classmates guide her around the classroom.

Through Mary MacKillop Today's Inclusive Early Education Project, Maria now has trained teachers who know how to support her, learning materials designed for children with visual impairments, and a classroom environment where she can fully participate. She is now in Year 3.



The work of Mary MacKillop Today is what Saint Mary MacKillop's legacy looks like in today's world.

Mary knew that education was a way to help people lift themselves out of poverty. She believed every child deserved a fair chance to learn.

Sometimes we might grumble about having to come to school because we think it is too hard or we are too tired. Imagine if there wasn't one for us to go to.

Today, as we remember Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, let us also remember the Sisters of Saint Joseph and the team members of Mary MacKillop Today around the world who carry on her important work. Let us remember and pray for children like Maria, whose life has been touched by Saint Mary's legacy. And let us pray for ourselves, that we may take up Mary's challenge and be fierce for fair — seeing a need, and doing something about it.

DID YOU KNOW?

In Timor-Leste, 1 in 5 children with disability cannot access education. Only 20% of preschool-aged children are enrolled in early education. Children like Maria, who are girls living with disability, face the greatest barriers of all. Around the world, 273 million children are currently out of school.



Acrostic Poem

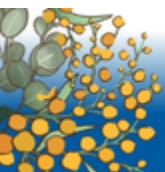
An acrostic is a poem in which the first letters of each line spell out a word or phrase, such as Mary MacKillop. The first letter of each line is capitalised. This makes it easier to see the word spelled out down the page.

M
A
R
Y

M
A
C
K
I
L
L
O
P

Acrostics don't need to rhyme. Each letter of Mary's name might describe the story of her life, what she did, something about her personality or a combination of all of these.

Adapted from: [How to Write an Acrostic Poem – Kenn Nesbitt's Poetry4kids.com](http://Poetry4kids.com)





Liquid Pictures

Liquid Pictures is a form of drama whereby a scripture passage is taken and divided into five or six main sections each with a short phrase. Choose a simple action for each phrase. A leader reads the opening line, for example: Jesus said. Each of the phrases are then proclaimed one at a time, by different children accompanied by the action. They repeat the phrase and the action two or three times and then freeze. The process continues with each child and each line until all five or six phrases are complete. The students will then be all in a line, in a 'frozen' picture that tells the story. The leader concludes with a simple statement.

Echo Mime

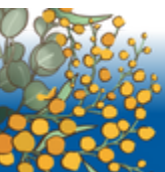
Echo Mimes assist children of all ages to understand and recall a scripture passage. The passage is written in short, simple statements. An accompanying action is created. A leader or group of students voices each statement with the accompanying action and the statement and action are repeated (echoed) by the rest of the group.

Adapted from Sacred Celebrations for Ordinary Time: Year A, A Resource for Celebrating Children's Liturgy of the Word, Rina Wintour (2004)

Gestures

Take each of the actions in the Gospel and create — or have the children create — a simple action for them. Whoever is doing the action could dress in one colour different from the person reading the Gospel. Ensure they don't make eye contact with the audience. Some examples:

- Do not worry — shake your head
- Eat — pretend to eat something
- Drink — pretend you have a glass of water
- Look — put your hand over your eyes and look beyond those gathered





Resources

Books:

- Freeman, Pamela, Mary's Australia: How Mary MacKillop Changed Australia, Black Dog Books, Newtown, NSW, Australia (2014)
- Geddes, Judith, In God's Hands, Psalms & Prayers for Children - In the Spirit of Mary MacKillop, St Joseph's Convent, St Albans, VIC, Australia, (2005)
- Goodwin, Joan, Letters from Mary, St Paul's Publications, Strathfield, NSW, Australia, (2010)
- Ryan, Maurice & Grajczonek, Jan, Learning Links to Mary MacKillop: Teacher Resources for the Religion Classroom, Lumino Press, Hamilton, QLD, Australia (2009)
- Wintour, Rina, Sacred Celebrations for Ordinary Time: Year A, MountJoy Enterprises, Manly, QLD, Australia (2004)

Websites:

- Liturgy Brisbane: www.liturgybrisbane.net.au
- Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre: www.mmhc.org.au
- Mary MacKillop Today: www.marymackilloptoday.org.au
- Sisters of St Joseph: www.sosj.org.au

About Mary MacKillop Today

Mary MacKillop Today is an international development and community organisation working in Australia, Timor-Leste, Fiji, and Peru. Inspired by the legacy of Saint Mary MacKillop and the Sisters of Saint Joseph, we partner with communities through programs in education, financial inclusion, and life skills. **Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible. ABN 88 808 531 480**

