

Be *Fierce* for *Fair*

MARY
MACKILLOP
today

Liturgy of the Word - Secondary

Prayer Space

Set up a space that is visible for all students. 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 determination to learn is at the heart of this year's Fierce for Fair campaign.



Feast of Saint Mary MacKillop - 8 August

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Liturgy of the Word - Secondary

Acknowledgement of Country

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

Introduction

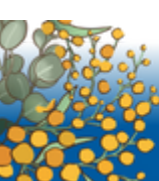
Today is the Feast Day of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop. It is a day to come together to celebrate the life and work of Australia's first saint. From a young age, Saint Mary worked tirelessly for others, especially for families who could not afford to send their children to school. In Penola in 1866, with the help of a priest, Father Julian Tenison Woods, and two of her sisters, she opened her first school.

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 walking alongside those who were vulnerable with compassion and courage. 1866 was also the year she and Father Tenison Woods began the Sisters of Saint Joseph, a religious congregation still active today. She and the Sisters went wherever the need was greatest. They gave up everything to live and teach amongst the people they served.

Throughout Australia, New Zealand, and in places like Timor-Leste, the work of Mary MacKillop carries on today through an organisation called Mary MacKillop Today.



Mary MacKillop Today continues the vision of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop and the Sisters of Saint Joseph — working alongside communities to create lasting change. If Mary MacKillop were living in our world today, she would not only be out serving those in need, she would be advocating fiercely against the injustices that deny children their right to education.



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Feast of Saint Mary MacKillop - 8 August

Liturgy of the Word - Secondary

Introduction cont.

Meet Maria

One of the children whose story reflects Mary's living legacy 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 morning she walks to school along narrow dirt paths and across rivers. She is determined. She is in Year 3.

Her father Silveiro is also her teacher. He received training through Mary MacKillop Today's Inclusive Early Education Project. Her classmates walk beside her through the village. Her teacher Joana guides her in the classroom.

In Timor-Leste, 1 in 5 children with disability cannot access education. Only 20% of preschool-aged children are enrolled in early education. Girls with disability face the greatest barriers of all. Maria's story is not unique — but it is a reminder that the work Saint Mary MacKillop started 160 years ago is still urgently needed today.



1 in 5

children with disability in
Timor-Leste cannot
access education

20%

of preschool-aged
children are enrolled in
early education

273M

children worldwide are
currently out of school

Fierce for Fair is the theme Mary MacKillop Today has chosen for Feast Day. In today's liturgy, let us reflect on the ways we can be fierce for fair.

Let us pause as we become aware of God's presence.



Opening Song

Saint Mary MacKillop – Gary Pinto | Let it Start with Me – No Other Name

Opening Prayer

Leader: In the name of the Father...

Bountiful God,

You filled the heart of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop with hospitable love, especially for those at the margins of society. Deepen that love within us, that we may be fierce for fair in a world wherever there is an edge of need. We ask this in your name.

All: Amen.

Leader: Let us listen to God's Word.

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

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 or Echo Mime.

Reading

Colossians 3:12–17

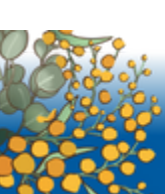
Reader: A reading from Saint Paul's letter to the Colossians:

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.

Reader: 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?

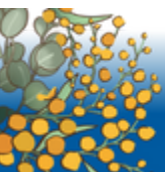
And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of 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. Below are suggestions for how this could be done:

1. Reflect Using Key Words from Colossians

Using repetition, each phrase below could be proclaimed by a different speaker. If you have audio-visual capacity, accompany each phrase with images that reflect Maria's story or the work of Mary MacKillop Today in Timor-Leste.

Show mercy. Be kind, humble, gentle and patient. (Repeat slowly 3 times)

Forgive, love, have peace. (Repeat slowly 3 times)

Be thankful! Sing! (Repeat slowly 3 times)

Give thanks to God!

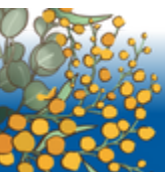
2. Reflect Using Discussion Questions

Use this series of questions that lead on from Matthew's Gospel and connect to both Mary MacKillop's story and Maria's story today:

- In what ways did Mary MacKillop look beyond food and clothing? How can I?
- Maria walks across rivers every day just to reach her classroom. What obstacles do I face — and how do they compare?
- What did Mary value? What do I value?
- How did Mary put her values into action? How can I put my values into action?
- When Mary faced an obstacle, what did she do? What can I do when I see unfairness?
- Maria says: "I cannot see, but I can learn just like my other friends." What does this tell us about the right to education?
- Mary was fierce for fairness. How can I be fierce for fair?

3. Be Fierce for Fair — Responsive Reflection

Students lead a reflection using the Be Fierce for Fair statements over the page. Images of Maria and the work of Mary MacKillop Today in Timor-Leste could be displayed so all become active participants in the liturgy.





Reflection Ideas - cont'd

BE FIERCE FOR FAIR — A RESPONSIVE REFLECTION

Be fierce for our human family.
For those living with war.
For those sleeping on the streets.
For those who go without food, clothing and shelter.
For those who live in fear.
For those who have only seen violence.
For those who have no one to turn to.
For children like Maria, who walk great distances just to reach a classroom.

Be fierce for the cry of the earth.
For polluted skies, waterways and paddocks.
For parched soil.
For flooded crops.
For vanishing biodiversity.
For diminishing habitats.
For broken food chains.

Be fair for people
In thought.
In word.
In deed.

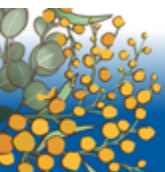
Be fair for planet
In thought.
In word.
In deed.

4. Text Messages and Social Media Retelling

As Mary MacKillop was a great letter writer, engage a class of students prior to the liturgy to write a series of text messages retelling her story, and Maria's story, in today's context, challenging their peers to be fierce for fair. These could be presented as an audio-visual presentation for those gathered. Encourage students to use #FierceForFair.

5. Josephite School Reflection

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.





Reflection Ideas - cont'd

6. Music Reflection

Reflect through music. Suggestions include:

- Hold Us Together – Matt Maher
- Open My Eyes – Jesse Manibusan
- From Little Things Big Things Grow – Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody
- Be the Light – Thomas Rhett

Some reflections could have quiet music playing in the background. Fade the music out as the reflection concludes.

7. Video Reflection

Use the YouTube video '[Shaping a Nation: Saint Mary MacKillop](#)' to give a sense of who Mary MacKillop was, where she came from, what she endured, and the legacy she has left. Pair it with a short reading of Maria's story so students can see how that legacy is alive today.

Reflection: Mary's Legacy in Timor-Leste Today

Maria's Story — A Reading for the Liturgy

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 build their future.



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

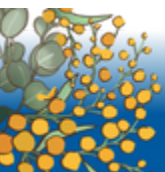
- Maria, nine years old, Timor-Leste

Maria is nine years old. She lives in a remote mountain village in Timor-Leste and has a visual impairment. Every morning, she walks to school along narrow dirt paths and across rivers — guided by her cousin Aguida, accompanied by her classmates, and supported by her father Silveiro who is also her teacher.

Through Mary MacKillop Today's Inclusive Early Education Project, Maria now has access to trained teachers, adapted learning materials including large-print resources, and a classroom environment where she can fully participate in her education. She has progressed to Year 3.

Her teacher Joana says: "As teachers, we believe all children have the right to education. We must continue to motivate them so they can succeed and build their future."

Her father Silveiro, who received training through Mary MacKillop Today, says: "I am proud and grateful that Mary MacKillop Today has given us training and solutions to support our children's lives."





Reflection: Mary's Legacy in Timor-Leste Today cont.

THE REALITY BEHIND MARIA'S STORY

In Timor-Leste, 1 in 5 children with disability cannot access education. Only 20% of preschool-aged children are enrolled in early education. Around 70% of Grade 1 students do not meet basic learning outcomes. Girls living with disability face the greatest barriers of all. Around the world, 273 million children are currently out of school.

These are not distant statistics. Timor-Leste is one hour's flight from Australia. Maria is one of our neighbours.

Mary MacKillop understood that education was the pathway out of poverty, and that every child, regardless of their circumstance, had the right to walk it. She spent her life making sure they could.

Today, as we remember Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, we also remember the Sisters of Saint Joseph and the team members of Mary MacKillop Today who carry her work forward. We remember children like Maria. And we ask ourselves: how can I be fierce for fair?



Prayers of the Faithful

Leader: Let us turn to God in prayer. Ever generous God, you inspired Saint Mary MacKillop to live her life faithful to the Gospel and bring hope and encouragement to those on the margins. With confidence in your generosity we pray:

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

Reader: Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For the Sisters of Saint Joseph, that they may continue to walk in Saint Mary's footsteps, knowing that they are surrounded by God's love, guidance, and care.

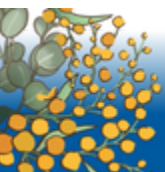
Reader: Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For Mary MacKillop Today, that they may continue to be guided by Mary MacKillop's unwavering belief in justice for all, and continue to commit to being fierce for fair.

Reader: Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.





Prayers of the Faithful

Reader: For Maria, and for all children with disability who face barriers to education — that they may find teachers, communities, and support that see their right to learn and act on it.

Reader: Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For our school community, that we may walk in Saint Mary of the Cross' footsteps, being fierce in the face of adversity, fair when we see injustice, and willing to spread love through our words and deeds.

Reader: Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

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

Reader: Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

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

Reader: Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We make these prayers and those in our hearts 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.

Leader: May we serve with deep respect for those experiencing poverty and a strong will for justice.

All: Amen.

Leader: May we see with the eyes of fierce fairness, share in her courage, and act with a heart of love.

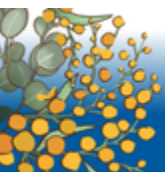
All: Amen.

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

All: Amen.

Closing Song

- Hearts of Courage – Timothy Hart
- Go Make a Difference – Steve Angrisano
- Do Something – Matthew West
- Let it Start with Me - No Other Name





Drama Techniques

Echo Mime

Echo Mimes assist students 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).

Liquid Pictures

Liquid Pictures is a form of drama whereby a scripture passage is 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. Each phrase is then proclaimed one at a time by different students, accompanied by the action, repeated two or three times, then frozen. The process continues until all phrases are complete. The students stand in a line in a 'frozen' picture that tells the story. The leader concludes with a simple statement.

Resources

Books

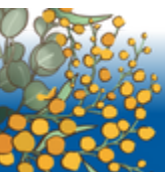
- Praying with Mary MacKillop, Trustees of the Sisters of St Joseph, North Sydney, NSW (2010)
- Wintour, Rina, Sacred Celebrations for Ordinary Time: Year A, Mount Joy Enterprises, Manly, QLD, Australia (2004)

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**





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.

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