

Be *Fierce* for *Fair*



MARY
MACKILLOP
today

Prayer Assembly - Primary

We Gather

Gather the assembled into quiet stillness.

Acknowledgement of Country

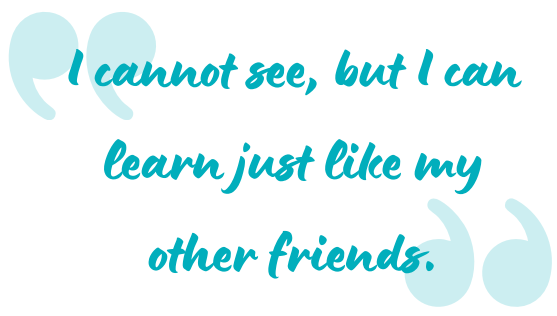
Reader

We gather in this space to call to mind Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Mary MacKillop founded the Sisters of Saint Joseph and together, she and they endured many challenges and overcame many difficulties to establish schools across Australia. Today the work of Mary MacKillop and the Sisters lives on in Australia and in Timor-Leste, one of Australia's closest neighbours, led by an organisation called Mary MacKillop Today.

MEET MARIA

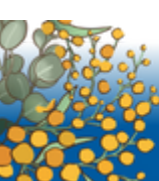
One of the children whose story shows us what Mary MacKillop's work looks like today is Maria. She is nine years old and lives in a remote mountain village in Timor-Leste — just one hour's flight from Australia. Maria has a visual impairment. Every morning, she walks to school along narrow dirt paths and across rivers. She is determined. She is in Year 3.

Through Mary MacKillop Today's Inclusive Early Education Project, Maria now has trained teachers, adapted learning materials, and a classroom where she can fully participate. That is what Saint Mary MacKillop's work looks like in today's world.



*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



Prayer Assembly - Primary

We Gather

Sing

Suggestions (optional): Beneath a Cross of Stars – Andrew Chinn, Saint Mary MacKillop – Gary Pinto, Let Our Light Shine – Michael Mangan, Never See a Need – Michael Mangan

Say

Let us begin our time of prayer together;
In the name of the Father...

We Listen

Option 1:

Gospel: Matthew 6:25–34

Read

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew:

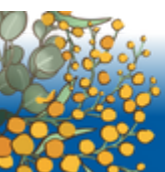
I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and what you are to wear. Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are?

And why worry about clothing? Think of the flowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin: yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his royal robes was clothed like one of these. Now if that is how God clothes the wild flowers growing in the field, will he not much more look after you?

So do not worry; do not say, “What are we to eat? What are we to drink? What are we to wear?” Your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Set your hearts on his Kingdom first, and all these other things will be given you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.





We Listen

Option 2:

Read and/or act out a picture book about Mary MacKillop.

Some suggestions 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

We Respond

REFLECTION OPTION 1

Reflect

Prayer reflection. Use the following sentence stems for children to either prepare a reflection prior to the assembly, or create one as the sentences are read out.

Mary used her eyes...

Mary used her ears...

Mary used her voice...

Mary used her hands...

Mary used her feet...

Mary used her heart...

As each sentence starter begins, invite the students to prayerfully place their hands on their eyes, ears, and lips. Encourage them to look at their hands, their feet, and then place their hands over their heart.

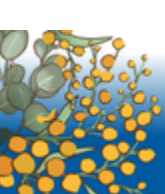
Or use this example, again inviting students to prayerfully place their hands on their eyes, ears, and lips as each new stanza is read:

Mary used her eyes

To see families in need
To see children who couldn't go to school
To find an unused stable that could become a school
To see other women wanting to help
To watch the children in her care

Mary used her ears

To hear people's stories
To listen to children read
To hear children laughing
To listen to God's Word





We Respond

REFLECTION OPTION 1 cont

Mary used her voice

- To teach reading, writing and maths
- To speak out against injustice
- To talk to her sisters
- To pray to God

Mary used her hands

- To write letters to her family
- To write on the blackboard
- To help those in need.

Mary used her feet

- To walk around the school
- To travel around Australia
- To ride a horse as a child.

Mary used her heart

- To love and care for others.

Read

Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop used her eyes, her ears, her voice, her hands, her feet, and her heart to reach out to those in need. She asked God to guide and help her. Let us turn and ask God to guide us to see, to hear, to speak, to do, and to love those around us. We do this by praying the words that Jesus taught us.

Our Father...

REFLECTION OPTION 2

Read:

Mary MacKillop was a great letter writer. Imagine she wrote this letter, telling you all about her life.

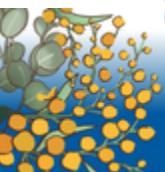
My Dear Friends,

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. I also worked in a printing press shop, which I really didn't like, but it helped me too.





We Respond

REFLECTION OPTION 2 cont

Many years ago now, in 1866, I received a letter from Father Julian Tenison Woods 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.

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 Saint Joseph. We couldn't have done what we did without God's help. We prayed together every day.

I pray that what we have started will continue. I think of a young girl called Maria in Timor-Leste, who walks across rivers every day just to reach her classroom. She cannot see, but she can learn. She reminds me of every child I ever taught — full of possibility, just needing someone to believe in them. Children everywhere 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

If you were to write back to Mary, what would you tell her? And what needs in the world would you tell her about?

We Go

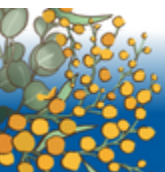
Pray

Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop loved God and she prayed every day for God to help her to be the best person she could be, loving and serving God and those around her. Today we are going to pray, just like Mary and we do so with our whole body.

(Quiet music begins)

Let us gently rub our hands together to make a soft sound and create some warmth. Now let's place them over our eyes.

May we look after our eyes and use them,
to see the beautiful world God gave us
to notice when our friends and family are sad and
to notice those in need.





We Go

Pray cont.

Let us now, gently cup our hands over our ears.

May we look after our ears and use them,
to hear our friends
to listen when we are asked to do something
and to listen carefully to hear God's word

Let us now, softly place a finger to our lips.

May we use our words wisely and use our voice,
to stand up for others
to speak kindly
and to pray

Let us now, touch each of our fingers and thumbs together and then our palms.

May we carefully and mindfully use our hands,
to look after the earth
to learn
and to help others

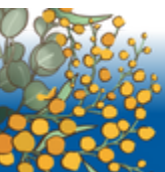
Let us now, wiggle our toes in our shoes and then bring them to stillness.

May we use our feet,
to walk carefully on the earth
and to go out of our way to help someone, just as Maria's classmates walk beside her every
day

Let us now, place our hands over our heart.

May we feel it beat steadily and use our heart,
to love all those we meet.

Amen.





We Go

Sing

Closing song suggestions:

- Beneath a Cross of Stars – Andrew Chinn,
- St Mary MacKillop – Gary Pinto,
- Go Make a Difference – Steve Angrisano,
- Hearts of Courage – Timothy Hart,
- In the Footsteps of Jesus – Andrew Chinn,
- Do Something – Matthew West

Resources

Books

- 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.
- Freeman, Pamela, Mary's Australia: How Mary MacKillop Changed Australia, Black Dog Books, Newtown, NSW, Australia (2014)
- 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).

Websites

- 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**

