4.5 Mary, Mother of God: First Among the Saints

This unit explores the way in which Mary listened and responded to God in the events of her life. It highlights the importance and challenge in the Christian life of listening and reflecting and trusting in the ways of God. It explores Marian prayers and feast days as ways in which the Church honours Mary, the Mother of God.

The unit also explores the qualities of listening and responding demonstrated in the life of Mary MacKillop. It invites students to reflect on ways in which they can receive and respond to God’s call and grace in their lives.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Values & Attitudes**  *Students will demonstrate that they are:* | **Knowledge & Understandings**  *Students will demonstrate that they can:* | **Skills**  *Students will demonstrate that they can:* |
| C2.1 able to value the lives of love and service led by saints (including Mary and the canonised saints) | recognise qualities of saints (including Mary and the canonised saints) who are models of love and service | make connections between the qualities of saints (including Mary and the canonised saints) and their lives |
| C2.2 willing to participate in celebrations which reflect the beliefs and traditions of the Catholic Church | describe ways in which the Catholic Church celebrates its beliefs and traditions | investigate ways in which the Catholic Church celebrates beliefs and traditions |

Syllabus Outcomes  
Church – Stage 2

Classroom Outcomes

*Students will be able to:*

* identify how Mary, the Mother of God, listened and responded to God in her life
* recall how Mary MacKillop listened to God and responded to the needs of others
* reflect on how they listen and respond to God in their lives
* name and describe how the Church honours Mary, the Mother of God

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Scripture | Doctrine |
| Luke 1:26-38 *The Annunciation*  Luke 2:41-52 *The Finding of  Jesus in the Temple*  John 2:1-12 *The Marriage Feast at Cana*  Luke 1:39-45 *The Visitation*  John 19:25-27 *Mary at Calvary* | * Mary was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus * Mary listened and responded to God * The Church honours Mary, the Mother of God, with special feast days, prayers and various titles * The Church names some special people as saints and honours them with a feast day |

Spiritual Reflection for Teachers

Each of us is called to be open and to listen to God speaking to us through the people, events and experiences of our lives. We are called to respond in faith as Mary did, and at times to wait in faith for a clear understanding of all that is happening in us.

In listening and waiting, we may sometimes have to face ambiguity and uncertainty. The openness that comes with listening helps us to move towards the resolution of that which troubles us.

Reflect on times when you have wondered about the presence of God in your life.

How do you reflect on God’s call to you through the events of your life?

In what ways do you engage in quiet reflection and inner listening?

What opportunities can we provide for our students to develop the capacity for quiet reflection and inner listening?

Catechism of the Catholic Church

**Excerpts from the Catechism of the Catholic Church are included below as information for teachers. They present the Church’s teachings contained in this unit.**

273 Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God’s almighty power. This faith glories in its weaknesses in order to draw to itself Christ’s power (2 Cor 12:9, Phil 4:13). The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith, for she believed that “nothing will be impossible with God,” and was able to magnify the Lord: “for he who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is his name” (Luke 1:37,49).

967 By her complete adherence to the Father’s will, to his Son’s redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church’s model of faith and charity. Thus she is a “preeminent and … wholly unique member of the Church”; indeed, she is the “exemplary realization” *(typus)* of the Church.

491 Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854:

*The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.*

974 The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, when the course of her earthly life was completed, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven, where she already shares in the glory of her Son’s Resurrection, anticipating the resurrection of all members of his Body.

828 By *canonising* some of the faithful, ie by solemnly proclaiming that they practised heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God’s grace, the Church recognises the power of the Spirit of holiness within her and sustains the hope of believers by proposing the saints to them as models and intercessors. “The saints have always been the source and origin of renewal in the most difficult moments in the Church’s history.” Indeed “holiness is the hidden source and infallible measure of her apostolic activity and missionary zeal.”

Scripture: Background Information

These texts are theological accounts written by the evangelists. They draw on the tradition of the Old Testament, as expressed by the prophets, especially Isaiah, to make it clear that Jesus fulfils the hope of Israel.

**John 2:1-12 The Marriage Feast at Cana**

The Marriage Feast at Cana is one of two events, occurring at Cana, which show Jesus’ mission and reflect trusting and faithful responses to him. The other is the cure of the royal official’s son (John 4:46-54). The Marriage Feast marks the beginning of Jesus’ ministry with the first of the signs given by him. In this text we see an interplay between Mary and Jesus. The need expressed is simple; “they have no wine”. In Jesus’ society the bridegroom was responsible for the provision of wine, a symbol of life and abundance. To have run out would have been embarrassing for the bridegroom, and would have been seen as a bad start to the marriage. The symbol of the bridegroom was often used to describe the relationship between God and God’s people.

Jesus responds to Mary’s request with what may seem at first to be a rejection but which shows that Jesus acts on his own initiative, in response to Mary’s request. Mary brings the need to Jesus’ attention, then trusts unconditionally that the request will be heard and action taken. The text helps us to understand the power of Mary’s intercession.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Luke 1:26-38 The Annunciation

In the Gospel of Matthew, the Annunciation of Jesus’ birth is made to Joseph by an angel in a dream. In that account, Mary is not portrayed as a central character. However in Luke’s Gospel, Mary is portrayed as being much more involved. The two different accounts of the Annunciation of Jesus present different insights. The Lukan account focuses on Mary. The writer of Luke’s Gospel introduces Mary as a young girl just betrothed, probably aged about 12 or 13 years. She is presented as deeply disturbed, even afraid of the experience she is having, although with enough confidence to ponder within herself what it all could mean. The text suggests that, like us, Mary had to reflect on the events of her life to understand what was happening Most of the text is about the child she will conceive. Only at the beginning and the end of the Annunciation narrative do we have some insight into Mary’s reaction. The very last verse indicates that she is willing to be part of the event even if she does not yet totally understand. She agrees, and calmly says – “yes, let it happen to me”. All of this is in keeping with the Jubilee theme of the Gospel of Luke, that God’s abundance is available to the least expected. A virgin from the obscure town of Nazareth will conceive and bear a son who will be great, the Son of God.

**Luke 2:41-52 The Finding of Jesus in the Temple**

When we reflect on Mary in this text, we perceive her as a good Jewish woman, making the yearly Passover pilgrimage to Jerusalem with her family. As Mary and Joseph return, Jesus stays behind in the Temple asking questions of the educated men, and discussing with them the finer points of the Law. When Mary and Joseph finally locate Jesus in the temple, it is Mary who speaks and questions Jesus. Mary does not understand Jesus’ response to her question and so again she needs to ponder (verse 52) what is happening and to discern the meaning of these events. Thus Mary is listening within herself to understand how to respond to God and those around her. She is indeed the model believer.

**Luke 1:39-45, 56 The Visitation**

The story of the visitation is a woman’s story. Two unknown and seemingly ordinary women of the first century meet during their pregnancies for mutual support. Mary the younger one, just pregnant with her first child, goes to the older woman who is in a similar condition. It misses Luke’s intent if Mary is presented simply as rushing to aid Elizabeth in her pregnancy. The focus seems to be on the two mothers-to-be coming together to praise the marvelous activity of God in both their lives. Elizabeth’s child, John, leaps in his mother’s womb as Mary greets Elizabeth. He is the one who will prepare people to recognize and receive the promised one. Elizabeth, whom we are told is filled with the Holy Spirit responds by telling Mary that she is blessed and the child in her womb is blessed. Elizabeth praises Mary for trusting in God. Elizabeth’s words point to Mary as the model believer. The writer here is underscoring his jubilee theme that the blessing of God is poured out on ordinary, even unlikely people. In this case, one who appears too old and one who is very young.

**John 19: 26-27 Mary at Calvary**

Dying on the cross, Jesus gave Mary to be his disciple’s mother. In all the Gospels there are accounts of several women being present at the crucifixion of Jesus. In John’s Gospel we read the account of the presence of the mother of Jesus and the beloved disciple at the foot of the cross. Jesus’ words to his mother and the disciple are interpreted as addressed to the faithful Church, symbolised in Mary and the beloved disciple. Faithful Christians are to take Mary as their mother, just as John lovingly took her into his home.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The Church’s Teaching and Lived Tradition

In Tradition: *To Know, Worship and Love,* Year 4, p71.

Opening Prayer, Mass of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

The bond between the mission of Jesus and the life of Mary his Mother is indivisible. The Church acknowledges that she shares the life of Jesus in heaven, and therefore it gives Mary a special place in the liturgical cycle. In the liturgy of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, celebrated on January 1, we remember and celebrate that Mary cooperated fully with the saving plan of God. In bringing Jesus, the Word of God, into the world, Mary brought the caring love of a mother to all members of the Church.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Celebration: Prayer and Liturgy

**Celebration is a key part of Religious Education. The following suggestions provide opportunities throughout the unit for celebration in prayer and liturgy. Most of these suggestions are included as ‘teaching/learning’ activities in Unit Content sections.**

* Review the Scripture text in KWL Year 4, p70-71 (Marriage Feast of Cana) to illustrate Mary’s role today, bringing the prayers and needs of the world to her Son.
  + Identify some present day needs of our world.
  + Prepare a Liturgy of the Word, based on the Marriage Feast at Cana, incorporating the needs identified by students as Prayers of Intercession.
* Listening to God through guided meditation.
  + Suggested reference: *Jesus’ Mum is My Mum*, Barbara Ann Bretherton, p17.
* Spend some time in silence and be attentive to God’s Word. Use the prayer from the *Word of God In Tradition* in KWL Year 4, p71. The prayer asks that like Mary we always respond with a generous spirit towards others.
* Praying the Rosary KWL Year 4, p154 & p75 (see Unit Content 3).
* Praying the Angelus throughout this unit KWL Year 4, p153
* Music:
  + *Love is Our Measure* (CD) Kevin Bates sm
  + *My Spirit Sings* (CD) Michael Mangan

Assessment

**Interim Assessment Statement 2014**

The identification of Teaching/Learning strategies as ‘suggested assessment’ has been removed from the 3-6 RE curriculum. The type of assessment activity and the way evidence of learning is gathered will vary, depending on such factors as; the outcomes being assessed, the evidence being gathered, the teaching and learning activity, context and students’ learning needs (NSW Board of Studies, <http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/support-materials/k-6-assessment-strategies/>) .

Assessment in Religious Education is based on the same principles as in other key learning areas. Please refer to the CEO Sydney site supporting the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in the context of the NSW BOS Syllabus. At this site <https://sites.google.com/a/syd.catholic.edu.au/professional-learning-modules/home> professional learning modules are provided to support teachers as they engage with the NSW BOS Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum.

**Module 4, Assessment and Planning** explores the principles of effective assessment ***for***, ***as*** and ***of*** learning and considers a range of strategies and methods for assessing student learning. Activities focus on moving beyond assessment as an index of learning, towards assessment that motivates, enhances learning and achieves deeper understanding to meet the diverse learning needs of all as students. Participants are encouraged to reflect on assessment as a driver for improvement in teaching and learning.

**Religious Education Curriculum and Assessment**

In Year 3-6 Religious Education Curriculum, both Syllabus Outcomes and Classroom Outcomes are key reference points for decisions about students’ progress and achievement. Classroom outcomes are more specific to the unit content. Unit Content statement and *Students will learn* statements in each unit should also be taken into account in planning and developing learning and assessment opportunities. Outcomes and Unit Content Statements are derived from Syllabus objectives.

Effective Religious Education involves teaching the Catholic faith (Scripture, doctrine, traditions, prayer and sacraments) and nurturing the faith of the child. There is no attempt to assess the child’s faith. Assessment is concerned with skills, knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith taught in the curriculum and supported in the religious life of the school.

Resources

*To Know Worship and Love,* Year 4, Chapter 9, (2003), James Goold House Publications, Melbourne, Victoria

Books

Bretherton, B, (1997), *You and Me God: Prayer Themes and Guided Meditations for Children,* Social Sciences Press, Australia

#### Catholic Education Office, Bathurst NSW, (1998), *Breathing Life into the RE Classroom,* CEO, Bathurst NSW

#### Christian Brothers Publications,(1995), *Prayer Ways,* St Mary’s Press. Winona, Minnesota

Nolen B, (1998), *Prayer Strategies – A Teacher’s Manual*, Harper Collins, Sydney

O’Neill K, *Mary MacKillop Learning Object* (CD-Rom), Toowoomba Catholic Education Office, Toowoomba Qld

Threlfo W, (2000), W*alking with* Stead, B M, (1995), *A Time of Jubilee, Using Luke’s Gospel with Children*, Desbooks, Victoria

#### Reehorst J, (1991), *Guided Meditations for Children 2*, Brown-Roa, Dubuque, Iowa

#### *Mary A Resource for Primary School Teachers,* Marist Resources, Mittagong, NSW

**Websites**

[www.cyberfaith.com/weblinks/ia\_maryourmother.html](http://www.cyberfaith.com/weblinks/ia_maryourmother.html)

In this online activity children learn more about one ancient prayer form known as the Litany. Suitable for teacher background . Contains teaching and learning activities.

<http://www.sosj.org.au/mary/resources.html>

The resource is a good website for information for teachers or students who are able readers.

It also has good photo albums.

Other

Rosary beads – available from Catholic bookstores and suppliers, eg M J Buckley Pty Ltd (Wholesalers), 19 Brighton Ave, Croydon Park NSW 2133, Phone 9799 2444; Paul A Sarks, 12-16 Burwood Rd, Enfield NSW 2136, Phone 9747 3586; Legion of Mary: 243 Broadway NSW 2007. Phone 9660 6131.

Key to Symbol

✪ denotes higher order activity

Unit Content 1

There are different types of listening, and listening requires a response.

*Students will learn:*

* about different types of listening, eg perceiving the external world through their senses
* to engage in quiet reflection as a form of listening
* about perceiving and knowing God’s will for them

Unit Content: Background Information

This unit content begins by exploring listening and perceiving through the senses. It introduces reflective listening which involves reflecting on the events and experiences of one’s life, and discerning God in this. In this way we can respond to God’s call to us in the events of our lives.

It is important to note that a response to listening is not always an action but can also be a deeper awareness, greater openness and / or a change of mind or heart.

This type of listening is being aware of our own worries and fears while at the same time trusting in the goodness of God.

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Engage students in a variety of activities that involve using their senses to explore ‘listening’.
* `Discuss the types of listening they experienced. Record these experiences on a PMI Chart: eg

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| PLUS | MINUS | INTERESTING |
| I heard a lot of birds calling | The trucks were very noisy | I didn’t realise there were so many birds near our school |

* In the sixth century St Benedict, in his now famous ‘Rule of Benedict’ advised his monks to “Listen with the ear of your heart …” (Rule of Benedict, Prologue: 1)

Invite students to wonder: I wonder how we listen with our hearts? Students share or journal their

response.

* In groups, students brainstorm various activities or objects that help to promote and develop ‘inner listening’ or reflection.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Music  Art  Poetry  Prayer | Movement  Stillness  Silence  Meditation | Literature  Photography  Nature |

Use these as a stimulus for reflection.

* Pose questions, with students journaling a response:
* What effect did this have on you?
* How did it speak to you?
* What was your response to this experience?
* What limits your ability to listen to your heart?

Unit Content 2

**Mary listened and responded to God in the events of her life:**

* ***The Annunciation***
* ***The Visitation***
* ***Finding of Jesus in the Temple***
* ***The Marriage Feast at Cana***
* ***Mary at Calvary***

*Students will learn:*

* about events in Mary’s life where she listened and responded to God
* to explore Scripture passages which highlight Mary’s openness and trust in God
* to reflect on events in their own lives
* to listen and respond to the Word of God through reflective prayer, drama and guided meditation

Unit Content: Background Information

Mary listened attentively to God through the events of her life as detailed in the Scripture passages. Her response was always based on trusting in God’s goodness, even when she did not fully understand. It was this complete openness to God that resulted in Mary receiving God’s Word in her heart and in her body. Thus she became the cause of salvation for the whole human race. She is therefore a model for the Church who must, like her, cooperate fully in bringing God’s Word to the world.

The Visitation (Luke 1:39-45) is only briefly dealt with in this unit and is revisited in Year 6. It is, however, important to deal with it in association with the Annunciation. For the students at this stage, it is sufficient that they identify the key events and words in the story. The focus should be on Mary and Elizabeth praising God’s wondrous activity in their lives and Elizabeth recognizing and praising Mary for her trust in God.

Mary at Calvary will also be developed more fully in the Year 6 unit. At this stage it is sufficient to identify Mary demonstrating her belief in Jesus, at the foot of the cross, as she did at Cana. Students may also explore the implication of Jesus entrusting the ‘beloved disciple’ and his mother to each other. As suggested by Threlfo (p91), they represent the community of believers, for John. Jesus declares his mother to be mother and model for all Christians. The ‘beloved disciple’ also becomes the model for us - to accept Jesus’ mother into our lives.

For background information on the main Scripture passages used, see ‘Scripture Background Information’.

In presenting the key Scripture passages it is essential that a variety of strategies be provided for students to explore and experience the Word of God.

Using meditation as one strategy

Meditation involves listening to the heart and getting in touch with God who dwells within. Meditation engages one’s imagination and emotions. It can take place in a variety of ways through imaginative prayer, the use of stories, Scripture, art and silence.

**Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies**

* Tell the story of The Wedding Feast at Cana using Resource Sheet 1 and 3D materials. Engage the students in wondering:
* I wonder what part of the story you like best.
* I wonder why Mary said to the waiters, “Do whatever he tells you.”
* I wonder what Mary is thinking as she watches her son, Jesus.
* I wonder how the servants felt when they saw the water had turned to wine.
* As a means of introducing students to key events in Mary’s life, divide the class into small groups and give each group one of the four other Scripture passages listed for the unit. Each group’s task is to read the passage, and prepare to retell the story using either retell, liquid pictures, ‘curtains up, curtains down’, talking pictures or 2D/3D concrete materials. You may want to guide the students’ retell with the following questions: Where? (where does the action take place?); When? (when does it take place?); Who? (who are the main character/s?); What happens? Each group presents their retell to the class. The class then responds to the question, ‘How did Mary listen and respond to God in this passage?’ The teacher may offer assistance here as to the author’s purpose. (See ‘Scripture: Background Information’ section and ‘Background Information’ above.)
* **Explore the main Scripture passages with students through a variety of experiences. The following are suggestions:**
* Teachers are encouraged to tell the story in their own words, maintaining the key phrases from the passage. This can be done in a variety of ways, which could include guided meditation. Proclaiming the Scripture from the Bible must also be included in this process.

Once students have experienced the Scripture and its context has been explored, a variety of experiences can be utilised to develop students’ understanding of the events and how Mary listened and responded.

* The following texts provide strategies to explore and respond to the main Scriptures used:

The KITE method in *A Time for Jubilee –* Barbara Stead, The Annunciation (pp 16-17) and Jesus in the Temple (pp30-31)

Guided Meditation in *Prayer Strategies –* Beth Nolan, Jesus in the Temple (p59); in *Guided Meditations for Children 2 –* Jane Reehorst, The Annunciation (p1).

* Examine key phrases in Scripture, eg Luke 1:41-52 Finding Jesus in the Temple:

“My father’s business” - How would you interpret this?“Mary stored all these things in her heart” - Brainstorm the types of things we store in our hearts and compare them to the types of things Mary stored in her heart.

* Use drama as a means of exploring an event, eg John 2:1-12 The Wedding Feast of Cana:

Reflect on Mary’s actions. What line in this text shows Mary’s total trust in Jesus?

* Wondering Questions: eg Luke 1:26-38 The Annunciation

I wonder how Mary felt when she was asked to be the mother of the Saviour? I wonder what the angel meant by saying, “Hail Mary full of Grace”?

I wonder what gave her the courage to accept?

* Journal Entry:

Imagine you are Mary and write about the event.

* Story Map: from Mary’s perspective.
* Name the key events in the life of Mary, Mother of God where she listened and responded.
* Choose one event and describe how Mary, Mother of God listened and responded to God.

Unit Content 3

Our Church celebrates Mary, the Mother of God, with special feast days and honours her with various titles and prayers.

*Students will learn:*

* about the Scriptural basis for the traditional prayers of Mary
* about the purpose and form of traditional Marian prayers
* about key Church feasts which honour Mary
* about the various titles used to honour Mary
* to honour Mary through the celebration of her feast days

Unit Content: Background Information

The Hail Mary is drawn from Luke 1:28 and Luke 1:42. The people of God’s family (the Church) have used these words of praise for more than 1500 years to pray to Mary and praise God for the things God has done through her. The second half of the prayer was added about 500 years ago. As we pray this part, we ask Mary to pray to God for us. In Marian celebrations and prayers we always pray through Mary to God.

The Rosary is a form of meditative prayer that requires application of the mind and not merely the repetition of vocal prayers. The rhythm of familiar prayers, repeated again and again, helps raise the mind above distractions. Contact with the beads is a kind of anchor, helping us to think about the events in the life of Jesus or Mary.

The main feast days of Mary are the Immaculate Conception (December 8); Mary, Mother of God (January 1); the Annunciation (March 25); Our Lady Help of Christians (May 24); the Assumption   
(August 15).

On November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII defined the dogma (article of faith) of Our Lady’s bodily Assumption into heaven, declaring that “the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.” (Munificentissimus Deus). This dogma reflected the beliefs of the faithful from the earliest centuries. Mary’s glorification gives us hope in our own bodily resurrection.

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception teaches that Mary was conceived and born without sin because she was so specially favoured by God. Pius IX defined this as a dogma of the Church in 1854.

The titles for Mary indicate the hopes and expectations found in Marian prayers. The ideals contained in the modern litany (KWL Year 4, p72) challenge values in contemporary society.

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Using the litany from ‘Our Prayer’ in KWL Year 4, p72, identify the various titles used for Mary.
* Students choose one title and elaborate on it:

eg “Mary, woman who listened” – students could identify when and how she listened.

* Using this litany as a stimulus, students present an artwork, which represents or symbolises Mary.
* Using the ‘Did You Know’ section in KWL Year 4, p75 discuss the first point that highlights feast days associated with Mary.
* In pairs, students look through an Ordo, Columban calendar or religious calendar and identify feast days for Mary in a particular month. Then report back to the group. These feast days can be recorded on a class calendar.
* Highlight the Assumption

- What does Holy Day of Obligation mean?

* Why is Mary honoured in this way?
* How can we in everyday life honour Mary?
* One way we honour Mary is through prayer. Groups nominate prayers that we associate with Mary. These are ‘braindrained’ onto a common class list.
* Revisit Luke’s Gospel to make connections with the Hail Mary:
* What does the angel Gabriel say to Mary?
* Go through the Hail Mary and discuss the words used in this prayer.
* In pairs or individually re-write the Hail Mary in your own words. Present to class.
* Research and present a musical form of ‘Hail Mary’ to the class.
* Use KWL Year 4, p66-67, p154, as a stimulus for a discussion on the Rosary.
* What do we call these beads?
* Why are there 4 sets of beads?
* What do the pictures (KWL Year 4, p66-67) represent in each set of beads?
* As part of an ongoing class prayer celebration, each student could choose one event depicted in the beads and do one of the following:

- Research some information about the event – this could include scriptural reference.

- Dramatise or mime the event.

- Find a piece of music that reminds them of this event.

- Draw, paint or sketch their own interpretation of this event.

Over a period of 4 weeks students share their individual interpretation of the chosen event during class prayer. These could be displayed around the prayer space if suitable.

For example:

Week 1 - The Joyful Mysteries

Week 2 - The Mysteries of Light

Week 3 - The Sorrowful Mysteries

Week 4 - The Glorious Mysteries

Unit Content 4

Like the saints, we are called to listen and respond to God in our lives.

*Students will learn:*

* about Mary MacKillop, who listened and responded to God in the events of her life
* to identify needs in their environment, and in the world, which require a response

Unit Content: Background Information

Mary MacKillop was faithful to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in her life. Like Mary, the Mother of God, she listened and responded to God.

Saints are our most obvious teachers. The lives of the saints manifest the inherent values of the Gospel tradition. In every age the saints demonstrate that in times that are decadent, ridden with confusion or in periods of doubt, it is not only possible to live out the Gospel, but that the Gospel can be enfleshed in an extraordinary manner in the lives of ordinary people.

For Australia, Mary MacKillop’s life provides witness to the Gospel, in the midst of difficulty and opposition.

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Using KWL Year 4, p73-74 as an introduction, brainstorm information about Mary MacKillop.
* In groups, students research, then report on aspects of the life of Mary MacKillop where she listened and responded to God.
* early life - setting up schools
* relevant sayings demonstrating her ideals - founding a religious order

✪ - A good resource for this research is ‘Mary MacKillop – Learning Object’ (CD-Rom). There are also activities on this CD-Rom which students may find enriching.

* + Compare and contrast how Mary, Mother of God and Mary MacKillop listened and responded to God.
  + Using Mary MacKillop’s prayer (KWL Year 4, p73), journal on what it can mean for us today.
  + Identify needs in our home, school, community and world. How can we respond to these needs? ‘Pass the Parcel’ strategy (*Breathing Life into the RE Classroom,* p81)is a good activity to use here, which allows students to contribute their ideas whilst at the same time being exposed to the ideas of other groups involved in the discussion.
  + Ask students to recall and reflect on a significant event in their life. (If students can’t think of an event, provide a community or topical event for reflection)
* How did you listen and respond to God?
* Is there anything you would change about the way you listened and responded in this situation?

Students write a journal entry based on this reflection.

* Describe ways they might follow the example of Mary, Mother of God and Mary MacKillop in listening and responding to God in their lives.

**Resource Sheet 1**

**The Wedding Feast at Cana**

John 2: 1-12

**You will need:**

* Bible, with ribbon marking St John’s Gospel
* Green felt cloth
* 8 peg figures

*Students are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story. When the children are settled, get the materials and carry them respectfully to the storytelling place as you would the Bible. Place these beside you.*

**A wedding is a wonderful celebration of life. Families and friends gather to witness the joining of a man and a woman in marriage. It is a time of great joy.**

*(Spread the green felt evenly on the floor, place the bride and groom at the centre)*

**This is a story from our special book – the Bible**

*(Reverently hold the Bible for students to see).*

**The story of this wedding is recorded in St John’s Gospel**

*(Open the Bible to the correct place- using a pre-placed ribbon)*

**There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. In Jesus’ time the wedding celebrations went for days!**

*(Place figure of Mary at centre, left of wedding couple)*

**Mary, the mother of Jesus was there.**

*(Place figures of Jesus and two disciples at right and two waiters at upper left)*

**Jesus and some of his disciples were also among the guests.**

*(Move Mary figure to Jesus’ side)*

**During the party the wine for the guests ran out.**

**Mary noticed this and said to Jesus, “They have no wine!”**

*(Turn Jesus away from Mary towards empty space – pause – turn Jesus back to Mary)*

**Jesus said to Mary, “Mother, why are you telling me? It is not my time yet.”**

*(Move Mary towards servants)*

**Mary spoke to the servants “Do whatever he tells you,” she said.**

*(Turn Mary back to face Jesus)*

**There were some large water jars nearby, so big that they could hold gallons and gallons of water.**

*(Move Jesus towards servants)*

**Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”, and they filled them to the brim. “Draw some out now and take it to the steward”, he told them. The steward tasted the water and it had turned into wine.**

**When the guests drank, they were amazed that the best wine had been kept until last!**

*(Move all figures into a circle)*

**The wedding feast continued and everyone joined in the celebrations.**

**This was the first of the signs given by Jesus: It was given in Cana in Galilee. He let his glory be seen and his disciples believed in him.**

*Carefully pack story materials into storage box and put away.*

*Pause quietly for a moment and then begin to wonder together.*

* I wonder what part of the story you like best.
* I wonder why Mary said to the waiters, “Do whatever he tells you.”
* I wonder what Mary is thinking as she watches her son, Jesus.
* I wonder how the servants felt when they saw the water had turned to wine.

1. Adapted from KWL, Teaching Companion, 3b, p103 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. KWL Teaching Companion, 4A, p162 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. KWL, Teaching Companion, 3b, p104 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)