



# **CELEBRATING SAINTS**

**TEACHER GUIDE**

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# Introduction

Saints are holy people who follow Jesus' life and his teachings. There are two types of saints that the Catholic Church acknowledges. The first are known as 'acclaimed saints'. These are individuals such as St Peter or St Paul, who have been given the title because of their extreme holiness and are recognised universally.

The other type of saint is called a 'canonised saint'. In order to become a saint, these people need to go through a process called 'canonisation', whereby they are then recognised as a saint by the Catholic Church throughout the world.

Saints are honoured by the Catholic Church after they die in recognition for their good deeds and the work they carried out while they were alive. Many of the saints were martyrs (those who died for their faith in God) and others were recognised because they led an exceptionally holy life. Saints can also be seen as those people who showed extreme persistence in something they believed in.

One of the requirements in order for a person to be canonised is having some form of evidence that two miracles have been performed. These miracles are seen as acts that other people are unable to do, such as the unexplained healing of a person with an incurable disease.

Saints are individuals to whom many Catholics pray in order to find solace. They are celebrated by the Church on their individual feast days, and there are many rituals and customs to revere and remember these exceptional individuals.

Saints were everyday people. Their unwavering devotion to their causes was paramount, and their faith inspired them to follow in Christ's footsteps and live Spirit-filled lives.

## Catholic Identity

*Celebrating Saints – Teacher Guide* is an additional resource that aims to reinforce the overarching faith concepts of most Australian R.E. curriculums. In keeping with Catholic Identity, students will have the opportunity to investigate different saints and these saints' relationship with God. The mission for most Catholic schools is etched in tradition and encompasses Catholic Identity that encapsulates sound gospel values. Investigation of the saints provides students with rich and diverse opportunities to further explore their faith, culture and service of social justice while adhering to the vision and distinctiveness of their Catholic community.

## R.E. and Australian Curriculums

This resource highlights the values of Christian life and faith formation, and it emphasises how saints are seen as heroes and stewards of creation and forgiveness. The lives of various saints are portrayed as promoting the Reign of God and, through this, students are able to apply a new understanding to their own life situations.

Students will have the opportunity to further consolidate their understanding of the Christian faith using the scriptures. References to the scriptures are located throughout the book, and students will be required to investigate and interpret historical events within the Bible that involve Jesus and the early Christians.

Each unit of work explores the life and work of various saints. These units of work include a teachers' information section, a supporting text about the saint and a series of cross-curricular activities that promote discussion and insight into sainthood. The activities are designed to recognise and emphasise the importance of saints within the Church calendar year and give students a brief overview as to why different saints are honoured by the Catholic Church.

Teaching the topic of saints can also be concurrent to the general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum. Students will encompass various skills and knowledge to develop creative thinking and inquiry-based investigations related to specific saints and their causes.



Personal and Social Capability



Ethical Understanding



Literacy



Intercultural Understanding



Critical and Creative Thinking



Sustainability



Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capability

### REFERENCES:

<http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/About-Us/Projects>

<http://www.catholicsschoolstandards.org/the-standards/mission-and-catholic-identity>

<http://www.schoolidentity.net/introduction/>

# The process of canonisation

The official process of declaring someone a saint is called canonisation. Canonisation involves numerous stages and careful consideration of all facts and details.

## Investigation

Upon the death of a person who has demonstrated extreme holiness and has lived a life faithful to God, the Catholic Church may consider them for canonisation. The bishop of the diocese will oversee the investigation and write a report about the candidate.

## Veneration

An investigation is undertaken by the Vatican department known as the 'Congregation for the Causes of Saints'. This department studies the life of the deceased person further. If the candidate died a martyr's death, the Congregation will decide whether the candidate sacrificed their life for the Church. The Congregation also researches the candidate's missionary work. If it is decided that the candidate lived with heroic virtues, the individual is then titled 'venerable'.

## 'Advocate of God'

This title refers to a person from the Vatican who is responsible for overseeing the case of the candidate and further examining their life. The advocate can also challenge the application for sainthood, raising any concerns or objections about the candidate.

## Beatification

The candidate is proven responsible for a miracle. The miracle may involve someone being completely healed of an incurable disease by God, through prayers to the candidate. A special ceremony is held where the Pope beatifies the candidate. The candidate is given the title 'Blessed.'

## Sainthood

Another miracle is required before the candidate will be canonised by the Pope and declared a saint by the Catholic Church.

Visit <https://youtu.be/IUGRdpRJWYA> for a short clip that further explains the process of canonisation.





# Confirmation and the saints

## Baptism

In Baptism, when a person becomes a member of the Catholic Church, they are baptised into a life with God.

## Confirmation

Confirmation, together with Baptism and Eucharist, completes the process of initiation into the Christian community and finalises the process that began at Baptism. The Sacrament of Confirmation enriches the faith that is received at Baptism, calling the candidate into a deeper relationship with God.

When we are baptised, we are given seven important gifts from the Holy Spirit. These seven gifts are:

- Wisdom
- Understanding
- Counsel
- Fortitude
- Knowledge
- Piety
- Fear of the Lord

At our Confirmation, we grow in strength with the sealing of these gifts. The gifts of the Holy Spirit help us to make good moral choices, to live as faithful followers of Jesus and to share the love of God with others.

## The saints

While they may have been ordinary people, with the help of the Holy Spirit the saints upheld the mission of Jesus in their lives. They used the gifts to inspire their faith in God and to minister it to others. Through their actions and words, the saints nurtured the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control. As role models of discipleship, they inspire others to serve God in their daily living.

## Choosing a saint

Confirmation candidates are traditionally called upon to choose the name of a saint whom they admire and aspire to be like. These saints are Spirit-filled role models for the candidates, who are able to pray to them for guidance in the journey of life.

### REFERENCES:

<http://www.allaboutgod.com/gifts-of-the-spirit.htm>

<http://www.cam.org.au/Catholic-Faith/Church-Teaching/The-Gifts-and-Fruits-of-the-Holy-Spirit.aspx>

# Saint Mary, Mother of God

## Learning focus statement

Students recognise the importance of Mary, the Mother of God, as a model of discipleship in the Catholic Church.

## Key concepts

- > Trust
- > Faith
- > Family
- > Humility

## General capabilities



### Saint Mary, Mother of God

**Fast facts ...**

<b>FEAST DAY:</b>	1 January
<b>PATRON OF:</b>	Humility
<b>BIRTH:</b>	8 September, before 18 BC – Nativity of Mary
<b>DEATH:</b>	15 August, approx. 48 AD – Assumption of Mary

"Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."  
- LUKE 1:38



**Background information**

Mary was the Mother of Jesus Christ and is known as the greatest of all saints. Mary was born in Jerusalem and grew up in the town of Nazareth. Her parents were believed to be St Anne and St Joachim.

**A woman of trust**

The angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary to tell her that she had been chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus. Without hesitation, Mary willingly accepted God's plan. She travelled with her husband Joseph to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born.

**A woman of faith**

Mary's faith in God was always strong. When Mary and Jesus were guests at the wedding at Cana in Galilee, Mary was the first to notice that the wine was running out and sought out her son to help. At his mother's request, Jesus carried out his first miracle, transforming water into wine. Even though Jesus had never worked a miracle before, Mary put her faith in her son and in God.

**A woman of courage**

When Jesus was crucified, Mary stood with courage by the cross and watched her son suffer. At Jesus' request, she accepted his beloved disciple John as her son. After Jesus' death, Mary gathered in a room with his followers to play with them and comfort them at the time of Pentecost. Mary lived her life as a humble servant of God. She faced many uncertain and challenging times with patience, courage and complete faith in God.

**Define it ...**

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## Useful information for teachers

- > St Mary is known by many titles, including Saint Mary, Mother of God, The Blessed Virgin Mary and Our Lady.
- > The events of Mary's life are recorded in the New Testament. She has been honoured by the Catholic Church since the apostolic ages for her role as the mother of our saviour, Jesus Christ.
- > Mary was possibly born in Jerusalem to parents Saint Anne and Joachim. She grew up in Nazareth, where she was visited by the angel Gabriel, who informed her that she was to become the mother of Jesus.
- > Mary was engaged to St Joseph. He was visited by an angel in a dream and told to marry Mary. Even though she was married to St Joseph, Mary is considered to have remained a virgin her whole life.
- > Mary and Joseph had to travel to Joseph's birthplace, Bethlehem, as the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken of the Roman world. They may have faced punishment if they had not made the journey. It was here in Bethlehem that Jesus was born.
- > Mary showed great faith in God throughout her life. She accepted God's plan to be the mother of Jesus without reservation.

- > It was at the wedding of Cana, after Mary noticed that the wine supplies were running low, that Jesus performed his first miracle. Traditional Jewish weddings often lasted for a week and were public events. Hosts were expected to provide food and wine for all the guests. It would have brought great shame on the hosts to run out of wine.
- > Mary was present at the crucifixion and gathered with Jesus' followers in the days before Pentecost.
- > There are many feast days in the church calendar to honour Mary. On 25 March is the Feast of the Annunciation, when Mary was visited by the angel and accepted God's plan; 15 August is the Feast of the Assumption, when God assumed the Virgin Mary, body and soul, into heaven.

## Suggestions for teaching

- > Ask students to write one word to describe Mary, Mother of God, on a card. Students compare with a friend. Compile a class list under the heading, 'Mary is'.
- > Allow students time to read the information page carefully.
- > Give students the opportunity to add new descriptive words for Mary to the class list. Teachers should emphasise the great faith



and trust Mary showed in God through her willingness to accept God's plan.

- > Students share times they have said yes to something that was hard to do.
- > Bibles should be provided when completing Activity 1 and 2.
- > Before students interview their friends for Question 3 of Activity 2, ask them to reflect on their individual talents and share ideas about how they can use these talents to serve others.
- > Teachers may wish to provide students with a set of questions to use when completing their interviews, such as:
  1. God has given you unique gifts and talents that he wants you to share with others. What do you believe your unique talents are?
  2. How will/do you share these talents with others?

**Mary said 'Yes', so can you!**

Mary was a humble woman who said yes when God asked her to be the mother of our Saviour. Her response was an immense act of faith.

1. Read the account of the Annunciation from Luke 1:26-38.
2. In the speech bubble write the message that the Angel Gabriel gave to Mary.

3. What words did Mary say to accept? Write her words in the speech bubbles above.

4. Was it easy for Mary to say yes? Why or why not? Record your answer, and then compare with a partner.

5. Think of a time when you were asked to do something difficult. Reflect on how you responded. Why is it sometimes hard to say yes?

God wants us to be strong followers and to make the right choices, even when this is difficult to do. What is God asking of you? How will you respond?

I say 'yes' to God when ...

Further investigation  
When we pray to Mary, we are asking her to pray for us on our behalf. She can bring us closer to God. Find a quiet space and write a prayer to Mary asking her for guidance in helping you to say yes to God. Use your prayer book if you pray it each night.

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## Opportunities for further discussion

1. What made it easy for Mary to accept what God wanted her to do without reservation?
2. Mary is regarded as the greatest of all saints. Discuss why this title was bestowed on her.

## Making connections to prayer

- > Use the link below to explore the parts of the Rosary: <http://www.cam.org.au/Catholic-Faith/Prayers/How-do-I-Pray-The-Rosary.aspx>
- > Have students read Mary's song of praise in Luke 1:46–55 and reflect on Mary's gratitude to be chosen as Jesus' mother. Reflect on what the students are grateful for in their lives.
- > Use the YouTube clip of 'Ave Maria' sung by Andrea Bocelli to encourage students to reflect on importance of Mary in the Church: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_6Qu15k24SA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6Qu15k24SA)

**2 We are all called to be disciples of Christ**

The disciples were ordinary people called to follow Jesus. God invites us all to follow him and live out the Gospel. We are first invited at our baptism and then later as confirmation, when we are called upon to use the gifts he has given us and to share them with others.

1. Read Matthew 4:19-20. Stop! Think! Reflect! What were the disciples asked to do? How did they say yes to God?

2. There are many everyday people who, like Mary, use their gifts to help others. Draw someone you know who lives a Spirit-filled life. Describe what they do for others and how their words or actions affect those around them.

3. Interview two friends to find out how they use their unique gifts and talents to serve others. Compare this with how you use your gifts. Your teacher will guide you.

FRIEND 1	FRIEND 2	ME

Further investigation  
Use a search engine to research someone who used their gifts and talents to serve and help others. Some suggestions might be Fred Holloway or Victor Chang, Maria Curie.

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## Future learning suggestions

- > Visit a local church or use a search engine to explore a variety of images/statues of Mary. Explain to students that throughout history Mary has been portrayed in hundreds of thousands of artworks by some of the most famous artists and by different cultures. Note common themes and details in the artworks. Allow students to use a medium of their choice to create a portrait of Mary.
- > Use a Church calendar to explore the feast days of St Mary and research why these days are celebrated.