Fertile Question:  *What part does my gender play in constructing who I am?*

**Core Content Area 2: A conscious, deliberate awareness and response**

**TOPIC 2.3: Gender and religion**

**Extending Knowledge: Gender in scripture**

In this lesson students will investigate some of the stereotypes associated with women of the Gospels.

**For students to investigate some of the stereotypes associated with women of the Gospels, select from the following activities:**

1. **Who was Mary Magdalene?**
   i. Form groups of four to analyse and critique understandings of Mary Magdalene in the New Testament of the Bible.
   ii. Create a collaborative space for your group to contribute their current knowledge and understandings about Mary Magdalene, for example Typewithme. Write your own answers to the following questions: Who was Mary Magdalene? What did she do? What words do you associate with her? Where did you get your knowledge about Mary Magdalene from?
   iii. Allocate one Gospel to each group member to investigate how, when and where Mary Magdalene is referred to in scripture. Each person will read each of the Scripture passages (and perhaps a few verses before or after if the reference is not clear) and record the main events, people and places in the relevant part of the table in Useful Resources. Use Bible Gateway if NRSV Bibles are not available.

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iv. Share findings with the rest of the group so that each group member has a complete table.

v. Examine the texts from each of the four Gospels. Highlight or underline in the same colour, events, actions or ideas about Mary Magdalene common to two or more Gospels.

vi. Compare these ideas with your original list made at the start of the lesson. What are some new words you could use to describe Mary that you may not have included before? How is Mary’s representation in the scripture counter cultural to the way women are usually portrayed, the way women were usually treated, and the roles women usually had?

vii. Share ideas with other groups about why such a false understanding about Mary Magdalene exists today. How does it change perceptions about Mary and women in Jesus’ time to think of her and others as financial supporters of Jesus and his ministry, as disciples or at least someone the disciples paid attention to, as leaders in the early days of the Christian church?
Mary Magdalene was with Mary, the mother of James, looking on from a distance at the death of Jesus. These women used to follow him and provide for him when he was in Galilee.