Fertile Question: How could I live the life of a true hero?

Core Content Area 3: Religion, role models and heroes

TO PIC 3.1: Saints and martyrs

Extending Knowledge: Why Mary MacKillop?

In this lesson, students will explore the life and work of Mary MacKillop and examine the process of her canonisation as a saint in the Catholic Church.

For students to explore the life and work of Mary MacKillop and examine the process of her canonisation, complete the following activities:

1. Examine information about the life and work of Mary MacKillop Australia’s first formally recognised Catholic Saint.
   a. Refresh your knowledge about the life and work of Mary MacKillop in the light of your understanding about heroes, saints and role models gained from previous lessons.
      i. Access and explore the Mary MacKillop website. There are short film clips under the Mary’s Story tab from the movie Mary that provide information about where Mary came from, her dreams and some of the challenges she faced. Discuss with a partner what you think made Mary stand out in the communities she lived and worked in.
      ii. Read the page Recognising Mary’s Life and Work either individually or as a class and discuss the following question. What evidence is given in the article that positions you as a reader to recognise Mary MacKillop as a worthy Australian Catholic saint?
   b. Compare the path of canonisation of Mary MacKillop with the formal process of canonisation in the Catholic Church.
      i. Review the process of canonisation given in in Lesson 3.1.1 or read a more detailed version here.
      ii. Examine the canonisation timeline for Mary MacKillop and answer the following questions: Do the events in Mary’s canonisation correspond with the steps in the formal process? How many years did the process take from the preliminary discussions until actual canonisation? How might you account for the large gaps between parts of the process? What does the visit to Mary’s tomb by the Australian Prime Minister in 2008 suggest about the significance of Mary MacKillop’s sainthood for all Australians?
   iii. Conclude this lesson by reading the short article After Canonisation and reflecting on how Mary and others like her can be an example and a challenge for all Christians to follow.