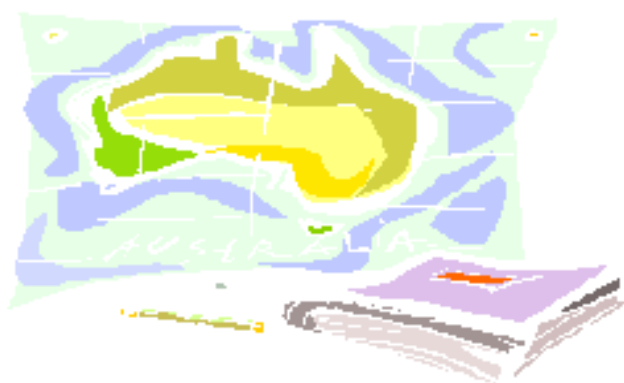


Saints and Heroes

Dreamers and Visionaries

Mark Elliott

The World Wide Web provides a wonderful pathway through which students can become immersed in the life and times of interesting and inspirational people that have made a contribution to justice. This article provides a range of exciting learning opportunities for students to begin a search for just such a person; the values they espoused, barriers to success they had to overcome, personal sacrifices they made to benefit others, principles on which they based their daily living as well as the factors that came together to make them a saint, hero, dreamer or visionary for justice.



Australian Visionaries

Students explore ways faith is strengthened through the witness of others who work for justice. They create a Concept Spiral that is focused on the lives of some significant contemporary Australian Catholics. A concept spiral consists of three cardboard circles (small medium and large) held together in the centre by a split pin. An example has been provided below.

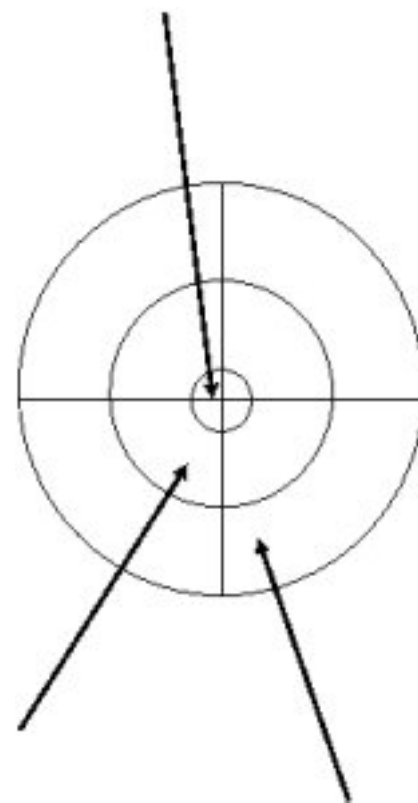
Students form groups of four with each student selecting a different Australian to study. Together the four students then produce one concept spiral. On the 4 segments of the inside circle of the concept spiral students identify the four contemporary Australian Catholics who through their witness give voice and life to Church teachings about justice.

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Some suggested Australians include:

- Sir William Deane (former Governor General of Australia)
- Lowitja (Lois) O'Donoghue (National Living Treasure)
- Matthew Hayden (Australian cricket team)
- Sr Irene McCormack, RSJ
(Australian missionary martyred in Peru)

- Fr Frank Brennan
(Jesuit priest and social activist)
- Ciaron O'Reilly
(Social Activist and member of Catholic Workers Movement)
- Donna Mulhearn
(human shield prior to the Iraq conflict)
- Sr Patrica Pak Poy
(RSL peace Prize winner for elimination of land mines)
- Peter Kearney (Musician)



On the four segments of the middle circle students write in 25 words or less the social context in which each person acts. On the four segments of the outside circle students suggest how each person's life is a living witness to Christian beliefs and Church teachings about justice.

Students can access the web sites suggested below to locate information about some of the Australians listed.

Sir William Deane

www.racismnoway.com.au/classroom/Factsheet/21.html

Lowitja (Lois) O'Donoghue

www.racismnoway.com.au/classroom/Factsheet/49.html

Matthew Hayden

www.melbourne.catholic.org.au/kairos/k2003vol14/hittingheights.htm

Sr Irene McCormack

www.catholicmission.org.au/peo-missio.htm

www.schools.ash.org.au/mountsj/mccormack/irene.htm

Fr Frank Brennan

<http://abcasiapacific.com/nexus/stories/s1020514.htm>

Ciaron O'Reilly

www.peace.ie/pastacts/ciaronor.html

Donna Mulhearn

www.catholicweekly.com.au/03/nov/2/19.html

Sr Patricia Pak Poy

www.cathnews.com/news/303/42.php

Peter Kearney

www.catholicweekly.com.au/01/dec/9/12.html

Prophets of Hope

Students explore some Old Testament prophets and their contribution to justice. Initially students consider the following quotation and discuss some possible meanings and contexts. This quotation is from a man called Herbert Agar, an American poet and writer of the 1940s.

The truth that makes people free is for the most part the truth that people prefer not to hear.

The idea that comes to most people's minds when they hear the word *prophet* is information about the future. However, this in fact makes up a relatively small proportion of the Old Testament prophets' messages. Most of their time was spent challenging people about the present - how they were living their lives right now. The main function of the prophets of Israel was to remind the people about their covenant commitment to God, and urge them to live it out in practice. Prophets were often not well received in the local communities from which they came.

Students form learning teams of four to find information about Old Testament prophets. Each team member is allocated a prophet (e.g. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel or Amos). Students then form 'expert' groups based on their allocated prophet, they read the scriptural references on their prophet listed below and fill in the retrieval chart. While in their expert teams they discuss the best way to teach the members of their home team about their allocated prophet. Students return to their home teams and present their information.

Isaiah: 1:16-17; 3:1-5; 5:1-7; 6; 7:1-9; 30:1-7; 20:1-6; 9:6-7; 11:10-16; 10:22

Jeremiah: 26:1-11; 27:1-4; 26:16-19; 18:1-7; 38:4-6; 19:1-3, 10-11; 38:7-13; 22:13-19; 32:6-15;

Ezekiel: 1:1-3; 3:16-21; 33:7; 1:4 – 3:15; 8:1; 14:1; 3:25; 2:3-4; 13-14; 18:1-32; 36:22-38; 37:1-14

Amos: 8:1-18; 7:10 -13; 5:10 -20; 9:11 -15

The following is a possible retrieval chart that could be used to collect information about prophets.

Name of the prophet	Time and place in which they lived	The prophet's message	Images or symbols used	The prophet's role	Audience reaction to the prophets

The following web sites will assist students in completing their retrieval chart:

www.biblegateway.com/cgi-bin/bible

(The Bible Gateway web site containing the texts from each of the four prophets)

www.christianwebsite.com/artman/publish/article_13.html

(Guide to the Old Testament prophets)

www.religioustolerance.org/chr_otb4.htm

(Information about the prophets and their lives)

The Church has not applied the title *prophet* to anyone other than those named as prophets in the Bible. However, the early Church recognised prophecy amongst the charismatic gifts that continue in her life. Today we continue to be blessed by the witness of many who interpret for us the mind of God, who show in their lives what the Christian life is meant to be. Some are high profile, such as Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day, and Jean Vanier. Others are known in local communities through their work for justice or deeds of charity. They challenge all of us to recognise that bringing about God's kingdom requires of each person a change of heart and practical action that is quite often counter-cultural.



**Fill in the names of people who you believe
are Modern Day Prophets.**

Someone who gives you hope for the future.

Someone who is honest with you, even when it is difficult.

Someone who challenges you to act fairly.

Someone who encourages you to be your best self.

Someone who helps you understand God's love for you.

[Links accessed: 23 June 2004]