

# Pray In May Assembly – 11-16 year olds

This talk will allow pupils to explore the importance of Mary as the mother of Jesus and how we can turn to her in prayer during May. It will also introduce the work of Mary's Meals and how pupils can support the charity through prayer.

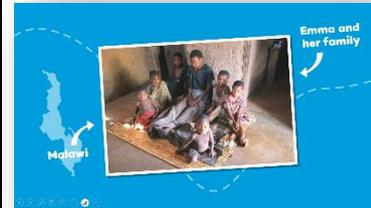
The talk can be delivered by a staff member, or by a group of pupils by dividing up the slides between the various readers. You can also request a talk from a Mary's Meals volunteer.

You will also need to be able to display the PowerPoint presentation. This talk can take approximately 20 minutes.

Slide	Wording	Discussion points
	<p>Welcome to our assembly today where I am going to share with you the work of Mary's Meals, and how we can support Mary's Meals during the month of May.</p>	
<p><b>"When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?' Philip answered him 'It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" (John 6: 5, 7)</b></p>	<p>We will begin with some scripture relevant to today's topic...</p> <p>Feeding the hungry is an important theme in the Bible, as we see from Jesus feeding the five thousand. <b>(Read passage on screen)</b></p> <p>Jesus performed a miracle to ensure the hungry were fed. We aren't asked to perform miracles, but we are asked to share what we have with others, and with God's help address the inequality and injustice that exists in our world.</p> <p>Mary's Meals is a great example of this in action.</p>	



The story of Mary’s Meals starts with this man, Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow.



In 2002, he travelled to Malawi, a country in Africa, while they were experiencing a famine.

Take responses from pupils on their ambitions for the future.

He had been involved in international aid work for 10 years, so he wanted to know how people in the UK could help families in Malawi.

He met Emma who you can see in the photograph with her six children. Emma’s husband had already died, and Emma was close to death too. She was worried about what the future would hold for her children in this desperate situation. Magnus got talking to Edward about the future and asked about his hopes and ambitions.

How would you answer that question?

A job you might like to do, or somewhere you would like to travel to?



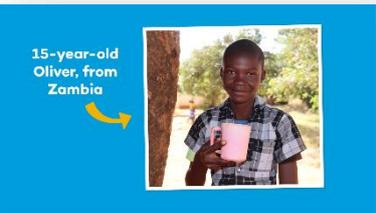
Edward had a different answer. He said: ***“I would like to have enough food to eat and I would like to go to school one day.”***

Edward was 14 years old – at that age we would take for granted that school would be part of his life. Yet he had never had that chance, because his family had to focus on surviving and getting enough food.

<p>Today 71 million primary school-age children are out of school around the world, and many others come to class too hungry to learn.</p>	<p>This situation isn't unique – today there are 71 million primary school aged children around the world who are out of school. For many of these children, hunger is the main obstacle. Many children end up working to support their family or even begging for food instead of attending class.</p> <p>There are millions more who are at school, but they're so hungry it's difficult to concentrate. As we spoke about earlier, hunger can make it difficult to think about anything else.</p>	
	<p>Meeting Edward showed Magnus how we could help families in Malawi. In 2002 we served the very first Mary's Meals in a primary school in Malawi.</p> <p>By serving meals, we were meeting the needs of hungry children, but by doing it in school specifically, the children were attracted into the classroom to learn together – many of them for the first time.</p> <p>From the early days, we could see the impact of providing nutritious school meals. More children were attending school, and they were doing well in class too.</p>	
	<p>Over 20 years later, Mary's Meals is still serving meals in school but has grown a lot since then.</p> <p>They are now serving school meals to more than three million children every school day!</p> <p>It's amazing to see how far it has come, but this is only the beginning. Mary's Meals believes that every child should receive a daily meal in their place of education – as I mentioned,</p>	

	<p>for millions around the world, this isn't the case, so there are many more children waiting for Mary's Meals.</p>	
	<p>Mary's Meals started in Malawi and is now serving meals in a total of 16 countries!</p> <p>As you can see on the map, it's expanded to a number of countries in Africa like Madagascar, Kenya and Ethiopia. They work in a few countries in Asia like Syria, Yemen and India. Plus, in Haiti in the Caribbean and Ecuador in South America.</p> <p>Although Mary's Meals is served in each country, the actual meal will be different depending on the culture and what food is available to buy locally.</p> <p>So, Mary's Meals in Malawi is a mug of vitamin enriched porridge, while in India it's vegetable curry with rice.</p>	
	<p>Here's a short video where you can learn a bit more about Mary's Meals.</p>	
	<p>Mary's Meals has undertaken research along the way to track the impact of the meals, and found that they help to reduce hunger, improve attendance at school, help children to do well in their exams and make progress.</p> <p>The community also becomes more supportive of education. And the meals help make children happier, thanks to less worries about hunger.</p>	
	<p>From the early days, prayer and faith played an important role in this mission.</p>	

	<p>Mary's Meals is named after Mary the mother of Jesus. Magnus has a deep faith and wanted to dedicate this work to Our Lady, who was a mother herself and would understand the challenges faced by families around the world.</p>	
	<p>As a young person, Magnus had travelled to Medjugorje in Bosnia, which you can see in the picture here.</p> <p>He went on pilgrimage to find out more about what had been happening there – there had been apparitions of Our Lady reported in the news. His experiences there helped bring his faith to life, and Mary's Meals has had a special connection with Medjugorje ever since it started.</p>	
	<p>In Catholic Social Teaching, the church emphasises the preferential option for the poor – that is God's deep love for the poorest and most vulnerable people. As Catholics, we are asked to live out this love in our own actions, finding ways to help our brothers and sisters living in poverty.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">“When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours.” Catechism of the Catholic Church 2446.</p>	<p>The church encourages us not to see this as giving exactly, but rather sharing what belongs to the whole human family. <b>(Read passage on screen)</b></p>	
	<p>Whatever people can do to support Mary's Meals it all adds up. Mary's</p>	

	<p>Meals' founder Magnus describes all of these actions as little acts of love. By supporting this work in any way, you are helping open the door to education for young people around the world and helping reduce child hunger.</p>	
	<p>Mary's Meals use a low-cost model, meaning that it only costs £19.15 to feed one child for a whole school year. In a small way, we can see that like with the feeding of the five thousand, small amounts can make a big difference.</p>	
	<p>Donations are not the only way to make a difference.</p> <p>Prayer is an important way for us to support the work of Mary's Meals, and this is what is asked of us during the month of May.</p> <p>This is a special time during the church's year when we dedicate time to praying for Our Lady's intercession, asking her to join her prayers with ours.</p>	
	<p>Our prayers are for young people like 15-year-old Oliver, who receives meals from Mary's Meals in Zambia. His family struggles to afford the food they need, so having a meal at school each day makes a big difference.</p> <p>Oliver walks a long distance to school every day, and the promise of a daily meal helps him feel stronger and concentrate in class.</p> <p>He told us: <b><i>"Walking 10 kilometres to school on an empty stomach is difficult for me. By the time I get here, I'm feeling weak. However,</i></b></p>	

	<p><b><i>porridge takes away my hunger and I instantly feel better."</i></b></p>	
	<p>We are going to use the prayer resources from Mary's Meals to reflect on their work together and pray for children and young people around the world affected by hunger and poverty.</p>	
	<p>The experience of Mantasha, who lives in a slum in India, shows the real difference these meals can make.</p> <p>She told us about what it was like for her to begin attending school thanks to Mary's Meals: <b><i>"Only after I came here did I start to feel hope that I could be educated. I want to be a teacher and give the same hope to other children. My dream is to build a school and then teach there."</i></b></p> <p>The future is in our hands – to help make a difference for Mantasha and children like her.</p>	
	<p>Thank you for listening.</p> <p>Opportunity for pupils to ask any questions.</p>	