



# Meals Make a Difference

A Mary's Meals learning resource for pupils  
between five and eight years old

Mary's Meals is a registered charity: SC022140

mary's  
meals

a simple solution  
to world hunger

# Meals Make a Difference

## Aims

This resource aims to help pupils:

- understand how Mary's Meals helps children who are hungry.
- learn more about the lives of children around the world and how they compare to their own experiences.
- recognise how their gifts can help others.

## About this resource

These lessons are suitable for pupils between five and eight years old.

They can be used separately or together depending on the time you have. Individual lessons can be extended over multiple days if you would like to focus more on a particular topic with your class.

We encourage you to start with lesson one and then choose from the remaining lessons.

We want to help you get the most out of this resource – please contact us on [hello@marysmeals.org](mailto:hello@marysmeals.org) if you would like advice and resources for fundraising. We can also arrange for a volunteer to give a talk about Mary's Meals, either in-person or online, and answer questions from your pupils.

## Curriculum links

- Religious education.
- Personal, social, health and relationships education.
- Geography.
- Science.
- Citizenship.
- Design and technology (food technology).

For specific subject guidance related to the primary school curriculum in your country, please refer to the relevant curriculum guide.

Please note: These lessons explore child hunger and poverty, as experienced by children in countries where Mary's Meals works. If your group includes pupils who have moved to your country from one of our programme countries, or have their own experiences of hunger or poverty, you may choose to adapt the lesson to suit your group. We have provided a variety of options to help with this.

## Special dates

While these resources can be used at any time during the school year, you could choose to link in with one of the following days:

- International Day of Education – 24 January
- World Hunger Day – 28 May
- Harvest Festival – usually at end of September or beginning of October
- World Porridge Day – 10 October
- World Food Day – 16 October
- World Poverty Day – 17 October



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**Learning intention:** Pupils will learn more about Zambia, a country where Mary's Meals works.

## Lesson 6: Hunger in The Bible

**Learning intention:** Pupils will learn how key characters respond to hunger in The Feeding of the Five Thousand and reflect on how their gifts can help others in need.



# Lesson 1: Foods around the world

**Learning intention:** Pupils will learn about the different foods Mary's Meals provides around the world and the impact these meals have.

## Use photo pack one

Using photo pack one, look at images of the different foods that Mary's Meals serves to children around the world.

**Discuss the foods with the pupils, using the following prompts:**

- Which foods do you recognise?
- Which of these foods do you like or dislike?
- What meal would you have these foods for?
- Who do you think prepared the food?
- What can you tell about the children eating the food?
- What is your favourite meal?
- What snacks do you like eating?
- Have you eaten food from another country? What was it like?
- What foods do you eat at school? For example, packed lunch, school dinner or snack.

**Explain that these foods are served by the charity Mary's Meals to children at school:**

- The food is cooked by local volunteers.
- For many of the children, this is their only meal each day.
- Use the word 'poverty' and explain that some families in the world are so poor that they cannot afford to eat each day.
- If Mary's Meals did not help, then many of the children would not go to school because of hunger.

## Make a list

Make a list of reasons or a mind-map to show why food and school are important.

Pupils could use these to create posters or leaflets to promote the work of Mary's Meals, showing the importance of nutritious school meals.



# Lesson 2: A meal in Zambia

**Learning intention:** Pupils will learn about the traditional meal provided by Mary's Meals in Zambia.

The following lessons focus on Zambia. You may opt to use a different country where Mary's Meals works if it fits in better with your current class or school topics. Information on our school feeding programme in Zambia, and in other countries, can be found on [our website](#).

## Discussion with pupils

**Talk with the pupils about their favourite foods:**

- What do you like to eat?
- What is your favourite breakfast, lunch and dinner?
- Why is a healthy diet important?
- How would you feel if you ate the same meal every day?

**Explain that the food that Mary's Meals provides in Zambia is a maize and soya porridge, which is fortified with essential vitamins and minerals (an image can be found in photo pack one):**

- Ensure pupils understand that for children in Zambia this is a very popular food that gives them the nutrients they need to be healthy.
- A healthy meal like porridge gives children the fuel they need to concentrate, stay alert and absorb information throughout the school day.
- Children who live in Zambia are not used to the food your pupils enjoy.

## Hold an activity

**Hold one of the following activities, which can be linked to learning about balanced diets:**

- Make porridge with the pupils. You could add different fruits such as strawberries, banana, blueberries, or honey or jam. You could alternatively make overnight oats if you do not have access to a hob or microwave.
- Write out or sequence instructions for making porridge.
- Draw or write about what we eat at school and what children in Zambia eat at school, dividing your page or a paper plate in half to show the two side-by-side.
- Read either Goldilocks and the Three Bears and The Magic Porridge Pot with your class.

## Fundraising idea

Hold a porridge morning or afternoon for families to share what you've learned about Mary's Meals and food around the world. You could make and sell porridge pots with a fruit station for people to add their own healthy toppings. These could include strawberries, banana, blueberries or apples.

Display the pupils' work or give a short presentation on Mary's Meals. This will help to raise awareness and funds to provide children with a daily meal.

Remember - every 10p/11¢/13¢\$ raised will provide a school meal for a hungry child!



# Lesson 3: Food and farmers

**Learning intention:** Pupils will learn about where their food comes from and compare this to how food is sourced for Mary's Meals.

## Discussion with pupils

**Talk about where our food comes from:**

- How does food get to our homes?
- How does food get to the shops?
- Are all the farms or factories near our homes?
- Can all fruit and vegetables be grown in this country?

**Talk about the important role of farmers and how they produce the crops we need to make different meals:**

- Pupils should understand that certain foods need particular weather conditions to grow.
- Look at a globe and discuss how many tropical fruits in our supermarkets are grown in hotter countries, as opposed to the polar regions which are coldest.
- This activity could link well with harvest time.

## Hold an activity

Explain that the ingredients used to make Mary's Meals is sourced from local farmers. Some schools also have a garden to grow vegetables to eat with their meal.

**Hold one of the following activities:**

- Bring in packets or labels of fruits or vegetables from home to look at the country of origin – how far did the food travel? You could plot the countries of origin on a world map together and think about how the food might have reached your country.
- Try some foods available in Zambia. Examples include sweet potato, corn, peppers, mango, papaya and guava.
- Try growing your own fruit or vegetable by planting seeds with the pupils, linking to science around what seeds need to grow.



# Lesson 4 – Failo's day

**Learning intention:** Pupils will learn about daily life in another country and culture and reflect on how this compares to their life.

## Discussion with pupils

Failo is a child who eats Mary's Meals in Zambia. There are images of him in photo pack two.

**Discuss the photos, using the following prompts:**

- What is happening in this photo? What can you see? What is the same or different to your family, home and school?
- How do you think Failo is feeling?
- What things are the same or different to your day?
- How are the children getting to school? What is your journey to school like? Who in the class lives the furthest from school?
- How is their school the same or different to ours?
- What games do you think they like to play?
- What chores does Failo do at home? What jobs do you do at home?
- What difference does Mary's Meals make to Failo's life?

## Hold an activity

**Explore further the similarities and differences between Failo's life and the pupils' experiences, using one of the following activities:**

- Draw or write about events in their own day and a comparison with Zambia, dividing a page in two to show these side-by-side. For example, the journey to school, what children eat, and what they do at school and at home.
- Act out activities from Failo's day in small groups and freeze frame to talk about them. For example, herding goats, selling vegetables, the long walk to school, eating Mary's Meals and playing with friends. How might Failo feel about each activity?





# Lesson 5: All about Zambia

**Learning intention:** Pupils will learn more about Zambia, a country where Mary's Meals feeds hungry children.

## Explore themes

Explore and learn about Zambia together, giving context to Failo's life and the work of Mary's Meals. You can use the [Mary's Meals website](#) for information on our work in Zambia, and explore other online resources.

### Together, you could find out:

- Where is Zambia on a map or globe? Which hemisphere is it in?
- What are the colours and design of the Zambian flag?
- How many people live in Zambia?
- What's the weather like in Zambia compared to the UK? What would you need to pack for a visit?
- What animals live in Zambia?
- What are homes and schools like in Zambia?
- What foods do people in Zambia eat?
- What are typical jobs in Zambia?
- What places are there to visit in Zambia? For example, Kafue National Park and the capital city, Lusaka
- How many children does Mary's Meals feed in Zambia?
- How long has Mary's Meals been working in the country?

Pupils can present their findings by writing reports, or making posters or travel brochures.





# Lesson 6: Hunger in The Bible

**Learning intention:** Pupils will learn how key characters respond to hunger in The Feeding of the Five Thousand and reflect on how their gifts can help others in need.

Please note: This activity looks at the themes of hunger and meals in the context of the biblical story, The Feeding of the Five Thousand. This activity can be used by Christian schools, or others looking at Bible stories within the context of religious education, with the questions adapted to suit your context.

## Share a story

Share the story of The Feeding of the Five Thousand with the pupils – you could use a class Bible, an online animation of the story, or the biblical text from the Gospel of John (6:1-15).

**Talk to the pupils about what the story means to them, before using the following points to guide discussion:**

- A boy in the crowd had food with him and chose to give it to the Disciples so it could be shared equally. Is it always easy to share what we have, or can it be difficult?
- What happens to the food, how is it more than enough for so many hungry people?
- We see how Jesus acts when he sees people who need help. How can we be more like Jesus?
- A miracle takes place – and we can see that it started with a child giving what they had to help others.

## Hold an activity

Encourage the pupils to think about what gifts they have to offer, and how they can use these gifts to help people they know, or help the children who eat Mary's Meals.

**Ask the pupils to draw, talk or write about their own gifts:**

- Firstly, ask your pupils to identify their own gifts, such as singing.
- The pupils can then be asked to think about how their own gifts can be used to help others. For example, they may decide to sing for their grandma to make her smile.
- Pupils can then discuss how their gifts can help the children who eat Mary's Meals. For example, pupils could choose to sing a song with their classmates at an event to encourage people to give a donation to Mary's Meals.

**Alternatively, guide the pupils to identify each other's gifts:**

- Each pupil can take a piece of paper, write their name on it and leave it on their desk.
- The class moves around the room and writes a gift or compliment at each pupil's desk.
- The pupils can use this as a starting point for writing about how their gifts can help others.

## Fundraising idea

As a class, organise an event or fundraising initiative – using the pupils' gifts – to help feed more children with Mary's Meals. Contact Mary's Meals on [info@marysmeals.org](mailto:info@marysmeals.org) for advice and free fundraising resources.



**It costs just £19.15/€22/\$25.20  
to feed a child with Mary's Meals  
every day for a school year.**

Your class can change the lives of hungry children by holding your very own fundraiser!

You can get in touch with us at [hello@marysmeals.org](mailto:hello@marysmeals.org) for a free fundraising pack full of ideas.

No matter what you choose to do, raising funds for Mary's Meals will be an incredible learning and bonding experience for your pupils, all while helping to feed some of the world's poorest children.

**[marysmeals.org](http://marysmeals.org)**