

**First Nations people are advised that this resource and external links may contain images, voices and names of people who have died.**



# TEREESA'S STORY (AUSTRALIA)

PRIMARY (3–6)  
CASE STUDY AND  
ACTIVITIES

Photo credit: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia



# TEREESA'S STORY

## AUSTRALIA



Tereesa, a proud Gamilaroi woman, is now an artist, studying at TAFE and working at Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation.

Tereesa grew up in Western Sydney, born and raised on Darug land. A mother of four young children, she found it hard to find a stable home and provide for them on her own.

Seeking a better future for her children, Tereesa found the support she was looking for when she joined the Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation's Young Mums and Bubs Group, supported by Caritas Australia.

Baabayn (which means 'Ancestral Woman' in Gumbaynggirr language) was founded by five Elders who wanted to create a community and welcoming environment for First Nations Australian families and individuals.

**"Baabayn is a place where people can come and gather. It's a belonging place. It's a place of culture, finding out about who your mobs are," said Auntie Jenny, one of the founders of Baabayn.**

The Young Mums and Bubs Group supports young mothers to learn skills in arts and crafts, working with others to earn an income and how to manage their money. Baabayn also helped Tereesa find a home for her family.

There are many other great activities for people to participate in at Baabayn too. Tereesa's children attend the Homework Club. There is also a Yarn Circle, a Jarjums (children) Club and a Youth Group.

**"It's important because we were always on the fringe as Aboriginal people and we were always ostracised and left outside... Baabayn is a place of welcoming," Auntie Jenny said.**

Tereesa with one of her first artworks she painted at Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation in Western Sydney. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia

# TEREESA'S STORY

## AUSTRALIA



As part of the Young Mums and Bubs Group, Tereesa met other young women who have been through similar life experiences.

Growing up, Tereesa didn't have the opportunity to learn about her First Nations culture. But through Baabayn, she was able to hear stories from Elders and reconnect with her culture.

Already an aspiring artist, Tereesa was able to flourish at Baabayn. She has sold her artwork at local markets.

**"When I paint, every painting has a story. And my story is very long," Tereesa said. "I don't think I'd be the person I am today without Baabayn and being part of the Mum's Group has brought out a lot of creativity in my bones that I didn't even know I had. I'm relaxed, very relaxed when I'm painting. It helps me calm. I've been through a storm per se and painting, I just feel at peace."**

Tereesa's artwork was recognised at the 2022 Vivid Light festival in Sydney. Vivid Light illuminates the city with art projected onto the city landscape.

Four of Tereesa's artworks – *Crow Totem*, *Connections of Both Land & Water Tribes*, *Yinaar Miyaay (Women's Business)* and *Goanna Totem* – were projected onto the Wulugul Walk at Barangaroo.

**"I've never been to Vivid and to have my artwork displayed is over the moon amazing. I never thought in a million years that this was something that would happen to me," Tereesa said.**

Today, Tereesa is studying a certificate in Community Services so that she can increase her skills and give back to her community.

After volunteering at Baabayn, Tereesa was offered paid employment with the Youth Group and is now an assistant to the Young Mums and Bubs Group. As a former participant, Tereesa understands what it is like to be in the shoes of the members and can share her experiences and insights with other young mums.

Tereesa's children now produce their own artwork and are eager to learn more about First Nations Australian culture, history and symbols.

**"I want my children to continue learning about their culture," Tereesa said. "I want them to have an involvement with the community. The community has your back. It's good to have that to lean on and I want my kids to realise that as well."**

With your support, the work of Baabayn can continue so that young mothers like Tereesa can keep their culture strong for future generations.



# TEREESA'S STORY

## LEARNING TASKS



Read Teresa's Story (Australia) and watch ['A Day in the Life' film](#).

### TASK 1: DISCUSSION

- It was hard for Teresa to raise 4 young children on her own. Where did Teresa find support?
- What kinds of activities happen at the Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation?
- Why is Baabayn important to the local community?
- Why is art important to Teresa?
- How did Caritas Australia help?
- How does art help keep cultures alive?
- How will you share Teresa's story with others?

**Curriculum links:** English, HASS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

### TASK 2: KAHOOT! QUIZ

Test students' knowledge of Teresa's story by playing the [KAHOOT!](#)

### TASK 3: THE ART OF STORY TELLING

- A. "When I paint, every painting has a story. And my story is very long," Teresa said. I'm relaxed, very relaxed when I'm painting. It helps me calm."**

Teresa uses painting to share her story and connect with her culture. It also helps her feel calm.

Students think of their own story and select an art medium that both helps them feel calm and to tell part of their story. For example, colouring, painting, drawing, making music, sculpting, writing a poem, weaving, etc.). Allow time for students to share their art with others, and potentially the wider school community through an art event.

- B. "I've never been to Vivid and to have my artwork displayed is over the moon amazing. I never thought in a million years that this was something that would happen to me," Teresa said.**

Students explore art projection. Demonstrate the difference when projecting an image onto a flat wall, compared to a curved wall, pillar or archway. Experiment with different modifications to the image so they adapt to the different shapes and landscape.

### Extension

Can your class create a large art display/mural based on the theme For All Future Generations? Or hold a colouring-in competition to help raise money for Caritas.

**Curriculum links:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Visual Arts, Design and Technology

### TASK 4: CLASS YARN CIRCLE

Another activity Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation offers is a Yarn Circle.

*The use of a **yarning circle** (or dialogue circle) is an important process within Aboriginal culture and Torres Strait Islander culture. It has been used by Indigenous peoples from around the world for centuries to learn from a collective group, build respectful relationships, and to preserve and pass on cultural knowledge. It promotes belonging by giving students an opportunity to listen and be heard.*

Put time aside each day for the class to participate in a yarning circle. They can share stories about their day, their family, their culture. To learn more about hosting yarning circles in the classroom visit [QCAA](https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au).

**Curriculum links:** English, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Health and Physical Education

# TEREESA'S STORY

## LEARNING TASKS



### TASK 5: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING (CST) LINK - SOLIDARITY

#### Solidarity

*noun*

- a firm and persevering commitment to the common good, which reminds us that everything is related
- the act of standing shoulder to shoulder with others
- a way of saying, 'I'm here with you'

- A. How is solidarity demonstrated in Teresa's story?  
*(consider the welcome and support she received at Baabayn and how Teresa volunteered and is now working at Baabayn to provide support for other mums. Teresa also speaks about how the 'community has your back'.)*
- B. How is supporting Caritas an act of solidarity?
- C. When have you stood 'shoulder to shoulder' with someone in need of support?
- For more teaching resources on Solidarity - refer to our [CST Toolkit](#)
  - **Curriculum links:** Religious Education

### TASK 6: RE LINK

Tereesa found a way to share her story through art. Jesus was also a great storyteller. He often used parables in his teaching and ministry.

Share the parable: **The Friend at Midnight** ([Luke 11:5-13](#))

Discuss how the friend eventually agrees to help his neighbour because he was persistent rather than because they are friends, despite the late hour and the inconvenience of it.

Tereesa has demonstrated great persistence. She didn't give up when life was difficult, she found support and has worked hard. She can now provide for her family and enjoy sharing and celebrating her artistic achievements with others!

Ask students to reflect on a time when they have demonstrated persistence.

**Curriculum links:** Religious Education

# THANK YOU

## PHOTO CREDITS

Tereesa's Story (Australia) – Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia

## PRIMARY STUDENTS

Learning about people not having what they need to live a healthy and safe life can be hard. If you are feeling worried or upset about anything you have learnt about through this resource, make sure you talk to your teacher or a trusted adult. They can share your concerns via our [website](#).

Do you have an idea for how Caritas Australia can improve our school resources? We would love to hear it! Please email [education@caritas.org.au](mailto:education@caritas.org.au)

## TEACHERS

For more school resources, please visit: [caritas.org.au/resources/school-resources/](https://caritas.org.au/resources/school-resources/)

Stay up to date with events and resources! Subscribe to [Caritas Australia's Education e-newsletter](#)



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