



Marist Education
WEST CENTRAL EUROPE

Marcellin Champagnat



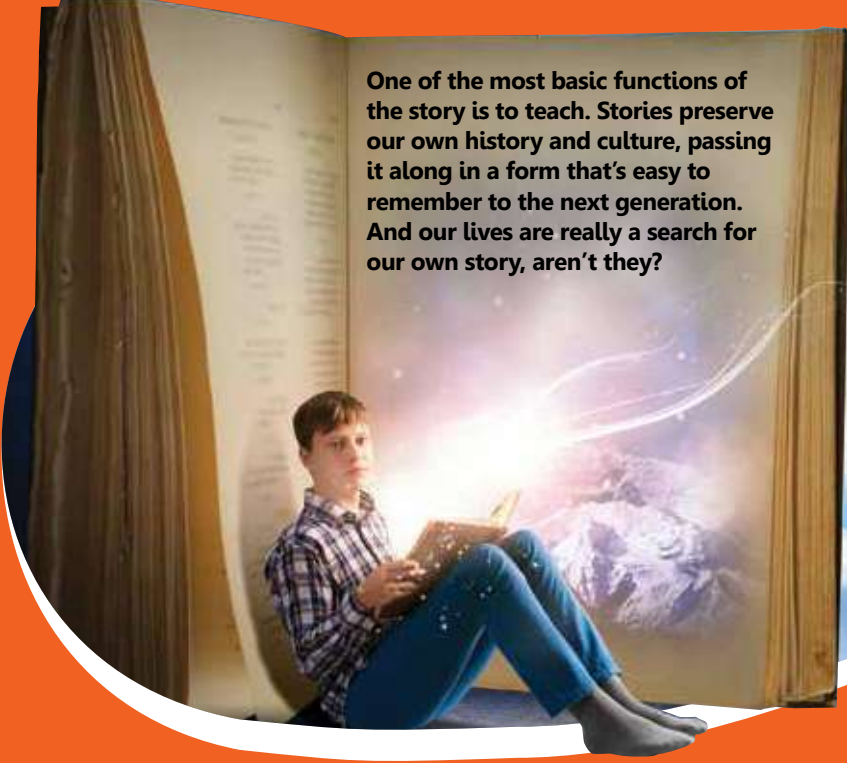
Stories & Prayers

Marist Curriculum Booklet 2

Stories



Stories are an important part of life, they are everywhere. Through stories we communicate how to act towards one another, what we value and what is possible in a fun and interesting way.



One of the most basic functions of the story is to teach. Stories preserve our own history and culture, passing it along in a form that's easy to remember to the next generation. And our lives are really a search for our own story, aren't they?

Marcellin Champagant was the founder of the Marist Brothers. Marcellin's stories tell us about his life, about his values and give us an insight into the kind of person he really was and teaches us how to be truly Marist.

Marcellin's life story was that of an ordinary boy who achieved extraordinary things.

The Montagne boy

On 28 October 1816, Marcellin was working as a priest in a remote village called La Valla in France. He was called out to

the house of a dying boy in the hills of Bessat. The boy was Jean-Baptiste Montagne, the son of a

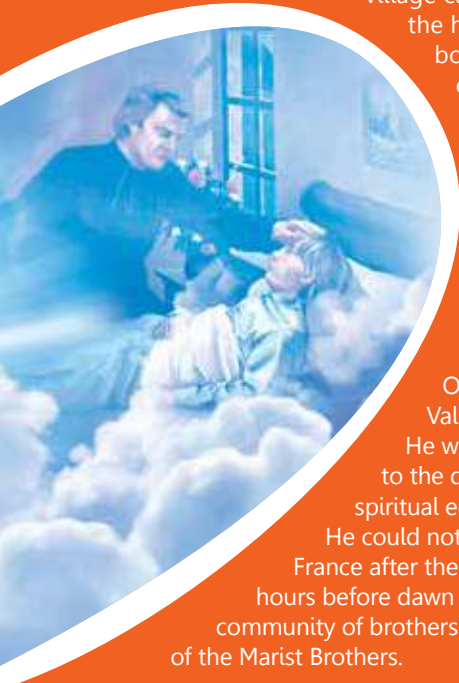
carpenter. After hours of walking uphill to get to the house, Marcellin was shocked to find a

young sixteen-year-old boy who looked more like a twelve year old due to his illness. When

Marcellin spoke to him he realized the boy was uneducated and knew nothing about God or

Christianity. Marcellin spent hours by the boys bedside and helped him prepare for a death

that was very near.



On his long walk back down the mountains to La

Valla, Marcellin's thoughts and feelings were in turmoil.

He was glad that he could give comfort and consolation

to the dying boy, but he felt such sadness for the lack of

spiritual education he had seen in the dying young boys face.

He could not help thinking about all the other young people in

France after the Revolution. He couldn't sleep that night and in the

hours before dawn he decided to take the first steps towards making a

community of brothers to educate young people. This was the beginning

of the Marist Brothers.

Reflection

Marcellin wanted to change the world for young people like Jean-Baptiste. The story of the Marist Brothers is a story of passion and compassion. Marcellin Champagnat saw the future Marists in the eyes of Jean-Baptiste Montagne, a dying boy who was leaving this world without knowing how much God loved him.

Take some time to think about what you would like to change in your community for the greater good. Write a letter to Marcellin to tell him how his story has inspired you to change in your community. Remember small acts have great impact.



Fourvière Pledge



In 2016 the Marists celebrated the 200th anniversary of “The Fourvière Pledge”. What exactly happened 200 years ago? In July 1816, after ten hard years of study Marcellin Champagnat realised a dream to become a priest and together with twelve newly ordained priests they climbed to the shrine of Our Lady of Fourvière in Lyon and dedicated their lives to Mary. They made a promise/pledge to begin the foundation of the Society of Mary, which became

known as the Marists Brothers. It was a pledge that Marcellin would live out for the rest of his life and he returned to Fourvière every opportunity he had to renew his promise.

It’s important for us as Marists to remember the fact that through this event the Marist Family was born. To think about the fire that led them to make such a commitment, and to help us to discover what “fires” us in life... The Fourvière Pledge is not in the past, it is in front of us like a challenge or goal, “firing” our journey.

To DO:

Marcellin wanted to educate young people in a caring way, especially those who were disadvantaged. He believed every young person deserved to be loved equally.

Think about what motivates you in life and gives you energy. What is your ‘fire’? What’s important to you? Who is important to you? What are your beliefs?

Write your own pledge for your journey? Explain what you want to achieve in life and why you want to do these things.

EXTRACT OF FOURVIÈRE PLEDGE

“We striving to work together for the glory of God and the honour of Mary, Mother of the Lord Jesus, declare we will, as soon as possible, establish the congregation of Marist”

Lost in the snow



One day Marcellin received news that one of the young brothers, who was still only 16 years old and working at a school at Bourg-Argental, was very ill. When Marcellin heard he immediately set out on foot to make the 20km journey over rugged mountain terrain to visit him. He was accompanied by 22 year old Br. Stanislaus and all went well until a heavy snow storm hit them on the return journey. They became lost in the heavily wooded slopes under Mt. Pilat and after hours of walking through the blizzard, darkness and exhaustion descended on them. Marcellin helped Br. Stanislaus along as he struggled with the bitter wind. Soon they could go no further and as they sheltered under a tree it became apparent that Br Stanislaus would soon die of exposure.

They knelt in the snow and said the **Memorare** (a prayer) to Mary and could hardly hear themselves above the howling wind. They had just finished the prayer when they saw what looked like a lantern moving in the distance. A farmer called Mr. Donnet had taken a random notion to check his stable by an outside door even though he had access to the stable from

inside his house. Whatever the farmers motives or inspiration, his lamplight saved the two men.

As they warmed their frozen limbs gratefully by Mr. Donnets fire, Marcellin and Br. Stanislaus were convinced that their prayer had been heard and that the Blessed Virgin Mary had saved them. The brothers always interpreted the event as an act of confirmation from God that they were doing good work and had God's blessing. It became a cherished story that helped them along when times became difficult.

Memorare (new version)

Remember,
most loving Virgin Mary,
never was it heard
that anyone who turned to
you for help was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence,
And aware that I'm not perfect,
I turn to you for protection for
you are my mother.

Reflection:

Everyone needs to ask for help from time to time.
Think about how Marcellin fought through the storm,
helped his friend and then asked for help.
In your life right now, can you see yourself in Marcellin?
When have you gone through a stormy time in your
life and what got you through that rough time?
What would your version of the Memorare sound
like? Write your version in your own language
thinking about your own life experience.





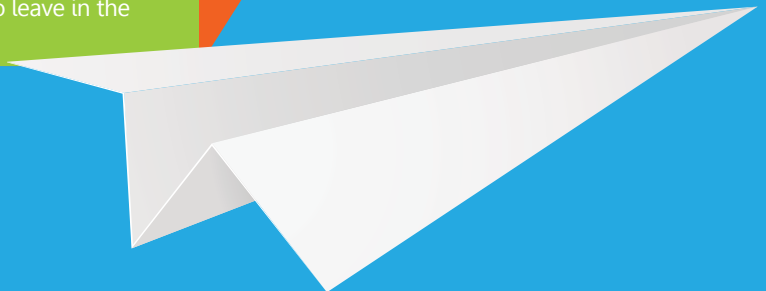
Building the Hermitage



Marcellin, now living in La Valla, began thinking about building a house large enough to accommodate his growing community of brothers. On his travels between La Valla and St. Chamond he had often set his eye on a sheltered section of the Gier river valley that appealed to him as a natural hermitage (religious retreat). With help from a number of people he bought the land and set about building the mother house that would be called **L'Hermitage**.

The first stone was laid there on May 13, 1824. Although professional builders were used to raise the structure, the Brothers themselves did most of the labour. They quarried rocks out of the valley, dug for sand and mixed the mortar. Marcellin led the way and was first on site every morning and last to leave in the evening.

The building progressed a lot in the summer months when brothers returned to help from their schools. Summers were normally times for Brothers to extend their own education and to sharpen their teaching skills, but now it was time to roll up their sleeves. Within a couple of summers a five-storey building rose out of the valley. A mill and a bakery were added and soon the terraces along the slopes had gardens, orchards, meadows and vineyards that helped the brothers to be self-sufficient. In time the water of the river Gier was used to provide power for a cooperative factory established to assist local people. Twenty Brothers and ten postulants (training to be Brothers) moved into the Hermitage in May 1825.





Today the Hermitage has been renovated and hosts many visitors from around the world. Visitors spend a few days learning about Marcellin's life and walk in his footsteps reflecting on their own lives.

Marcellin is buried in the Hermitage and a beautiful museum has been created to preserve all the items and documents that tell us about Marcellin's life. You can even see the bedroom and office he lived in for 15 years. Often, people like to sit and pray and feel Marcellin's presence.

Perhaps some day you will have an opportunity to visit L'Hermitage with your school.



Watch:



Follow this link to watch a video about Marcellin's life called 'A heart that knows no Bounds'
<https://youtu.be/T5fijeozgXc>

To Do:

The Hermitage was a home that Marcellin built with his first community of brothers and it is still home to many brothers today. It became a place where as a family they shared principles and values and they grew together. A foundation for their shared sense of purpose. Marcellin believed 'family spirit' should exist not only in our homes but also in our schools. A place where each person feels welcome, is treated as equal, and can have warm down-to-earth relationships with each other. Think about your own school and write a paragraph about the ways it has a 'family spirit' and ways it could develop its family spirit.

Marcellins Words..



Here are a few sayings of Marcellin that Marists treasure in their hearts:

- "If you want to teach young people, first you have to love them all- love them all equally"
- "When you live in the favour of God and rely on him alone, the sky's the limit"
 - "Without Mary we are of no account; with Mary, we have everything, because she is always holding her adorable son in her arms and heart"
- "I cannot meet a child without longing to tell him how much God loves him"
- "You can only help others when you offer up your life for them"
- "Let there be among you just one heart and mind. Let it always be said of the *Marists as it was of the early Christians: See how they love one another!"

To Do:

With the person beside you read each saying and using your own words explain what you think Marcellin meant in each one.

Write your own saying that says something about what you think is important in life.





The La Valla Table

Marist Symbol

The table of La Valla is an important symbol for Marists. It is the table Marcellin built with the first brothers and used each day together. It symbolises family and the relationship that unites us as Marists – simply and powerfully.

It was this family spirit that Marcellin wanted to be the distinguishing feature in Marist schools. Marists have used this table as a symbol for developing our relationships with one another, developing our culture in Marist schools and wanting the best for each other, because good families are built on love.

There is a place for everyone at the table. Marist brothers and other Marists sit side by side at the table. Around the table people gather to speak, laugh and be together. These simple moments sharing are very important in being truly present and getting to know each other.



To Do:

Draw the La Valla Table. Draw the people that are important in your life sitting at the table. They can be family members, friends, teachers etc. Include yourself and if you like include Marcellin Champagnat who is now part of your life as a Marist student. Add plates on the table and on the plates write the words to represent the values that are important in your relationship with the people sitting at the table with you.

Project



As a Marist student, it's important to know the history behind your Marist School; where it came from, who was responsible for the building, and what were the motivations behind creating it. If you're lucky you may even get some insight into the spirit or atmosphere that existed in times gone by.



Task:

In small groups follow the questions to guide your project. You can talk to staff members, a Marist Brother, people in the community or look at the history section of your school website to give you some insight.

Your project can be presented as a video, scrapbook, poster, power point or even something new!

Questions

Reimagining the Founding Story of Our School

1. Who founded the school?
2. When was it founded?
3. Who was the first Principal?
4. What is the motto and crest of the school? Explain it.
5. Why did the founders decide to establish a school in this place? What were their key reasons?
6. Can you find any information about the earliest students who attended the school?
7. Study key events that have taken place over the lifetime of the school (buildings, change of location, growth in student numbers, change of Management, sporting, or other achievements). Try to include important occasions such as school achievements, i.e. sports, music and academic. Collect a video/ photo /diary file of key events.
8. In groups identify the six words that best describe 'your' school. Discuss what these words represent and how they are linked to the founding story of the school.



Extension:

- Prepare a presentation on the values of the school for incoming First Year students. What would you say when attending a local primary school to speak to Sixth Class pupils?
- Imagine setting up a completely new school. What needs in today's society would it most likely need to address? Write a proposal to the department of Education for your new school. Explain all the details for your new school; what needs it will meet for young people in the community and how it plans to do this?



Prayer



Who do you talk to when you are happy, or sad, or worried or pleased about something? Maybe you talk to your parents, grandparents or a friend.

Many people believe that they have a special friend that they can talk to about anything – talking to God is called praying.

We see from Marcellin's life that praying, particularly to Mary, was very important for him to give him strength in difficult times, to give thanks and to seek encouragement to continue his work.

Sometimes people like to pray by themselves, with other people in a group or church or even in their heads. Sometimes we have so many things to pray for we don't know where to start. Here is a tip!



Thumb - The thumb is the closest finger to you. So start praying for those who are closest to you.

Index - The next finger is the index. Pray for those who teach you. They need support and wisdom to help others.

3 - The next finger is the tallest. It reminds us of our leaders. They need guidance.

4 - The fourth finger is the ring finger. It is our weakest finger. It should remind us to pray for the weakest, the sick or those who have problems.

5 - The pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. After you pray for the others you will be able to think about what you really need in a better way.

Here are some prayers Marcellin often said and Marists all around the world still say in his memory.

Hail Holy Queen

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy,
hail, our life, our sweetness and our
hope.

To you we cry, as children of Eve: to
you we send up our sighs, mourning
and weeping in this valley of tears.

Turn then, most gracious Advocate,
your eyes of mercy toward us, lead
us home at last and show unto us
the blessed fruit of your womb,
Jesus, O merciful, O loving,
O sweet Virgin Mary!

Amen



Psalm 127- Marcellins favourite Prayer

Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labour in vain.
Unless the Lord guards the city,
the guard keeps watch in vain.
It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,
after a long days work;
for it is the Lord who gives sleep
to his loved ones.

Children are indeed
a gift from the Lord,
A blessing from the fruit of the womb.
Happy is the person
who has lived a good life.
They will not be put to shame
when they speak with
their enemies at the gate.

To DO:

Marcellin had a special place in his heart for Mary and prayed to her often. How much do you know about Mary? Look up the bible and research some gospel stories about Mary, such as; The Annunciation, The birth of Jesus, The visit to Elizabeth, The Wedding at Cana, and Mary at the Cross. Choose your favourite one and write an account of the Gospel story about Mary. What did this story tell you about the type of person Mary was?





OUR MARCELLIN PRAYER

Marcellin Champagnat, our Founder
 You lived with children and young people;
 You loved them with passion,
 And you devoted all your energies to them.

Help us to create a school community,
 That resonates with his teachings,
 Let us be filled with compassion for others,
 And help us to reach out to them in all their difficulties.
 Marcellin Champagnat, our Founder,
 You thought of the least favoured of young people
 And you founded our Marist Family
 Especially for them

Help us to live the Good News of the Gospel
 Help us to work for solidarity.
 And help us to remember Marcellin's instructions
 to treat all those we meet with,
 'love, and to love them all equally'.

Marcellin Champagnat, our Founder
 Look upon us, and bless us
 As we try to keep alive your dream
 In our community and in our school
 Give us your spirit of practical compassion,
 And may we, like Mary, our good Mother,
 Help them to see the face of Jesus
 In all those who suffer
 And lead us to take action to help them.

Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us
 Saint Marcellin Champagnat, Pray for us.
 Let us always remember, to pray for one another





TO DO:

Sometimes the language used in prayer can be difficult to understand so you can create your own prayer and use your own words. It's what's in your heart that's important. Write a prayer using your words and your thoughts.



Class Activity:

Each student writes their prayer on a piece of paper or sticky note and creates a prayer wall in the classroom. Every morning students take a different prayer to say.

PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

As we come to the end of this module we ask you to take time to reflect on all you have learned. As a class, follow the Marist Liturgy called 'Marcellin in the Snow. You will find this on the Marist USB key or go to:

Go to:

www.maristeu.com - Resources - Marist Curriculum - Year 2 - Marist Liturgy - Marcellin in the Snow.



If you would like to learn more about Marist Education go to www.maristeu.com or contact the Director of Marist Education.

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