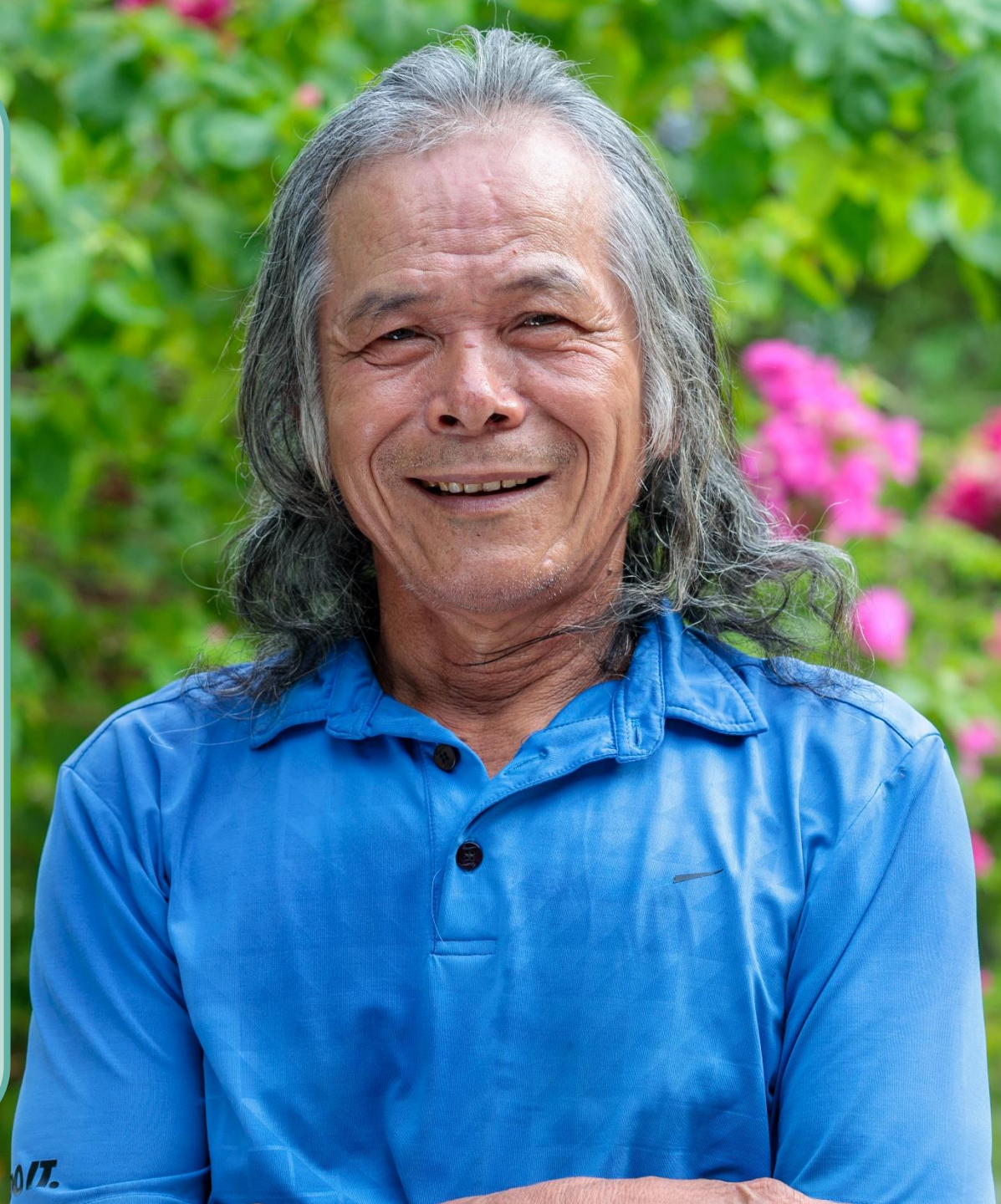




THU'S STORY (VIETNAM)

**PRIMARY (F-2)
CASE STUDY AND
ACTIVITIES**

Photo credit: Phan Tan Lam/Caritas Australia





This is Thu's story.



Thu lives with his wife, Linh, in Vietnam.



Many years ago, there was a war in Vietnam where land mines were used. Even though the war ended in 1975 many unexploded land mines still exist.




When Thu was 12 years old and looking after his cows, he lost his leg when he stepped on an unexploded land mine. Thu now uses a prosthetic leg to walk.



Living with a disability in rural Vietnam, away from the big towns and cities, was hard for Thu, who worked mainly as a rice farmer.



Thu works hard to earn enough money to live, while also caring for his wife, Linh, after she suffered a stroke.



“She is my wife and we have been living together and depending on each other, I am the one to be there with her and for her.”

Thu





Determined to improve their lives, Thu and Linh joined the Empowerment of People with Disabilities program supported by Caritas Australia.



The program assists people living with disabilities to start a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA), or group.



Through his village savings and loan group, Thu was able to get a loan which he used to open his own barber shop!



Thu also joined an incense-making group. He sells incense to earn more money.



Through earning money with his barber shop and selling incense, Thu was able to repair his house.



Before he joined the program, Thu mostly stayed at home.



But now Thu and Linh spend time with friends who all support each other, thanks to the VSLA group, which is a welcoming space for people with a disability.



“I think having a club is good, where people living with disabilities can join and help one another.”

Thu





With the support of Caritas Australia, the Empowerment of People with Disabilities program was able to assist more than 6,300 people in Vietnam in the last year.



"I am grateful to Caritas Australia for the help they give to people living with disability like me and my wife. Thank you to Caritas Australia and the Australian people."

Thu



THU'S STORY

VIETNAM



Read **Thu's Story** and watch the ['Day in the Life' film](#).

TASK 1: CLASS DISCUSSION

- Why was it hard for Thu to earn money to support his family?
- How does Thu earn money now?
- How did Caritas Australia help?
- How will you share Thu's story with others?

Curriculum links: English, HASS

TASK 2: PHOTO STUDY

As a class, view the photos in Thu's Photo Storybook.
Ask students:

- What do the photos show you about Thu's life?
- Which photo do you like the best? Why?
- What questions would you like to ask Thu?
- What do you want to learn more about?

Curriculum links: English, Health and Physical Education

TASK 3: COUNTRY STUDY

Can you find Vietnam on a world map? Using the world map provided and either Google maps or an old-fashioned atlas, locate Vietnam. Colour this country in and label it.

Extension: Which region of the world is Vietnam in: Africa, Europe, Asia, Oceania, North America, or South America? What direction is Vietnam from where you live? What time is it in Vietnam?

Curriculum link: Geography

Thu looks after cows near his home in Quang Tri province, Vietnam. When Thu was 12 years old, he lost his leg after stepping on an unexploded land mine. Photo: Phan Tan Lam/Caritas Australia



TASK 4: CLASS CLUBS

Thu said, "I think having a club (Village Savings and Loans Association) is good, where people living with disabilities can join and help one another. Additionally, there are many meaningful activities from the project to support my family and others."

Students brainstorm what clubs already exist at school and what clubs they would like in their class. Could it be a Lego club, a craft club, a reading club, a computer club? Students choose one idea and record what activities would be involved and how they would make members of the club feel welcome.

Curriculum Links: Health and Physical Education

TASK 5: INCENSE

Thu learnt how to make incense. Incense burning is a common cultural and religious practice in many Asian countries, including Vietnam. A popular time to sell incense is during the Tet Festival (Vietnamese New Year).

Psalm 141:2 "My prayers rise like incense"

Students think, pair, share, some smells they associate with special events. E.g. the smell of gingerbread at Christmastime, or hot cross buns at Eastertime. In Vietnam, for many people it is not only the smell of incense but the act of burning incense that is part of their prayer ritual.

Student brainstorm prayer rituals they do or have seen others do. E.g. Sitting in a particular way, lighting a candle, holding rosary beads, closing their eyes, holding their hands together, holding hands with others, etc.

Incense is used in the Catholic tradition, although not as often at Mass now. There are many references to incense in scripture and the most common incense students might be familiar with is frankincense from the Christmas story.

Research when, how and why incense is used in the Catholic Mass. You could invite your Parish Priest to explain the use of incense in the Catholic tradition and show the students the thurible.

Curriculum Links: Religious Education

TASK 6: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING (CST) LINK – SUBSIDIARITY AND PARTICIPATION

Subsidiarity and Participation

noun

- from the Latin word *subsidium*, meaning support or assistance
- the idea that people and groups have the right to participate in decisions that affect them and, when they can't meet their own needs, other parts of society (e.g., the government) assist with resources and support
- an approach to common life that promotes participation and ensures people are architects of their own development

- A. How is the subsidiarity and participation demonstrated in Thu's story?
- B. How is supporting Project Compassion one way you can promote subsidiarity and participation?

For more teaching resources on Subsidiarity and Participation- refer to our [CST Toolkit](#)

Curriculum Links: Religious Education

TASK 7: RE LINK

The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30–32)

Read the scripture and discuss.

From little things, big things grow! For Thu, he started with a loan for a barber shop. He then went on to join an incense making group. He earned enough money to fix his house. Now he is looking at investing in livestock.

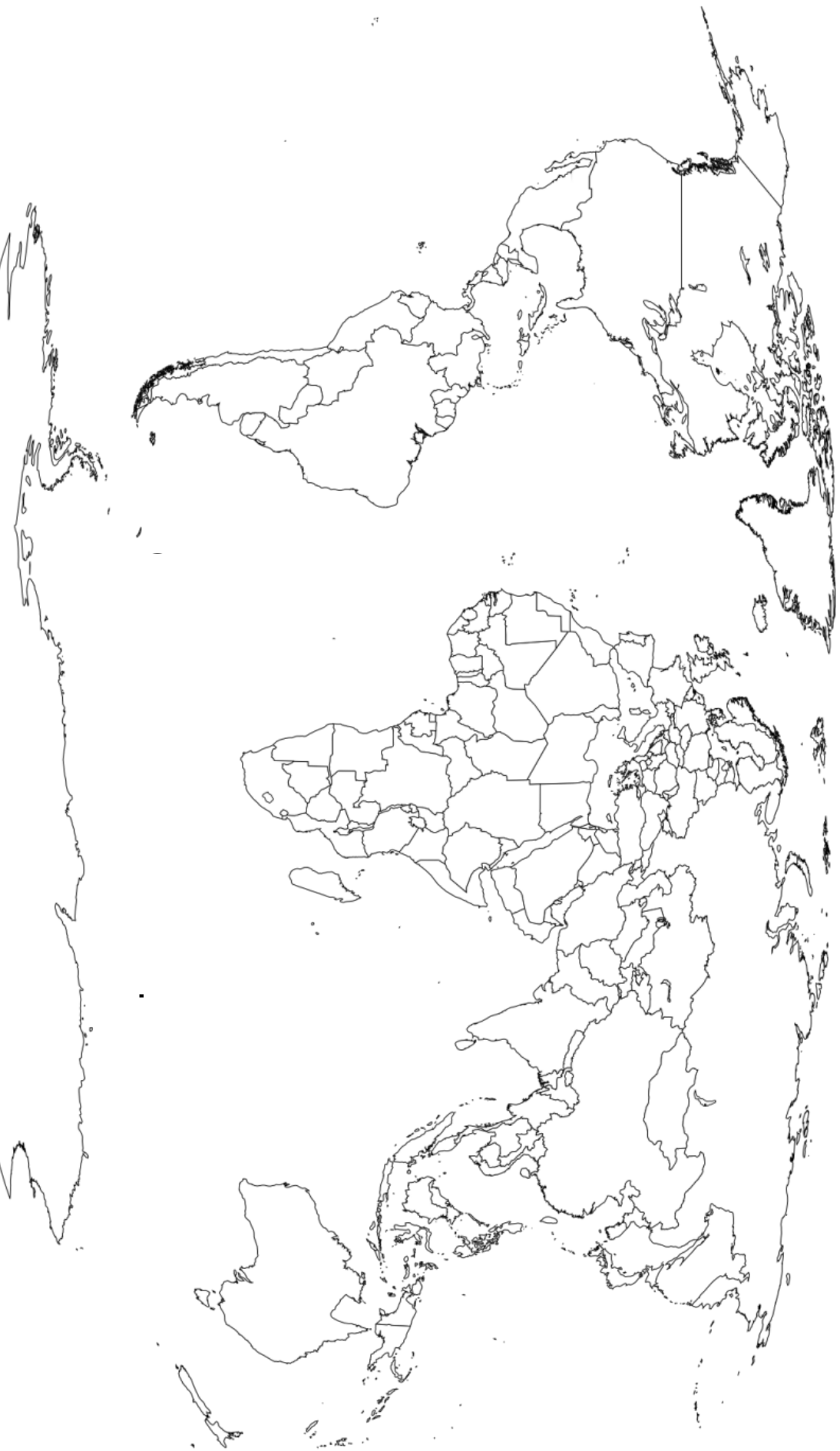
What small steps can your students take that will lead to a better life for themselves and for others?

TASK 8: PRAYER

Write a prayer for Thu and Linh. See worksheet.

Curriculum Links: Religious Education

World Map

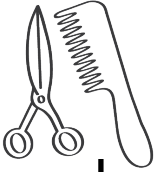


Name: _____



My Prayer for Thu

Write a prayer for Thu and his community in Vietnam.



THANK YOU

PHOTO CREDITS

Thu's Story (Vietnam) – Phan Tan Lam/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

TEACHERS

For more school resources, please visit: caritas.org.au/resources/school-resources/

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



Caritas Australia gratefully acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program.