



PRISCILLA'S STORY (ZIMBABWE)

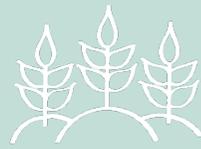
**PRIMARY (3–6)
CASE STUDY AND
ACTIVITIES**

Photo credit: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia



PRISCILLA'S STORY

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Priscilla lives with her husband Charles and two of their grandchildren, Obry (8) and Jayden (7) in the Hwange region, in northwest Zimbabwe.

In Hwange, the impacts of climate change such as unpredictable rainfall, drought, poor quality soils and high temperatures have made it much harder to grow enough food to eat. With almost half of the population living in extreme poverty, on less than \$2.15/day¹, buying food is not an option, leaving many families at risk of extreme hunger.

During times of intense drought and food shortages, Priscilla had to commute to the town centre and wait in long queues to collect food.

“It was stressful because we didn't know what to give our children because there was nothing to give them,” Priscilla said.

Lack of food was also having an impact on children attending school. Women and girls in particular were spending most of their time going out to look for food to feed their families.

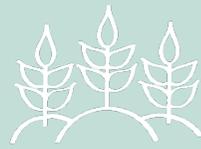
“Life was very difficult,” explained Priscilla. “The challenges we faced included walking long distances to fetch water from the borehole so that we can water our gardens, bathe, wash our clothes and utensils. The manual pumping of the borehole was cumbersome for some of us who have grown old.”

In 2019, Priscilla joined the Zimbabwe Integrated Community Development Program, run by Caritas Australia's partner organisation, Caritas Hwange. Through the program, Priscilla and her community learnt conservation farming. This involves not disturbing the soil too much, using lots of soil cover (mulch) to help retain water and learning about growing a variety of drought-resistant crops which require less water to grow.

Priscilla holds millet from this year's harvest in her storeroom at her home in Hwange district, north-western Zimbabwe.
Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia

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Priscilla was able to produce a bumper harvest in her first year of practising conservation farming. She has grown millet, sorghum, and maize. And, with her new-found knowledge, Priscilla has helped train and support other farmers in her community to learn conservation farming techniques to produce better yields too.

“Even for those who have no knowledge of it, we try to assist them. That’s why we work in groups,” Priscilla said. “We work in a united and productive manner. Each one of us in the group has a role to play. Some do the digging of the basin, while some do the manure.”

Priscilla also used the funds from her harvest to start poultry farming, where she can sell eggs to pay for her grandchildren’s school fees, books, and stationery.

“With the poultry project running, this will be an income-generating source that will help us survive even during droughts,” Priscilla said.

Caritas Hwange repaired a cattle dip tank for Priscilla and her community. The tank is filled with water mixed with insecticide that kills ticks and insects. Back in 2017, a number of Priscilla’s cattle died from tickborne diseases. The dip tanks are a vital resource for the community as they help keep livestock healthy.

“We get milk from the cows and the manure we use in conservation farming comes from the cattle. Protecting our cattle is very important to us as they are a source of emergency funds especially in difficult times such as during a drought,” said Priscilla.

Caritas Hwange’s other activities include repairing a borehole, so Priscilla and her community have access to clean water closer to home and establishing a community garden to grow nutritious vegetables to eat and sell. To help water the community garden and fill the dip tank, a solar-powered water pump was installed.

Priscilla now has the skills and resources she needs to build resilience for her family.

Caritas Hwange’s Zimbabwe Integrated Community Development Program has supported over 10,000 people so far. With your support through Project Compassion, we can all ensure communities have what they need now and for all future generations.

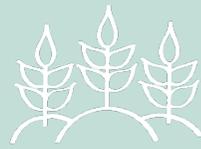
Along with your support, this program is supported by the Australian government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



¹[World Bank](#)

PRISCILLA'S STORY

LEARNING TASKS



Read Priscilla's Story (Zimbabwe) or watch the [film](#).
'[A Day in the Life](#)' film is also available.

TASK 1: DISCUSSION

- Why was it hard for Priscilla to grow enough food to feed her family?
- How did Caritas Australia help?
- How does Priscilla support her family now?
- How is Priscilla supporting others in her community?
- How will you share Priscilla's story with others?

Curriculum links: English, HASS

TASK 2: KAHOOT! QUIZ

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

Curriculum links: English, HASS, Mathematics

TASK 3: 'FOOD FOR LIFE' BOARD GAME

Climate change is impacting many farmers as they try to grow enough food to feed and support their family. Students explore the issue of food security through playing the board game.

Materials needed: printed copies of the board game, markers for each student and a 6-sided die.

Curriculum Links: HASS, Health and Physical Education

TASK 4: CONSERVATION FARMING

Conserving water in the soil is particularly important in drought-affected areas. Discuss some of the principles of conservation farming.

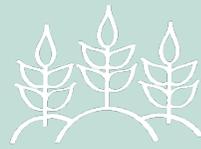
Codesign an experiment with your class in relation to conservation farming. For example, have two pots the same size, filled with the same soil or potting mix. Cover the soil in Pot A with mulch such as straw, woodchips, shredded paper, leaves etc. Leave Pot B with no cover. Water both pots with the same amount of water and leave them in the sun for a few days. Students then remove the covering of Pot A and compare the soil, first by looking at the colour and then by feeling the soil to see if the soil in Pot A that have covering feels more damp/darker in colour than the soil in Pot B.

Students write a report including the title, aim, hypothesis, materials and method, observations and results, analysis, and conclusion.

Curriculum Link: Science, English, Mathematics, HASS

PRISCILLA'S STORY

LEARNING TASKS



TASK 5: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING (CST) LINK – PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR

Preferential option for the poor

noun

- the act of prioritising the needs of the poor over the desires of the rich, the rights of workers over profits and the preservation of the environment over its exploitation
- a way of responding in love to the unjust circumstances in which millions of people live

A. How is preferential option for the poor demonstrated in Priscilla's story?

B. How is supporting Project Compassion one way you can demonstrate preferential option for the poor?

For more teaching resources on Preferential Option for the Poor- refer to our [CST Toolkit](#)

Curriculum links: Religious Education

TASK 6: RE LINK

The Parable of the Sower ([Mark 4:1-20](#))

- Read the scripture passage and discuss:
- What do you think are the key messages of the parable?

Like the seeds that were able to grow and flourish on good soil, what small thing can you do this week that can make a difference to the larger issues of climate change or poverty?

Curriculum links: Religious Education

FOOD FOR LIFE Board Game

Instructions

Use a different coloured marker for each person in your group and one dice. Place your markers at the start. Take turns throwing the dice to see how far to move. See how long it takes you to grow FOOD FOR LIFE.



START
You are a farmer in Zimbabwe

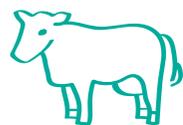


You don't have enough money to buy seeds. Go back 2 spaces.

It hasn't rained so your crops don't grow. Move back 3 spaces.

You learn new farming methods. You grow more food than ever before. Move forward 3 spaces.

You don't have enough money to send your grandchildren to school. Go back 2 spaces.



You need water to keep your plants alive but have to walk a long distance to get it from the borehole. Go back 2 spaces.

A good crop means you have enough money spare to buy some chickens. You now have another way to make a living! Move forward 2 spaces.



A strong wind blows the mulch off your garden, leaving your crops to dry out. Move back 5 spaces.

One of your cows gets sick. You take time to check that others in the herd aren't sick too. Move back 3 spaces.

CONGRATULATIONS!
You now have FOOD FOR LIFE!



You join with others to grow food in the community nutrition garden. Move forward 2 spaces.

You pause from your own work to help train other farmers in your community. Move forward 1 space.



You earn extra money by selling eggs and can now afford to buy school supplies for your grandchildren. Move forward 3 spaces.

THANK YOU

PHOTO CREDITS

Priscilla Story (Zimbabwe) – 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

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](#)



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