

# God is Love

## Fiji's History & Culture

Biographies

Year 7

Term 1





# Thinking about biographies

Use this activity sheet for the biographies on the following pages.

Use the Thinking Hats to write a summary of the biography.

## 1. The White Hat (The facts)

- What is the name of the person? (Write this as a heading)
- When was the person born and when did they die?
- How old were they when they died?
- Where were they born?
- Where did they work?
- What was the main type of work they did?



white

## The Yellow Hat (The good points)

- How did this person help other people?
- Write about one good point that stands out to you in the biography.
- What were the strengths of this person's character?



yellow

## 2. The Black Hat (The bad points)

- What difficulties (hardships) did this person experience?
- Write about any sad events that happened in the person's life.
- What difficulties were the people of the country experiencing? What needs did they have?
- Were there any times in this person's life when they acted wrongly or made a wrong decision?



black

## 3. The Red Hat (Emotions)

- Write about one amazing event in the biography and explain how you felt when you read or heard it.
- Describe some of the emotions of the person and why they felt happy, sad, angry, worried or otherwise.



red

## 4. The Green Hat (The creative hat)

- What creative ideas did this person think of to solve problems?
- If this person did not choose to carry out the work they were called to do, what might have happened? (How would it have been different for people of that country.)



green

## 5. The Blue Hat (What we can learn from the biography)

- What did you learn from the life of this person?
- What does it challenge you to do?



blue

# Amy Carmichael

## Biography

Can you imagine traveling thousands of miles away to help children? Amy Carmichael was known as Amma, which means mother, to many children in India. Discover more about Amy's remarkable life in this lesson.

Have you ever wanted to change something about your appearance, such as the color of your eyes or hair? Amy Carmichael did! When she was a little girl, Amy would pray to God each night to change her brown eyes to blue. To her dismay, her eyes didn't change, but she continued to pray to God, and when she was grown, she became a missionary in India.

Amy Carmichael was the oldest of seven children! She was described as a feisty child who longed for excitement. Amy was born in 1867 in Ireland, an island country close to England. Amy's father owned a mill, so they were able to live in a beautiful home and they had enough money to buy everything they needed.

When Amy was twelve years old, she attended a boarding school, which is a school that students live at. Away from home. Amy was able to come home during breaks and holidays.

Sadly, when Amy was eighteen, her father died, and life changed. The family was no longer wealthy, and she had to help take care of her brothers and sisters.

Amy felt a calling to pursue missionary work, so she left for India in 1895. Amy settled in a town called Dohnavur, which is about thirty miles from the southern tip of India. Amy focused on helping Indian women convert to Christianity, but after meeting a young Indian girl, she felt she needed to help children.

The young girl's name was Preena, and she had been sold to a Hindu temple by her mother. It was common in these times for parents to sell girls to the Hindu temple because it saved them money and they believed they would find favor with the gods. At the age of 5 or 6, many girls were given to the priests to be slaves. They lived in the temple until they were old. Then they were put out of the temple because the girls were no longer useful to the priests. They went to live in groups in the poorest parts of the town.

Preena did not like it at the temple, and she ran away. Amy found Preena, and there was a connection between them. Preena called Amy Amma, which means mother. Amy decided to help children who were sold or abandoned and living in poverty.

One day a baby was brought to Amy to look after, and soon after, another two. More babies followed. Toddlers were brought to her too, especially very pretty little girls whose parents thought that the gods would make them rich if they gave their daughters to them. Some temple women, who desperately didn't want girls to go through all that they had been through, risked their lives to get new babies and toddlers out of the temple and into Amy's care.

For years Amy was a mother to unwanted little girls. She gave them a home, she loved them as though they were her own and she taught them about the Lord Jesus. Not all of them survived because some became ill, and there were no medicines at that time.

One day Amy had an accident. She fell, breaking her leg and damaging her ankle badly. Nowadays she would probably have had surgery and would have been able to walk again. But things were different then, especially in India.

For the next 20 years, Amy was mostly in her bed and rarely out of her bedroom. That didn't stop her loving rescued children and it gave her time to pray for them.

# Hannah Dudley

## Biography

### Part 1

The plantation owners did not care about the Indian people, but the Methodist Church loved them and wanted them to know that the Lord Jesus also loved them. A lady named Hannah Dudley came from the Methodist Church in Australia to help the Indians. Miss Dudley had worked for live years in India so she knew the Hindi language, and knew how people lived, what food they ate, what made them happy and sad, and all about their traditions.

Miss Dudley began work in Suva among the Indian people in Toorak who no longer worked for the plantation owners but were growing vegetables to sell to the white people in Suva. Hannah believed that God brought Indians to Fiji because, "He wanted to save them through the Gospel of His Son". She knew that God loved them very much, that Jesus died so they could have all their sins forgiven and so they could have everlasting life.

Hannah suffered many things so that she could be a good witness to the Indians. She lived as close to the families as she could, ate the same food as them, shared her money and her food, and became so poor she could not afford to go back to Australia when she got sick. The mosquitoes bit her very badly and her legs were poisoned. She could not walk for several weeks. One time she fell into the Rewa River near Davuilevu, and two Fijian boys had to rescue her.

Some Indians didn't want her to talk about Jesus to the Indian people and they spread bad stories about her, that she was not really a trained teacher but a beggar in Australia. When her father died in Australia, she could not go home to be with her mother and brother and sisters; she cried for her father all alone in Fiji. But Hannah was very faithful and hard-working. She visited the homes of the people to tell them about Jesus, and went to comfort those people who were in prison or in hospital. The women loved to welcome her into their very poor homes because she could speak Hindi. They could tell her their stories about their homes and family in India, and they knew she understood because she had lived in India. Also they knew that she, like them, missed her family members.

After a year some people wanted to become Christians and get baptized. People in Australia sent her enough money to build a church where Dudley High School stands today. This was the first Indian Methodist Church in Fiji.

### Part 2

Hannah Dudley felt very sorry for all the children playing around their houses during the day with no one to care for them and no chance to go to school. She knew that unless they learned how to read and write they would not be able to get any better work than the weeding and planting that their parents were doing, so they would never be free or able to earn money to have a better life.

Miss Dudley lived in one room in a house that belonged to somebody else, but she had a verandah on her room. She decided to start a school on her verandah. She went around the Indian homes asking the parents to send their children to her school. Most of the parents only wanted to send their boys to school, but she said girls should also be allowed to come. So many children came that she had to move her school to a church hall. This used to be on the compound where the Centenary Church now stands, then it was moved up to Toorak.

Miss Dudley did not have books or blackboards or many of the things our teachers have today but she did the best she could with what she had available. Some of the Indian fathers said that they wanted to learn to read and write, so they could get better jobs. Hannah agreed that they could come at night after work, and so for three nights of every week she had a night school for men.

Hannah believed that education was important. God is very wise. He has made a wonderful world, and the more we learn the more we can be thankful for this wonderful world that we live in. If people don't know what makes the rain come, what the sun is, how plants grow; how people get sick and get well again, they can have all sorts of wrong beliefs that make their lives very unhappy.

While Hannah was teaching the children and adults how to read and write, she would tell them stories from the Bible. She was teaching the Indians about our Lord Jesus Christ at the same time as teaching them how to read and do mathematics. Hannah Dudley also had a Sunday School, and many of the children came because they liked to hear Bible stories.

The Government only began schools for Indian children in 1911. This was fourteen years after Hannah had begun her work. Today we have the privilege of education and we must thank God for giving us this opportunity, and also thank our parents who working hard so their children can go to school.

### **Part 3**

Imagine that you are nearly blind. If you were nearly blind you would need help to do things like getting dressed, crossing the road, buying things at the shops, and lots of other things. Hannah met a nine-year-old boy who was just like this. Rajesh's mother had run away from her husband because he used to hit her all the time. She got a job as a housekeeper, but the lady who gave her the job said Rajesh was not allowed to live with her. She could only see her son on her one day off each week.

Who would look after Rajesh all the other days? Where would Rajesh live? His grandmother and grandfather and all his aunts and uncles were still in India. The neighbours were too busy and too poor and they had nothing to share with this boy. Rajesh's mother was very worried.

Then Rajesh's mother heard about a nice white lady called Miss Hannah Dudley, who talked about how Jesus loved blind people and healed them. She took Rajesh to see Hannah. Hannah said, "Let Rajesh stay with me."

By then Hannah had a house in Toorak where the Dudley School stands now Rajesh could not go to school because he couldn't see well enough to read, but he loved to listen to the stories Miss Dudley told the children: stories from the Bible, stories about life in India, stories about life in Australia. Hannah knew that Rajesh must one day look after himself so he must learn to do something well enough to earn money She taught him a trade. We don't know what it was. - Perhaps it was polishing peoples' shoes; he could do that by feeling the shoes and feeling how much shoe polish to put on his brush, then rubbing the shoes very hard. Or perhaps he worked in a store putting vegetables into bags; he could count very well. Hannah taught Rajesh to 'see' by feeling things with his fingers, and he became very clever.

Hannah cared for other little children who were left alone when their mothers and fathers died. These children are called orphans. Hannah adopted them and loved them as though they were her own family, even though she was not married and had no husband to help her earn money for their food or school fees. She loved them, and they loved her and began to call her "Hamari Mataji" or "Hamari Maa."

#### **Part 4:**

Hannah Dudley left Fiji when she got too sick to work anymore. She took some of the Indian children whom she had adopted and went back to her home country of Australia. She could only keep the children there until they had finished their education; they were not given permanent residency. So rather than send them back to Fiji, Hannah left her country of birth and went to live in New Zealand, where the children were allowed to become citizens.

One of Hannah's adopted sons, Raymond, became a Minister of the Methodist Church. His fellow-ministers liked him so much they elected him as the President of their Conference. This was the first time they had ever elected someone who wasn't a white New Zealander to become their President, so it was a great honour.

One of Hannah's girls, Piyari got married to Ranjan Mewa, and they bought a shop that sold fruit and vegetables. They had three sons. Three of Hannah's other girls did not marry but they became very good at sewing and were happy living in a nice house in Auckland and going to work each day Hannah grew old and weak, and Piyari and Ranjan took her to live with them. Early on May 2, 1931, Piyari and Ranjan and their children, and all of Hannah's adopted family living in Auckland gathered around her bedside because they knew their beloved Maa was dying. Hannah was very peaceful and quiet; she was not afraid to die because she knew that when she "went through the deepest darkness, she would not be afraid, because Jesus, the good Shepherd, would be with her." (Psalm 23).

Early in the morning of May 3, 1931, Hannah died. Her sisters and brother were still in Australia, but the children she adopted, who were grown up now and her grandchildren, stood around the bed and prayed with her as she died.

They were sad to lose their beloved Maa, but they were happy that she was going to Heaven to see Jesus. They also knew that because they believed in Jesus, loved Him and served Him the

way that Miss Dudley had taught them, and they would also go to Heaven one day. They would all be together again. Hannah once said to a friend that those who believe in Jesus never really die. They just go to sleep in this life and pass through the gate into the presence of Jesus.

### **The Indian Division of the Methodist Church in Fiji & Rotuma**

The Indian people were brought to Fiji from different parts of India between the years 1879 and 1916. Altogether 60,533 Indians came to Fiji during that time to work on the coconut, sugar, cocoa and other plantations that the white people owned in Fiji. The Indians were mostly uneducated people from the villages in India, who did not know where Fiji was - they thought it was in another part of India and that they would be able to live very much the same as they always had.

However, they had to travel over the sea for nearly three months, and when they got to Fiji they were often treated very cruelly by the white plantation owners. They had to live in very poor houses, and were punished if they did not do all the work the overseers expected them to do each day. Often overseers sat on horses and whipped the Indian labourers in the field if they did not work very hard all the time. Other times the Indians had to give back some of their wages as a fine, or they were sent to jail, if there was not enough work done.

The Indian women had to get up at 3 am to bathe, cook breakfast and lunch before they went to the field to work. They carried their babies on their backs and put them to sleep on sacks beside the fields while they worked. Children too old to be carried to the field, played at home without anyone to care for them until they were 8 or 9 years old, then they too had to work on the fields. There was no school at all for them to go to. All the aunts and uncles and grandmothers and grandfathers were back in India, so there was no one to look after the children.

Only 0.1% of the Indians came to Fiji as Christians; 83% were Hindus, Muslims 15% and Sikhs 2%. The Indians were very unhappy and missed their families back in India. Many became so angry they committed murder and other crimes and went to prison. The British Government only allowed four women for every ten men to come, so many men could not get married, and this led to a lot of fighting, divorce and immorality.

Under the indenture system, the Indians had to work for five years and then they were free to stay in Fiji or return to India. If they worked for another five years, they were offered a free passage back to India. If they chose to stay in Fiji, the British Colonial Government said they "would be in all respects free men with privileges of resident in other British Colonies". This led the Indians to believe that they would be politically equal to Fijians once their indentured period was served. 9,000 Indians were put on plantations in the Suva, Nausori and Rewa areas.

**Biography**

## Pandita Ramabai of India

Ramabai was born in the year 1858 in Western India. Her parents like most of the people of India, belonged to the Hindu religion. Her father was a 'pundit', a religious teacher. He was a kindly man and he named his daughter 'Ramabai' or 'Giver of Delight'. He was generous too, especially to the pilgrims who came to his house. Before long all his money was gone. He had to sell his home and became a wanderer himself. Little Ramabai was carried about in a cane basket and she grew up without a home.

Her father was an honoured man. In the Hindu religion there are hundreds of different 'castes' or classes into which people were born. The castes could not mix with each other. The lowest were the 'outcasts' or 'untouchables'. The highest were the Brahmins' or Priests' and Ramabai's father was one of the highest castes. He was welcomed wherever he went. People gladly listened to him reading the Holy writings in the old sacred language called Sanskrit'. He traveled round India to the temples of the gods and his family lived on the gifts of the people. But most of the people of India are quite poor and if the crops fail there is dreadful famine. While Ramabai was still young, both her parents died of starvation. She and her brother were left homeless wanderers.

Ramabai was a clever girl. In those days women were less important than men but her father had even taught her the sacred Sanskrit language. As she traveled through India she learnt other languages too. She longed to use her life in service for others. As a good Hindu she read their holy books, prayed to the idols in the temples, and bathed in the sacred rivers, but slowly Ramabai grew discontented with her religion. The gods never seemed to answer her prayers, and the lazy priests at the temples would not help her, but she felt something even worse about her Hindu religion. Everywhere she went she saw the dreadful unhappiness of Indian girls. By Hindu custom, marriages were arranged by the parents and girls were married by the time they were twelve-years-old. Then, if the boy 'husband' died the girl was left a widow and she would never marry again. In old times, Hindu widows died with their husbands on the funeral pyre. This terrible custom has been forbidden by the British rulers of India, but in 1829 widows were still despised. Hindus believe that we live over and over again, and to be a child widow must be a punishment for evil-doing in a former life. Throughout India Ramabai saw these poor girl-widows harshly treated when they had done nothing wrong. She determined to give her life to helping them.

When she was 20 years old Ramabai went to Calcutta, the largest city of India. No one could sneer when she spoke about the sad lot of Hindu women. Scholars were astonished that she was as clever as they were in the sacred language and in the Hindu scriptures and teachings because women were not allowed to learn the holy Sanskrit language. Besides, Ramabai was not even married. But they recognized her learning and wisdom and called her 'Pandita' or 'Lady Teacher'. Soon afterwards Ramabai married the man she loved and a little girl was born to her, 'Manoramabai' - 'The Joy of my Heart'. Ramabai had broken the custom by marrying

a man from the lowest caste of all. When her husband died she was left a widow. But she refused to live in misery or to give up her great ambition.

Ramabai went to the city of Poona. There for the first time she met Christian missionaries and read the Gospel of Jesus in her own language. The Sisters of St. Mary the Virgin showed her Christian love and encouraged her in her work. Ramabai wrote books about it and, when she had saved enough money, she went to England to study and then to America. When she returned to India to take up her life's work, she was a Christian. She had found in the Good News of Jesus the answer to all her prayers.

In 1889 Ramabai set up her first Widows' Home in Bombay. She was helped by gifts from friends in England and America. Her Home grew so quickly that she needed a bigger house. She found one in Poona and there the unhappy girl-widows found happiness. Ramabai never tried to change their religion but before long the girls wanted to share the joy that Ramabai found in the worship of Jesus. The fame of her Home spread and more girls came to it. Ramabai traveled round the cities disguised as a beggar, rescuing girl-widows from cruelty and starvation.

When plague broke out in Poona, Ramabai moved her Home out into the countryside. She had bought a piece of land there with money from her friends abroad. It made an excellent settlement for her girls and before long it became famous as 'Mukii Sadan' - 'The Home of Salvation'. Ramabai had three women to help her teach and train her 300 girl-widows. One of the three was her own daughter, Manoramabai. She could not refuse anyone in need and by 1900 Ramabai had 700 girls in her country Home. It was a Christian village with its own church and houses, and wells, and its own orchards and vegetable gardens. Ramabai's girls grew into fine young women. There was much to be done in the houses and out on the land, in the laundry and in the bake-house. On the looms the girls learnt to weave their own clothes. They helped to print the Bible that Ramabai had translated into their own language.

They joined in the worship of the village church and many of them were baptized into the Christian Church. The fame of Ramabai and her work spread far and wide. In the year 1919 King George V honoured her with a gold medal for her devoted service to the women of India. From 'The Home of Salvation' her girls went out to marry and set up their own Christian homes. Ramabai died in 1922 but her influence lives on still today' in the new India, for Pandita Ramabai brought new honour and respect for the women of her country

### **Revision Questions**

1. What is famine? What causes it?
1. How important was it to Ramabai that she knew how to read and to speak in different languages?
2. What cause did Ramabai want to give her life to?
3. How many girls lived in 'The Home of Salvation' by the year 1900?
4. What did the girls learn to do?