



# Mother Teresa

## MOTHER TERESA

### PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Have you heard of Mother Teresa? If so, what do you know about her?
2. Do you know where Macedonia is? If not, look at a world map and locate it.
3. Have you ever been to India?
4. Have you heard of the disease called “leprosy”? If so, what do you know about it?
5. What is the Nobel Peace Prize? Can you name any recipients of this prize?





ESL Lesson Plans - Famous People - Mother Teresa

## **Mother Teresa**

Mother Teresa was a Catholic nun who helped the poor, the sick, and the dying in India and around the world.

She was born Agnes Gonxhe Bojaxhui on August 27, 1910, in what is now Macedonia. At age 18, she joined the Sisters of Loreto, a Catholic order in Dublin, Ireland, to become a nun. The Sisters also did charity work in India. Two years later, in 1930, they sent her to Calcutta to teach in a high school.

When she took her final religious vows in 1937, she took the name “Teresa” in honor of St. Teresa of Lisieux.

In 1948, Mother Teresa became an Indian citizen. She also left the high school and the Sisters of Loreto to start her own religious order. She called it the Missionaries of Charity. It was dedicated to helping Calcutta’s poorest people.

By the 1960s, Mother Teresa and her nuns had set up orphanages for children, hospices for the dying, and homes for those with leprosy all over India. In 1965, they began to open missions in other countries, including the United States.

Many people were inspired by Mother Teresa. The Missionaries of Charity includes more than 4,000 nuns and more than 100,000 volunteers who help the nuns run schools, hospitals, orphanages, and food centers in over 120 countries. Many more people give money to support their work.

Mother Teresa received several international awards for her charity work, including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. Rich and famous people often came to Calcutta to meet her. Yet she remained a humble, simple person who always wore a plain white sari with a blue border.

Mother Teresa died on September 5, 1997. The government of India honored her with a state funeral. In October 2003, Pope John Paul II named her “Blessed Mother Teresa.” The Catholic Church may declare Mother Teresa a saint in the future.

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

**A. True or False. Read the statements below. If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F. If it is false, correct the information.**

1. Mother Teresa was born in India. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Mother Teresa was an Indian citizen. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Mother Teresa was once a teacher. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Mother Teresa's religious order works only in India. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The Indian government respected Mother Teresa. \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the answers in complete sentences.**

1. What did Mother Teresa do when she first went to India? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the name of the first religious order Mother Teresa joined? What was the name of the order she started? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the main goal of Mother Teresa's religious order? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What had Mother Teresa and her order accomplished by the 1960's? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What do the Missionaries of Charity do today? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What kind of person was Mother Teresa? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How did the Indian government honor Mother Teresa after her death? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What might the Catholic Church do regarding Mother Teresa in the future? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**VOCABULARY REVIEW****A. Match the words on the left with the correct meaning on the right.**

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| _____ 1. nun       | a. show respect  |
| _____ 2. order     | b. a place where religious or charitable work is done                                    |
| _____ 3. charity   | c. operate, manage   |
| _____ 4. vow       | d. a woman who is a member of a religious order  |
| _____ 5. dedicated | e. ceremony and burial of a dead person  |
| _____ 6. orphanage | f. promise   |
| _____ 7. hospice   | g. having a very modest or simple opinion of oneself                                     |
| _____ 8. mission   | h. a religious group   |
| _____ 9. inspire   | i. a place to live for children whose parents are dead                                   |
| _____ 10. run      | j. give feelings or thoughts or confidence to someone; encourage someone to do something |
| _____ 11. humble   | k. kind help for the poor, the sick, children, etc.                                      |
| _____ 12. honor    | l. a place for very sick and dying people to live  |
| _____ 13. funeral  | m. given or set apart for a special purpose  |

**B. Choose the correct word from the left column above to complete the following sentences.**

1. When a man and woman get married, they make a \_\_\_\_\_ to love each other forever.
2. He has \_\_\_\_\_ his whole life to helping sick people and poor people.
3. When the president of the company got sick, he asked his son to \_\_\_\_\_ the business for him.
4. When her parents died, she went to live with her aunt and uncle. They didn't want her to live in an \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The teacher wants to \_\_\_\_\_ her students to work hard.



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**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Do you ever do charity work? If so, what kind of charity work do you do?
2. Why do you think so many people were inspired by Mother Teresa?
3. Is it common in your country for people who are dying to spend their last few weeks or months in hospices or do most people remain in the hospital or at home?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
5. Why do you think so many rich and famous people wanted to meet Mother Teresa, who was such a simple, humble person?

**Notes:**

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**ANSWER KEY****PRE-READING QUESTIONS**

- 1 - 3. Individual answers (and...)
4. Individual answer or (Leprosy is a serious infectious disease that attacks the skin and nerves. It occurs most often in warm and wet areas in the tropics and subtropics. Throughout history, people have considered leprosy to be a terrible disease and people with this illness have been kept in separate, isolated places far away from healthy people.)
5. The Nobel Peace Prize is given for special achievements in humanitarian work, peace efforts, work in the area of human rights, etc. (The Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, Mikhail Gorbachev, Jimmy Carter, and Mother Teresa, are just a few of the many recipients of this award.)

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS****A. True or False**

1. F                    2. T                    3. T                    4. F                    5. T

**B. Written answers**

1. She taught in a high school.
2. The first religious order she joined was called the Sisters of Loreto. Her own religious order was called the Missionaries of Charity.
3. The main goal of her order was to help the poorest people of Calcutta.
4. By the 1960s, Mother Teresa and her order had set up orphanages for children, hospices for the dying and homes for people with leprosy.
5. The Missionaries of Charity run schools, hospitals, orphanages and food centers all over the world.
6. She was a very humble, simple person who devoted her life to helping people.
7. The Indian Government honored Mother Teresa with a state funeral. (A state funeral is usually only held for government leaders.)
8. The Catholic Church may declare Mother Teresa to be a saint in the future.

**VOCABULARY REVIEW****A. Matching**

1. d                    2. h                    3. k                    4. f                    5. m                    6. i                    7. l                    8. b  
9. j                    10. c                    11. g                    12. a                    13. e

**B. Choose the correct word**

1. vow                    2. dedicated                    3. run                    4. orphanage                    5. inspire