

## Sorry Day

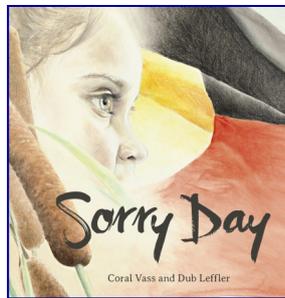
By Coral Vass & Illustrated by Dub Leffler

Publisher: National Library of Australia

ISBN 9780642279033 SCIS: 1859219

\$24.99

There was a hum of excitement. Flags flickered in the breeze as Maggie's heart danced with delight. 'This is a very special day!' her mother said. Maggie holds tight to her mother as they await the long anticipated apology to show a willingness to reconcile the past for future generations. In the excitement of the crowd Maggie loses touch of her mother's hand as is lost. In a time 'long ago and not so long ago' children were taken from their parents, their 'sorrow echoing across the land'. As the Prime Minister's speech unfolds Maggie is reunited with her mother. But the faces and memories of the stolen generation are all around them. Two stories entwine in this captivating retelling of the momentous day when the then Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, acknowledged the sorrows of past and said 'Sorry' to the generation of children who were taken from their homes.



Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

### Themes:

- Indigenous experiences
- Sorry Day

### Discussion Questions & Activities:

- Look at the cover of the book with the class. What do you think the book will be about? What makes you say that?
- Why do we apologise?
- What is the difference between official and a personal apology?
- Have there been any other apologies to groups in history by cities, governments or countries?
- Use the school library and local council websites to find out about the Traditional Custodians of the land your school is built on and the land your family lives on. Find out five facts about the Traditional Custodians, such as the languages they speak and the stories associated with these languages.
- Does your school have a 'Welcome to Country' statement? Have you ever heard one, for example at an event or in a public building? Write out a 'Welcome to Country' statement.
- Why do you think this statement is used at many ceremonies and public events?
- Discuss the meaning of 'Traditional Custodians of this Land' and 'Elders'. Why is it important to acknowledge and pay respect to Elders both past and present?
- Research the Australian, Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal flags. What do the various symbols on each flag represent?
- Discuss the effects of the Assimilation Policy, which was introduced in Australia from approximately 1951 to 1962.
- Why do you think the Prime Minister apologised for the effects of the Assimilation Policy?
- Discuss the following question in your class: Are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have made a significant contribution to this country celebrated as much or in the same ways as equally significant non-Indigenous Australians?
- Choose one significant Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander who was affected by the Assimilation Policy or who fought for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights, and research their life. Examples might include Eddie Mabo, Faith Bandler or Adam Goodes. Design ten questions you could ask your chosen person, to find out more about their life and their experience.
- Write a list of some of the laws that were imposed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- From your list, choose one law to focus on and answer these questions:
  - \* In what ways did this law impact the life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
  - \* In what ways did it affect later generations?
- Draw or paint a picture to illustrate the importance of the National Apology in paving the road to reconciliation.
- Use the school library and online sources to investigate National Reconciliation Week and National Sorry Day. Find out:
  - \* When the annual celebration is held?
  - \* Why the annual celebration is held?
  - \* What is happening/happened in your local area to celebrate these events this year?
  - \* Design posters to promote and celebrate National Reconciliation Week and National Sorry Day at your school.