

Learning Sequence 3, Teacher Resource 1

Leadership of Ursula Frayne 1846 - 1857

Main events in the Swan River Colony from 1845 to 1857

This sequence of events covers the years that Mother Ursula Frayne led the Sisters of Mercy Foundation in Perth.

| Date | Event |
|------------------------------|--|
| 6 May 1845 | Diocese of Perth was established. John Brady was consecrated Bishop of Perth. |
| 7 January 1846 | The 7 Sisters of Mercy arrived in Fremantle after a voyage of 113 days on the ship the ' <i>Elizabeth</i> ' as part of a group of 28 missionaries led by Bishop Brady, which included Spanish Benedictine priests, brothers and lay Catholics. |
| Jan 1846 to Feb 1847 | Andrew Clarke was Governor of the Swan River colony. He was ill from July 1846. Son of a Protestant Irishman and a devout Anglican, Clarke was not supportive of the Catholic Bishop and the Sisters of Mercy. |
| February 1846 | Sisters of Mercy began the school in Victoria Square which became the first secondary school for girls in Australia and is the present site of Mercedes College. |
| 1847 | The first welfare home for Aboriginal girls was established in Perth. |
| 1847 | Foundation stone of the first Convent of Mercy - The Holy Cross. The Convent is still in use today by Mercedes College as their art department. |
| 1848 | A branch convent and St Francis Xavier's school was established in Fremantle. Bishop Brady ordered the Sisters to leave the school in May 1849 due to lack of money. |
| December 1848 | Three new Irish Sisters of Mercy arrived in the colony. |
| February 1847 to August 1848 | Frederick Irwin was acting Governor of WA. Irwin's administration was unpopular among many colonists due to the poor financial state of the colony. |
| August 1848 to July 1855 | Charles Fitzgerald was Governor of the colony. |
| 1849 (September) | The first Sisters of Mercy Pension School was opened. |
| June 1850 | The first convicts from Great Britain arrived in the Swan River colony. A total of 9721 male convicts were transported to the colony between 1850 and 1868. |
| 1852 | The Pope invited Brady to Rome where he was asked to resign as Bishop of Perth and Serra to stand in as Bishop. However, Brady returned to Perth claiming that he was still Bishop. This led to conflict between the two "Bishops" of Perth. Catholics were divided between supporters of Brady and supporters of Serra. |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| July 1853 | St Joseph's Boarding School was opened. |
| 1853 | A primary school was established in Dardanup using lay teachers and supervised by a local priest. |
| 1854 | 18 per cent of the colony's population were Roman Catholics. The numbers were boosted by the arrival of free settlers, Irish Catholics amongst the convicts, and government-sponsored Irish women. |
| 1855 | There were 13 Sisters in the Convent of the Holy Cross . |
| September 1855 | St. Teresa's Branch Convent was opened in Guildford. This was closed in 1861 owing to the illness of M. Baptist O'Donnell and reopened in 1881. |
| July 1855 to February 1862 | Arthur Kennedy was Governor of the Swan River colony. |
| January 1857 | Mother Ursula Frayne, Sisters Anne Xavier Dillon and Joseph Sherlock moved to Melbourne to begin a new Foundation (which began in March 1857). |
| 1859 | The New Norcia Mission separated from the Perth diocese. |

Activities

This information can be developed into two student activities:

1. Vocabulary development. Discuss the meanings of the **bolded** terms. Students could write out the term and its meaning on separate coloured pieces of paper. These could be matched on a Word Wall developed to build student vocabulary.
2. Sequencing events. Teacher could construct a timeline from 1845 to 1857 for the students.
 - a) A horizontal timeline with a scale of 1 year equals 2cm beginning in 1846 and ending in 1857.
 - b) The title could be – Changes during the Leadership of Mother Ursula Frayne.
 - c) Students add the information from the table above to the timeline using clear printing. (An online timeline can also be developed using one of the programs available).
 - d) Write one paragraph to describe the changes brought by the Sisters of Mercy to the Colony while Ursula Frayne was the leader of the Sisters of Mercy in the colony. (Schools, Aboriginal welfare and new Convent). The students could create a series of sketches to show the changes brought by the Sisters from 1845 to 1857 which could be displayed around the room.

Alternatively you can enlarge the table and cut out the events, jumble them up and provide an opportunity for the students to work in groups to organise them in the correct chronological order. Each group could choose one event to research further and develop an artistic or visual collage to display and explain to the class.

Learning Sequence 3, Teacher Resource 2

The Leadership of Ursula Frayne 1846 - 1857

Growth of Education in the Colony

Up to the 1840s there were few government supported schools (called Colonial schools) and limited free education in the Swan River Colony. An early government school was Guildford Colonial School which began in 1833. However, during the first ten years of the Colony a series of small private schools were established, run by the Church of England, other religious groups or by private teachers. These schools usually did not last more than 6 months because of the small number of students or lack of interest in the subjects offered. Killerby estimated that possibly 100 out of the 600 children of school age in the Colony had received any education by the early 1840s.

(Source: Killerby 1996, p. 126)

From their initial school in 1846, which only attracted one student on the first day, the Sisters of Mercy became successful in attracting students to their schools. Reasons for the growing numbers of children attending the Sisters of Mercy schools included:

1. The Sisters were recognised for their quality of teaching, thoroughness and excellent organisation. Sisters such as Mother Ursula Frayne and Sister Mary Anne Xavier were experienced and dedicated teachers, while all of the Sisters devoted their lives to teaching as part of their vows..

2. The Sisters actively sought out Catholic children to attend their schools and confronted parents if children did not attend or missed schooling.

"As Catholic children would not come to us, we determined on going to seek them, convinced as we were in our own minds, that they were to be found. Accordingly, we obtained from the Bishop a list of names and residences of all the inhabitants who were known or suspected to be Catholics. The letters "o.b." after these latter puzzled us a little, but the explanation was beautiful for its simplicity: if they are not Catholics, they 'ought to be'."

Source: Ursula Frayne 1864, p.17.

3. The Sisters accepted children from all religions into their schools. In following the Irish Educational System they provided one half an hour of general Christian education and then an hour of specific Roman Catholic instruction.

Source: Killerby 1996, pp. 126 -128.

The Growth and Character of the Mercy Schools

1. The first convent school was established in Victoria Square in 1846. Here is a description by Ursula Frayne of supplies for the first school:

"a supply of school book, copies (copybooks), slates which the Bishop [Brady] had brought from Europe ; but the school room table, desk or form we had none. To requisites which seemed indispensable, my reply was, "do the best you can". ...The sister [Mary Anne Xavier] set to work... Once more the packing cases were called out of their hiding places...and did duty as desks. A few planks placed on bricks which were picked up around the grounds, served for seats, and a veranda back of the convent could make a very good school, at least during the summer of that delightful climate." (Source: McLay, Anne rsm, 1992, p. 26)

2. April 1847: the Benevolent Institution for Aboriginal children and poor European children was opened. Benevolent institution children were educated with the others.

3. St Francis Xavier's School in Fremantle began in December 1847, but only stayed open for two years.

4. In 1849: the Sisters began Our Lady of Mercy School, the first secondary school in Western Australia. The following advertisement appeared in the Inquirer on 1 August 1849:

The Sisters of Mercy, possessing every facility, have arranged to open on the 3rd of September, a distinct Day School for a limited number of young ladies. Besides a solid English education, comprising Grammar, Geography, History, Writing, Arithmetic etc, etc, the French Language will be taught; also music, drawing and plain and ornamental works.

5. A newly constructed "School House" was opened on 25 July 1853 with 279 students. The building had four large rooms, two above and two below. Each was a school room housing one of the four schools.

1. The Pension school (fee paying) - Our Lady of Mercy School

2. An assisted or free school - St Joseph's School

3. A fee paying primary school - St Mary's Middle School

4. An Infants' school for girls and boys under the age of 7 - Holy Angels School

Ursula Frayne was pleased with the new School House and commented that the building was "one of great public activity, an ornament to the town, a standing monument of what persevering exertion can accomplish". The new school had cost £800 to build; of this the Sisters raised £355 through donations, fetes, lotteries and subscription lists. Ursula wrote further on the achievement: "After this example let no one yield to discouragement or be deterred by difficulties from at least attempting good works. In less than 12 months, what had seemed impossible had become an accomplished fact. The schools were built and paid for with money collected in poverty-stricken Perth."

Source: Killerby 1996, pp. 195-196.

5. St Theresa's Convent school in Guildford was opened in August 1855. The church school was housed in adjoining residences. Approximately 30 children attended the new school, twice the number who attended Guildford's Colonial school.

6 In 1857 a school was opened in Dardanup, with support from a wealthy Roman Catholic, Thomas Little.

Activity

Using evidence from this page and "**Leadership Student Resource 1: The expansion of schools**" instruct the students to develop a **Y chart** on what classrooms looked like, sounded like and felt like during the 1840s. Then write a story based on the daily routine and activities of a student attending Our Lady of Mercy School during the late 1840s.



The 1848 Convent of Mercy (middle building), which is where the St Joseph's Catholic Girls' Orphanage began. Source State Library of Western Australia, BA1886/797

http://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b3033226_1.jpg



A copybook used in Boston, USA, around 1840

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copybook_\(education\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copybook_(education))

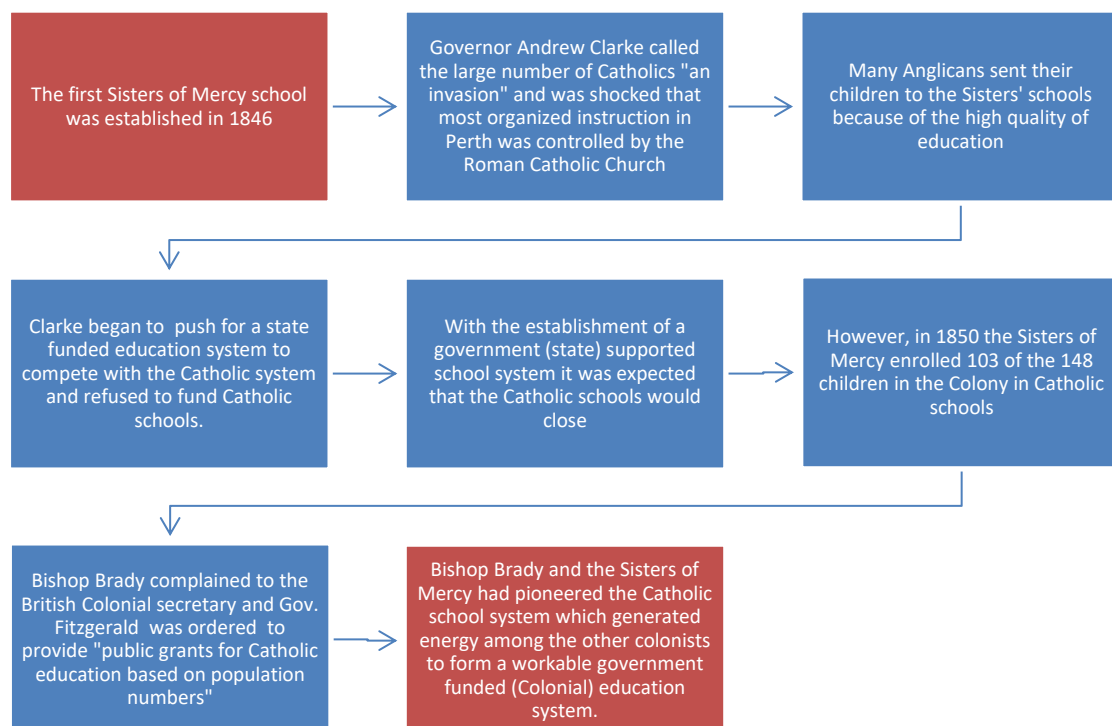
Learning Sequence 3, Teacher Resource 3

The Leadership of Ursula Frayne 1846 - 1857

Cause and Effect - The impact of the Sisters of Mercy on Education in the Colony

The first permanent Catholic school in Western Australia was established by the Sisters of Mercy in 1846. The Sisters' dedication and struggle against economic, social and political opposition to create a Catholic education system had lasting effects on Western Australia. One of the most important effects was to prompt the Government to fund primary school education in the Colony.

Cause and Effect: Catholic Education and the development of Colonial schools



Information from Mossenson 1992, pp. 9-15

Activity:

Use the Cause and Effect diagram to prepare a headline and short editorial for the Inquirer Newspaper on the impact of the Sisters of Mercy on education in the Swan River Colony.

Note: During the nineteenth century public or government funded education in Australia was often called National education, after the system in Great Britain. Instead of using the term National education the government in the Swan River Colony called public funded education Colonial Education.

Learning Sequence 3, Teacher Resource 4

The Leadership of Ursula Frayne 1846 - 1857

Who's who in the Colony

Students can be directed to undertake research to create a profile or summary card on one of the following people who influenced the lives of the Sisters of Mercy from 1846 to 1857, the years that Ursula Frayne was Mother Superior of the Mercy Convent in Perth. Important people to be researched include:

- **Bishop Brady**
- **Dom Rosendo Salvado**
- **Bishop Serra**
- **Governor Andrew Clarke**
- **Acting Governor Frederick Irwin**
- **Governor Charles Fitzgerald**



Sample from the Trading Cards website

Activity:

Allocate one person to each group of four or five students (or have students select a name from a slip of paper in a box). Instruct them to create a trading card or individual profile of their particular person.

Students should research the following on their particular person:

Name and background,
role in the colony,
relationship with the Sisters of Mercy,
influence on the Sisters' mission in the Swan River Colony.

As the teacher you may choose to download the Trading Cards template found at the following website:

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/trading_cards_2/

The profiles can be used in a trading game, where students can swap cards and learn about each person, initiate their own questions for research and/or develop a class quiz.

These online references and information from the Sisters on people in the list will assist you to support your students to complete this activity.

Dom Salvado

<https://atributetoaustralianchristians.wordpress.com/2013/09/03/rosendo-salvado/>

<http://www.carnamah.com.au/bio/rosendo-salvado>

<https://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au/heritage/heritage>

Bishop Brady

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/brady-john-1821>

<http://www.perthvista.com/history-of-the-catholic-church-in-wa.html>

Also includes some information on Bishop Serra

Bishop Serra

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/serra-joseph-benedict-4560>

Governor Andrew Clarke

<http://members.iinet.net.au/~perthdps/graves/bio-09.htm>

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/clarke-andrew-1901>

Frederick Irwin

<https://www.constitutionalcentre.wa.gov.au/ExhibitionsOnline/GovernorsAndPremiers/Governors/Pages/Irwin.aspx>

An extract from <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/irwin-frederick-chidley-2263>

It was in the educational field that the acting governor's policies achieved more enduring results. The Catholic Church had been recently established in the colony under the care of Bishop John Brady. Although his congregation was quite small, Brady brought a large party of priests and several nuns of the Irish Sisters of Mercy to Perth. When Brady proceeded to found schools which Protestant children attended, Anglican leaders including Irwin became infuriated, for at that time the Church of England could not afford schools of its own. Governor Clarke had refused Brady's application for state aid for his schools, and had also attempted to found National schools, though with little success. When Irwin assumed control he pursued Clarke's policy with greater vigour. He clashed with Brady over a proposed marriage bill, over an allotment for a Catholic cemetery, and over the prelate's title of address on official correspondence. In particular Irwin was determined to challenge the superior position in education which the Catholic Church had achieved. Accordingly in 1847 he created a General Board of Education of which he and several other prominent Anglicans were members. Assisted by government subsidies for teachers' salaries, the board founded schools based upon broad Christian principles in Perth and in the other main centres of population. In this way the board originated the state school system of education in Western Australia.

Governor Fitzgerald

<https://www.constitutionalcentre.wa.gov.au/ExhibitionsOnline/GovernorsAndPremiers/Governors/Pages/Fitzgerald.aspx>

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/fitzgerald-charles-2047>

Ursula wrote about the support for the Sisters provided by Rosendo Salvado:

[A fete] took place on Tuesday and Wednesday of Easter week. Three tables were full and displayed in the school room. Bishop Salvado played on the piano for an hour.

Bishop Brady

Comments by Ursula Frayne in a letter to the Mother Superior in Dublin dated November 1846. She noted that in the first three months in the Colony Bishop Brady supported the Sisters' activities and allowed them to make their own decisions and was pleased with their work. However, in her words Ursula felt that his attitude changed toward the Sisters of Mercy and he did not understand their independent way of working.

"Bishop Brady is our spiritual and temporal (earthly) guardian as well as Confessor...in fact every ...circumstance he brings under his inspection and direction... If the Bishop saw a Sister, and she did not instantly approach to get his blessing...it would be set down as marked disrespect. If I make any change in the duties of the Sisters without consulting him, it is considered too much reliance on my own judgement [and] want of humility". (Source: Byrne 1981, p 46)

Dom Joseph Serra

In 1849 the Sisters of Mercy received money from Dom Serra to build a house for Aboriginal girls. Yet in 1850 Serra tried to stop the building works. Ursula was in Rome at the time and wrote to Bernard Smith in Perth saying: "Remember you are not to obey Dr Serra if he orders you not to get the children's cottage built, he has no authority to give such an order." (Source: McLay 1992, p. 63)

Learning Sequence 3, Teachers Resource 5

The Leadership of Ursula Frayne 1846 - 1857

A letter to Queen Victoria for Aboriginal children

1. Schools for "Native children"

Ursula Frayne held great interest in Aboriginal people and believed in the importance of education, conversion and "civilisation" of Aboriginal children. In 1855 the Wesleyan Missionary, Samuel Hardy, made the following comment in a letter to his church.

"Not one [Aboriginal] is seen to frequent any place of worship, except for the Romanist Church, for the Sisters of Mercy are still attempting something on behalf of the aboriginal girls. Otherwise no one seems to care for their souls or bodies." (Killerby 1996, pp 198 -199)

Ursula Frayne was determined to assist Aboriginal children but there was very little money in the Catholic community to house and educate these children. However, over the period from 1846 to 1853 the Sisters of Mercy opened a Benevolent Institution and cared for at least 10 Aboriginal girls. Some of Ursula's actions to improve the education of "Native children" included:

- A letter to Queen Victoria in England in 1847 asking for money to build a home for Aboriginal children as she said "...to end their wandering and...their ignorance of [Christ]....we plead on behalf of Your Majesty's European and Native subjects of Western Australia. In their name we beg a site on which to raise the necessary building, a portion of land fit for cultivation, and some [monetary] assistance towards accomplishing the projects we have in view." (McLay 1992, p 62)
- In April 1847 the Benevolent Institution was opened for Aboriginal girls and poor European children. The Aboriginal children were educated with the European pupils and in the first public examination their results equalled the European students much to the delight of the Sisters.
- In 1853 Ursula wrote to Governor Fitzgerald asking for a government grant to support the Benevolent Institution.
- 5th July, 1853 at the opening of the new School House at the Convent of the Holy Cross Governor Fitzgerald gave £100 and a separate donation of £60 for the care of the Aboriginal girls.
- Mary Catherine Palamira, a young Aboriginal girl, was taken by Ursula and Mary Anne Xavier to Italy and Great Britain in 1850. The journey aimed to report on the Perth Mission, recruit more nuns and raise money. Mary Catherine attended school in London but died in less than a year.

2. Attitudes toward Aboriginal people during the 1800s

The Sisters of Mercy believed, like most colonists in the 1800s, that European education and the Christian religion were essential to improve the lives of Aboriginal children. The Sisters separated these children from their parents to teach them "superior" religious and cultural values. One of the Sisters wrote: "the native children ...are going on well. They are dear, good natured little pets. They have almost completely forgotten their native language which we hope will secure them from joining their own people". (McLay 1992, p 58)

From 1847 the New Norcia Mission, 132 kilometres north of Perth, slowly emerged through the untiring efforts of Rosendo Salvado, the only Benedictine missionary who at this time successfully began a mission in rural Western Australia. Salvado created St Mary's Mission (from 1848) and the St Joseph's Native School and Orphanage (from 1861) which were run by the Benedictine monks. By the 1860s New Norcia Mission was successfully educating Aboriginal children. Salvado was a keen student of the beliefs and language spoken by the local Aboriginal Yued people. His cooperation with the Aboriginal community assisted in the growth of the Mission during Salvado's lifetime (to 1900). Schooling at New Norcia was focused on practical skills and many young people worked at the Mission after they left school. Sheep and cattle production, cultivation of crops, fruit and vegetable gardens and a vineyard sustained a population of over 200 Aboriginal people in New Norcia by the 1890s. Excellent images of life in New Norcia can be found through the State Library of WA "Storylines" website. See <http://storylines.slwa.wa.gov.au/archive/archive.php> Go to "Place" and then click on "New Norcia".

Student Activity: Perspectives on the education of Aboriginal children:

Students work in groups using information from the primary and secondary source material provided on this resource sheet to answer the following questions.

1. *What point of view would the Sisters of Mercy, Rosendo Salvado and an Aboriginal Elder have on the following aspects of Aboriginal education?*

| Area of education | Sisters of Mercy | Rosendo Salvado | An Aboriginal Elder |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Retaining Aboriginal language | | | |
| Hunting and gathering in a nomadic existence | | | |
| Keeping the traditional beliefs of Aboriginal people | | | |

3. In what ways have the attitudes towards the education of Aboriginal children changed since the mid-1800s?

Learning Sequence 3, Student Resource 1

The Leadership of Ursula Frayne 1846 - 1857

The expansion of schooling



Image Source: <http://www.mercy.org.au/history/>

The Sisters of Mercy gave special attention to education in the Swan River Colony. Although they were not the first Roman Catholic Sisters to come to Australia, the Sisters of Charity came to NSW in 1838, the Sisters of Mercy were the first teaching order and their impact on education in Western Australia was very important.

Access the Virtual Museum of the Sisters of Mercy at:

<http://institute.mercy.org.au/about-us/archives-and-heritage/virtual-museum/>

Read Section 4 "Education" of the Virtual Museum, and conduct research when directed, to find the answers to the following questions. As you are reading through the information choose two artefacts (historical items) from the Museum which are not found in schools today. Think about the artefacts and write anything about them that makes you wonder (such as their use and how being in a classroom has changed).

1. How soon after arriving in the colony did the Sisters of Mercy open their first school?
2. What are some of the subjects studied in the schools which are shown in the images?
3. Carefully study the photograph of "Classroom at Mount Gambier South Australia" on page 5. Discuss with a partner everything you can see in the photo and write out your list here.
4. Look at the school prospectus on page 7 which provided information on the subjects taught at Mercy Schools. There are several subjects that are not often taught in schools today. These include: elocution, fancy work and playing the mandolin. Research and explain what a mandolin is and what you would learn in elocution and fancy work lessons.

Mandolin

Elocution

Fancy work

5. What do you wonder about the two school items that you have chosen from the Virtual Museum?

6. What can be learned about education provided by the Sisters of Mercy from this primary source, an advertisement published in a Perth newspaper in 1849?

Education

“The Sisters of Mercy, possessing every facility, have arranged to open on the 3rd of September, a distinct Day School for a limited number of young ladies. Besides a solid English education, comprising Grammar, Geography, History, Writing, Arithmetic etc, etc, the French Language will be taught; also music, drawing and plain and ornamental works.

Parents wishing to avail themselves of this opportunity, and be informed as to the terms and other details, will have the goodness to call at the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, Perth, on any day from this date until the 5th August and from the 16th August, afterwards, Sundays excepted.”

Source: Inquirer, Perth WA, 1 August 1849

| Criteria | Information from the primary source |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Publication date | |
| The message or what the source is saying to the reader. | |
| Useful information provided on education | |

Learning Sequence 3, Student Resource 2

The Leadership of Ursula Frayne 1846 - 1857

Vocabulary review - word match

Match the correct term from the following list with the definition provided in the table below.

Benedictines, conversion, Protestant churches, secular, Anglican Church, Wesleyan Church, Romanist church, Colonial schools, Diocese, Governor.

| Definition | Term |
|--|------|
| Churches that “protested” against the Pope and Roman rule within the Church. | |
| Government funded schools in the colony of Western Australia | |
| Used the teachings of John Wesley | |
| Not relating to religion | |
| An area over which a Bishop has spiritual and administrative control | |
| The Roman Catholic Church, with the highest spiritual authority being the Pope in the Vatican in Rome. | |
| To change beliefs or to commit to a new religion | |
| Catholic religious communities that observe the Rule of Saint Benedict. | |
| The representative of the British government in the Western Australia. | |
| A new church created in the 1500s when the King of England took control of the Church of England. | |