



## Mother and Baby homes

### Unit 3

#### Activity 5

#### School perspectives

##### Julia Carter, child/servant/gardener in the Tuam Mother and Baby home

The fact that I was from the home, it dulled my brain at school, and I couldn't take in as much as another child would, things didn't sink in.

I was never anywhere but in the back desk, I was looked upon as stupid.

If there was anything missing from the class in [primary] school, they'd always blame the girls from the home.

Mother [Superior] Hortense asked the Mercy nuns to let me into the secondary school, it was a kind of condescension to let me in.

[Sr Raphael] had an awful set on me because I was from the home. She despised me and picked on me. She is buried near the Cathedral, and years after when I was passing that way, I would stick out my tongue at her grave!

There was a girl in secondary school very friendly with me, I think she was from Barnaderg or somewhere, and Sr Attracta said to her 'Could you not get any other companion than Julia Carter?'

It was hard to get pals, I was always craving to have a pal...

##### P.J. Haverty, child born in the Tuam Mother and Baby home

Memories are very short about the home. But the most thing I remember is...marching down to school in twos. And marching back again in the evening and locked up again. And I think of kids outside: they were poor, miserable as well ... but they had the freedom to run around, play with the neighbours' kids and all that.

You see when we went to school, we had to go ten minutes late in the morning, leave ten minutes early in the evening again, so we wouldn't be going in with other kids or talking to them. And you were cordoned off on your own in the playground. You weren't allowed to play with these other kids. And the other kids were even threatened, coming in late in the morning, that they would be actually put sitting with us. Imagine! Like they would have got slaps from the teacher with the sticks on the hand and all that, but the worst thing was to have to sit with us.

Now we were never taught anything, we were just like dummies sitting there.



### Catherine Corless, historian, author and activist

My sister Mary and I attended Mercy Convent primary school [in Tuam] ... ten minutes later, as was the daily routine, the home babies arrived. I watched them as they shuffled in, one by one, with their heads down, the click-clack of their hob-nail boots tapping the floor, as they took their seats at the back of the class. ... The teacher never called on them. It was as though they weren't even there.

Something about the separation, the segregation, was having an effect on our young, malleable minds. We saw them as 'different'. We were taught that they were not the same.

When class was dismissed, as usual, the home babies left first.



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