



Sisters of Saint Joseph
of the Sacred Heart

Resource for Years 3 - 6

Prayers, Reflections and Stories based on Mary MacKillop's value

Attitude of Gratitude

Photographs, Prayers and Stories
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Prayers

Attitude of Gratitude

Sacred Space




You need:



A cloth
Candle
Picture
Bible


- ✚ Choose a prayer from the list below.
- ✚ Set up the Sacred Space and invite the children to gather around it
- OR
- ✚ Provide the materials for the Sacred Space and organise the children to put them in place.
- ✚ Choose a saying from the one of the values in the theme being studied around Mary MacKillop. Print it out and place in the Sacred Space.


Bowl and Stones




 Provide a bowl of water and place in the Sacred Space. Beside it place a pile of pebbles or coloured glass.

 Invite the children to take a stone and hold it. As they hold it invite them to think of something to thank God for eg, a good holiday, for families, playing well in sport etc. 

 When all are ready invite each child to place a stone in the water and silently pray their prayer of thanks.

 When all have had a turn the children say together: "Thank you God".

 Invite the children to dip their hand in the water and make the sign of the cross.



Prayer of Gratitude

- ✚ Invite each child to pray in thanksgiving for something. It could be a simple "Thank you God for"




Prayer of Gratitude 2

- ✚ Invite each child to think of the best part of the day so far.
- ✚ Invite the children to say a prayer, thanking God for what they are thinking of.




Dice Prayer - Four Values


-  Make a list of six topics for prayer and display it so all gathered can read the points. The children might like to make this list themselves. Here is an example.



1. Prayer for everyone gathered.
2. Prayer of thanks. What are we grateful for?
3. Prayer that we can be open to all, especially those who are different from us.
4. Prayer to be like Mary MacKillop so we can do our bit to help others.
5. Prayer that we listen for God's call wherever we are, whatever we are doing.
6. Prayer for the Sisters of St Joseph who were the first people to follow Mary MacKillop and Fr Julian Tennison. Woods in the care and education of children.

-  Gather around the sacred space.

-  Reading from the Bible. (See examples in Attitude of Gratitude - Scripture and sayings of Mary MacKillop).

-  Invite a child to roll the dice and when a number eg, number 4 comes up, they pray about whatever is on the list.



Gratitude Beads

- ✚ Make a set of beads of any length. Place four beads between two larger beads and make a wristband or one for the ankle



- ✚ On each small bead a child might name something that they are grateful for.

- ✚ On the large bead say together,
Thank you God
or
God you are very good to us.



Gestures of Morning Praise

- ✚ Stretch your arms high and wide above your head.

Thank you, God, for the gift of another day.



- ✚ Hold arms out from your sides, a little below shoulder height. Pivot to the left and to the right with your arms stretching outward toward the cosmos.

God bless the people all over the world.

- ✚ Stretch your arms out straight in front of you, slightly apart, palms up.

God, I give you all I am and all I have.

- ✚ Pull your hands close together and cup them as a container.

I open myself to receive the gift you have waiting for me in this new day.

- ✚ Bend over, reach down, and touch the floor, or the ground.

I touch this planet, Earth., with reverence and gratitude.

- ✚ Stand up, cross hands over your heart, and bow to the waist.

God, may I be united with you throughout this day. I am aware of your love strengthening me and shining through me.



Scripture

Attitude of Gratitude

Scripture quotations from NRSV:
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Jesus Thanks God - Matthew 11:25



...Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants."

Gratitude is the memory of the heart.

Mary MacKillop 1907

One Man Says Thanks - Luke 17: 11-18



On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? Was none of them found to return except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

Thank God for the way He protected me though all.

Mary MacKillop 1898

Paul says Thanks - Romans 1:8



I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.

We have all very much for which to thank and love God.

Mary MacKillop 1873

Paul Gives Thanks for the Gifts of his Friends - 1 Corinthians 1: 4-7



I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

My gratitude to God for all that is done for those I love.

Mary MacKillop 1867

*Paul Gives Thanks for his friends in Ephesus -
Ephesians 1: 15-16*



I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.

Thank God for all his mercies and love.

Mary MacKillop 1873

Choosing to Help - Matthew 8: 1-3



I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.

Let us humbly thank God alike for the trial and for the blessing, for the bitter and for the sweet.

Mary MacKillop 1875

Rejoice and Give Thanks - Phillipians 4: 4-6



Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Thank God for all his mercies and love.

Mary MacKillop 1873

Paul Gives Thanks for Good News - Colossians 1: 3-4



In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints.

**When I want something very much I thank God beforehand
for I feel God will certainly grant what has been thanked for.**

Mary MacKillop 1874

Paul's Reasons for His Gratitude - Thessalonians 1: 2-3



We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Be happy and again I say it, thank God.

Mary MacKillop 1874

Love Increases - 2 Thessalonians 1: 2-3



We must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of everyone of you for one another is increasing.

Be happy and again I say it, thank God.

Mary MacKillop 1874



Stories

Attitude of Gratitude

Mary Went to Rome

My name is Maggy McGyver. I am thirteen years old and my brother James, is ten. This is a story about how I met Mary MacKillop

In March 1873 we set out with our parents from Adelaide to go to Europe. I noticed a very interesting lady who was travelling alone. She didn't mix much with the other passengers. That made her very interesting indeed. She was dressed in a black dress, like widows wore in those days, and I heard that her first name was Mary.

After some time, we arrived in Albany, Western Australia. We had to wait on shore for our ship called 'Bangalore' to be ready to sail. Mum took James and me for a walk. We were going past a cottage when we saw Mr Cameron from Penola stop and say in surprise, "Mary! What are doing here?" We didn't hear Mary's reply. Mr Cameron said, "You can't stay here. You must travel with Ellen and me." I watched them walk away towards the ship.

That evening I saw all three on board. I heard Mary say to the Camerons, "I don't know anyone else travelling to Europe. I was a bit worried but I said a prayer asking our good God to look after me, so here I am with you. God answered my prayers generously. You know Uncle, whenever I want something, I thank God for it first because our God cannot refuse something we have said 'thank you' for."

Mary was the Camerons niece. I could see that Mr and Mrs Cameron thought a lot of her. I asked Dad to show me on a map where we were, and where we were going. At Bombay we got on another ship that sailed to Aden and Suez at the top of Africa. There was no Suez Canal in those days so we travelled on a train to Alexandria where we sailed on another ship! All this travel took a long time. I had my tenth birthday on 9 May in a place called Brindisi.

All this time I kept a look-out for Mary. She was lovely, with grey eyes and a lovely smile that lit up her face. She stayed in her cabin most of the time. I think she wrote a lot of letters. When she did come out on the deck, she seemed to be praying. I wished I knew more about her.

We caught a train that left Brindisi for a strange sounding place called Foggia. James and I began to make up words to rhyme with it and laughed so much that Mum told us to stop and sit still. When we reached Foggia we all left the train. Mum and Dad presented our passports to the officials and we moved ahead in the line. The Camerons and Mary didn't have passports! What would they do I wondered? I watched them as we waited for Dad to find a horse and carriage. I saw Mr Cameron arguing with the officials. Then I looked at Mary. She was standing calmly with her eyes half closed. I let go of James's hand and edged over closer to see what she was doing.

As I drew closer, I could hear her praying! She said, "Dear God, I can't get a passport here and I need to go to Rome. My good God, I place my trust in you. I know you will help me go to Rome. Thank you for looking after me." Then, to my

surprise, one of the officials waved her through to catch her train. WOW! I thought this is a special lady all right. God is certainly looking after her.

All that happened about three years ago. Now I'm back in Adelaide with my family. Yesterday we met some ladies in the street who were Sisters of St Joseph. Mum stopped to talk to them and gave them some money. I looked at them with interest. Suddenly I recognised one of the Sisters. It was Mary from our trip to Europe! She certainly looked different in her brown nun's dress but I would remember those grey eyes anywhere. Then Mum introduced me. "I remember you," I blurted out. "You went to Europe when we did."

Mary smiled. "Yes, of course. We travelled most of the way together. It's lovely to see you again and you are so grown up, Maggie."

Then Mum and I walked away. I asked Mum who the lady was. "That's Mary MacKillop," she said. "People call her Mother Mary. She has started some schools for children who can't afford to go to schools like yours."

"I like her," I said. "I remember her saying that God can't refuse us if we say 'thank you' first when we pray for something. I've done that a few times since our trip. You know mum, Mary MacKillop must be a very grateful person."

"Why is that?" asked Mum.

"Well, I think she said thanks to God this morning for the money she needed to buy books for her schools. Then she met you and you gave her what she needed. I'm going to keep on thanking God for you and Dad and James. That way, I know God will always look after you."

Mum laughed and gave me a hug. Then we walked the rest of the way home.

A Ray of Sunshine

I am Sister Denis. I knew Mary MacKillop a long time ago. Mary was the kindest, most patient person I have ever known. Mary was like a ray of sunshine in our home called St Joseph's Convent. She went out of her way to help people. She herself was grateful for even the smallest things done for her.

One day, Mary MacKillop asked me to go into the city with her to visit Mrs Doyle who was sick. In those days, we could catch a tram into the city of Sydney. We had to do a lot of walking when we arrived there. I was happy to go with Mary as I liked going out with her. I just never knew where we would go or what would happen when we reached our destination. Mary was full of surprises.

Eventually we arrived in town and were walking along Kent Street when I noticed something unusual. When they saw us coming, people seemed to pop out of shop doorways, or change direction to come close to us. As they approached, they would say, "God bless you," to Mary. It felt like they went out of their way to speak to her. I looked at Mary and saw her face was lit up with a beautiful smile. She seemed to know each man and woman who spoke to her. They were smiling in return.

At last we caught sight of Mrs Doyle's place. We approached the door and Mary knocked before going in. I followed her into a drab looking house with two rooms. It was all a little untidy. Mary called out and a faint voice came from the other room. We went in and I saw a youngish woman lying in bed. It was Mrs Doyle. Mary went to the bedside and checked that Mrs Doyle had taken her medicine and then I went out to make a cup of tea for her. When I went back in, the bedclothes were straightened and the lady had a fresh nightdress on. I watched as she drank her tea and could see her looking better already. We tidied up the little house so Mrs Doyle could rest a little longer without worrying about housework. When it was time to go, Mary bent over and kissed Mrs Doyle on the cheek.

"Don't try to do anything today, dear," Mary said. "Perhaps you'll be better tomorrow," and with that we went out, closing the door gently behind us.

As we walked back to the tram stop, I noticed a few more people coming up to Mary. "God bless you," they each said.

Mary said to me, "A blessing from these people is worth so much. I am delighted to receive it from them."

Then I realised that Mary must have helped these people too. This was their chance to express their thanks by blessing her. I have often thought about that day. Mary taught me so much, especially about gratitude.

Mary MacKillop and Tommy

My name is Tommy. I live near Gosford in New South Wales. This is my story.

When I was five, my father left home to look for work in the goldfields. He never came back. My mother didn't know what happened to him. Mum and Dad couldn't read or write and there were no telephones in those days. Mum and I were the only ones at home. Mum took in washing to try and pay the rent on our house. I didn't go to school. For a few years, I used to wander around the streets doing jobs for people just to get something to eat.

When I was eleven, I became friendly with a group of boys who used to steal things. One day, a policeman caught me climbing out of a window of a house I had broken into. The next thing I knew, I was being taken to the court house to be charged with theft. I didn't know it at the time, but a Sister of St Joseph called Sister Patricia used to go to the court to see if there were any boys that needed help. She must have seen me and went home to the convent where Mary MacKillop lived and told her about me.

"Mary," she said, "We have to help this boy. I know his mother. She's a hard working woman. She doesn't deserve to have Tommy put into a State institution."

"You are right dear," she said. "You must go to the court early tomorrow morning. Talk to the judge and tell him that I will take care of Tommy," so Sister Patricia hurried off to the court.

At the court, I was interested in this lady who was dressed all in brown, except for some white material around her face. I'd never seen a Sister of St Joseph before. I watched as she talked to the judge and other court officials. They were all looking at me. I was scared. "What would happen to me now?" I wondered.

A policeman and this Sister came over to where I was standing. The policeman told me to go with Sister Patricia. "Behave yourself young man," he said. "You don't know how lucky you are."

I wasn't so sure about being lucky. Where was this lady taking me? She said she was Sister Patricia and that she knew my mother. "Now I'm in big trouble," I thought.

Sister Patricia led me to the convent where she lived and took me into a room, like an office. There was another lady dressed just the same as Sister Patricia. It was Mary MacKillop.

"Mary, I've brought Tommy from the court. I have to go to my class now so I'll leave him here with you."

"Yes, dear. He will be all right here." Then Mary MacKillop turned to me.

"Hello, Tommy," she said. "You are going to stay with us here for a while until I can talk to your mother. I hope she will let us take you to Kincumber."

This was news to me. Mary MacKillop spent a lot of her time with me that day. Mary taught me some prayers. By the time Sister Patricia came home from school, I was able to show her how I made the Sign of the Cross.

I stayed with the Sisters for a few days until Mary MacKillop took me to Kincumber boys' orphanage. There I went to school with lots of other boys. I learnt to read and write and to do sums. Mary MacKillop often came to visit us at Kincumber. I loved to see her so I could show off what I learned at school.

Well, that was a long time ago. I left Kincumber eventually and found a good job. I looked after Mum and then I married. I have three boys of my own and two lovely girls. My wife and I like to live here because it's close to Kincumber. We like to help the Sisters and the boys as much as we can. It's one way of showing our gratitude for the care I received when I needed it.

I often think of Mary MacKillop and Sister Patricia. I am so grateful that God helped me through them. I often say, "Thank you God for Mary MacKillop and the Sisters of St Joseph who looked after me so well."

Late Home

I am Jenny Swenson. I live in Sydney. I like to visit an old friend of my mother's. Her name is Sister Bridget. She is a Sister of St Joseph and is now living in a convent with other Sisters her age. Mum says that they are a powerhouse of prayer. I guess she means that they do a lot of praying in a quiet sort of way.

Sister Bridget is very old, but I love to sit in the garden at the front of the convent and listen to her stories of long ago. She once knew Saint Mary MacKillop. Sister Bridget gets a faraway look in her eyes when she talks about Mary. She says Mary was the kindest person she has ever known. When Sister Bridget talks this way about Mary, I know that she is leading up to a story.

My favourite story is about the time Sister Bridget and Sister Joan became lost in Sydney. I find it hard to imagine Sydney with no cars, just horses and buggies to travel in. There were no telephones either. Sydney must have been a really quiet place in those days. Ordinary people, like the Sisters of St Joseph, walked everywhere as there was nowhere to keep a horse and they probably couldn't afford to own one. I know this because Sister Bridget tells me about it nearly every time I see her.

Sister Bridget and Sister Joan hadn't been Sisters of St Joseph very long and were only just learning how to teach in school. One day, Mary MacKillop sent them on a special assignment.

"Sisters, I want you to go to the home of Mrs Smith. She wants to become a Catholic so we have to help her. I want you to go through a lesson with her as I can't go today. I'm sure you will do well. She is expecting you after lunch today."

"Oh, yes, Mary. We'd love to do that," the Sisters replied.

"Here is the book of lessons. I'm sure you will enjoy your visit with Mrs Smith."

"Thank you Mary," they said and hurried off to look at the lesson marked in the book for the day. They asked one of the Sisters how to get to Mrs Smith's place and, after lunch, hurried off on their new assignment.

Mrs Smith was a gracious lady who welcomed Sister Bridget and Sister Joan warmly. They sat at the kitchen table and went through the lesson. Mrs Smith was really eager to learn all she could about being a Catholic and the Sisters found the lesson easy to teach.

When they had finished, the two Sisters set out from Mrs Smith's place to go straight home, but they took a wrong turn. Soon they were walking along an unfamiliar street where people didn't look very friendly. Their joy and excitement died down as they realised that they were lost. They walked and walked. They asked a few people which way they should go but those people didn't know the part of Sydney that the Sisters came from. Some just shrugged and said they couldn't help.

The afternoon wore on and soon it was dark. The street lights were being lit and the two Sisters began to panic. What if they were out all night? What would Mary MacKillop say when she saw them? Would they ever get home? With all these thoughts rushing through their minds they hurried on. Then they heard a clock chime eight o'clock. They stopped and listened. It was the clock over the post office in North Sydney! As it chimed the hour they hurried towards the sound.

What a relief. There was their beloved convent, but nearly all the lights were out! They ran to the front door puffing and laughing with relief. They banged on the door. It seemed to take ages before a Sister came to open the door for them.

"We are so sorry to be this late," Sister Bridget gasped. "We were lost."

The Sister who answered the door was very unhappy with them. "Go and tell Mary MacKillop where you've been," she said. "She has been worrying about you two since you didn't turn up for dinner tonight."

Sister Bridget led the way to Mary MacKillop's office where there was a light shining under the door. Sister Joan tapped timidly on the door. Both of them felt sure they would get into trouble. .

"Come in," said Mary. The two young Sisters crept in quietly. Mary looked up from her letter writing. "Oh, you are home!" exclaimed Mary. "Thank God you arrived home safely. I've been worried about you. What happened?"

Then Sister Bridget and Sister Joan told her their story about becoming lost. Mary wore a worried expression on her face as she listened to them. They fully expected her to be cross. They stood with their eyes down, waiting for her to say something.

To their surprise Mary said, "You poor things. You haven't had anything to eat since lunchtime." Then, Mary sent for the cook. "Sister, heat up something for these two Sisters to eat."

"In the meantime," she said to the two Sisters, "you two can go and have a bath to relax. After that you can have some dinner and before you go to bed I want to hear about your visit with Mrs Smith." They thanked Mary and hurried off to do as she had told them. They were really glad to freshen up and to have something to eat.

At this point in her story, Sister Bridget always looks dreamily into the garden in front of us and I know she is thinking about Mary MacKillop.

"You know dear, Mary MacKillop was a very kind and caring person full of gratitude for what God and other people did for her to help keep schools open. She was kind and thoughtful with Sister Joan and me that night and I'm not sure we were very grateful then. I am now. I thank God every day that Mary MacKillop is our own Australian saint."

I know that a lot of people would agree with Sister Bridget so I sit beside her and imagine Mary is in the garden with us. Then I think about Mum and how she says that Sister Bridget is the kindest, most grateful person she knows. I think that's because Sister Bridget models herself on Mary MacKillop.

Thank God for people like Mary MacKillop and Sister Bridget who show us the way to live like Jesus.

A Tidy House

Mrs Jones loved to tell her friends about the time Mary MacKillop visited her when she was ill. She would begin the story by describing how sick she was.

One day, I had a temperature and a bad headache. My husband brought the doctor. We could hardly afford his fees. I told the doctor I'd be better soon but the doctor said to stay in bed till the end of the week. I was so sick I couldn't do anything else. When I did try to get up I was so giddy that I would fall over. I felt helpless. The children stopped going to the nearby school run by the Sisters of St Joseph. It was this that caught Mary MacKillop's attention.

Sister Agnes, who taught my eldest daughter Gemma, told Mary that I was sick and that the children weren't at school. That's when Mary decided to visit my home.

It was on Tuesday afternoon after school had finished for the day that Mary and Sister Agnes came to the house. When they arrived, the children were playing outside and I was trying to sleep. Gemma brought them into my bedroom. The curtains were pulled to stop the glare. Mary stepped into the room and put her cool hand on my forehead.

"I'll get you a glass of water," she said. Mary came back with a jug of cool water and a glass. She gave me a drink, pulled the covers up around me and went out to the kitchen. As I went off to sleep, I heard Mary and Sister Agnes talking to the children.

I don't know how long I slept, after a while I woke up. My daughter, Gemma, came in and said that Mary and Sister Agnes were preparing meat and vegetables for dinner. I felt bad to think that the Sisters were caring for my family and I began to worry about the house being messy.

Just then, Mary came in with a bowl of soup for me. "Here you are, dear. Eat this up and you will feel better." With that Mary packed the pillows up behind me and set the bowl of soup on a tray on my lap.

When I was finished, Mary and Sister Agnes made the bed up freshly and tidied up the bedroom. Then Mary found a broom and swept the floor and the front veranda.

"Then what do you think she did? She kissed me on the cheek. I was so surprised. I began to recover quickly after that visit. I'll always be grateful to Mary MacKillop for what she did that day. I say, thank God for Mary MacKillop and all she did for me and my family!"

Soup Bones

My name is Sister Jean. I am a Sister of St Joseph. A long time ago I knew Mary MacKillop. I lived with her and a lot of other Sisters in a convent in Sydney. I remember a time when I was grateful for Mary's kind heart and her sense of humour.

One of my jobs in those days was to go out and get the groceries from shopkeepers who would supply the Sisters with the food they needed. There were no cars in those days and, like most people, we couldn't afford to keep a horse and buggy either, so when we went anywhere, we walked. It wasn't always easy to carry the heavy bags of groceries home.

Mary MacKillop had started an orphanage near us and, one day, Sister Eileen and I were sent out to collect what was needed for the orphans and for the Sisters caring for them. We had one big shopping bag each. On the way home, we called into the butcher shop for some soup bones. There were quite a few and I had to carry them.

Our bags were heavy so we took a short cut across a park in the hope of arriving home more quickly. To my horror I saw two big dogs under a tree. They were watching us. My legs began to tremble. One of them started to bark. Suddenly they both ran towards me and other dogs came from the nearby streets. They were running excitedly to where I stood. A dog pushed its nose up to my bag and sniffed. I stood still in fear. Another dog growled and made a dash for me. I was terrified. I began to run as hard as I could across the park. The dogs ran behind me. They were snarling and nipping my ankles as I ran.

I couldn't get away from them. Then I got an idea. I reached into the bag and drew out a bone and dropped it on the ground. The dogs stopped for a minute as they all tried to pick it up. Some stayed behind to fight over it. The others began to chase me. I dropped another bone. Again they stopped for a minute but some gave chase almost at once. I kept dropping the bones one by one until we were back at the orphanage. I raced inside and Sister Eileen slammed the door. I stood there breathing deeply. We giggled a little from nervousness and then quickly made our way to the kitchen where Sister Catherine was waiting for the groceries.

We took the bags in and placed them on the kitchen bench. Sister Eileen placed all her groceries on the bench and put her bag away. I began to empty my bag. I placed the contents on the bench and looked inside for some bones. There were none! The bag was empty! I had thrown all the bones away. What was I going to do?

Sister Catherine said, "Where are the bones for the soup?"

"I threw them away to stop the dogs from following us," I answered. She was very cross.

Sister Catherine took a deep breath and said, "I wanted those bones to make soup for lunch. Go at once to Mary MacKillop and tell her what you did." With that she went over to the stove and started moving pots and pans around noisily.

I had never been sent to Mary MacKillop before. What would she say when I told her that I threw the bones away? Slowly I made my way to her office. I took a deep breath and knocked on the door. I was afraid of what she would say to me.

"Come in," said Mary, who was writing letters at the table. "What is it, dear?"

I told her the whole story.

"So what happened to the bones?" Mary asked.

I replied, "So many dogs were following me, and I felt afraid so I kept dropping bones in the hope they would keep the dogs away from me. I was so sure you would prefer that the dogs ate the bones than that they ate me!"

To my surprise Mary MacKillop laughed. "You are right about that," she said.

I was so relieved, and grateful too, that Mary MacKillop had a sense of humour. She sent me off to help someone else after that and I was never sent out to collect groceries again. I remember Mary MacKillop and her kindness to me that day with gratitude in my heart.

Mary Brings Home Some Livestock

Sister Josephine lived at Moss Vale in New South Wales. She taught children in St Joseph's school there. She had many good memories of Mary MacKillop. Here is a letter she wrote to her friend Sister Patrick who lived in Sydney.

St Joseph's Convent
Moss Vale, NSW
June, 1898

Dear Sister Patrick,

Mary MacKillop arrived here a few days ago. She was very tired and hungry as she had left your convent very early in the morning to catch the train. She had a cup of tea and something to eat and then she came over to the school. I was delighted to see her and so were the children. She tested their sums and reading. I was glad that they did well and that Mary gave each of them a prize. She always has something in that big bag that she often carries. While she was in my classroom she asked me to meet her after school. She wanted to ask people around the district for donations for the new orphanage she has started. I was really happy to go with her.

When I arrived home after school, we had some afternoon tea and then we set out in a horse drawn buggy that Mary had borrowed. We went from door to door asking for donations. I felt a little disappointed when the first few people said they had no money to give us. Mary MacKillop never gives up. We went further and further along the country roads, stopping at each house we came to. You would never believe what happened at the third house. A lady offered us some chickens! What would we do with chickens? I thought. But Mary took what was offered and the chickens sat on the floor of the buggy in a snug little box with some straw in it.

After that, we had no problems. People gave us all sorts of animals and eggs as well. I wondered how Mary would get all this back to your place in Sydney. We came home the first afternoon with a goose that we had in a wooden box, with a hole in the top so its head could poke through, some hens and a rooster. How that rooster crowed all the way back to the convent! When we arrived home, the Sisters came out to help us get the animals under cover in the shed. We all burst out laughing when Sister Ellen picked up the box with the goose in it. The goose poked its head out, hissed and grabbed her sleeve in its bill. She received such a fright that she dropped the box and the poor goose became really angry. We let it out into the yard with the gate firmly closed. It ran off hissing angrily. It was so funny that I still have to laugh when I think about it.

I went out with Mary again the next day. Some people gave us money but mostly we collected more farm animals. They will be all right at Kincumber because the boys will look after them but I wondered how Mary would manage travelling back to Sydney. We collected more chickens, another goose, a lame parrot and a piglet. Mary received each thing while graciously thanking the giver of the gifts and donations. She is lovely with people.

I needn't have worried about how Mary would arrive home. Some of the men were kind enough to book the livestock on the train. I wonder how she got them off the train in Sydney? Were you there?

I must finish this letter now. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Lots of love from
Sister Josephine.

A few days later Sister Patrick wrote back.

St Joseph's Convent
North Sydney NSW
July 1898

Dear Sister Josephine,
Mary MacKillop arrived safely with her livestock. Some of the neighbours helped her to bring them to the Convent, so you needn't have worried about that. Most of the animals have gone to the orphanage at Kincumber where the boys will raise them. The lame parrot has gone to Mr MacDonald, Mary's uncle. He will take good care of it so we don't have to be concerned about it anymore. The piglet is so little and cute. I was delighted to see it. We'll feed it up here before we send it away.

I'm glad you were able to help Mary. She was glad of your company. She was tired when she arrived home but excited and pleased with all you helped to collect. Thank you for helping her.

Yours truly

Sister Patrick.

Mosquitoes

Mary MacKillop and several Sisters of St Joseph arrived in Brisbane on the 31st of December 1869. January can be a very hot and humid month in Brisbane with plenty of mosquitoes. Mary and the Sisters stayed at a convent belonging to the Sisters of Mercy, called All Hallows, for a few weeks until they found a place of their own. At All Hallows, they had mosquito nets over their beds to keep the pesky creatures from biting them in the night. When they moved into their own little place, they had no nets. In those days, sprays and roll-on repellents had not been invented so they had to put up with the mosquitoes. In a newsy letter back to the Sisters in Adelaide, Mary told of their adventures with the mosquitoes.

Convent of St Joseph
South Brisbane
February 1870

Dear Sisters,

I am writing in a hurry to get this into the mail which will go out on the steamer tonight. You are probably wondering how we are getting on here. The weather is so different from that in South Australia. It is very hot and humid all the time, even at night. It is hard to get used to. The mosquitoes that come out at night time are another thing we have trouble getting used to.

While we lived at All Hallows, we had nets that covered our beds at night. The nets were attached to the walls above our beds and we could drop them down and tuck them under our mattresses. It was like sleeping in a tent with tiny holes in it. The holes were too small for the mosquitoes to get through.

When we moved here into our own little place, we had no nets at first and we were sadly tormented by the whining, biting little creatures. The mosquitoes come out before sunset and they whine and bite all night long. We tossed and turned, trying to sleep but the whining kept us awake.

After a few nights like this, I said we would have to pray to St Joseph to keep them away. By that evening, we were all so busy preparing lessons ready for school the next day that when we said our evening prayers, we forgot. Again we were kept awake.

Finally, we remembered to say our prayer to St Joseph, asking him to give us a good night's sleep. Sure enough, the mosquitoes didn't bother us, even though they were in the room with us. From that night on, we have remembered our prayer to St Joseph to protect us from the mosquitoes at night. Every morning we say a prayer of thanks for a good night's sleep.

I hope you will get this letter soon. Please write to us here in Brisbane as we miss you all very much. Thank you for the letters that have already come. God bless you all.

Yours truly,
Mary MacKillop.

Mary Chased the Snakes Away.

The Sisters of St Joseph were asked to open schools in a lot of country towns in New South Wales. One time, Mary MacKillop travelled with the Sisters to their new home in a rural town. When they arrived, they found that the convent was on the edge of a paddock full of long grass. Some of the locals saw them arrive in Mr Smith's buggy from the railway station and hurried over to welcome the Sisters.

"It's good to see you Sisters," said Mr McCormack, the shopkeeper.

"When will you start school?" asked Mrs Black who had three school aged boys.

"You'll have to watch out for snakes in that long grass," said Mr Johnson the man from across the road.

"Yes," Mrs Jones said. "That paddock next door is infested with snakes. They crawl right through your yard. Be careful where you walk."

Then the people slowly went back to their homes or businesses and left the Sisters and Mary MacKillop at the front gate.

"Oh Mary, what will we do? I'm scared of snakes," said Sister Francis.

"I am too," said Sister James. "What if the children get bitten? What can we do?"

Mary stood still for a moment. She was thinking of what to do. She had grown up in country places and wasn't afraid of snakes but Sister James and Sister Francis were from the city and had never encountered snakes before.

As the Sisters watched, Mary took the large crucifix out of her belt and then she walked slowly along the fence with the crucifix held in front of her. She walked all the way around the property. As she walked her lips were moving. Mary was praying for the safety of the Sisters and the protection of all who came into the yard. The Sisters stood at the gate and watched her every move.

Slowly, Mary came back to them at the gate. She gave them a cheery smile and said, "You don't have to worry any more. I've prayed that the snakes won't come this way through the yard. You are quite safe. Come on. Let's go into your new Convent home and look around."

The Sisters were confident that Mary's prayers were heard so when she left the next day they cheerfully waved her off. They were grateful for Mary's love and concern for them.

The neighbours were amazed that the Sisters were able to live in peace from the snakes and that parents never had to worry about the safety of the children. While the Sisters of St Joseph lived in that town, no one ever saw a snake in the school yard. Whenever the Sisters told this story they would always add, "Thank God for hearing Mary MacKillop's prayers that day."