

Facilitation of a Group Using The Little Brown Book



Welcome.

We hope that it provides some practical ideas for exploring Mary MacKillop's spirituality with a small group.

Leo and Sue Kane

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Using Adult Education Processes

The following adult education processes can be used by **anyone who wishes to facilitate a group**. They emphasise each participant's **reflections on his/her personal experience**. This is **how we grow**, in our own time, to take on attitudes and values that become part of us. There is no need for lots of input from the facilitator. The **input comes from the The Little Brown Book**. **The facilitator is in the background**, allowing the wisdom of the group to tease out what is important to them. Leave room for the Holy Spirit to work from within each person.

Use your own words but words in italics in each process are there to help.

The Ground Rules For Group Work Need To Be Stated Before Each Session By The Facilitator

- There is no **pressure** on anyone to share.
- Simply say **PASS** if you do not wish to share.
- **A good listener** is a good sharer.
- Share only what you feel **comfortable in sharing**.
- We respect each person in the group by **listening attentively** to whatever s/he says.
- **No one should dominate** the group.
- Whenever there is quiet, reflective time, we **respect the privacy of others** in the group by refraining from anything that could be distracting. (*Good to have quiet, relaxing music at this time*)
- **We trust in the wisdom of the group**. (*This means the facilitator can become one of the group if s/he is well known, or if preferred, simply facilitate and not participate.*)

Some Tips for a Facilitator

A facilitator is above all a good listener, affirming people who contribute, and asking questions that might gently challenge the group.

Treat participants as adults. Don't be concerned if quiet discussion or even laughter occurs during silent times – this may indicate involvement, or simply express unease with silence. Allow them to get a cuppa or glass of water at any time.

It is good for people to not sit continually. Keep them involved. Encourage them to move outside, lie down, walk and read. If they are not in the same room, go around to see how they are going for time, telling them we'll be coming back to the group in a few minutes when time is almost up.

Give groups, if possible, an opportunity to choose which workshop they wish to engage in.

Always get larger groups to form a tight circle so that they can see and hear each other.

Using Resources

The Little Brown Book is needed for each participant for most sessions. If participants have their own books, encourage them to *mark whatever touches them*. This helps them to own their unique spirituality, and is a big help when pages are read again later on.

A simple sacred space, with perhaps a picture of Mary MacKillop, any suitable symbols for a session,

some flowers and lighted *candles* to provide a prayerful atmosphere for the session(s). Candles should always be lit for prayer times. Suitable music also should be played, especially during quiet time or during a guided meditation. It is helpful to provide *cushions* for people to use in chairs or for lying down on floor. Always have *biros* available for all sessions. It's good if you can have a white board displaying *the name of the session, the aims and timetable*, and for recording as needed. Coloured light cardboard is more durable than paper and can be used on many large copiers. These can be cut out as bookmarks for further use and are easily written on.

Involve participants by asking them *to choose a song or hymn that captures the theme of a session*. These can be played at the beginning, during or after a session. Some suggestions: Taize chants, hymns/songs by T Watts, F Andersen, P Kearney, & K Bates cover most, if not all, of the 10 themes, but it is best to get participants involved by choosing suitable ones from their own repertoire. Another option could be for the group to listen to a reflective classical piece chosen & introduced by a group member.

Judging the Time

The group sessions below are intended to last for about one and a half hours. Too much more than this can be tiring on participants. Try to *break at a time that suits them* with good breaks for morning tea and lunch if you are having a full day. It's best to have only one session after lunch. Sometimes it is better to *stay with a particular section* if participants are engaged but not bogged down. You can always continue after a break or at another time or simply leave a section out.

If you only have 10 minutes available, **adapt** a section from the session. Continue at another time from where you finished, if it fits in OK, or simply skip a part if it doesn't fit.

See group prayer sessions below for a process that only takes 5-10 minutes. Don't *overdo* a particular process. Try sections of a session for variety.

If you are running out of time or you think participants would gain more from an evaluation from the heart, use the evaluation processes below. *They can give a good finish to the day, especially the "I feel(Finish the sentence).*

The times suggested for each session are there as an aid. You may need to shorten some sessions and lengthen others depending on numbers and the "buzz" in the group. You are the best one to judge that. If participants seem to be very engaged don't break them off too quickly. *Adapt to the feel of the group.*

Immediate Preparation Essential for Each Workshop

- Make sure the *room is set up comfortably*, with good heating, lighting and ventilation, and no distracting noises, with some soft music playing as participants enter.
- Make each person feel *welcome with a smile*, introductions where necessary, and a cuppa if possible. Don't forget any *info on essentials*, eg whereabouts of toilets, time of lunch breaks, etc Name tags should be filled in with Christian name only but large enough to be read easily.
- Give them an outline of the *timetable* if there is going to be more than one session.
- Write the aims on a whiteboard or in a prominent position with the name of the session, so that participants can see where they are heading.
- Explain that there will be time for prayer but it won't necessarily be at the beginning.
- Give material out beforehand where appropriate.
- Check again ground rules, tips and resources to ensure all is covered.

Evaluations

A simple evaluation could provide honest feedback at the end of each session in written or oral form. This could be done by giving a rating of *1, the lowest, to 5*, alongside the aims. Don't expect each person to rate all aims highly. If you can help a person explore a particular aim successfully you have sown good seed here.

Another form of evaluation about the sessions is to invite them to *respond to the unfinished sentence:*

I feel, and/or to ask them to say whether there is any insight or helpful thought they might be taking away from the session. This is a good process in so far as it helps participants to own better their spirituality and possibly live it.

Ask them to write down where the sessions might be improved if you want feedback. Tell them to be honest as we can always improve a session

Allow time at end of workshop for evaluations if required.

If you have run out of time at the finish, use the *I feel* paragraph above. It gives participants an opportunity to finish the day in a more personal and positive way.

Another help, if time runs out, that gives *ownership and a good group finish to the day*, is to use the evaluations , rating 1 –5. Find out *which ones got 5, which ones 4 down to 1*. It also provides good feedback to yourself. Remember people are different. Some will get more out of some sections than others .



Themes

The following themes have been presented in **10 sessions**, each session lasting 1½ hours. Different sections of a session can be adapted for shorter times.

- 1 Taking a greater ownership of insights from Scripture and Mary's thoughts
- 2 Exploring and owning my own unique spirituality and what Mary can offer me
- 3 Exploring my own perceptions of God
- 4 Attempting to answer the question: "Where is God for me?"
- 5 Exploring a spirituality of humour
- 6 Becoming the person I am capable of being
- 7 Facing pain
- 8 Looking at the human face of God in Mary and myself
- 9 How/ when/ where/ why do I pray?
- 10 Exploring my relationship with God

Session 1

Taking a greater ownership of insights from Mary and Scripture to help me to live more freely and more fully

Aims

- To know and appreciate Mary's approach to life
- To explore my own attitude to life
- To try to make some of Mary's sayings and Scripture quotations my own.

Resources

The Little Brown Book (TLBB)

Have each of Mary's sayings, (see below)with the supporting Scripture passage on each page typed underneath, on a small cut-out of coloured paper or cardboard. Place these around the sacred space. Another alternative is to create bookmarks on coloured cardboard with a saying of Mary's and the Scripture passage.. These can be placed on tables for participants to pick up and look at. Suggest sayings and Scripture taken from these sections of TLBB: 5,6,7,18,22,32,43, 50,54,60. You will probably need at least 6 copies of each for each member of group. (This, of course, will depend on the numbers present. Some members will also choose the same quotes)

Process

(Words in *italics* are for facilitator if required.)

1. Ask members of the group to ***take your time and choose 3 or 4 cards with passages that say something to you.*** As they are choosing, ask them, when they have finished, to ***sit quietly and reflect on what made you choose these particular passages.*** Allow a minute or two for this quiet reflection. (10-15min)
2. Ask them to ***choose 1 or 2 other participants,*** where they will be ***invited to share what you are thinking.*** Ensure that no one is left out.. Allow extra time if they are getting into it. (Most love a chance to talk like this in a small group they feel comfortable with) (10–20 min)
3. Ask them to ***move to another group of 2 or 3 to share your thoughts and to listen carefully to what the other participants are saying*** (10-20 min)
4. Bring them back into the large group and ask if there was ***something that came up in any of the groups that could be good for the whole group to hear. Just insights. Not meant for long discussions.*** (Leave out the large group if you feel there has been enough discussion or you are running out of time) Don't be frightened if there is silence. Most people are not too comfortable sharing in a larger group. It will depend on how well the group know each other. Allow a minute even if there is silence. (10-20 min)
5. Prayer session with quiet reflective music in background

Use the first of the guided meditations below with the Mary MacKillop stone

OR

In the large group, ask each member to ***read aloud Mary's saying or the Scripture passage that meant most to you.*** Remind them to ***PASS if you wish to.*** When all have finished, ask them to ***close your eyes.*** ***For 3 or 4 mins think about where and when you might bring to your own life the sayings you have chosen. It could be for example, at home with the family or at work or on the way to work. You might like to jot a reminder down on back of your card.*** Finish with ***let us ask Mary to help us take all this forward with the Hail Mary together.*** Depending on the group, you might have them join hands for this. Don't forget quiet music during this session. Invite participants ***to take away any of the copies remaining, with the suggestion that you might like to put your sayings in a prominent place. eg on fridge, in bedroom, bathroom or car.*** If the group know each other well, ask them ***how could we take this forward as a group.***



Session 2

Exploring and owning my own unique spirituality and what Mary is inviting me to.

Aims

- To affirm myself in values I try to live
- To challenge myself in values I need to explore further.
- To come to a better understanding of Mary MacKillop and the Gospel values she lived by.

Resources

TLBB. Art material: coloured pencils, paints, etc. Sacred space with candles, flowers etc. Reflective music. A picture frames for each participant (from \$2 shops)

Art paper of correct size to fit into frames.

Write on cardboard the name of a value from the list below, with the number of the section from TLBB as well. Suggest : 2 - generosity, 3 – celebrating life, 6 – owning my shadow side, 12 - a peaceful spirit, 13 - forgiving, 18 - being still, 32 – finding more meaning in my life, 36 – getting closer to God, 52 – keeping young in heart, 53 – enjoying life, 60 – facing fear, 63 - serenity of spirit. Make 3 or 4 copies of each, depending on numbers, as some will want to choose the same ones. Spread near the sacred space or on tables so that they can be read easily

A coat of arms is to go on art paper to fit into picture frame for each member. Allow a space at each corner of art paper for values to be written down in symbol or colour or whatever, and a spot at the centre for a motto You might have an example of a coat of arms for those who might not feel so confident.

Process

1. Ask each participant to take 3 or 4 cards **showing qualities or values which you feel you are having a go at living**. When they have all finished, ask them to now **take 1 or 2 that would be a challenge to live**. When all are finished, ask them to **reflect in silence on what made you choose these particular cards**. (10-15min)
2. Join one or two others to share your response to **what made these particular values so important for you**. Allow time for good discussion. (15-20 min)
3. Give out TLBB to be **read in silence on the sections indicated on your particular cards. What do you think Mary is trying to say to you? You might like to make your own personal jottings on back of a particular card**. Quiet, reflective music to be played. (15-20min)
4. Encourage them to **make your own coat of arms**. Emphasise that **it is not an art class. Important for you to express whatever comes from within you, values that have meaning for you The motto might refer to your favourite saying of Mary's, or a Scripture passage, or a thought of your own. Express what is important to you in colour or symbol, word or phrase, doodle or whatever**. Each person should be given a cheap \$2 picture frame for her/his picture. Do in silence if possible, but ok to share with the person(s) alongside you if you finish. (30-40 min)

5. *Prayer - not words today. Your prayer is your work. It has come from within you.*

*That is the best kind of prayer. Invite everyone to **place your masterpiece in a sacred space. Be silent or discuss as you wish** Don't forget to invite participants **to place your coat of arms at home or at work in a position that will help you to remember your commitment.***



Session 3

My Perception of God

Aims

- To recognise distorted perceptions of God
- To realise that all perceptions of God are limited
- To recognise a God of Love, Who affirms and challenges me to become more fully alive
- To continue exploring the Love Mystery we call God.

Resources

Art paper of correct size to fit into picture frames picked up at \$2 shops or little parchments at \$2 used for painting on. A small piece of cardboard for writing their perceptions of God on.

Art material: crayons, paint and small paintbrushes, black pencils, etc

Have a large poster in a prominent position. **Our images of god must always be limited because no words can adequately describe god.**

A4 or large paper around the sacred space with one of the following printed large on each page:

An Angry God, A God Of Big Hugs, A Far Away God, A God Of Vengeance, A Santa Claus God, A God Of Infinite Fun, A God Of Infinite Surprises, A God Of Duty, A God Of Unrealistic Expectations; A God Whose Love Has To Be Earned, A Demanding God, A God Far Beyond Me, A God I Must Give Obedience To, A God Who Liberates, A God Who Affirms, A God Who Challenges, A God Who Affirms And Challenges, Love, The Great Reality Behind The Small Realities, A God Of Beauty, Headmaster, Tyrant, Loving Presence, Love Mystery, Truth, Beauty, Goodness

A small piece of cardboard for writing their perceptions of God on.

Process

1. Invite participants to ***look at some of the descriptions of God shown around the sacred space. Which ones say something to you about your perception of God when you were younger? Which ones say something about your perception of God now? Jot your perceptions down on cardboard.*** Allow them to talk if they begin to do so. (10 min)
2. Ask them to ***read in silence the following from TLBB: 10, 19, 26, 28, 32, 36, 45. Jot down any insights from Mary's perceptions of God on cardboard.*** (20-30 mins)
3. Ask them to ***divide your paper or parchment into 4 sections. In one section create a picture of your perception of God when you were young; second section, one showing God as God is to you today; third section, your insight into Mary's perception; fourth section, one of the God you would like to explore further.*** (Some of the perceptions of God around the sacred space may help them to

get thinking on this one.) **Use paint, crayons, pencils etc.** Tell them that **it is not necessary to be an artist. It may be simply a mass of colours, words, sketches, whatever. It is meant to say something about who God is for you. Whatever you allow to come from within and put down is what matters.** Allow talk and laughter. Each person could be given a cheap \$2 picture frame for her/his picture, although this is best kept for session 2 as above, if you intend facilitating it. Use the parchment for variety. (30-40 mins)

4. Encourage them to **share your work in pairs or small groups as you finish.** Finish by telling them that **your creative work is your prayer. Place your masterpiece alongside the sacred space and view each other's work,** allowing talk, sharing and laughter. **Take it home and place it where you will think more about who God is for you.** (10-15 mins)



Session 4

Where is God for Me?

My Response to God.

Aims

- To look for God wherever I am
- To respond to God in the beauty and the messiness of life
- To know and value Mary MacKillop's approach to life
- To be more aware that God is always with me
- To be more open to transcendent moments in my life
- To be more grateful for "the roar of the ordinary"
- To attempt to face my challenges better.

Resources

The Little Brown Book

Writing paper with Where is God for me? printed on each one, and placed on participants' chairs before they sit down

You will also need to tell this story.

A mother was worried about her son who was beginning to steal things. She had tried everything. As a last resort she asked help from her old, feared, Irish parish priest. The little boy found himself sitting in front of the ferocious looking priest.

"**Where is God?**" cried the priest. The little boy was understandably frightened but did not answer. "**Where is God?**" thundered the priest again. Again no answer from the trembling boy. For the third time he bellowed in his tiny ear, "**Where is God?**" The little boy decided he had had enough and took off home, got his little brother into their secret cupboard and confided in him: "We're in big trouble. God is missing and they think we've pinched him!"

Process

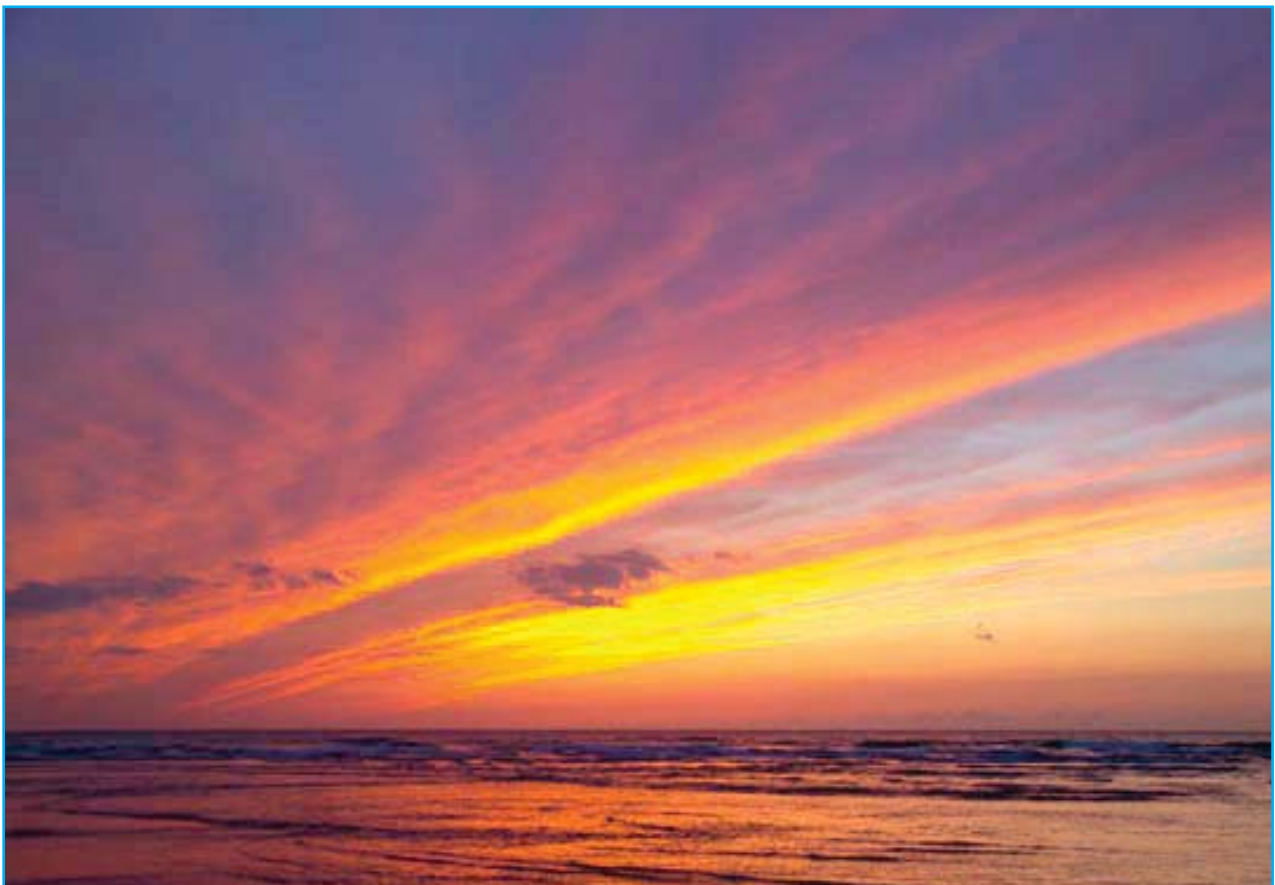
1. Tell the story, emphasising when you have finished, that ***we can so easily put God, as it were on a shelf, out of sight, in our ordinary lives each day. Today we want to try to answer the question of that old parish priest, "Just where is God for me in the hurly-burly of life each day?"*** (10 mins)
2. ***Fill in your answers in silence to the question: "Where is God for me?" on the sheets provided.*** (Music) (5-10 mins)
3. As they finish, ask them to ***share their answers with 2 or 3 others.*** Encourage them to ***write down any insights as they listen to each other.*** (15-20 mins)
4. ***Read quietly Mary's response to the question, found on the following from TLBB: 12, 15, 16, 26, 30, 38, 59, 64. Is there something I could take away from her that would allow God more into my life?***

Hot it down. (Don't forget the reflective music). (30 mins)

5. **Spend a moment thinking quietly about what you have learnt from Mary or from others in the group. (Music) (2-3)** In a group of 2 or 3, share some of your insights, allowing enough time for everyone who wishes to share. (15-20 mins)
6. The prayer in the large group is simply **for each person to read any insight s/he has written down from the session.** Very quiet music. (10 mins)

Or

Guided meditation 2 below, using Mary MacKillop stone.



Session 5

Exploring a Spirituality of Humour

Aims

- To celebrate life more
- To relax with and enjoy God
- To try to develop a healthy sense of humour
- To look at what makes people happy
- To laugh at myself a bit more

Resources

The Little Brown Book pages 3, 23, 33, 46, 52, 55, 57

Biros and writing paper or cardboard to write on. Small pieces of coloured cardboard preferable. Better chance participants will keep written insights.

Copies of the following on a page for writing on :

Laughter is sunshine in the house. (Thackeray)

The most wasted of all days is the ones where we haven't laughed. (Chamfort)

He who laughs, lasts. (Anonymous)

It takes 72 muscles to frown, but only 13 to smile. (Anonymous)

A smile breaks down most barriers. (Anonymous)

Questions on a page from Asking Questions section (see pp16-17): 3, 23, 33, 46, 52, 55, 57.

Allow a few lines between each question for jottings. Number the questions as given.

Process

1. A copy of the questions that link into TLBB, as above, left on each chair before participants arrive as well as the quotations page.
2. **Take a few moments to reflect on the 5 quotations. Rank them as well as you can in order of importance for you. Share your reasons for ranking in small groups of 2 or 3.** (10-20 min)
3. Silent reflection time: Remind them of **the importance of asking questions**. See below to “asking questions” section. **Read alone, reflectively, from TLBB as given above. What is Mary trying to tell me? Jot down any insights to the questions on the sheet provided.** (Quiet music) (20-30mins)
4. **Share insights in small groups of 2 or 3.** (15-20 mins)
5. Large group sharing: **What is “something” you would like to make more your own and what would be important for the group to try to make their own.** (15-20 mins)

6. Finish with activity below with words that give unity and laughter to a group. **Form a circle, something like footballers do before a game, with arms around each others' shoulders.**

Ask them:

Do you think we sometimes leave God out of our fun and laughter? Do you think God would have been very much part of the community spirit among us, in our hospitality, unity and fun at the Olympic Games ? We could even regard what we do now, as a prayer for the sort of spirit we would like in any group we are in, especially our families or where we work – community, laughter, life-affirming

Tell them there is no need to practise the words. Tell them that it is a good way to finish a session like this and can be regarded as our fun prayer to our God who enjoys us all. It is a sort of prayer that united us all at the Games. Don't tell them what the fun prayer is until they recognise the Aussie, Aussie Aussie (You might invite someone beforehand to lead this).

Leader Aussie, Aussie, Aussie!

Response Oi! Oi! Oi! etc etc

(Feel free to choose a different slogan if you feel the group may not relate to this one)



Session 6

Becoming the Person I am Capable of Being

Aims

- To recognise the importance of knowing myself better
- To better accept my vulnerability
- To realise more that God loves me just as I am, warts and all
- To be a little more open to what is happening to me
- To become more the right sort of role model, especially to my kids
- To try to meet life's challenges a little better

Resources

The Little Brown Book

Coloured cardboard with these sayings on them

Our willingness and desire to know ourselves better is our most basic drive.

Our whole human growth depends on it. (Adult education research)

There is only one journey...going inside yourself. (Rilke)

The unexamined life is not worth living. (Socrates)

The reign of God is within you. (Luke 17, 20-21)

Page with questions from Asking Questions (pp16-17) re TLBB: 4, 5, 33, 44, 46, 53, 58, 65 with space after each question for participants' own reflections.

All these on participants' chairs before processes begin

Process

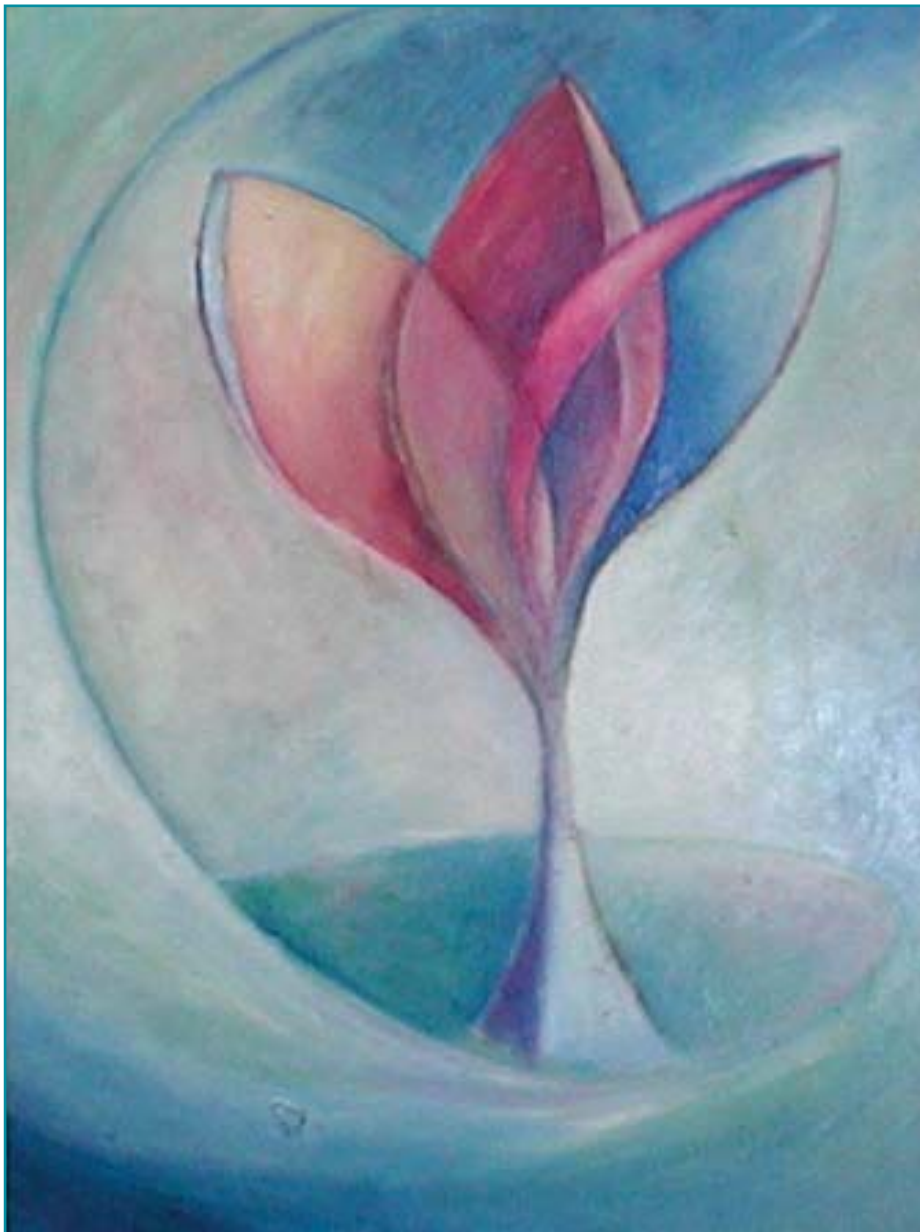
1. Quiet reflection on statements on cardboard for a few minutes.

Which two quotations say most to you? Do you find the quotations a bit scary? Do you agree with them? Jot down in point form any responses you feel you can make to the questions (10-20 min)

See what the person(s) alongside you thinks. [Groups of 2 or more OK if you wish] Jot any points down from your discussion (20-30 mins)

2. Remind them about the ***value of asking a question***. (See below, p 23, on "asking questions"). ***Give out resource page with questions re TLBB. Write down any personal thoughts you might have in response to the questions. Read in silence the pages from TLBB: 4, 5, 33, 44, 46, 53, 58, 65. What is Mary trying to tell me? Jot down after each question whatever says anything to you.*** (30 mins)

3. After reading and reflection time have finished tell them that ***if you wish to share with another, feel free to do so in groups of 2 or 3.. You might prefer to continue reflecting in silence.*** (15 mins)
 4. ***The prayer will be in the form of a meditation walk, using what touched you from the words of Scripture or Mary's words or your own insights from TLBB.***
- (See 73&74 from TLBB on how to introduce a meditation walk).**



Session 7

Facing Pain

Aims

- To recognise suffering, not always as a problem to be solved, but as a mystery to be lived
- To try to better recognise the challenge in life's setbacks
- To try to better respond to daily challenges
- To grow a little more in trust with my good God
- To live with my vulnerability a bit better
- To try to say "Yes!" more often to my good God

Resources

The Little Brown Book: 6, 10, 31, 34, 39, 48, 60, 64

A pack of cards

Writing paper with the words printed at the top:

Everything can be taken from a person but one thing: the last of human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances. (Victor Frankl: Search for Meaning, reflecting on his experiences in the Holocaust).

Questions also on this page from Asking Questions, (pp16-17): 6, 10, 31, 34, 39, 48, 60, 64 with space underneath each one for jottings

The following on coloured paper for our prayer

Introduction to Sr Irene (21.8.38 –21.5.91)

Sr Irene McCormack* was an Australian Sister of St Joseph who made the spirituality of Mary MacKillop a reality in her own life through **her morning offering prayer each day. She chose a response to life** that took her among the poor in a little village in Peru. Her belief that *the poor deserve the best we can offer* led eventually to her death at the hands of assassins.

The assassins came, looking for her, banging on the door: ***Where is the nun? Where is the nun?***

She walked calmly with her hands clasped in front,....with her chin up, trembling inside but firm in her determination to support the other men being accused.

Her murder was swift.

*Irene is made to lie face down. Fifteen minutes later, at around 8pm, she has been tried – **found guilty ...of feeding the poor....and is shot dead.***

Irene herself could say: ***Let us be entirely God's (1890).*** Mary MacKillop's prayer sums up Irene's commitment.

It was not till I was forty that this overwhelming experience of the unconditional, gratuitous love of God became a reality in my life – not just an intellectual conviction.

Out of that experience, she tells us, came the strength to create her own version of the Morning

Offering, her own unique approach to the Giver in the unknown of life each day.

(To be read slowly)

God, my Father, You love me and forgive me.

*So, today, I **accept all as gift***

And ask to find You, Lord, the Giver, in the gifts I choose:

To face life without fear

To live wholeheartedly in each present moment

May my heart sing today a song of grateful thanks and praise

I am God's work of art!

I am precious in His sight.

Do you think it would make a difference in my life, if I asked each morning, to **find You, Lord, in the gifts I choose today?**

To draw closer to You, what gifts should I ask from you today?

I choose Life

Without fear

Without anger

To live in the present moment without baggage

With forgiveness

Asking you to be with me in my vulnerability

By saying YES to my little challenges today

Trusting in you to be with me

In a more intimate relationship with you

Would you like to choose one of the above for your morning offering each day or make your own below?

.....

Mary MacKillop reminds us that - ***'All depends on prayer. Begin with it!' (1890)***

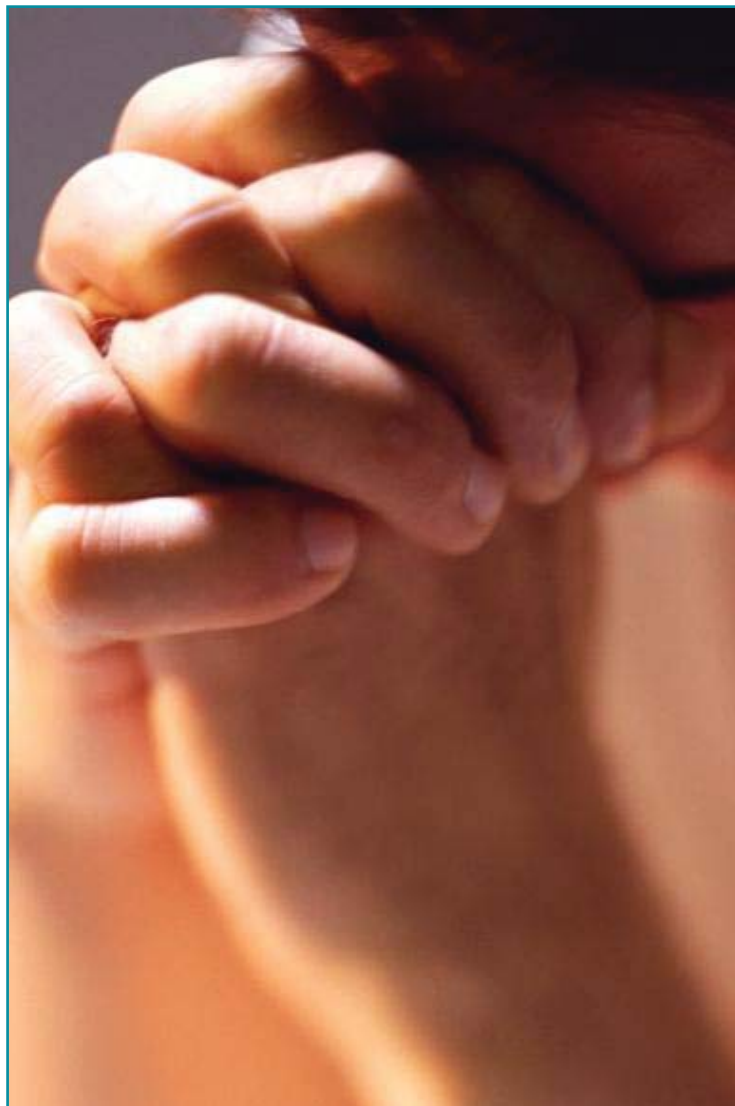
**Any quotations or references about Sr. Irene McCormack come from a 1996 publication of the Sisters, a beautiful tribute to her, simply called "IRENE" available at the MacKillop Centre*

Process

1. Get someone to ***explain the rules of a simple game of poker***, just keeping to what makes a good hand down to the worst hand. (5 min)
2. Give out cards at random, some getting 2 cards, others 3 or 4, or 5. There will be a lot of confusion, laughter and talk. That is ok. Just tell them that all will be explained (5-10 mins)

3. Ask each person to say **how s/he feels about the hand s/he was dealt**. Expect **terrible, cheated, great etc** across a whole range of feelings. Tell them that **this is what life is all about. I have very little say in the hands life deals me. I can often do nothing about it. I can't change the hand I am dealt. The big question is: "How do I respond to these many challenges." The great psychiatrist, Frankl, would say that I am free to choose an attitude to it all. My attitude and response have much to do with the sort of person I am and will become.** (20-30 mins)
4. Give out the writing sheets with Frankl's words and the questions referring to the different sections of TLBB. **Quiet time with the sections indicated in TLBB. Jot down anything that says something to you.** (20-30 mins)
5. After reading time is up, **invite them to continue reflecting or sharing with others if you wish.** (10 mins)

The shared prayer will be **reading from the page on Irene. (Best to have a number of readers who will need to be asked to pause for 3or 4 secs between each reading) Give a few minutes for quiet reflection after the reading.**



Session 8

Looking at the Human Face of God in Mary. Where Do I Show the Human Face of God to Others?

Aims

To consider what it was about the down-to-earth and not-to-be stopped Mary that

Won the hearts of the tough men of the outback

Took on the poorest of the kids

Encouraged the first Sisters

Looked after the "lepers"

Allowed her to be so forgiving

Made her orphans at Kincumber so precious

Allowed her to show the human face of God to all around her

Resources

The Little Brown Book

Envelopes (each with Christian name of a participant on front) and containing 4 or 5 thin pieces of coloured cardboard, to be picked up as participants arrive. A copy of (Mat 25:14-30) on coloured paper for each participant also available beforehand.

A copy of (Mat 25:14-30) on coloured paper for each participant also available beforehand.

Process

1. **Quiet time to allow us to better know the human Mary MacKillop. Read quietly 2, 16, 25,37, 40, 47, 50, 57, 64 from TLBB. What qualities do you admire in Mary? Jot these down on one of the pieces of cardboard in your envelope.** (Quiet music) (20 mins)
2. **Pick out someone you would like to share with, or form groups of 3 or 4. Share with them the qualities you admire most in Mary.** (15-20 mins)
3. **Every one back in the large circle. Take the cardboard out of the envelopes and place everything on the floor in front of the chair you are sitting on. Invite participants to get ready to move quickly. I want you to go to as many envelopes as you can and write on the cardboard one quality you like about that person .If there are some the same as Mary's qualities, make sure you write them down It doesn't matter if some repeat the same quality Nothing negative but lots of humour allowed. Do as many as you can in the short time. Move quickly.** (You will need to encourage some who may feel embarrassed. Ensure them that at the end they will be glad they took part. **(I have never known anyone not to be pleased and not to have gained from this exercise of affirmation.)** Make sure everyone is being attended to. Have a few helpers just in case. These are rarely needed, but – just in case. Have spare copies of extra cardboard handy in case they are needed
4. If some have finished tell them that **it is OK for you to read the comment while waiting for the rest to finish.** Let those still writing continue, but you may have to call a halt, if people are waiting for the next step. (3-5 mins)

Ask everyone to be silent while you reflect on the words of affirmation others have written. When most have finished emphasise that we need to realise that these qualities are real. It is how others see us. They should not be denied. They are God's gifts to you, not for yourself but for others. Did you know that psychologists would say that the qualities you admire in others, you have yourself. They may only be in seed form but they are within us waiting to flourish. This means that you too have those qualities you admired in Mary. They are there , not for yourself, but for others. Don't put yourself down. We need to accept ourselves as we are , the good and the not-so-good. (5mins)

5. For the prayer, **read the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30)**. This makes a greater impact if it is acted out. You will need to have people with parts prepared beforehand. (10-15 mins)
6. Encourage everyone to **take home your affirmations and acknowledge them on days when you feel a bit down**.



Session 9

How/When/Where/Why Do I Pray?

Aims

- To decide whether prayer is helpful or necessary
- To learn to pray as I am, not as I aint
- To consider whether I want to allow my good God in at different times during the day?
- To know that I am not alone
- To think about the place of St Joseph.
- To take time out sometimes for a cuppa with God

Resources

The Little Brown Book

A piece of coloured cardboard for each person with the words on it of the guided meditation below, no 2, using Mary MacKillop stone. See below also for resources on this meditation

3 or 4 coloured pieces of cardboard for writing on for each person.

Process

1. ***Insist with the group that for this exercise we need to have no distractions in fairness to those around us. If you move, make sure you are in a place where you will not be distracted by others. I want you to read in silence from The Little Brown Book, pages 22, 40, 42, 61, 66, vii, viii. Try to jot down on your coloured cardboard or mark any words that say something to you on each page.*** Quiet reflective music in background. (30 mins)
2. ***Share what you jotted down with another person you feel comfortable with (OK for three in a group).*** (15-20 mins)
3. Guided meditation: ***No 2 guided meditation using Mary MacKillop stone as given below.*** (20-30 mins)
4. If time still left, tell the group that ***Mary MacKillop was a Gospel person. She brought the Good News to others through her own presence. Look through the Little Brown Book and choose those Gospel passages at the bottom of each page that touch you in some way. Write them down on the cardboard provided. You might like to keep one in your wallet or purse, where you can take it out and own it more, while you are having a quiet cuppa, or some other time when you are alone.***

Session 10

My Relationship with God

Aims

- To allow Love into my life more often
- To be more aware of a Loving Divine Presence
- To find greater meaning in my life in this relationship
- To understand better that God takes the initiative
- To be more grateful to God
- To trust God more
- To be more open to a God of Surprises.

Resources

- » The Little Brown Book
- » A nice, fairly large vase which can be filled with some sand, small pebbles, some small flowers and water. Most of these are available cheaply at low dollar shops.
- » Have sand in a small jar, pebbles in another small jar, and a glass of water.
- » 3 or 4 pieces of small coloured cardboard for writing on
- » Sacred space for placing vase on
- » Reading of Mat 14, 27-33 or John 15, 12-17 on a page for each participant.

Process

1. Have vase on sacred space in the centre of the group. Ask for volunteers for the following
 - a. Pour pebbles into the vase until about almost full. ***These represent our doctrines. Ask what would be some of the doctrines we believe in? You might have to refer them to the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed which we say at Mass. Emphasise they are an important part of our faith, handed down to us from the Apostles' time.*** (10-15 mins)
 - b. Next pour in some sand, enough to cover the pebbles. ***These represent our morals, our Do's and Don'ts.*** Get them to tell you what they are. Don't give them the answers. Get them involved. Refer them to ***the 10 commandments. Some might even remember the 6 Commandments of the Church Again stress the importance of the commandments . They keep us on the straight and narrow path to God. They should be the way we express our love for God and our neighbour.***(10-15 mins)
 - c. Now, the flowers. ***These represent our worship – what we do at prayer. Get them to give some examples: the Mass, the rosary, the sacraments .We all know how much this is part of our faith.***(5-10 mins)

- d. Ask *is there anything that is missing? We have dealt with what we believe in, our morals and our worship. Is there anything important that is missing? Hold up the glass of water. What does this represent? If it is not there, our religion can become a formality, even a burden to carry and without meaning. Do you sometimes experience your religion like this?*

Allow answers until you hear the words *love of God* or, even better, *my relationship with God*. Emphasise that *our doctrines, our morality and our worship, important as they are, are more like the dry bones of our religion. Our love for God and God's love for us give life to our faith and, like the water, should permeate every aspect of our faith. Without a personal relationship with God we tend to make our faith a formality like an empty, dry shell. A healthy relationship with God makes it come alive! Perhaps we have emphasised what is important, but neglected what is essential, if we are to live the Gospels.* (10-15 mins)

2. Quiet time to *read the following pages from The Little Brown Book: 11, 27, 30, 31, 59, 63, 65, jotting down on coloured cardboard anything that might help you in your relationship with God.* (20-30 mins)
3. Invite participants *to continue with their reflections or to join a group to share their thoughts.* (10-15 mins)
4. Finish with a reading from Matt 14 : 22-33. Good to have different readers from different parts of the room, taking the parts of the narrator, Jesus and Peter or John 15, 12 – 17 with a reflective pause between each sentence, using a different reader for each one. (5-10 mins)



Asking Questions

Introduction

Participants need to know why questions are important. Socrates believed that “ the **unexamined** life is not worth living.”

Questions take us beneath the surface, to who we really are. In asking a question about how we live, **we question assumptions**, and come to know ourselves and to be ourselves. We then take responsibility for the way we live. If we don't ask questions we will **go on “living”, but never really be alive**. We will lack freedom and meaning in our lives. We live a sort of counterfeit life. ***What lies before us and what lies behind us are small matters compared to what lies within us (Emerson)***

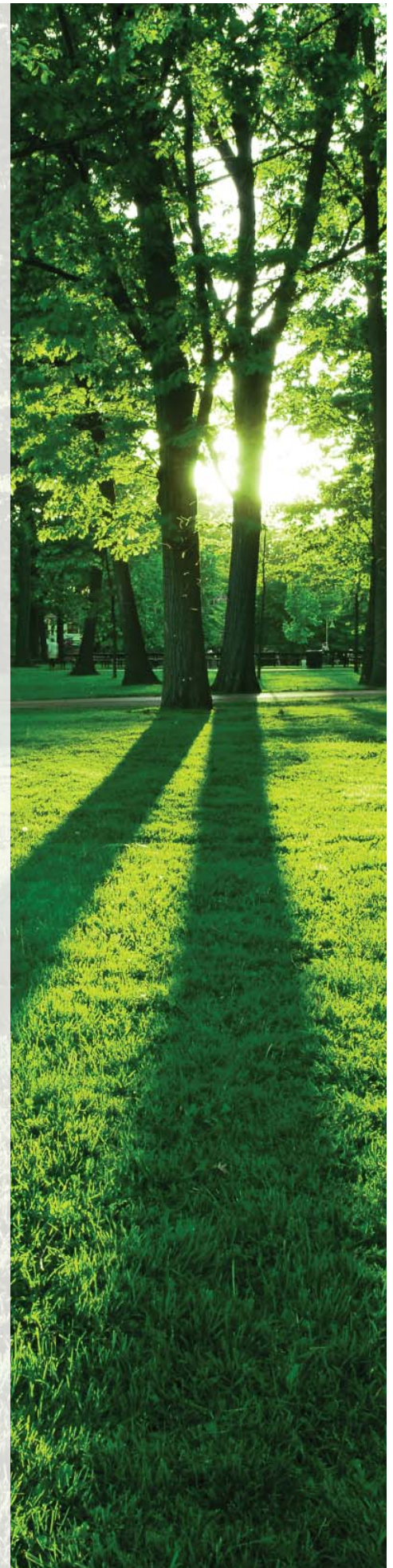
The questions below will have answers for us that will result in more challenges and questions. Mary's insights will help us to explore the answer to a question, but we **have first to ask the questions ourselves** if we are to become who we really are.

(Suggest giving out this introduction, and the particular questions relating to each theme in the facilitation of adult groups, each time you run a session, rather than referring to the index in the LBB. Asking questions can do so much for us)

A quick reference is given below for what each section could offer in The Little Brown Book in response to a question. The list of questions will also be helpful for reference in facilitating sessions for groups.

- 1 Do I give others a “fair go”?
- 2 Can I walk the extra mile?
- 3 Do I have much of nature's greatest medicine?
- 4 What sort of footprint am I making?
- 5 Am I gentle with myself?
- 6 What do I do with my negative feelings?
- 7 Not enough time to take time for myself?
- 8 Can I love myself?
- 9 Am I still on the starting blocks with Reconciliation?
- 10 Handling pain?
- 11 Do I put a spin on the truth?
- 12 How do I face my fears and tensions?
- 13 What do I do with old hurts?
- 14 Do I miss the beauty that creeps unnoticed into my day?
- 15 How good am I at listening to the voice of God?
- 16 Where do I look for God each day?
- 17 How do I help my kids to love God?
- 18 Have I lost the plot?
- 19 Smelling the flowers today?
- 20 How kind am I?
- 21 How do I face life's setbacks?
- 22 Do I want prayer in my life?
- 23 Am I growing up – beginning to laugh at myself?
- 24 Getting my sins into perspective?
- 25 What is my ear like?

- 26 Do I recognise God in my love for my kids?
- 27 Am I looking after myself?
- 28 Do I have a special time for tuning into God?
- 29 How do I respond when times are tough?
- 30 Do I recognise my growth times?
- 31 What is my response to an absent God?
- 32 Where do I find meaning and purpose in my life?
- 33 Do I have a negative or positive response to life?
- 34 Can I live with my vulnerability?
- 35 How do I go about working on my masterpiece?
- 36 Do I believe in allowing God to take the initiative?
- 37 How do I treat “the lepers” in my life?
- 38 Do I miss “the roar of the ordinary”?
- 39 Have I a balanced approach to life?
- 40 Do I pray as I am or as I ain’t?
- 41 Can I walk in the shoes of another?
- 42 What sustains me?
- 43 What tells me that I don’t have the game sewn up?
- 44 Where is the Gospel calling me?
- 45 Do I think God understands me with my masks?
- 46 What is the secret for me to be happy?
- 47 How can I be open to what is happening to me?
- 48 How do I respond to the downside of my life?
- 49 Am I creating a community of hope and love?
- 50 How do I go about giving affirmation?
- 51 Who am I there for?
- 52 Getting older or younger?
- 53 Enjoying life each day?
- 54 Do I own my daily selfishness?
- 55 How often do I notice the riches in my backyard?
- 56 Where does Jesus take flesh in my life?
- 57 Am I able to see the face of God in the fun times?
- 58 What do I know about the co-founder of the Brown Joeys?
- 59 Who are my role models?
- 60 Facing my fear of rejection, failure, criticism?
- 61 Do I know someone who can help me?
- 62 Can I say “sorry”?
- 63 Maintaining serenity of spirit?
- 64 How do I respond to the unexpected?
- 65 How do I recognise a follower of Jesus?
- 66 Can I say “Yes”?
- 67 Am I looking for more in my life?
- 68 How often do I make time for a cuppa with God?
- 69 Am I open to being affirmed and challenged?
- 73 What about taking a quiet stroll with God?
- 80 Am I ready to try to live: “The Glory of God is me fully alive!”



Short Prayer Sessions

Each session would take a different page as described below.

Resources

A particular section in TLBB from the list above that you or the group have chosen, with reflective music in the background. The italic sections are the words or sentiments the facilitator might use.

Introduction

First, remind the group that:

*We know that looking at, and hopefully, **learning from our own experiences**, can help us to grow as human beings.*

*We do this by honestly **affirming and gently challenging** ourselves as we reflect.*

*It is not a time for action. No resolutions! It is simply a time for each of us to **relax with our good God** and be open to the challenge of attempting to live Gospel values and attitudes.*

Group or Personal Reflection

Begin with the following, pausing for about 5-10 seconds after each asterisk, allowing time for participants to reflect on the words:

Take a moment to close your eyes and relax, breathing in slowly and deeply*, slowly and deeply**

*We are in the presence of Mary's good God * who is alive * in each one of us**

Be still *and know that I am God* (Ps 46:10).

*I love you * just as you are.*.*

I cannot stop loving you* – no matter what you have done!*

Believe my whisperings in your own heart**

(Read through the particular section slowly or allow participants to read through their particular page quietly, first telling them)

Respond to anything that touches you.

See if your good God is affirming you in a particular attitude and perhaps gently giving you a challenge

After a few moments of reflection, invite volunteers to read the phrase or words that touched them. Finish by thanking participants for coming and sharing.

Guided Meditations

Guided meditations holding my Mary MacKillop stone, using Scripture (**bold**) and Mary's sayings (**bold italic**)

These 2 meditations below can be used at the end of a session or for a group prayer at any time.

They can be read by one of the group, the facilitator or different participants from different directions in the room. They need to be done without rush to allow prayerful reflection.

Resources

Small stones or coloured beads that can be bought at cheap dollar stores.

Copies of the meditation below

Process

Allow participants to choose their stones (or beads) lying around the sacred space, before you read the guided meditation, slowly and prayerfully.

Pause for a few seconds at each comma and full stop to allow participants the time and space to reflect prayerfully. You might like to read through it for your own meditation to help you in reading it to the group

After reading the meditation, if you have time, ask participants to open their eyes and *read quietly the meditation that you are going to give them. Tell them to focus on the words that meant something to them and to reflect on them for a moment.* If the group is comfortable in sharing, ask them to *share why they chose their particular section.* Finish with quiet, reflective music as each one reads her/his section. (Remember to tell them that *there is no pressure to share*).

At the end of the meditation *invite participants to take their stones with them, and to carry them in their pockets or purses, as a reminder to help them make their relationship with God a priority. Tell them that carrying their stones is a tangible way of telling God that they want God to be part of their lives and that is what matters most.* Don't forget quiet music as you read the meditation.



A Guided Meditation

Place yourself in a comfortable position with your small stone (bead) in the palm of your hand. Close your eyes, and breathe in and out, slowly and deeply, feeling completely relaxed. Breathe in and out slowly and deeply Remember Mary's words:

'Hurry and fuss will destroy interior peace'.

Slow yourself down. (Are you speaking slowly and pausing to allow them to be still?)

Get in touch with your stone. Is it all smooth, or can you feel some small rough parts? Rub it between your fingers and the palms of your hand. Get to know it. Does it feel pleasant to hold? Make it your own. Hold it with care.

Listen as your good God speaks to you. 'Be still and know that I am God'. This stone is my special gift to you today. It is a small sign of my unconditional love for you. Hold it in the palm of your hand just as I hold you in the palm of my hand.

(The above is used for the introduction to the 2 meditations below. There is no need to use all the words above and below in a meditation. Choose the words you feel most comfortable with, or you know would help a particular group. If you wish, you can make 3 or 4 meditations out of the material given below. You will notice an emphasis on Mary's words and Scripture.)

Guided Meditation One

I want you to try to **listen to My whisperings in your heart**. That's how we build a personal relationship together. Getting to know each other takes time, where we listen and talk to each other. **Draw near to Me and I will draw near to you.**

Don't be frightened to respond and tell Me how you feel – angry, pleased, frustrated, resisting. That is what it is like to be human. I felt the same way when I became a human being. Be honest with Me!!! **I see your heart**. Our relationship depends on this honesty.

During the day, remember: **There where you are you will find Me. I will always be with you.** Try to remember to see **My hand in all that happens**.

Don't forget that **if you have love in your heart, you shall have Me with you**. Then you can **walk in My presence in the midst of the most trying occupations**. If you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me.

Do you realise how much I love you? **My love is too deep for words to express**.

I love you just as you are, warts and all. Have you ever said to Me: "I love You"? You often respond well to My do's and don'ts, and you show great respect for Me. But what I want most of all is for you to love Me.

How I yearn for you to trust in Me. I know you have to face the downside of life but **do not let your troubles disturb your trust in Me**. I want **My joy to be in you**.

Remember that **I am Love**. **Cling to My love**. Can you try to do this? Can you **lean more on Me, less on yourself**? Choose life, holding fast to me. **With Me on your side what need you fear**? There is no fear in love; perfect love casts out fear. Rejoice in Me.

Meditation Two *(following introduction)*

*I want you to challenge yourself to seek out those in need around you at home or at work. **Help the weak to become strong.***

*Above all I want you to be happy. Do you believe you will **find happiness in making others happy?** Remember that **just as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to Me.** Can you try to **bear with the faulty as I bear with you?** **Reject no one.** Can you **forgive and forget anything painful in the past?***

My peace I leave with you. Try to keep your mind in peace, whatever happens. Don't forget that you must always expect from time to time to receive crosses – and know that you also give them. You never know what My grace can do for you.

Remember: Those who lose their lives for my sake will find it. Remember, too, that all will be right with time and a little patience

I don't love you, provided you change. I love you, just as you are, hoping that you might slowly change.

*Be compassionate with yourself on your journey with Me. I want you to enjoy yourself and be happy above all. I am inviting you to grow into **the person I am calling you to become.***

*I am not surprised if you fall. Falling over and getting up again is part of the journey with Me. **My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness.***

Just do your best and I will bless your efforts. *I want you to be gentle and **patient with your self when you see you have failed.** I know what it is like to be human. I will give you the power for your hidden self to grow strong.*

*I understand you better than you understand yourself. **Give Me your hand.** Please **do not think hard things about yourself.** Love yourself!*



Group Prayer

using material from the processes given above in facilitation of groups

The facilitator will need to adapt the different steps in the process, depending on time available. Don't forget reflective music during most if not all of the prayer time.

- Session 1** Process 1 or 1 & 5
- Session 2** Process 1 & 6
- Session 3** Process 1 with a reading from one or two of the pages from TLBB that are given in the process
- Session 4** Process 1, 2 with short readings from sections of different pages given in TLBB chosen by participants beforehand.
- Session 5** Process 1 with short readings from different pages of TLBB chosen by participants beforehand. Finish with 5, telling them to 'take the roof off'.
- Session 6** Process 1 & 2, followed by extracts read from pages of the TLBB chosen beforehand by participant.
- Session 7** Ask participants to reflect on the words of Frankl and to share their thoughts with the person(s) alongside them. Readings from the TLBB.
- Session 8** Process 1, using a few pages that you think best, followed by 2&6
- Session 9** Process 6 & 7
- Session 10** Process 2 & 4.

