

Dear Year 5 Girls and Boys

I have been in Perth quite a while now and eager to correspond or meet with you.

You may know that I first came to Perth by sailing ship in 1846. We arrived in the heat of summer and my fellow companions and I –six women came with me from Ireland- had a lot to learn about Australia

We found the Aboriginal people were very interested in learning more about us because we were women living on our own and starting up a new school that we wanted their children to attend. We wanted to get to know them as well and they were happy to be sharing their knowledge of their lives, the bush, the plants and animals and the Swan River with us. We as newcomers to Perth learned to love them and through them the earth in new ways with all the different plants and animals we discovered that were unusual for us coming from Ireland in the Northern Hemisphere.

When we first arrived in Perth we came in a small boat up the Swan River from the harbour in Fremantle. The river was wider than it is today and the shore line was much closer to the middle of the city than it is now. I think Elizabeth Quay would have been underwater in 1846 so it is good no one tried to build it then!

I hope you are learning a lot every day at school. Your Australian expression, 'give it a go' is a good motto for you as a student as some things you will try to learn will start out difficult but become easier over time. You need to listen to your teachers and your parents who will direct and encourage you to always make the most of every day at school.

Some of the most important lessons you will learn will include how to see Jesus as a light in your life, showing you the way to be a good person and how to treat your fellow students with kindness and care. When you feel that you are different because you believe something that others don't you need to have courage to follow your beliefs about God and how to always treat others with respect. Sometimes you need to encourage your friends to behave in new and better ways by showing that you behave like this yourself.

Everyone at Frayne probably wants to be the best and top of the class. But I want you to know that as long as you always do your best and try hard you will be the best at being your best self. Remember-no one but you can be you!

Sometimes you have to be silent and just listen more. Jesus did that even when he was accused of being wrong. One of my life mottos was "Jesus was silent" which is a good example for all of us when perhaps we are being misunderstood but have to wait for the understanding of others.

If you really want to build a community of love in your college that is named after me make sure you are a person who is willing to forgive your friends, your teachers and your family. Forgiving is the beginning of healing and new beginnings for all of us.

Please write back to me soon, or drop by to see me on the convent veranda.

Mother Ursula
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