

# Blessed + Broken

## Leader's Guide

(Excerpt from *Blessed + Broken: Lent Year B*)

*This book, and the accompanying DVD and audio CDs, gives you a simple, but comprehensive tool to help your group break open the treasures of the Lenten Gospels.*

*The good news for you is that these materials have been designed and compiled to make your task as easy as possible. This Leader's Guide will give you practical steps for using the program each week and guidelines for effective small group leadership or facilitation.*

*The other Good News is that your 'job' is primarily the work of the Holy Spirit. You are simply the channel or means for the Spirit to mend broken hearts and nurture weary souls.*

Each week the program has different components or sections. As group leader you may need to select certain components for each meeting if the meeting time is limited. The program outlined in the resource is designed for a meeting time of 90 minutes.

### Year of Youth

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has declared this liturgical year (2018) as the Year of Youth. Pope Francis has dedicated the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be focused on the theme of 'Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment'.

While the *Blessed + Broken* program has been written and prepared for all age groups, there are certain aspects of the program that may be of particular interest to young people.

### Blessed and Given

This year there is one section or component we would strongly urge you NOT to omit: 'Blessed and Given'. This section is only on the DVD and CDs. Each week a person shares their personal story.

Four of the stories in the 'Blessed and Given' section have been written and narrated by young people. The other two stories concern major events that occurred when the person was in early adulthood.

- Week 1: Katelyn Ross speaks about suffering from anorexia and her battle to overcome the messages from the media, advertising and the fashion industry about 'body image'.
- Week 2: Throughout much of his life John Evans has had to deal with depression and a severe sense of loneliness caused by abuse that was inflicted upon him as a child.
- Week 3: Michael Tanuvasa Kelemete has Samoan background and was very close to his grandparents. He speaks of his profound grief after their death and his eventual decision to go to the seminary and train to be a priest. (NB: The publisher apologises for an error on page 7 of the 'Blessed + Broken' book. Michael Tanuvasa Kelemete is of Samoan background, not 'Tongan background'.)
- Week 4: At age 23 Clare Sultmann had the world beneath her feet – the perfect job in a Sydney legal practice and an apartment at Bondi Beach – until a garbage truck drove over her and sent her into a sequence of 37 surgeries.
- Week 5: Caroline Grogan shares her story of making the vocational discernment to study, research and work in the area of aging and dementia.
- Week 6: Ora Duffley is a young teacher who conveys her anguish at the reports of violence and destruction inflicted upon the Christian communities of northern Iraq by Daesh (ISIS) in 2016. In 2017 she visited these communities to help the local people rebuild their towns and churches with the help of SOS Chrétiens d'Orient.

These are all issues and concerns that can relate to everyone.

At the end of the video or audio presentation allow a brief period for participants to share their responses, questions and challenges.

If you do not have the DVD/CDs the videos and text are available on the website:

[www.lentprogam.com/stories](http://www.lentprogam.com/stories)

If there is not time to hear the stories in the meeting let the group know about the website and suggest participants view the story at home.

## Some practical suggestions

- Prepare for the meeting 30 minutes prior to the starting time: items for prayer, any refreshments for after the meeting, background music, checking equipment and playing background music as people arrive. The hymn, 'Bread Broken and Given' that is used in the Closing Prayer is very simple, however, it will be unknown to most people. Track 1 on CD 1 is a recording of the hymn that includes all the verses. If participants hear this as they arrive they will become familiar with the melody.
- Be ready to welcome each person as they arrive and make sure they are introduced to those they don't know. Having nametags could be beneficial, at least for the first week. Little things that provide a warm and welcoming environment will yield a big result to help participants make the transition from their busy lives to a space of sacredness, prayerfulness and discernment.
- Let people know that you will be starting and finishing on time each week and if circumstances mean they arrive late or have to leave early, that is okay, but it won't interrupt the flow of the group. If it looks like the meeting might run over time, always ask the participants' permission to go an extra ten minutes but no more. If there is going to be a social time it is wise to have it at the end so it doesn't inconvenience those who wish to leave.
- You may need to start the conversation rolling by providing an initial response to a discussion question or by asking appropriate open-ended questions. An open-ended question is designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer using the participant's own knowledge, thoughts or feelings: 'Tell me about ...'; 'What do you think about ...'; 'How does this make you feel?' ... Ask the Spirit to work through you and each member of the group to cultivate an attitude of 'holy listening' – a respectful, prayerful and attentive heart.
- Always remember you are the servant leader – you do not have to be the expert or know all the answers. If a question is raised throw it open to the group to answer or failing that, say you will look further into the question and bring any information back to the group next week.
- Give the quieter participants, who may find it difficult to enter the conversation, an opportunity to share their thoughts. Be respectful of those who don't want to contribute but let them know they are welcome to at any time.

## DVD and CD

To complement this book there is a DVD and two audio CDs. These resources are available as a set – the DVD at the front of the box, then the two CDs.

The DVD has videos of the six Scripture Reflections and six personal stories – 'Blessed and Given'.

A menu screen allows you to play the video for the appropriate week. Ensure all group members will be able to see the screen easily – some seats may need to be moved during this session. Test the video before the session for volume and picture quality.

If the group is not able to meet in a room with access to a TV and DVD player (or computer) audio recordings of the Gospel Reflections and 'Blessed and Given' are also available on the CDs.

There are 2 CDs. The first CD covers weeks 1-3. The second CD covers weeks 4-6. In the text, each recorded section is indicated with a CD symbol and the appropriate track number. Make sure you are familiar with the operation of the CD player, and do a sound check for the appropriate volume level.

## Overview

Each of the six sessions of this Lenten resource has these components:

- Welcome
- Call to Prayer (guided meditation)
- Opening Prayer
- Listen to the Good News (Gospel)
- Break Open the Good News (Gospel Reflection)
- Share the Good News
- Blessed and Given (personal stories)
- Closing Prayer
- Live the Good News

Throughout the sessions there are notes and suggestions for you (in italics). It will be helpful to read these notes and suggestions before the session.

## Opening and Closing Prayer

Each week some simple items are required for the sacred space. These are listed below. You may choose to modify these to suit your circumstances.

- All weeks: purple fabric, Bible, large purple candle, matches or lighter.
- Week 1: large bowl of water on a stand and a small branch for sprinkling rite.
- Week 2: a tea light or small votive candle for each person, a taper, small bowl for catching any dripping wax.
- Week 3: money (coins and notes).
- Week 4: a Crucifix that will be passed around the group during the ritual.
- Week 5: a glass container of seeds.
- Week 6: loaf of bread to be broken, plate or basket or bowl for the bread.

Before the Opening Prayer there is a 'Call to Prayer'. This is a simple guided meditation. If the meeting time is less than 90 minutes this is an optional section.

Each week during either the Opening or Closing Prayer you will invite the group to participate in a very simple ritual action. In a few words explain the action before the prayer. Read through the Opening and Closing Prayers before the meetings so that you are prepared for the ritual action. It will be helpful if you lead the ritual action.

## Listen to the Good News

The Gospel readings do not precisely match the readings at Mass. Sometimes verses are omitted for brevity (eg Passion Sunday).

## Break Open the Good News

Three of the gospel reflections are written by Dr Antonia Pizzey. Antonia has just completed her first year teaching as a lecturer at ACU in the School of Theology. For the Lenten program she brings a wealth of knowledge of scripture and theology as well as the perspective of a young adult in the Church.

The other three reflections are written by Fr Dom Orih (a young Nigerian priest in the Archdiocese of Brisbane), Bishop Anthony Randazzo (Archdiocese of Sydney) and Fr Rob Galea (Diocese of Sandhurst).

You'll notice Fr Rob presents in a different style than the other videos. Fr Rob works with high schoolers and young adults all over the world, evangelising with his music and through the use of his YouTube channel. He uses a vlog (video blog) style way of presenting complex topics in a way that is relevant and accessible to young people.

## Blessed and Given

This section is only on the DVD and CDs. Each week a person shares their personal story. At the end of the video or audio presentation allow a brief period for participants to share their responses, questions and challenges. These videos are also available on the website ([www.lentprogram.com](http://www.lentprogram.com)). If there is not time to hear the stories in the meeting let the group know about the website and suggest participants view the story at home.

## Live the Gospel News

This last section of *Blessed + Broken* is not intended for the group meeting, but rather for the days between each gathering. As group leader it will be helpful to point this out on the first meeting.

Each week, the 'Live the Good News' section provides suggestions and steps for concrete actions. There may be projects that the group can take on. At some point in the meetings the group could discuss this but as group leader ensure this discussion has a definite time limit.

## Website

For additional resources please visit the website: [www.lentprogram.com](http://www.lentprogram.com)

This site includes information about other resources for Lent: poster, prayer cards and resources to download.

On the last session please encourage group members to visit the website and fill out the online evaluation form.