

*Do I give Lent  
the spiritual  
energy it  
deserves?*



# PREPARE the WAY →

## **A LENTEN RESOURCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Designed especially for youth groups to use in the lead up to Easter, this six-week Lenten resource contains gospel reflections and activities to help young people deepen their understanding of this season.

# Lent.

Otherwise known as that famous Christian tradition where we give up chocolate for 40 days (until Easter Sunday), and then stuff our faces full as reward for the sacrifice! How many of us as children did not fully understand why we celebrated Lent in the first place?

Perhaps some of us are still unsure as to why for the 40 days and 40 nights before Easter, we prepare ourselves through spiritual exercises: **penance**, **almsgiving**, and **voluntary self-denial**. We do all this preparation because we give thanks to God for giving us His one and only Son, so that He may give us life to the full.

Traditionally, we are taught that Lent is all about giving up things, such as chocolate, coffee, TV, even Facebook! The purpose of sacrificing these things is so that we can increase our relationship with the living God. What many don't realise though is that a similar outcome can be achieved by *taking something up* rather than giving something up.

So maybe this Easter instead of doing the normal 'giving up', you can 'take something up', with the same goal of increasing your relationship with God. It might be as simple as committing to reading the Scriptures for as little as five minutes each day, performing an act of social service each week, or joining a parish group to help with the Easter preparations. Finding the time to commit to one of these tasks might be just as much of a challenge as giving up something you really enjoy!

So as we start this journey of Lent, let us reflect on the following question: *Do I give Lent the spiritual energy it deserves?*

# WHAT IS PREPARE THE WAY?

*This resource has been written by the Archdiocesan Office for Youth (AOY) in Melbourne. It is especially designed for youth groups to use throughout the Season of Lent. The resource will cover the six Sundays of Lent and prepare participants for the Easter Triduum.*

*Our aim is to help young people deepen their faith and understanding of Lent in the weeks leading up to Easter. It is also hoped that the resource can help form a deeper sense of 'community' within the youth group.*

*There are no set 'rules' to using this program, and no allocated times for each activity so that it can be adapted to suit your particular group and meeting time. It is recommended however that you spend a minimum of 30 minutes per session. While the sessions are based around the Sunday readings, the session does not necessarily have to be run on a Sunday. Although if it is run on a Sunday, it could be more effective in driving the Gospel 'home'.*

***We have compiled the first three Sundays in this document, and the next three Sundays will be available to download from our website [www.cam.org.au/youth](http://www.cam.org.au/youth) soon after.***

***If you have any questions, contact the AOY team on (03) 9412 3341 or email us at [aoy@cam.org.au](mailto:aoy@cam.org.au).***

## HOW DO I USE THIS RESOURCE?

The resource contains Scripture readings and reflection activities for each Sunday in Lent, which, depending on the person facilitating the group, and the number and the age of the participants present, can take anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours.

Using this resource:

- **Plan the session.** Each session includes the Gospel reading for that week, an activity, reflection questions, and a Psalm to pray. There is also an active component to the resource, with suggestions of what participants can do during the week to live out the Gospel.
- **Be prepared.** Make sure you read through the program and appropriate resources before you go and run it!
- **Create an enjoyable and relaxed environment** so that when group members arrive, they feel right at home.
- **Set up a central focus to set the mood.** This focus may include things like a bible, a candle, some nice fabric—anything! Be creative but also mindful of the mood you are trying to create.
- **The leader sets the tone in the group** therefore the energy of the leader is vital to setting a good mood within the group. If the leader isn't passionate about this stuff why should the participants be?
- **Use the provided PowerPoint slides.** Depending on the style you choose to read the Gospel/Psalm, the provided slides can be shown or photocopied for the group.



## TIPS FOR GROUP LEADERS:

For leaders who wish to get the 'most' out of this resource and run it for an extended period of time (e.g. a two hour session) here are a few options to consider:

- Start the session with a method of prayer called *Lectio Divina* (Holy Reading). This is a helpful way of reading the Gospel and really reflecting on the words before the group 'unpacks' it. (See **glossary** for steps to *Lectio Divina*)
- Start/end the meeting with your own prayer experience. This could be anything from reading your own youth group's prayer (if you have one) to spending 15 minutes of silence with God! Be creative.
- Find, play, reflect, sing or even dance to some appropriate music.
- With the activities or reflective questions, ask the group to take a period of time to write down their responses prior to sharing as a group.
- Share your responses and encourage deep group discussion.

# LEAVE THE DEVIL IN THE DESERT

WEEK 1

## Welcome to Week One

*In this week's Gospel reading, we visit Jesus, who has just spent 40 days and 40 nights in the desert, without food or drink. The devil then comes to visit him, tempting Him with loaves of bread.*

*Our themes for this session:*

- **Temptation**
- **Trust in God**
- **Faithfulness**
- **Preparation**

## GOSPEL READING

*Matthew 4:1-11 • Jesus is Tested in the Wilderness*

*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the desert to be put to the test by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was hungry, and the tester came and said to him, 'If you are Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' But he replied, 'Scripture says:*

*Human beings live not on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' The devil then took him to the holy city and set him on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down; for scripture says: He has given his angels orders about you, and they will carry you in their arms in case you trip over a stone.' Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says: Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. And he said to him, 'I will give you all these, if you fall at my feet and do me homage.' Then Jesus replied, 'Away with you, Satan! For scripture says: The Lord your God is the one to whom you must do homage, him alone you must serve.' Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels appeared and looked after him.*

## ACTIVITY

*Materials: You'll need a ball and some space to spread out!*

This activity demonstrates how we can follow Jesus' example when we meet the devil – in the desert of our own life. Ask the young people to stand facing one another in a circle, which represents the 'Christian community'.

Call for a volunteer to stand in the middle of the circle as the 'devil'. Explain that the ball used in this game represents faith. The object of the game is to pass the ball (i.e. faith) from one person to another without allowing the devil to take it away. In other words, everyone needs to "keep the faith" as the devil tries to do whatever possible to steal it as it is tossed from person to person.

If the person in the middle temporarily steals faith away, the last person with the ball becomes the new devil for the next round of the game.

After playing a few rounds of the game, relate it to today's Gospel reading.

- *What can we do to avoid temptation? (What 'tactics' did you use to make it hard for the devil to touch the ball?)*
- *In today's Gospel, how did Jesus show us we should treat the devil?*
- *How can we ask for God's help in times of temptation?*

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Jesus spent 40 days and 40 nights in the desert praying in preparation before He started His public ministry. **Do we spend enough time in prayer to prepare ourselves for the significant moments in our lives?**
- After 40 days and 40 nights of fasting Jesus would have been pretty hungry and thirsty! The devil then tried to catch Jesus at His weakest moment, tempting Him to use His divine powers to give into temptation. **When we are at our lowest, are we more easily tempted? What can we do to resist this?**
- Jesus rejected the first temptation by quoting scripture that he would have been taught as a young man: “Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” **What do we live on? How does the Word of God sustain us?**

## PSALM TO PRAY

*Psalm 141: 1-5, 8-10*

*Yahweh, I am calling, hurry to me, listen to my voice when I call to you. May my prayer be like incense in your presence, my uplifted hands like the evening sacrifice.*

*Yahweh, mount a guard over my mouth, a guard at the door of my lips. Check any impulse to speak evil, to share the foul deeds of evil-doers. I shall not sample their delights!*

*May the upright correct me with a friend's rebuke; but the wicked shall never anoint my head with oil, for that would make me party to their crimes.*

*To you, Yahweh, I turn my eyes, in you I take refuge, do not leave me unprotected. Save me from the traps that are set for me, the snares of evil-doers.*

*Let the wicked fall each into his own net, while I pass on my way.*



## DURING THE WEEK...

Like Jesus did, spend time in prayer as you prepare for something. It could be...

- *Before school everyday this week I will spend five minutes with God.*
- *Before I leave the house today I will embody an attitude of appreciation.*

Identify the temptations in your life. For the brave hearted try and cut them out of your life completely but if you're not that game try and build your strength to resist them. It could be...

- *I will give up sugar on my weat-bix!*
- *I will put more joy in God, and not shopping!*
- *I will cut down the time I spend on Facebook by an hour a day!*

# THE MOUNTAIN OF FAITH

WEEK 2

## Welcome to Week Two

In this week's Gospel reading, Jesus takes Peter, James and John to the high mountain where He reveals His true nature.

Our themes for this session:

- **Being transformed with Jesus**
- **Looking towards heaven**
- **Listening to Jesus**
- **God as our light**

## GOSPEL READING

*Matthew 17:1-9 • The Transfiguration*

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as dazzling as light. And suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said, 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you want me to, I will make three shelters here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and suddenly from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.' When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. But Jesus came up and touched them, saying, 'Stand up, do not be afraid.' And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order, 'Tell no one about this vision until the Son of man has risen from the dead.'

## ACTIVITY

*Materials: A3 pieces of paper, textas/pens (one for each person)*

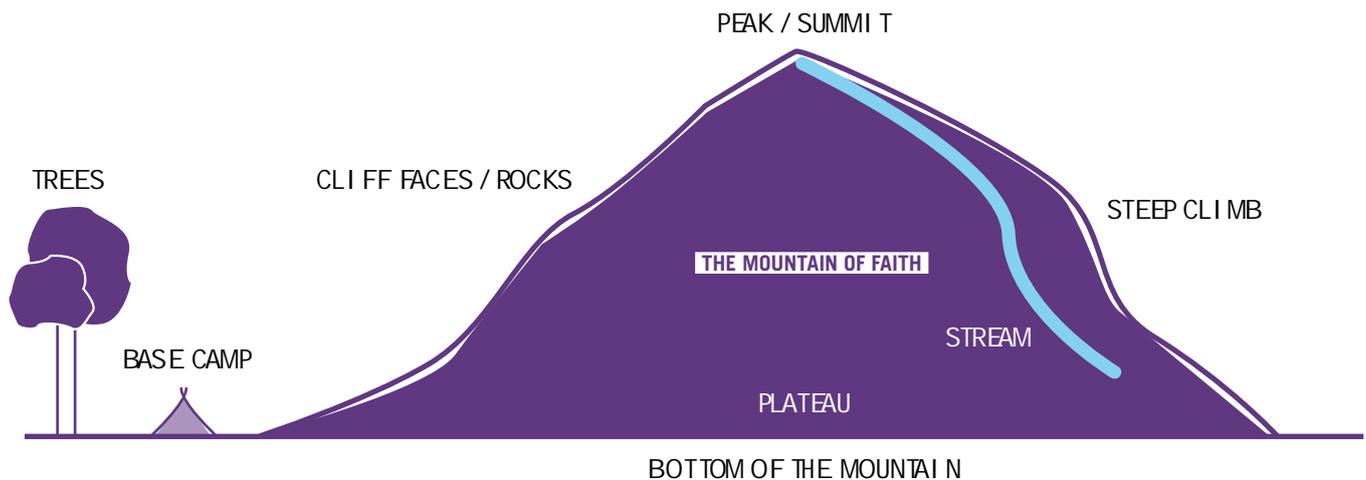
This activity is meant to help us recognise the different parts of our faith lives by drawing on the analogy of a mountain that was mentioned in the Gospel.

Start by giving each person an A3 piece of paper and some textas. Instruct everyone to turn their paper to landscape and draw their own mountain, labelling the following: The bottom of the mountain, base camp, plateau, trees, cliff faces or rocks, steep surfaces, the peak, streams, etc. Don't worry too much about what it looks like as it doesn't have to be a masterpiece!

After everyone has drawn and labelled their mountain, reflect on the following:

- What are some of the challenges in your faith? (**Cliff faces or rocks**)
- Where do you go to replenish your faith if you are feeling out of supplies? (**Base camp**)
- When are the times you feel 'flat' or have no energy to keep climbing and exploring your faith? (**Plateau**)
- What gives you strength to keep climbing and exploring your faith? (**Steep surfaces**)
- What can you take refuge under or hold onto in your faith life? (**Trees**)
- What gives your faith new life? (**Stream**)
- What is the most important thing to your faith? Or what is the pinnacle? (**The Peak/Summit**)





- How do you support others (who haven't had an experience of faith)? How do you convey to them the beauty of faith (just like you would tell people about the view from the top of the mountain)? **(The bottom of the mountain)**

After having reflected on this, open the discussion up to the larger group and ask people to share what they feel comfortable sharing. It is probably a good idea that a leader goes first to model the depth of the conversation.

## PSALM TO PRAY

*Psalm 27:1-6*

*Yahweh is my light and my salvation, whom should I fear? Yahweh is the fortress of my life, whom should I dread?*

*When the wicked advance against me to eat me up, they, my opponents, my enemies, are the ones who stumble and fall.*

*Though an army pitch camp against me, my heart will not fear, though war break out against me, my trust will never be shaken.*

*One thing I ask of Yahweh, one thing I seek: to dwell in Yahweh's house all the days of my life, to enjoy the sweetness of Yahweh, to seek out his temple.*

*For he hides me away under his roof on the day of evil, he folds me in the recesses of his tent, sets me high on a rock.*

*Now my head is held high above the enemies who surround me; in his tent I will offer sacrifices of acclaim. I will sing, I will make music for Yahweh.*

## DURING THE WEEK...

As they were coming down the mountain Jesus told them not to tell anyone of what He had done until He had risen from the dead. Now Jesus has risen from the dead, we can tell people! Try these...

- *Tell one person about your faith journey and why your faith is important to you!*
- *The most powerful way of communicating the message of Jesus is not through words but through actions. Show at least three people your faith (without using words!).*

One of the ways in which Jesus revealed His divinity is through the transfiguration. In our lives it's not usually as simple to notice God's glory by Jesus revealing Himself to us on a mountain top.

- *Once a day for everyday this week, notice God's presence, wherever!*

# THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

WEEK 3

## Welcome to Week Three

*In this week's Gospel reading, Jesus breaks the social norm by speaking to a Samaritan woman, offering her eternal life.*

*Our themes for this session:*

- **Eternal life**
- **Turning to Jesus**
- **Caring**

## GOSPEL READING

*John 4:5-42 (shortened version) • The Samaritan Woman*

*Jesus came to a Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her. 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' Jews, in fact do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied: 'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you: Give me a drink, you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.' 'You have no bucket, sir' she answered, 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?'*

*Jesus replied, 'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life.'*

## ACTIVITY

*Materials: A4 pieces of paper, pens (one for each person)*

One of the big themes in this Gospel reading is the Samaritan woman coming to, and later, serving Jesus. It sounds so simple, but we cannot do it alone. As a matter of fact, we cannot do anything alone. As Jesus said in the Gospel, we need to come to Him to have eternal life.

In this activity you are invited to speak with Jesus in prayer—your own prayer. It can be simple. There are no rights and wrongs or dos and don'ts.

Here are some themes to help you: coming to Jesus, eternal life, worshipping God, caring and reaching out. Read the example below:

*Lord, I thank you for the eternal life you've given me.  
I ask that I can walk with you in all parts of my life,  
In the times of trouble, in the times of joy and in the times of peace.  
Guide me to make decisions in my life that bring me closer to you,  
So that I can know you and always remember that I live for you.  
I offer myself to you Lord in preparation for the Easter season,  
May I appreciate the sacrifice you made for not only me but for all people,  
And truly know your love.  
I make this prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.*

Your prayer does not have to be exactly like this, but it is important that it's done by yourself, really offering your needs up to God. Perhaps after everyone has written their prayer, come together as a group and pray them as one!

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- The Samaritan woman was one of the lowest people in society to the Jews, yet Jesus broke the current social norm and spoke to her. **Who are the social outcasts in our society and do we give them the respect and dignity they deserve?**
- Jesus offers eternal life not only to the Samaritan woman but to all of us. **How do we receive eternal life from Jesus and what does it mean to us whilst living on earth?**
- Jesus invited the Samaritan woman to faith – to a new life. We are also called to evangelise and offer others a life of faith. **How are you spreading the Gospel message and showing others what a life of faith can be like?**

## PSALM TO PRAY

*Psalm 121:1-8*

*I lift up my eyes to the mountains; where is my help to come from? My help comes from Yahweh who made heaven and earth.*

*May he save your foot from stumbling; may he, your guardian, not fall asleep! You see -- he neither sleeps nor slumbers, the guardian of Israel.*

*Yahweh is your guardian, your shade, Yahweh, at your right hand. By day the sun will not strike you, nor the moon by night.*

*Yahweh guards you from all harm Yahweh guards your life, Yahweh guards your comings and goings, henceforth and for ever.*



## DURING THE WEEK...

Jesus cared for everyone, even the people He was told not to care about. Try these...

- *Go out of your way to care for someone. For the brave, show concern for someone who society tells us we should not care for.*
- *Let yourself be cared for. It is easy to care for others but sometimes hard to let others care for you.*

The Samaritan woman served Jesus and we are called to do the same. Try these...

- *Read Matthew 25: 31-40 and then live it in our modern day world*
- *Pray and ask how you can best serve Jesus and act on it!*

# THE BLIND MAN BELIEVES

WEEK 4

---

## Welcome to Week Four

*In this week's Gospel reading, Jesus heals the blind man and invites him to worship.*

*Our themes for this session:*

- **Works of God**
- **Sight restored**
- **Anoint him**

## GOSPEL READING

*John 9:1-41 (shortened version) • A Man Born Blind Receives Sight*

*As Jesus went alone, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. He spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.*

*His neighbours and people who had earlier seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.'*

*They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a Sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put paste on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see.' Then some Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the Sabbath'.*

*Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again. 'What have you to say about him yourself now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet,' replied the man.*

*'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied, 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away. Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man said to him, 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord I believe' and worshipped him.*

## ACTIVITY

*Materials: A blindfold (per pair)*

Objects are randomly scattered in an indoor or outdoor place. In pairs, one person verbally guides their partner, who is blindfolded, through the minefield. The pair then swaps over roles.

Debrief this activity talking about:

- How did it feel to be blind?
- What do you rely on without your sight?
- Is sight important? Why or why not?
- What are the things we miss without our sight?

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- The blind man's life would have been completely changed when he saw for the first time. **Do you think you see your life differently because of your faith? How?**
- In the Gospel Jesus seeks the man out and finds him. **How in our lives do we let Jesus know us?**
- The blind man was not afraid to proclaim his faith and belief in Jesus. **Have there been times when we have been embarrassed to admit our faith? Or have there been times when we are proud to proclaim it?**

## PSALM TO PRAY

*Psalm 146:1-10*

*Alleluia! Praise Yahweh, my soul!*

*I will praise Yahweh all my life, I will make music to my God as long as I live.*

*Do not put your trust in princes, in any child of Adam, who has no power to save.*

*When his spirit goes forth he returns to the earth, on that very day all his plans come to nothing.*

*How blessed is he who has Jacob's God to help him, his hope is in Yahweh his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them. He keeps faith for ever, gives justice to the oppressed, gives food to the hungry; Yahweh sets prisoners free.*

*Yahweh gives sight to the blind, lifts up those who are bowed down.*

*Yahweh protects the stranger, he sustains the orphan and the widow. Yahweh loves the upright, but he frustrates the wicked.*

*Yahweh reigns for ever, your God, Zion, from age to age.*



## DURING THE WEEK...

Jesus broke the Sabbath (the Jewish day of rest) to heal the blind man. For you...

- *Don't be scared to "go outside the lines" with your faith – do something different!*
- *Don't let your faith sleep, always be active, especially in times/places you are not expected to be active.*

When the blind man's sight was restored, his perspective on things must have really changed. Try to...

- *Keep track of your attitude. This week, be positive in at least three situations that you wouldn't usually be positive in.*
- *Believe actively. Ask three people three different questions about issues of faith you may have this week.*

## Welcome to Week Five

*In this week's Gospel reading, Jesus weeps for his friend Lazarus, who has died. By the grace of God, Jesus brings him back to life.*

*Our themes for this session:*

- **Jesus a human**
- **New life**
- **Believing**

## GOSPEL READING

*John 11:1-45 • Jesus brings Lazarus back from the dead*

*There was a man named Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister, Martha, and he was ill. It was the same Mary, the sister of the sick man Lazarus, who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair. The sisters sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will not end in death, but it is for God's glory so that through it the Son of God may be glorified.' Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that he was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go back to Judaea.' The disciples said, 'Rabbi, it is not long since the Jews were trying to stone you; are you going back there again?' Jesus replied: 'Are there not twelve hours in the day? No one who walks in the daytime stumbles, having the light of this world to see by; anyone who walks around at night stumbles, having no light as a guide. He said that and then added, 'Our friend Lazarus is at rest; I am going to wake him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he is at rest he will be saved.' Jesus was speaking of the death of Lazarus, but they thought that by 'rest' he meant 'sleep'; so Jesus put it plainly, 'Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I am glad I was not there because now you will believe. But let us go to him.' Then Thomas -- known as the Twin -- said to the other disciples, 'Let us also go to die with him.'*

*On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. Bethany is only*

*about two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died, but even now I know that God will grant whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said: 'I am the resurrection. Anyone who believes in me, even though that person dies, will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' 'Yes, Lord,' she said, 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.' When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in a low voice, 'The Master is here and wants to see you.' Hearing this, Mary got up quickly and went to him. Jesus had not yet come into the village; he was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were in the house comforting Mary saw her get up so quickly and go out, they followed her, thinking that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Mary went to Jesus, and as soon as she saw him she threw herself at his feet, saying, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'*

*At the sight of her tears, and those of the Jews who had come with her, Jesus was greatly distressed, and with a profound sigh he said, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept; and the Jews said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man. Could he not have prevented this man's death?' Sighing again, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day since he died.' Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took the stone away. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said: 'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer. I myself knew that you hear me always, but I speak for the sake of all these who are standing around me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me. When he had said this, he cried in a loud*

voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with strips of material, and a cloth over his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.' Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what he did, believed in him.

## ACTIVITY

*Materials: A4 paper, photocopy of "What Made Jesus Tick?" worksheet (See Appendix)*

What did Jesus dream about at night? Was He ticklish? What do you think was His most embarrassing moment? Today's reading contains the shortest verse in the bible which is 'Jesus wept.' (John 11:35). This verse is so simple yet gives us a real insight into Jesus being fully human and feeling all human emotions. In this activity we are going to do a 'character profile' on Jesus by focusing on His humanity. There are no right or wrong answers. Use this as an opportunity to explore the question, 'What made Jesus tick?' Make sure you have some fun with this and fill in all the categories, then give a reason as to why you chose that particular answer! Use the following table as your example. There is a full list in the Appendix that you can photocopy for the group. Good luck!



TOPIC	ANSWER	REASON
<b>Jesus' pet hate?</b>	Hypocrites	Jesus always spoke against hypocrites and taught people not to be one!
<b>Favourite colour?</b>	White	When Jesus transfigured Himself on the high mountain, He chose white.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- We know that Martha has realised the potential of prayer when she says, 'I know that God will grant whatever you ask of Him.' **Do we remember God's power when we pray? How can we use it in our lives?**
- The Gospel refers to Jesus' emotions several times (e.g. 'Jesus was greatly distressed' and 'Jesus wept'), which to us reiterates His humanity. **What does it mean to us that Jesus was fully human?**
- Jesus said in the Gospel 'Anyone who believes in me, even though that person dies, will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.' **What does this mean in our lives? What does it mean to 'believe and never die'?**

## PSALM TO PRAY

*Psalm 145: 1-5, 17-21*

*I shall praise you to the heights, God my King, I shall bless your name for ever and ever. Day after day I shall bless you, I shall praise your name for ever and ever.*

*Great is Yahweh and worthy of all praise, his greatness beyond all reckoning. Each age will praise your deeds to the next, proclaiming your mighty works. Your renown is the splendour of your glory, I will ponder the story of your wonders.*

*Upright in all that he does, Yahweh acts only in faithful love. He is close to all who call upon him, all who call on him from the heart. He fulfils the desires of all who fear him, he hears their cry and he saves them.*

*Yahweh guards all who love him, but all the wicked he destroys. My mouth shall always praise Yahweh, let every creature bless his holy name for ever and ever.*

## DURING THE WEEK...

Focus on Jesus' humanity. It could be...

- *Imagine how Jesus would act in a situation (you are in). Try and be creative and do it in different situations, e.g., On public transport, at the supermarket, walking down the street, etc. Live how you think Jesus would act.*
- *Imagine speaking to Jesus one on one as a mate, talk like you would normally talk to a friend and don't hold back!*

Jesus, through the power of God, gave Lazarus his life back. How can we redeem new life through God? It could be...

- *Look at things differently! Think of your usual walk to school or drive to work, and approach it as though you have never done it before, taking note of the surrounds like it is the first time you're seeing them.*
- *Live a new life everyday and always be grateful for the opportunities we are given, say thanks to God at least five times a day!*

## Welcome to Week Six

Our themes for this session:

- Pain
- Truth
- Sacrifice

### LEADER'S NOTES:

***This final week of the Lenten resource Prepare The Way will run a bit differently to previous weeks.***

This week, instead of reading the gospel then moving onto the activity, the group will read the gospel as part of the activity. Since this Sunday of Lent is Passion 'Palm' Sunday, the Gospel reading is quite extensive so there will be times where you stop reading and 'mix it up'.

Please make sure that you (and your fellow leaders) have read through the whole of the Week 6 handout and are familiar with the session prior to running it!

It is preferable that all participants are sitting on the ground together but if you can't get cushions ensure all group members are sitting on the same level.

As there are parts to be read aloud, make sure you swap the readers every paragraph or so to mix up the voices.

Have a printed handout of the gospel and activities (one document each) for all members of the group.

You may like to consider playing reflective music at the times when the 'personal reflection' is happening.

*Materials for this week:*

- 1 x handout per person
- 1 x pen per person
- A few loaves of bread (doesn't have to be plain bread)
- Enough juice for a few cups each
- 1 x cup per person
- 1 x cushion/pillow to sit on per person
- Reflective music

### GOSPEL READING

*Matthew 26:14-27:66 • The Passion*

#### **Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus**

*Then one of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?' They paid him thirty silver pieces, and from then onwards he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.*

#### **The Last Supper**

*Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus to say, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' He said, 'Go to a certain man in the city and say to him, "The Master says: My time is near. It is at your house that I am keeping Passover with my disciples."*

*The disciples did what Jesus told them and prepared the Passover. When evening came he was at table with the Twelve. And while they were eating he said, 'In truth I tell you, one of you is about to betray me.' They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn, 'Not me, Lord, surely?' He answered, 'Someone who has dipped his hand into the dish with me will betray me. The Son of man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!' Judas, who was to betray him, asked in his turn, 'Not me, Rabbi, surely?' Jesus answered, 'It is you who say it.'*

*Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples. 'Take it and eat,' he said, 'this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he handed it to them saying, 'Drink from this, all of you, for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. From now on, I tell you, I shall never again drink wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.' After the psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives.*

## GROUP ACTIVITY

- With the group break the logs of bread and pass it around, pour everyone a cup of juice and encourage everyone to just chat and relax.
- Have the group go around the circle and **in one word share their experience of Lent until now.**
- The disciples with Jesus sung songs to praise God. With the group play a relevant song, it could be your youth group's favourite song or if you have some musicians within your group pre prepare with them to play some music.
- As the song plays shut your eyes and try to imagine what it would be like to actually have Jesus gathered in the circle with you. **What is it like to be in His company? What is He saying? How does He make you feel? What are you telling Him?**

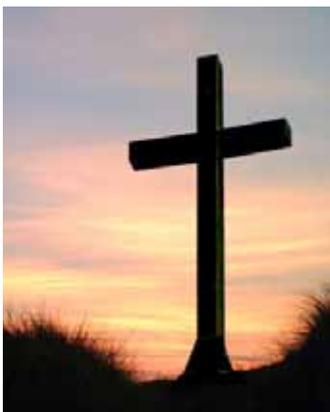
### Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away from me tonight, for the scripture says: I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered, but after my resurrection I shall go ahead of you to Galilee.'

At this, Peter said to him, 'Even if all fall away from you, I will never fall away.' Jesus answered him, 'In truth I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will have disowned me three times.' Peter said to him, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' And all the disciples said the same.

### The Garden of Gethsemane

Then Jesus came with them to a plot of land called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Stay here while I go over there to pray.' He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And he began to feel sadness and anguish.



Then he said to them, 'My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and stay awake with me.'

And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed. 'My Father,' he said, 'if it is possible, let this cup pass me by.

Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it.' He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, 'So you had not the strength to stay awake with me for one hour? Stay awake, and pray not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing enough, but human nature is weak.'

Again, a second time, he went away and prayed: 'My Father,' he said, 'if this cup cannot pass by, but I must drink it, your will be done!' And he came back again and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy. Leaving them there, he went away again and prayed for the third time, repeating the same words.

Then he came back to the disciples and said to them, 'You can sleep on now and have your rest. Look, the hour has come when the Son of man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! Look, my betrayer is not far away.'

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Peter was willing (with the other disciples) to die with Jesus before disowning Him, though when the time came their commitment was not as strong as they thought. How strong is your commitment to Jesus? Has it ever been tested?
- Jesus fell on the ground and was over overwhelmed with sorrow. Jesus sounds fairly distressed with what is about to happen even to the point of asking God that if this doesn't have to happen please don't let it. Have there been times when you've been scared to live God's will in your life?
- Peter, and James and John (the two sons of Zebedee) by the sounds of it were pretty tired and then Jesus told them to sit and pray when they were exhausted. 'The spirit is willing enough, but human nature is weak' Have there been times when we have desired to do good though you have struggled to?

### Jesus is Arrested

And suddenly while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared, and with him a large number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. Now the traitor had arranged a sign with them saying, 'The one I kiss, he is the man. Arrest him.' So he went up to Jesus at once and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi,' and kissed him.

Jesus said to him, 'My friend, do what you are here for.' Then they came forward, seized Jesus and

arrested him. And suddenly, one of the followers of Jesus grasped his sword and drew it; he struck the high priest's servant and cut off his ear. Jesus then said, 'Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, who would promptly send more than twelve legions of angels to my defence? But then, how would the scriptures be fulfilled that say this is the way it must be?' It was at this time that Jesus said to the crowds, 'Am I a bandit, that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? I sat teaching in the Temple day after day and you never laid a hand on me.' Now all this happened to fulfil the prophecies in scripture. Then all the disciples deserted him and ran away.

### **Jesus before the Sanhedrin**

The men who had arrested Jesus led him off to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. Peter followed him at a distance right to the high priest's palace, and he went in and sat down with the attendants to see what the end would be. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus, however false, on which they might have him executed. But they could not find any, though several lying witnesses came forward.

Eventually two came forward and made a statement, 'This man said, "I have power to destroy the Temple of God and in three days build it up."' The high priest then rose and said to him, 'Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against you?' But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to him, 'I put you on oath by the living God to tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus answered him, 'It is you who say it. But, I tell you that from this time onward you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.'

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'He has blasphemed. What need of witnesses have we now? There! You have just heard the blasphemy. What is your opinion?' They answered, 'He deserves to die.' Then they spat in his face and hit him with their fists; others said as they struck him, 'Prophecy to us, Christ! Who hit you then?'

### **GROUP ACTIVITY**

- Already in this Sunday's Gospel Jesus has been referred to as; the Teacher, the Son of Man, Lord, Rabbi, the Shepherd, the Messiah and the Son of God. These are only some of the many names that Jesus is known as, but what are some others? Who do you say Jesus is? What is He like? What are some other names you would call Jesus if he was in the circle with you? What qualities of His warrant's these titles?

### **Peter Denies Jesus**

Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came up to him saying, 'You, too, were with Jesus the Galilean.' But he denied it in front of them all. 'I do not know what you are talking about,' he said.

When he went out to the gateway another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there, 'This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.' And again, with an oath, he denied it, 'I do not know the man.' A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, 'You are certainly one of them too! Why, your accent gives you away.' Then he started cursing and swearing, 'I do not know the man.'

And at once the cock crowed, and Peter remembered what Jesus had said, 'Before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly.

### **Judas is Filled with Remorse**

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people met in council to bring about the death of Jesus. They had him bound and led him away to hand him over to Pilate, the governor. When he found that Jesus had been condemned, then Judas, his betrayer, was filled with remorse and took the thirty silver pieces back to the chief priests and elders saying, 'I have sinned. I have betrayed innocent blood.' They replied, 'What is that to us? That is your concern.' And flinging down the silver pieces in the sanctuary he made off, and went and hanged himself.

The chief priests picked up the silver pieces and said, 'It is against the Law to put this into the treasury; it is blood-money.' So they discussed the matter and with it bought the potter's field as a graveyard for foreigners, and this is why the field is still called the Field of Blood. The word spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was

then fulfilled: And they took the thirty silver pieces, the sum at which the precious One was priced by the children of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord directed me.

### **Jesus before Pilate**

Jesus, then, was brought before the governor, and the governor put to him this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'It is you who say it.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all. Pilate then said to him, 'Do you not hear how many charges they have made against you?' But to the governor's amazement, he offered not a word in answer to any of the charges.

At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was then a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over.

Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message, 'Have nothing to do with that upright man; I have been extremely upset today by a dream that I had about him.' The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus.



So when the governor spoke and asked them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' they said, 'Barabbas.' Pilate said to them, 'But in that case, what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified!' He asked, 'But what harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Let him be crucified!' Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent.

So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, 'I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.' And the people, every one of them, shouted back, 'Let his blood be on us and on our children!' Then he released Barabbas for them. After having Jesus scourged he handed him over to be crucified.

### **The Soldiers Mock Jesus**

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort round him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet cloak round him, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucifixion.

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

- When Jesus was before not only the Sanhedrin (a council of 23 judges) but also Pilate he remained silent at times that you could imagine would have been rather intense. Sit in silence and try to imagine and visualise what it would have been like to watch Jesus on trial; whose clothes had been torn, had been spat on, punched, slapped, flogged for hours and belittled in front of the crowds. Yet Jesus remained silent knowing He would be murdered.
- What is that like to imagine? Say a brief personal prayer of thanks for the sacrifice Jesus made for us.
- Facing a possible death, Peter lived up to Jesus' prophecy and denied Him three times before the rooster crowed. When in our lives have we been like Peter? Are we willing to stand up for our beliefs in Christ?

### **Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus**

On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, called Simon, and enlisted him to carry his cross. When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him. Above his head was placed the charge against him; it read: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.'

### **GROUP DISCUSSION**

- Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry His cross. Who's crosses do we help carry?



### **The Crucifixion of Jesus**

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said, ‘So you would destroy the Temple and in three days rebuild it! Then save yourself if you are God’s son and come down from the cross!’ The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way, with the words, ‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He has put his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, “I am God’s son.” Even the bandits who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

### **The Death of Jesus**

From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eli, eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’

When some of those who stood there heard this, they said, ‘The man is calling on Elijah,’ and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he filled with vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink. But the rest of them said, ‘Wait! And see if Elijah will come to save him.’ But Jesus, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit. And suddenly, the veil of the Sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom, the earth quaked, the rocks were split, the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy people rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the holy city and appeared to a number of people.

The centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said, ‘In truth this man was son of God.’ And many women were there, watching from a distance, the same women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after him. Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

- Many women were there at Jesus’ crucifixion had followed Him from Galilee to care for His needs. How in this day and age can we care for “Jesus”?
- Jesus cried ‘Eli, eli, lama sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ Jesus was about to die, you can understand why He was scared and thought God had forsaken Him. Have there been times when you have not been able to feel God’s presence in your life?
- After the moment of Jesus’ death those who were guarding Jesus saw all that had happened and instantly recognised that He was the Son of God. What does it mean for us to know that Jesus is the Son of God and that He gave His life for us? How does this express God’s unconditional love for us?

### **The Burial of Jesus**

When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, called Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud and put it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a large stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. Now Mary of Magdala and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.

### **The Guard at the Tomb**

Next day, that is, when Preparation Day was over, the chief priests and the Pharisees went in a body to Pilate and said to him, ‘Your Excellency, we recall that this impostor said, while he was still alive, “After three days I shall rise again.” Therefore give the order to have the sepulchre kept secure until the third day, for fear his disciples come and steal him away and tell the people, “He has risen from the dead.” This last piece of fraud would be worse than what went before.’ Pilate said to them, ‘You may have your guard; go and make all as secure as you know how.’ So they went and made the sepulchre secure, putting seals on the stone and mounting a guard. •

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

- Take some time to reflect on what you have heard through the reading of the Passion. After a couple of minutes as a large group discuss what has stood out for you and why.

# SOME LAST REFLECTIONS

# PREPARE THE WAY

---

## *Forty days have come and gone!*

*You have travelled the Lenten journey of life, death and resurrection. Take some time to reflect on how you have prepared yourself for Easter...*

- What have you learnt...about your faith, yourself, and God?
- What were the joys of your experience?
- Were there many difficulties? What were they and how did you overcome them?
- What was the highlight of the journey for you?



## THE TRIDUUM

### ***Holy Thursday***

Also known by some as Maundy Thursday, this day commemorates the Last Supper which Christ celebrated with His disciples on His last night before the crucifixion, this is a great day for mass and praying especially for the priesthood, the sacrament of mass and giving thanks for the Eucharist!

### ***Good Friday***

This is the day we remember Jesus making the ultimate sacrifice for us. It is recommended that you get down to an afternoon or evening liturgy. Make sure you don't miss the great opportunity to see the Stations of the Cross performed live, it can really enhance to your Easter experience by bringing the Passion of Jesus to life. This is also a day of fasting and abstinence from meat.

### ***Easter Sunday***

This is it, what we have spent all Lent preparing for is finally here! This is one of (if not) the most celebrated day for all Christians! This day we celebrate Christ's resurrection from the dead and how He overcame death. This marks the end of our 40 days of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Make sure you make it to mass today, greet everyone with the joy of the Resurrection and sing loud!

## AND WHILE WE'VE STILL GOT YOU...

*We'd really love to hear what you thought of this Lenten resource. Please take a few quick minutes to drop us some feedback on how we can improve this kind of material. Thank you.*

**Complete the survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/5RKK5H6](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5RKK5H6)**

Easter invites us to follow Jesus through truth, justice and love, to use our gifts to witness to the Risen One and to share fully in the life and hope he offers. By knowing that Jesus is risen, courageously we put aside fear and keep living our own personal journey until we are where Jesus awaits us.

Archbishop Denis Hart  
ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE

#### **PREPARE THE WAY: Lenten Reflections for Year A**

Produced by the Archdiocesan Office for Youth  
An agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne  
PO Box 146 East Melbourne VIC 8002  
[www.cam.org.au/youth](http://www.cam.org.au/youth)

This resource was created by using several valuable resources. The Archdiocesan Office for Youth would like to thank all those who assisted in the creation of this publication. The following resources were used in the development of this program:

- 'Sharing the Sunday Scriptures with Youth' Page 38. 1997 by Saint Mary's Press, 702 Terrace Heights, Winona, USA
- 'The Summit' Volume 38 Number 1 February 2011 by Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, 383 Albert St, East Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

If you enjoyed using this program we encourage you to visit the following websites for similar resources:

- <http://thereflection.vividas.com/> – An online Lenten resource using the Lectio Divina style of prayer released by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC)
- <http://bne.catholic.net.au/asp/index.asp?pgid=11979> – A Lenten Reflection Resource for Young People by the Archdiocese of Brisbane

## *Activity: What Made Jesus Tick?*

In this activity we are going to do a 'character profile' on Jesus by focusing on His humanity. There are no right or wrong answers. Use this as an opportunity to explore the question, 'What made Jesus tick?' Make sure you have some fun with this and fill in all the categories, then give a reason as to why you chose that particular answer! Good luck!

TOPIC	ANSWER	REASON
Jesus' pet hate	<i>Hypocrites</i>	<i>Jesus always spoke against hypocrites and taught people not to be one!</i>
Favourite colour	<i>White</i>	<i>When Jesus transfigured Himself on the high mountain, He chose white</i>
Given name		
Nickname		
Place of birth		
Hometown		
Occupation		
Personality traits		
Religious beliefs		
Achievements		
Left or right handed		
Best friend/s		
Favourite food		
Favourite parable		
Favourite prayer		
Favourite animal		
Favourite piece of clothing/ accessory		
Favourite past time/hobby		

## *glossary.*

***Penance.***

The repentance of sin (acknowledging we have turned away from God and making up for it)

***Almsgiving.***

Making voluntary contributions (the act of giving)

***(Easter) Triduum.***

The period of time from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday

***Lectio divina.***

This is a method of prayer that uses Sacred Scripture and has been in the Church for centuries. Below is a step-by-step process of this style of prayer:

- ***lectio***: Choose a passage; read...very slowly; dwell on each phrase; settle on a word, sentence or phrase that speaks to you; let the words sink into your heart.
- ***meditatio***: Repeat the word/phrase again and again; don't analyse it – just let it sink into your heart; gently 'rock' the word...as one might rock a baby.
- ***oratio***: Speak spontaneously to God; or just wait in silence with God; pray with frank honesty and trust; these are moments of 'praise', of thanksgiving, of 'intercession'.
- ***contemplatio***: allow God to show you things in a new light; see everything and everyone through God's eye; take time, don't rush.