

Australian  
Young Christian Students

# Post School Retreat

Kit





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# LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

Dear Students, Adults Assistants and Chaplains,

As the Formation Team of the National Executive we are proud to present to you our newest mission resource regarding organising and running a 'Post School Retreat'. This kit will be a guide to those facilitating and running this activity. This resource has been created to support the aims set at the 2008 YCS National Conference in regards to continued leadership past YCS involvement as a student.

This resource has been developed to firstly give an overview of what a Post School Retreat is all about and its aims for our leaders who are leaving the school environment and entering a new phase of their life. It provides some background information about how to create a suitable atmosphere, and mentions what should be taken into consideration before the event. Six interesting and intriguing sessions, including a reflection, have also been included in this resource. So, all the hard work has been done for you! Just make sure you have a good read through before you begin, because preparation and organisation is essential.

This resource is just a guide to help with your preparation, and we do not expect you to follow the outline 100%, so feel free to adapt parts to suit your needs. We hope that you find this useful, as we see mission, ambition and life after YCS as a very important part of our Movement.

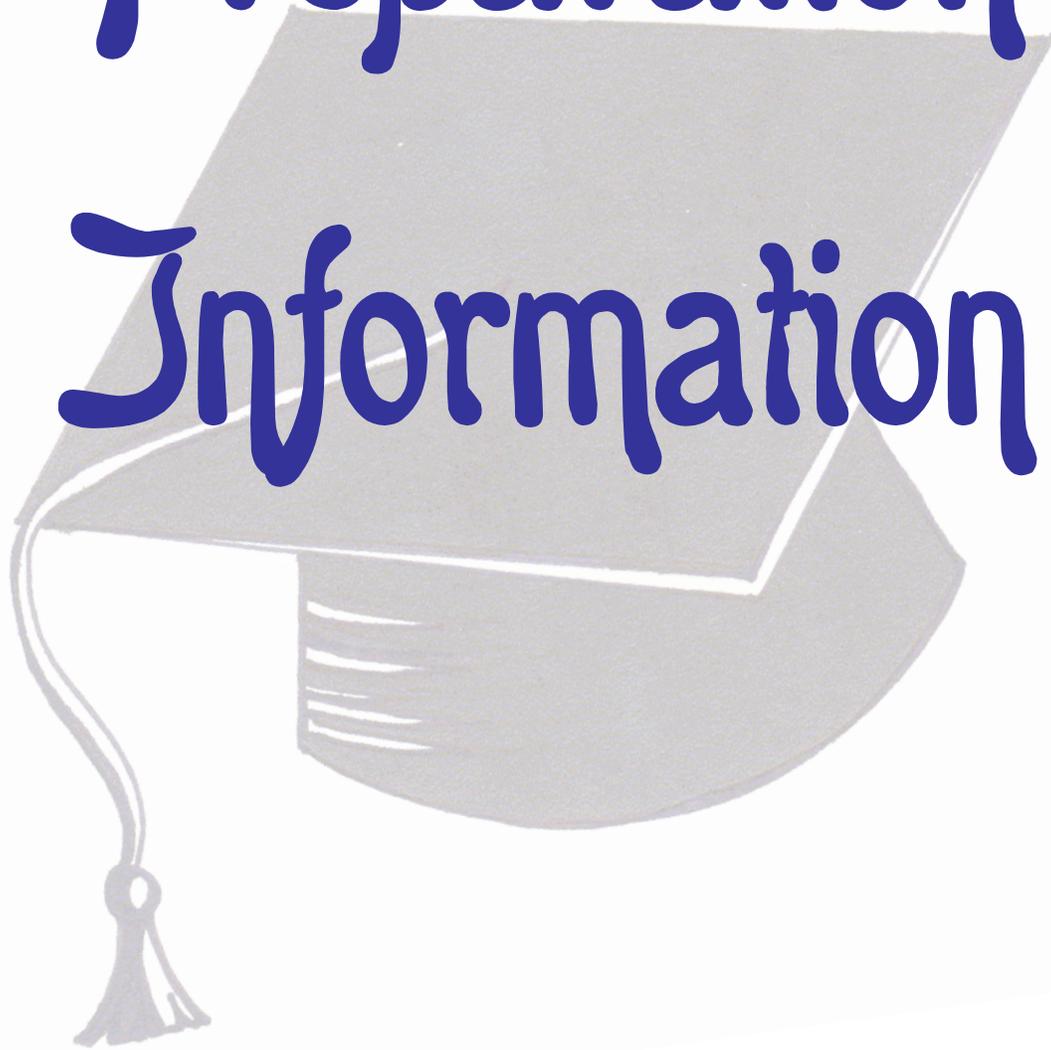
Yours in the Spirit of Cardijn,

Elise Ganley

On Behalf of the AYCS National Executive



# Preparation Information





# WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A POST SCHOOL RETREAT?

- To discover the skills and experiences that school leavers have gained through the YCS and how they can apply them to their next journey in life.
- To encourage students to reflect on their mission as they leave school.
- For the YCS to give thanks to the school leavers and the contribution they have made to the Movement.
- For those moving on to relax together, and reflect on their year.
- To create goals and a vision for their future.

# CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE RETREAT

The organisation of a Post School Retreat will be very similar to other camps or events that you might have held. We recommend that you use the 'AYCS Camp or Event Checklist' as a guide to organise all the logistics of the event. Below is a list of things that previous retreat participants have commented on, so you may like to consider them during your planning.

- **Venue**

The venue is a very important part of the retreat because it sets the scene. It does depend on budget of course, but in previous years many people have commented that a nice location, such as near the hills or on a beachside, adds a relaxing, thoughtful and special atmosphere. Perhaps keeping away from dormitory style bunking would help.



- **Food**

The food provided on the retreat should also suit the style of venue; for example try holiday style food if near a beach. Giving the food that bit of extra effort pays off too. A great idea is to have cooking as a bonding activity between the retreat participants. This can be a fantastic way to get to know each other, and makes a very pleasant meal.

- **Who will run the Retreat?**

It is very important that the students attending the retreat do not run any sessions. Some ideas for people to run the retreat include inviting year elevens along, or even adults. These adults can be Adult Assistants, ex-YCS members, workers or chaplains.

- **Object that represents their year**

When invitations are being sent out to year 12s about the retreat, make sure they are told to bring an object that represents their year. This is required for some of the sessions.

- **Ambience**

The right ambience for this retreat is crucial. You need an atmosphere where people are comfortable and willing to be themselves and share their visions. Little things can be done to create this, such as;

- Placing Fair Trade chocolates on the pillows
- Providing notebooks where participants can records their thoughts
- Being allowed to bring a non-YCS friends can add a different perspective and gives variety to the experience
- Giving out certificates at the conclusion of the retreat. These can be combined with a 'thank-you' as well, for their contribution to the YCS Movement.

- **Size**

Don't be discouraged by the number of people attending the retreat. You could have twenty or two people, the size is not significant.



# Retreat

# Content





# SUGGESTED AGENDA

## Sunday

12:00pm	Arrive and settle in
12:30pm	Lunch
1:30pm	Session 1: Reflecting Back on the Year
3:00pm	Afternoon tea and free time
4:00pm	Session 2: So Much to Give
5:30pm	Prepare dinner together
6:30pm	Dinner
7:30pm	Session 3: Liturgy
8:30pm	Free Time

## Monday

8:30am	Breakfast
10:30am	Session 4: My Passion
11:30am	Morning Tea
12:30am	Session 5: Painting and Collage
1:30pm	Lunch & Free time
3:00pm	Session 6: Closing Liturgy
4:00pm	Free Time
6:00pm	End of Retreat



# EQUIPMENT NEEDED

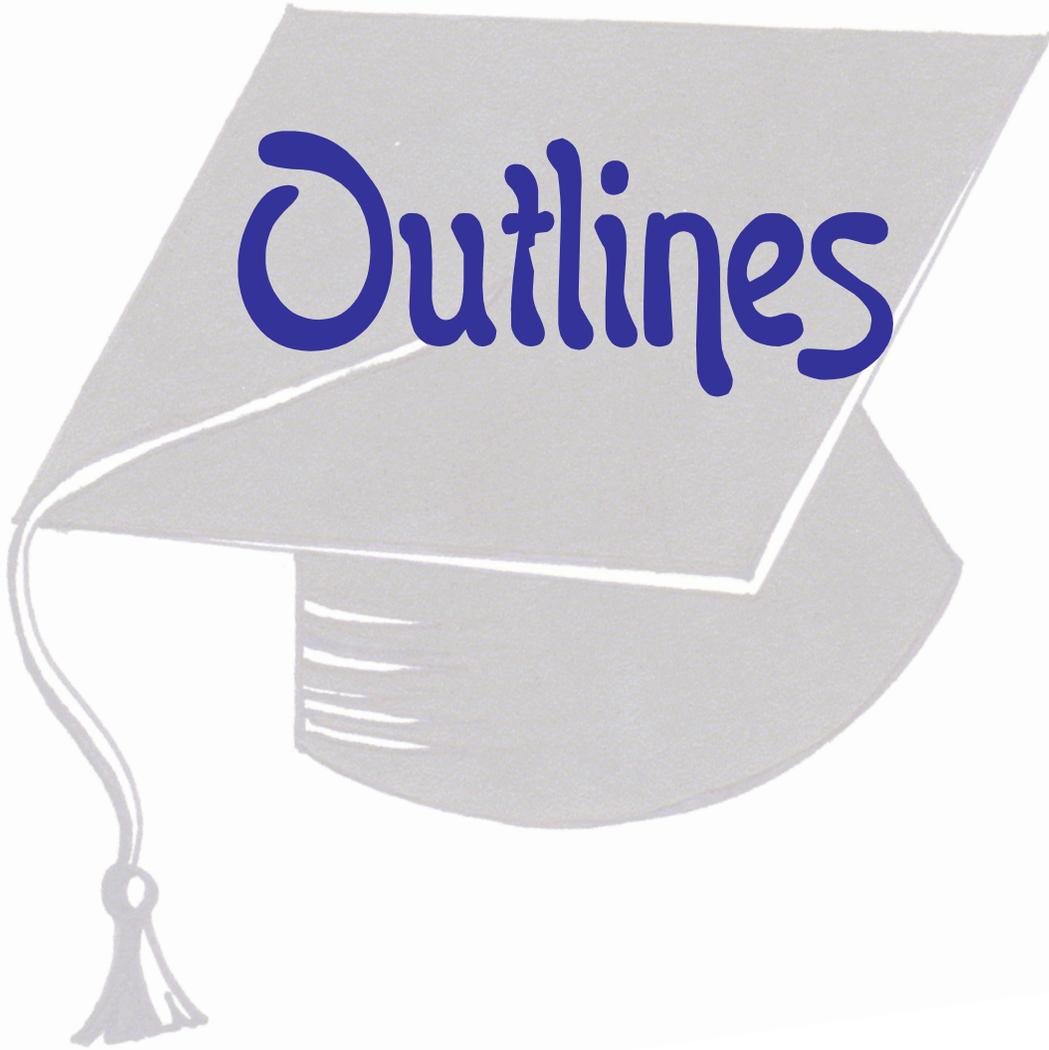
Check the 'AYCS Camp or Event Checklist' for some of the general things to bring to every camp, but some specific things needed for this retreat include:

- A retreat journal for each participant
- Pens, textas, or crayons
- Plain butchers paper
- Blue paper or cloth (to be used to symbolise water)
- Illustrated butchers paper (with picture of a person climbing a mountain, and another person being lifted by the wind)
- Coloured paper (to be made into boats)
- Instructions on how to make a paper boat
- CD player
- Music for reflections
- Plain paper
- Objects to create sacred space in liturgy (cloth, candles, cross, etc)
- Words and phrases cut out from the gospel readings
- Old newspaper
- Old magazines
- A3 paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Paint and paint brushes
- 4 candles
- A note explaining each candles intention during the liturgy
- Some seeds (popcorn kernels are fine)
- Small bowl of water
- A cross
- Cloth



# Session

# Outlines





# SESSION 1- REFLECTING BACK ON THE YEAR

**1 hour 30 mins**

The purpose of this session is to get the school leavers to reflect on year 12 and the experiences they have gained this year.

## **Equipment needed**

Retreat journals, year symbols, coloured paper, blue paper or cloth, pens and textas, instructions for folding a paper boat, and butchers paper (illustrated with a person climbing a mountain and another person being lifted by the wind)

## **Acknowledgement of the Land**

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the \_\_\_\_\_ people, the traditional custodians of the land we're meeting on, acknowledge our gratitude that we share this land today, our sorrow for the costs of that sharing, and our hope that we can move to a place of justice and partnership together.

## **Icebreaker**

Ask the group the following question:

- If they were represented by a food, which would it be and why?

*Leaders Commentary:* This weekend will be like food for us - nourishing. There will be a variety of flavours. For example some things will be sweet, some things heavy...

## **Introduction**

*Note:* This talk can be adapted by the person leading the retreat.

"I hope that this retreat will most of all be relaxing. From the outset, I want to acknowledge that the last year has been very difficult for some of us. This is a chance for us to all come together and reflect on everything that has happened, and to create a vision for what we hope is to come.

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Throughout this retreat, it is important that we all talk from experience and above all that we listen. If at any point on this retreat something disturbs you or bothers you in any way, please don't hesitate to see me personally and we will find a space for what you need.

The next 24 hours are YCS' gift to you. As a movement we want to say thank you for being with us and a part of us.

At the same time, this retreat is not only YCS' gift to you; it's your gift to one another. This is probably the first time that some of you have arrived at a YCS event and not been asked to run something. That's because we wanted to give you some time to chillax☺, but it doesn't mean that you're going to be passive. One of our key beliefs at YCS is that even in the smallest things you are always taking an action with God. On this retreat we're going to ask you to be active by cooking with each other this evening, by reading passages and by really putting yourself into the activities and reflections that we do. But above all we need you to be actively present to each other. We are called here *together*.

So I am inviting you guys to listen to each other. Really listen. If we are really attentive to one another, we will hear how people are feeling beneath what they are saying. We learn not to interrupt, not to laugh when people are trying to be serious, and to hold back the tendency to always focus on what we want to say next instead of really hearing our partners. We notice when someone's body language says they're uncomfortable. We hold back ourselves and discover the other person. The joyful part is that if we all do this, then each of us will be heard."

### **Group reflection**

Ask someone to read through this passage from the journals once.

#### **Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand**

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a

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quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognised them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand. *(Mark 6:30- 44)*

### Discussion

Ask the group the following questions:

- What is this passage about to you?
- What parts speak to you?

*Leaders Commentary-* Explain that you are going to go through the passage bit by bit over the course of this retreat.

Ask someone to read the first section:

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." *(Mark 6:30 - 31)*



Ask the group the following question:

- How does this mirror our story from this year?

*Leaders Commentary-* We are gathering to share what we have done, and how we have been good news for others.

### **Objects**

The retreat participants have been asked to bring an object to the retreat which represents them, and the year they've had. Ask students to present and share the symbolism of the object from their year, starting with the person leading this session.

### **Discussion**

Place the illustrated butchers paper (with the picture of someone climbing a mountain, and another person being lifted by the wind) in the centre of the circle. Ask the group to spend a few quiet moments thinking about the following questions and writing the answers in their journal.

Individual journal questions:

- What has been energising or uplifting this year?
- What has been challenging?

Ask the group to share their reflections from their journals aloud with each other. Ask them to write their reflections on what has been energising on the paper next to the person being lifted by the wind, and to write their reflections on what has been challenging on the paper with the person climbing up the mountain

### **Origami Hopes**

Lay the blue cloth or paper symbolising water in the centre of the group.

*Leader Commentary-* We are here to share and rest.

Ask students to consider the following question:

- What are you hoping for out of this retreat?

Give students a couple of pieces of paper each, and ask them to write their prayers and hopes for the weekend on them. Ask people to fold their pieces of

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paper into origami boats, and then to float them on the water.

*Leader Commentary-* Over the retreat other prayers and hopes might rise up in you. I encourage you to put them on paper, fold them up and add them to our river. We will leave this on display over the course of the retreat.

Ask the students the following question:

- What kind of things did you hope for this retreat?

*Leaders Commentary-* This could be anything about getting to know each other, supporting each other, finding the way forward, etc.

### **Passage Reflection**

Ask someone to read the following passage from their journals:

So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognised them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. *(Mark 32-34)*

Ask the group the following question:

- What does this say about Jesus?

*Leaders Commentary-* This could be things such as he was prepared to meet their needs, he was full of compassion, etc

Ask the group the question:

- Who has responded to you like Jesus this year?
- Who or what has supported or nourished your spirit?

*Leaders Commentary-* These are the things that are the word of God for you.



# SESSION 2 - SO MUCH TO GIVE

**1 hour 30 mins**

The purpose of this session is to think about the gifts that have been given to the school leavers and how they may use them to face the challenges that lay ahead in their lives.

## **Equipment Needed**

Journals, and textas or crayons

## **Passage Reflection**

Ask someone to read the following passage:

By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" (Mark 6:35-37)

*Leaders Commentary-* Sometimes, we face challenges that seem crazy. Lets look back on the past year. Year 12 may have seemed impossible; exams, relationships, challenges. But you overcame them with faith, hope, perseverance and hard work.

Ask the group to brainstorm challenges that they think they will face after Year 12. This might include things like work, uni etc. Get them to name some situations that they think may challenge their faith and things they might be scared of.



## Speaker Input

There should now be a talk/presentation by one of the retreat facilitators, an AA or chaplain. This could basically be any adult on the retreat who has faced a challenge post school. They would need to mention how they overcame it and how it ties in with the list that you just brainstormed. For example, someone may speak about the challenges to maintain their faith at University when they are in an environment that may not support their beliefs.

## Reflection

Ask someone to read the following passage again:

By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" (Mark 6:35-37)

*Leaders Commentary-* We can see how Jesus encourages the disciples to take responsibility of their situation. In light of this what is our responsibility? How do we respond to need?

Ask the group to write down times when they responded to a need.

- What did you do?

Give people time for some personal reflection, either thinking or writing, and then share amongst the group.

*Leaders Commentary-* With responsibility and giving however, we can only give what we have.

Ask someone to read the following passage:

"How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish." (Mark 6:38)



*Leader Commentary-* Even though we are only required to give what we possess, we often have more than we realise. Look back on the story you shared about a time when you responded to a need and think about all that you do have.

Ask the students to reflect on the following question:

- What can this verse tell you about whom you are and what you have to give?

*Leaders Commentary-* "Go and see" Jesus said. Go and see what you have like the disciples.

Students now have time for personal reflection. They are encouraged to go and do some journaling (take crayons) or go bushwalking etc. Before they go, read them the story of the cracked pot.

### **The Cracked Pot**

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water in his master's house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologise to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your masters house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts." The pot said.



The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again the Pot apologised to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pots side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my masters table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But if we will allow it, the Lord will use our flaws to grace His Fathers table. In Gods great economy, nothing goes to waste. Don't be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them, and you too can be the cause of beauty. Know that in our weakness we find our strength.

Our gifts are often our weaknesses as much as our strengths so don't be afraid to name those as well. They're part of our whole self, which is everything we can give.



# SESSION 3 - LITURGY

1 hour

The purpose of this liturgy is to bring together all the reflections and discussion of the day into prayer. This liturgy can be adapted to suit the needs of the group and this session could also be a Mass if available. Set a quiet reflective space using music, coloured cloth and with objects such as stones, leaves, a cross, candles etc.

## Equipment Needed

Music, journals, pieces of paper for every participant, textas, year symbols, words or phrases from the readings written onto pieces of paper (enough for at least one per participant) and objects to create sacred space.

## Liturgy

Play some quiet music to begin. The person running this session should say an opening prayer to set the scene.

Ask each person to present the symbols that they have brought to the retreat and put this and their journals in the sacred space. Then ask someone to read the following passages.

A reading from the Gospel of Mark

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied. (Mark 6: 39-42)



A reading from the Taipei Times

INDIA: Bank Run by Indian Street- Children is Ready to Go Global

[New Delhi, June 13, 2004] – A bank run by a group of Indian street-children for three years has decided to go global, the Hindustan Times newspaper reported.

The Bal Vikas Bank, or Child Development Bank (CDB), was started for Delhi's street children by the non-governmental organisation Butterflies three years ago, the report said.

The bank has 12 branches in Delhi and now plans to open branches in other Indian cities as well as Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal in the near future, according to a representative of Butterflies.

The CDB's 400 account holders -- mostly "rag pickers" and street-children -- own and run the bank from its headquarters at a night shelter for homeless children. Many of the children, some as young as 10 and 11, sell newspapers, boxes of tissues and other wares at traffic intersections. Some work on daily wages. Others collect waste and then sell it for recycling. "They already earn a living and we are trying to help them to invest in themselves," said Rita Panicker of Butterflies.

To open an account, a child first has to become a member of the club that works as collective guarantor. The bank also disburses loans, but the applicant has to sign an undertaking that the money will not be used for wasteful expenditure.

Butterflies recently organised a workshop for directors, country co-ordinators and managers of the bank – all children -- from organisations in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal and the Indian states of Bihar, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi. Members of the CDB, including 17-year-old bank manager Anuj, addressed the new initiates on the nitty-gritty of taking deposits, disbursing loans and maintaining account books.

Mohammed Yousef, a member of the Afghan NGO Aschiana said the bank would be very useful for children who were forced to work after being left homeless by the war in Afghanistan.

Bijaya Sanju from Nepal's NGO Concern said the concept should be implemented in all countries that had street children. "It will help them become self dependent and gradually move off the streets," he said.



### **Group Discussion**

Lay out key words and phrases from both of the passages that have just been read out. Ask everybody to choose the word or phrase that speaks most to them about what they have been reflecting on.

When everyone has chosen one, ask the group to share aloud:

- What does it say and why have you chosen it?

### **Affirmation Reflection**

If everyone is not already sitting in a circle, ask the group to do this. Light some candles if appropriate. Hand out a piece of paper to every participant to have in front of them. Ask them to write their name in the middle of the sheet. (If there are lots of people in the group, you may choose to use A3 paper for this.)

Ask everyone to pass their piece of paper around to the person on their left. Each person needs to write a positive affirmation on the piece of paper in front of them about the person who owns the paper. This should be something about who they are; not what they look like or how good they are at sports, etc. When a person has finished writing, they can pass that piece of paper around to their left, and wait for the next piece that is handed to them. Continue this until everyone has written on each piece of paper except their own.

Collect all the sheets of paper before everyone has a chance to read their own. These will be handed out in the liturgy tomorrow.

Close the liturgy with open group prayer.



# SESSION 4 -MY PASSION

1 hour

The purpose of this session is to get the school leavers to plan and discover how they can live out their unique mission after school.

## Equipment Needed

Journals, A3 paper, pens and textas.

## Passage Reflection

Ask someone to read the following passage:

And the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand. **(Mark 6:43-44)**

*Leader Commentary-* This reading is about leftovers and abundance. We have been given so much this year, and we have learnt so much. But the question is; 'what will we do with it?'

## Speaker Input

This is a good opportunity for a young adult, who was formerly a student in YCS to share their life experiences. They should reflect on where they believe they have been given abundances, what it means to them, how they use it now, etc.

## Group Reflection

Ask the group to take a step back and have a real think about what they have enthusiasm for. Hand each person a piece of A3 paper. Ask them the following questions slowly, allowing them time to think and reflect. Ask them to jot down their thoughts on the paper.

- Where is my energy and passion?
- What actions could I take to live this out?
- Are there any things that might stop me from doing these actions?

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When everyone has finished answering the questions, ask people to share some of the things they wrote on their pieces of paper.

When everyone has shared, get the students to lay their pieces of paper in the centre of the circle. Encourage everyone to walk around and brainstorm some possible solutions to write in response to others students challenges.

### **Individual Reflection**

Ask students to reflect on their own papers again, and decide on specific actions they can commit to.

Get the group to write their confirmed actions in their journal.



# SESSION 5: PAINTING AND COLLAGE

**1 hour**

The purpose of this session is to allow the students to relax and reflect on many aspects of their lives. It also allows them to display some creativity.

## **Equipment Needed**

Large sheets of paper, plenty of old magazines, textas, glue, scissors, paint, paint brushes, newspapers.

Set up this activity so that people have enough space to get as creative as possible. If you are using an indoor space, cover tables/floor with newspaper.

Give each student a large piece of paper and tell them to create a collage or painting that represents them. It could include their passions, their hobbies, what they value, their aspirations, what makes them unique, etc. Emphasise that this session is not about being the best artist, and that people shouldn't worry if they can't paint. It is just about cutting/gluing/anything to create a representation of who they are.

It is a good idea to play some music during this session so people feel relaxed. The facilitator could also do a collage themselves or show an example.

If possible, place this session on the agenda so that it runs into afternoon tea or free time, as some people will embrace this and want to spend ages on it, whilst others may finish quite quickly.



# SESSION 6: CLOSING REFLECTION

**1 hour**

This session is designed to tie all the sessions together and be an opportunity for shared prayer and worship.

## **Equipment Needed**

4 candles, 4 notes explaining each candle's intention, some seeds, small watering can/container of water, a cross, year symbols, music, cloth

## **Preparation**

Set up the room, with chairs/cushions for each person to sit around in a circle. Have a cloth forming a winding road in the middle of the circle, and at one end of it place the students' year symbols. Place some objects underneath a couple of the chairs (4 candles, some seeds, small container of water, and a cross). Ask everyone to make sure they are wearing shoes, or to bring some shoes with them to the reflection.

## **Discussion**

The facilitator of the retreat conducts a group discussion focussing on the following questions:

- What has been hard to digest this retreat?
- What was a new taste?
- What do I hunger for more of?
- What do I take as a left over to others?

Ask the group to focus on the prayer space and to make themselves comfortable. Encourage them to gently become aware of their breathing and to relax. Ask the group to turn to the YCS Prayer and get them to say this together.

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Instruct the students with symbols below their chairs to place them along the road as follows:

1. Invite the person with candle 1 to place their candle at one end of the road, get them to read out a note that says 'We light this candle to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land'
2. Invite the person with candle 2 to place the candle along the road after candle 1, get them to read out a note that says 'This candle acknowledges YCS as an international Movement around the world, and all those we are in solidarity with.'
3. Invite the person with candle 3 to place the candle along the road after candle 2 and ask them to read out a note that says 'This candle represents YCS around Australia, and all our brothers and sisters we share this Movement with.'
4. Invite the person with candle 4 to place the candle along the road after candle 3 and ask them to read a note out that says 'This candle burns for each of us here today. That we may be kept safe from harm, supported in the actions we have committed to, and nourished in our lives and faith.'

Now invite each person to take off one or both of their shoes. Together, you will create a shoe sculpture on the road. Begin by placing a shoe along the road, and invite everyone else to add his or hers, one person at a time. Then ask the group to focus on the shoe sculpture, and get them to think back to the path of life that your shoes have trodden.

*Leaders commentary-* "These shoes have together walked many, many kilometres. They have travelled in the service of others, in work, in exercise, in leisure. Sometimes they've been very still – as you've stood – on a queue, in conversation, at assembly, with a friend, at prayer, in confrontation, or simply waiting.

In these shoes, you have reached out to others – in love, in friendship, in laughter, in compassion.

In these shoes you have met women and men who have inspired you in your life. In these shoes, in your reaching out, you also have inspired others. And as we have gathered together here for this retreat, we have reflected on the year gone by. We

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have celebrated not only our gifts, but also our weaknesses that are often blessings in disguise."

Ask the person with the bag of seeds, to place them on the road.

*Leaders commentary* - "These seeds represent the beginnings of actions. Many of our actions over the past year have begun as a small thing, but the effects have grown like plants. Those seeds also represent the actions that we will take with us to carry out when we leave here today."

Ask the person with the watering can/container of water to add this to the road next to the seeds.

*Leaders commentary* - "We know that seeds do not grow without water. For us this water represents our commitment and the energy that we will put into carrying out our actions. They will not grow on their own. The water also represents all the things that nourish us and are life-giving. Our friends, our families and our faith"

Ask the person with the cross to please place it next to the shoe sculpture?

*Leaders commentary* - "This cross is our faith, and represents that as we journey on our lives, Jesus journeys with us too."

Invite each person now to remove their shoe from the sculpture. As they do this ask them to, name aloud the quality they want to embody as they walk into their future in this shoe. (Such as love, compassion, caring, perseverance, etc)

As a group say the YCS Creed. (This can be included in the journals, or may need to be handed around on pieces of paper.)

Explain to the group that you will now finish the reflection with a song. Encourage them to listen to the words, as they encourage us to take action to change our world and our lives.

## Australian Young Christian Students



Play 'Steer' by Missy Higgins and/or other songs.

After the songs have been played, hand around the pieces of paper that everyone wrote affirmations on yesterday. This might also be a good opportunity to hand out certificates to each participant, and perhaps a small gift from the Coordination Team.



# Additional Information





# JOURNAL MATERIAL

This includes all of the readings needed throughout the retreat, and some other nice quotes too☺ You will also need to leave some pages blank for people to write down their thoughts on.

## Foreword

Happy Retreat! We believe that as you spend the next twenty-four hours of your life here you'll find this is the perfect way to reflect upon what has been a special year... Think of what you've achieved... You've made it! Congratulations ☺

We are all so proud to be part of your lives. You have all been an absolute inspiration, and not only because you are fantastic leaders, but because you are beautiful people....

God bless you as you make the most of the next 24 hours...

Love the YCS movement.

## Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to



them to eat?" "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand. *(Mark 6:30- 44)*

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By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" *(Mark 6:35-37)*

"How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish." *(Mark 6:38)*



Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied. (Mark 6: 39-42)

And the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand. (Mark 6:43-44)

### The Cracked Pot

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water in his master's house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologise to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your masters house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts." The pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it



some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again the Pot apologised to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pots side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my masters table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But if we will allow it, the Lord will use our flaws to grace His Fathers table. In Gods great economy, nothing goes to waste. Don't be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them, and you too can be the cause of beauty. Know that in our weakness we find our strength.

Our gifts are often our weaknesses as much as our strengths so don't be afraid to name those as well. They're part of our whole self, which is everything we can give.

A reading from the Gospel of Mark

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied... (Mark 6: 39-42)

A reading from the Taipei Times

INDIA: Bank Run by Indian Street- Children is Ready to Go Global

[New Delhi, June 13, 2004] - A bank run by a group of Indian street-children for three years has decided to go global, the Hindustan Times newspaper reported. The Bal Vikas Bank, or Child Development Bank (CDB), was started for Delhi's street children by the non-governmental organisation Butterflies three years ago, the report said.

The bank has 12 branches in Delhi and now plans to open branches in other Indian cities as well as Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal in the near future, according to a representative of Butterflies.

The CDB's 400 account holders -- mostly "rag pickers" and street-children -- own and run the bank from its headquarters at a night shelter for homeless children. Many of

Never Underestimate The Students!



the children, some as young as 10 and 11, sell newspapers, boxes of tissues and other wares at traffic intersections. Some work on daily wages. Others collect waste and then sell it for recycling." They already earn a living and we are trying to help them to invest in themselves," said Rita Panicker of Butterflies.

To open an account, a child first has to become a member of the club that works as collective guarantor. The bank also disburses loans, but the applicant has to sign an undertaking that the money will not be used for wasteful expenditure.

Butterflies recently organised a workshop for directors, country co-ordinators and managers of the bank – all children -- from organisations in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal and the Indian states of Bihar, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi. Members of the CDB, including 17-year-old bank manager Anuj, addressed the new initiates on the nitty-gritty of taking deposits, disbursing loans and maintaining account books.

Mohammed Yousef, a member of the Afghan NGO Aschiana said the bank would be very useful for children who were forced to work after being left homeless by the war in Afghanistan. Bijaya Sanju from Nepal's NGO Concern said the concept should be implemented in all countries that had street children. "It will help them become self dependent and gradually move off the streets," he said.



# OTHER QUOTES AND PRAYERS FOR JOURNALS

*Prayer is one of the best free gifts we receive.*

*Life is Hard, God is Good, Let's Dance.*

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." - Margaret

*Mead*

"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong."

**Love the unlovable,  
Forgive the unforgivable,  
'Cause that is what God would do.**

*Faith is personal, but never private - Henk Eilander*

"Hide not your talents, they were made for use. What's a sun dial in the shade?" Benjamin Franklin



Whatever your cross, whatever your pain, God always sends rainbows,  
after the rain.

**Be the CHANGE you WANT to see in the WORLD!**

**God comes to you disguised as your life**

**The only way to make sense out of change is to PLUNGE with it, MOVE with it and JOIN THE DANCE. (Alan Watts)**

To be nobody but yourself – in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else – means to fight the hardest battle any human being can fight; and never stop fighting. (E E Cummings)

*Ask and it shall be given unto you. Seek and ye shall find. (Luke 11:9)*

'I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something.. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do. What I can do, I should do. And what I should do, by the grace of God, I will do.' (Edward Everett Hale)



### **YCS CREED**

As Young Christian Students we believe in God.

We believe that God created the universe and that we, as part of God's creation, are invited to help complete God's plan.

We believe that the earth has been entrusted to us, to care for, to nurture and to respect. People, as God's creation, have a dignity and worth beyond measure, and deserve to be treated with respect and understanding.

We believe the Holy Spirit empowers us to live active lives following the example of Jesus Christ. We do this through communicating our thoughts, opinions and emotions and accepting and loving each other unconditionally.

We believe that our schools should promote these values through encouraging students to form and question their own opinions and beliefs, and treating each student as a worthwhile individual who has unique needs and talents. Our schools should educate for life.

And we believe that Jesus calls us to live through actions, not just words.

Amen.

### **YCS Prayer**

Dear Jesus,

Please fill us with your spirit of love.

Help us to SEE the world as you do, to

JUDGE with your heart, and to ACT with

The strength and courage you have shown us

As we work to transform our world

Amen



# CAMP OR EVENT CHECKLIST

This is a Checklist with suggestions on how to organise a camp or a large YCS event based on YCS member's experiences. It is only a guide and there may be other aspects that you may think of that need to be considered. Remember YCS is a student run movement so this camp/event should also be.

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## Before the Event

- Choose a date for your camp or event.
- Choose a time for your camp or event.
- Book a venue- this is important as it will influence the further steps.
- Organise a committee consisting of student leaders, and at least one adult assistant with a student camp/event coordinator or Chairperson of the committee. For a camp we recommend having this meeting a term before the camp. i.e. If the camp is in the 2nd term holidays then have a meeting in the 1<sup>st</sup> term holidays. If it is a smaller event have a meeting at least six weeks before the event. This committee will need to most likely meet more than once, but this could be over the phone or on MSN if a face to face meeting is not possible.
- You will need to choose a focus/theme for the camp or event. This theme should come out of the concerns and actions of the YCS group running it or the focus and issues of YCS groups across the Diocese. Previous themes have included the Review Of Life, understanding Gothism, an International Theme, a Drug/Alcohol Focus, a 100% Respect event, a Life Long Leaders Camp, a Make Poverty History Camp, an Act Today Change Tomorrow Camp, Unity Across the Diocese theme and an Environment Theme.
- Do a budget for the camp or event, consider;
  - Accommodation
  - Transport
  - Food
  - Resources, i.e. pens and paper
  - Gifts for Presenters



- When organizing a camp you will need to consider what transport is available. If you require a bus, check with the local community to see if you can borrow one for free. Schools are a great place to start and often they will only want a donation for the use of the bus. If you are having a bus you need to also ensure you have a driver and a back up driver.
- Create a flyer and a permission form (may not be relevant for all events) that has all the information on it about the camp/event included contact details both student leaders and adults. You can get a sample permission form from the AYCS Office. We recommend getting the flyer out 2 months before a camp and 4 weeks for an event.
- Decide on the content and sessions for the camp/event and create an agenda that follows a SEE JUDGE ACT format. The theme will affect the content but for a camp it is important that the following things are included, Prayer and Reflections (morning and night,) Liturgy/Mass, a Review of Life and explanation, Free time, Evaluations, Action Session, Faith Session and a Student Reality Session/Issue Based session.
- Promote the event! You will need to use many different ways to promote the event such as distributing it to groups (leaders and AAs) and encouraging the YCS members to give them out to friends. You can also try putting it in school newsletters, parish bulletins, daily notices and by sending letters and flyers to schools.
- Organise what Adult Assistant will be there to participate in the event and supervise. You must have an adult who has their senior first aid certificate delegated as the first aid officer and we also suggest that they could be a well-being officer and deal with any other personal issues that students may experience throughout the camp/event. This means that the key student leaders and adults supporting them can concentrate on the content and running of the camp. Check your local area for the ratio to adults and students legally needed at an event. There may also be other roles that Adults could fulfill as well. It is important that before the event these adults are aware of their roles and expectations.
- You will also need to organize food for the camp or event. You will need to consider what type of food you want and who will organise this. For a camp in a city diocese it has worked successfully when one YCS group does the



organization of the food with a person from the camp committee team. You may also delegate the food to an adult to organize with a member of the camp committee.

- It is important that you also get confirmation of numbers before an event, we recommend two weeks but that will depend on the camp or event.
- It is important that a Risk Assessment of the camp/event or event is carried out
- You may also like to decorate the camp/event
- If you are having Guest Speakers and presenters organise a gift or a card for them also for people who have helped out with the organization of the camp.

### **During the Event**

- It is also a good idea to have a log book of who is in attendance at the camp so that you can keep a check of who is coming and going
- There should also be a registration table where people can pay money if needed, be welcomed and given any relevant information.
- At a camp we recommend creating a chill out/prayer space where students can go when they need some time to themselves or time for prayer and reflection.
- Members of the camp committee could take turns chairing a day of the camp.
- At the end of each day at a camp the camp committee should meet to pray together and reflect and review the day and plan for the next day.
- It is also a good idea for the Adults to also have a meeting at the end of each night.
- There should be separate rooms for male and females and separate sleeping areas for adults.

### **After the Event**

- Send an email to all presenters and those who helped out at the camp, one week afterwards thanking them for their support.
- Follow up and collate the evaluation forms
- Send certificates to the campers if relevant
- Participants to be sent a record of the key actions from the camp/event



**Don't Forget**

- Mobile Phone so that parents can contact an adult.
- Pens, paper etc
- Having a Note Pad or Action Booklet for every student.
- Do you need any resources, you can get them from the YCS Office or the Website
- First Aid Kit and someone with a first aid certificate.