

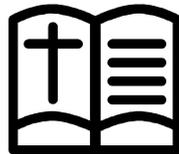
**Full of reflections for you and your group!**



Australian  
Young Christian  
Students' Movement

presents

The  
Gospel  
Reflection  
Booklet



## **Letter from the National Executive**



Dear students,

We have created this resource, the Gospel Reflection booklet, to help in faith formation of students and Adult Assistants. By bringing student's faith back into their lives we are continuing actions from the National Conference to further the formation of the AYCS Movement.

Students often find gospel reflection hard and uncomfortable because they don't understand the way the bible is written. We feel that by using this resource, it will make it easier for students to discuss and develop their faith. Therefore bringing a greater understanding of the Gospel into YCS.

Since the National Conference it has been an ongoing goal of AYCS to create a way of forming and developing student's faith. By putting together this booklet we believe we have taken a huge step towards achieving this goal.

As an executive, we also think this resource will be of great benefit to Adult Assistants. With this resource and greater knowledge, they will be able to guide students in faith formation whilst expanding their own.

Yours in the Spirit of Cardijn,  
The AYCS National Executive

## Introduction

Faith Formation is a vital part of the Young Christian Students' Movement (YCS). Without an understanding of our faith, the YCS has no grounding and our actions lose their motivation and focus.

The student leaders of the Australian YCS have created this Gospel Reflection Booklet as a resource for students to refer to when needing assistance in finding understandable reflections in order to deepen their faith formation.

This booklet can be used on all levels of the Young Christian Students Movement, eg. Local, Diocesan and National. Students are encouraged to go through this resource with their Diocesan or local Chaplains and Adult Assistants so as to fully benefit from the guidance and understanding that the booklet provides.

### **Table of Contents**

<b>Letter from the AYCS National Executive</b>	2
<b>Introduction</b>	3
<b>Gospel Reflections</b>	4-12
Steps to writing your own Gospel Reflection	4
The Good Shepherd	5
The Vine and The Branches	6
Two Foundations	8
The Woman Caught in Adultery	9
The Commissioning of The Disciples	10
Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth	12
<b>Alternative Reflections</b>	13-23
Ten spiritual reflections based on prayers, poems, pictures, quotes, and stories.	
<b>Other Resources</b>	24

# Gospel Reflections

## Steps to writing your own Gospel Reflection

1. Choose a passage from the bible that you can relate to and can see a deeper meaning in or that you think is a really good story.
2. Read through the passage a couple of times to identify the key message or themes.
3. Then think of a story that is real in your life that is similar to the Gospel passage.
4. Use the Review of Life questions as a guide to write questions which you can ask the other members of your group. Make the questions challenging and reflective. You want the group to really think about

### Review of Life Questions

#### See

1. What exactly happened in this situation? What was your action in response? (the facts)
2. What caused this to happen and why? (the causes)
3. How were people affected? (the consequences)

#### Judge

1. What do you think about this?
2. What *should* be happening? (the ideal situation)
3. What does your faith say about this situation? What would Jesus do here?

#### Act

1. What exactly do you want to change? (Long term aim)
2. What action could you take this week that would be a worthwhile step towards achieving this change? (short term action)

## **“The Good Shepherd”**

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away - and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

I have other sheep who do not belong to this fold, I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again.”

### **Some questions for discussion**

1. What do you think is the message in this passage?
2. Who has been a “good shepherd” in your life? Someone who has sacrificed something of themselves to care for you or someone you know.
3. How can you follow Jesus’ example and be a “Good Shepherd” in your life?

## **“The Vine and the Branch”**

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit...”

“My father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

John 15:5-8 (NRSV)

### **Reflection on the Reading**

A powerful image; the vine and the branches.

It gives us a sense of team, of interconnection. All are important, all have a contribution to make, something to offer to the bigger body

In order to bear much fruit, we must be active parts of the vine, open to seeing and nurturing the gifts of others.

## Some questions for discussion

1. What do you think marks you as a branch of the vine? As a follower of Jesus:
  - At school?
  - At home?
  - Among Strangers?
2. Being a branch of that vine, means becoming one with God. What do you do to bring yourself closer to Jesus and know him better?
3. It is always important to try to improve our relationship with God so that we understand what actions we need to take to change the situations in our lives. What action can you take to improve your relationship with Jesus?



## **The Two Foundations**

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I tell you?

I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words and acts on them. That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it has been well built.

But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell and great was the ruin of that house”

*Luke 6:46-49*

### **Some Questions for Discussion**

1. Think about what Jesus has said in this Gospel passage. Think of one time you have been the man with a solid house and one time you have been the man who's house was washed away.
2. Why do you think that it is important to act upon what Jesus teaches?
3. What can you do to make sure you act on the words that you hear in the Gospel? Think of one particular thing that you can do to act out what you believe in.

## **“The Woman Caught in Adultery”**

At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them.

The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everybody, they said to Jesus.

*“Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?”*

They asked him as a test, looking for something to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question, he looked up and said,

*“If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her”.*

Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there. He looked up and said,

*“Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”*

*“No one, sir”* she replied.

*“Neither do I condemn you,”* said Jesus, *“go away, and don’t sin any more.”*

John 8: 1 - 11

### **Some questions for discussion**

1. Think of some ‘bad guys’ in your life: someone who does the wrong thing at school, or on your bus. Maybe a criminal in the news. How do you react to them?
2. Using this story as a guide, what do you think Jesus would do in your situation?
3. What does this call you to do?

## **“The Commissioning of the Disciples”**

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw they worshipped him; but some doubted.*

*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age”*

Matthew 28:16-20 (NRSV)

### **Reflection on the Reading**

In today's Gospel, Jesus comes to his disciples after the resurrection, and tells them they must go out in his name; go out and baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. He is asking them to go out and baptise and teach, not just in his name, but in the name of the three persons of God.

The Disciples are afraid – perhaps unsure what this call means...

Afraid because Jesus is no longer with them in the flesh?

Afraid because they feel uncertain about their direction/mission without Jesus in person to guide them?

Perhaps they feel abandoned.

Jesus reassures them that he is with them and affirms them in what he is asking them to do: “I am with you always; yes to the end of time.”

## **Some Questions for Discussion**

*There are 2 sets of questions for this reading, they can be done together or separately depending on the circumstances of your group*

### ***Feeling Abandoned***

1. When have you felt abandoned by Jesus like the disciples did?
2. In this Gospel passage, Jesus is telling you that he will always be there for you, no matter what! What can you do to be more aware of Jesus' presence?

### ***Being Afraid***

1. In this passage the disciples were afraid to do what Jesus was asking them to. When have you been afraid to do something that you know is right?
2. Why were you afraid? Describe the situation.
3. Do you think that God can give you strength to do the things you know are right?

## **'Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth'**

He stood up to read the scriptures and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed and announced that the time has come when the Lord will save his people."*

Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read."

Luke 4: 17 - 21

### **Some questions for discussion**

1. What point is Jesus making?
2. How do we see other Christians live out this mission in their lives?
3. What does this mean in our lives, and our mission as students? What do we need to do to follow Jesus?

## **Alternative Reflections**

*Spiritual reflections based on prayers, poems,  
pictures, quotes, and stories.*

### **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 plans.

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.

For this to be achieved we are called to be active participants in life, to communicate with one another, to share our thoughts, opinions and emotions and to accept and love 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 living is through actions, not just words.

Amen

### **Some questions for discussion**

1. What part of the YCS Creed jumps out at you or catches your attention?
2. Do you agree with the things that YCS believes?
3. How do you live out these values? Are you an "*active participant in life*"?
4. What can you do to ensure that you are "*living through actions not just words*"?

# SYMBOLS

1. Choose ONE of the symbols below and discuss what it symbolises to each person in the group
2. What unusual interpretations can you come up with?
3. Try to find out the proper explanations of each symbol.



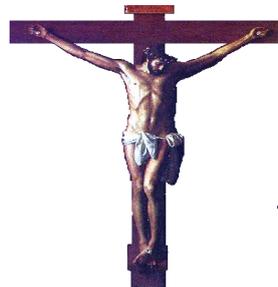
St Vincent De Paul Society



Red Cross



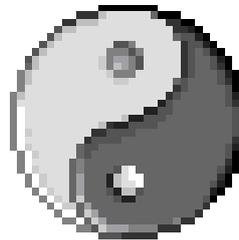
Young Christian Students Movement



The Crucifix



Amnesty International



Yin & Yang

## Liberation

*“If you have come to help me you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine then let us work together.”*

Lilla Watson  
Murri Woman

### **Some questions for discussion**

1. What do you think about this statement?
2. Why do you think Lilla Watson said this?
3. Do you think there a difference between helping someone and working together with them?
4. YCS is a student run movement because this empowers students to take control of their own lives. Do you see any relationship between what YCS does and what Lilla Watson is saying?
5. Can you think of a time that you have done something to help someone rather than working with that person/people on an equal footing? Would you do anything differently now?

## Let Every Word

LET EVERY WORD  
BE THE FRUIT  
OF ACTION AND REFLECTION

REFLECTION ALONE WITHOUT ACTION  
OR ENDING TOWARDS IT  
IS MERE THEORY,  
ADDING ITS WEIGHT  
WHEN WE ARE OVERLOADED  
WITH IT ALREADY  
AND IT HAS LED  
THE YOUNG TO DESPAIR.

ACTION ALONE  
WITHOUT REFLECTION  
IS BEING BUSY POINTLESSLY.

HONOUR THE WORD ETERNAL  
AND SPEAK  
TO MAKE A NEW WORLD POSSIBLE.

*Archbishop Helder Camara  
Nobel Peace Prize Nominee  
Long time YCS Adult Assistant in Brazil*

### **Some Questions for Discussion**

1. Why do you think it is important to have Action and Reflection working together?
2. Can you see how the Review of Life has a balance between action and reflection?
3. Is your YCS group effective at both Action and Reflection? Why/Why not?
4. How can you improve the way your group uses the Review of Life so that you are both, reflecting on your faith and taking actions to live it out?

## **Bodies**

A group of people were riding along one day when they came to a river. The river was choked with bodies of people drowning. On the riverbank, a few people were struggling to pull out the victims and were calling out for help. Our heroes went down to help with the rescue, but even with the additional help many more victims were out of reach and were swept downstream than could be pulled out.

So a number of the rescuers decided to move upstream to find a better spot. They came to a place where the river was narrower and more bodies could be reached, but still more victims were swept away than could be saved.

Then a small number of workers began to leave the group. When someone shouted “Where are you going? Come Back! We need you to help pull people out.” They replied “This is ridiculous. We’re going upstream to see if we can find the idiot whose pushing all those people in!”

### **Some Questions for Discussion**

1. In the story, what was more effective, pulling the bodies out or stopping them from being pushed in to start with?
2. Can you find any links between this story and YCS? Do you think YCS tries to form students to pull people out or to prevent the problem?
3. What are you putting your energy into at the moment? What actions are you taking?
4. Does this story change the way you look at this activity and its value? If so, how?

## A Prayer

Dear God,

In the world I live in, I see peace, joy, love and happiness. I am happy with my world, my life, my friends and my family. I have my problems, I complain, I despair, but still I love and enjoy life.

But then I can look and see in the whole world there is poverty, war, heartache, hunger, despair, loss, hatred and I wonder how can our two worlds be so different? How can we drop so low, when we know how much you love us?

Whose fault is this if it's not my fault and it's not the next persons fault. I cannot blame you. Our world's problems are the world's fault, and as individuals we can solve these problems. But we need the united efforts of everybody. I pray, Lord, join us together and unite all your people so we can solve these problems.

Amen

### Some Questions for discussion

1. Do you ever wonder why God lets the people of the world have so much suffering? Do you sometimes blame God for the suffering?
2. God asks each of us to follow Jesus. What does following Jesus mean in relation to dealing with the injustices of the world around us?
3. What can you do to create the kind of world that God is asking us to create?

## Action Everyday

“The YCS is not a label which can be placed on any young peoples Movement... (It is essentially) action among students.”

*Joseph Cardijn*  
*Inspiration of YCS*

### Some Questions for discussion

1. Think about this quote from Cardijn, what makes YCS different from any other youth group or movement?
2. In your experience of YCS has there been a large focus on action coming from the Review of Life?
3. What type of actions have you taken? What has inspired you to take action?
4. What can you do to ensure that your everyday action is transforming the student world?



## STARS

Everyone is special. And because everyone is special, we are all given stars. But these stars aren't for us, and there are some rules attached to these stars. First of all everyone only gets six of them, and they have to last you your entire lifetime, so it's important to choose wisely who you give them to. Anyone who has influenced you, or anyone who has made even the smallest impact on your life is someone who you can give a star to. The other thing is that you can't divide the stars into two or three or more pieces – you have to give a star whole. You'll find that it's the most amazing feeling for both you and for whom you give a star to when you say, "you've got one of my stars." You never feel happier for having done something than when you give someone one of your stars.

So now I want you to think about your stars, and about whom in your life you want to give them to. Maybe you've found people to give all your six stars to already, or maybe you haven't found any. Whatever the case, there are six stars that are out there for each and every one of you.

Now, if you want to make a comment or say prayer, feel free to share it when you're ready...



## Forgiveness

Read the newspaper article below.

### ***“Mugger forgiven”***

*A 66 year-old Brigidine nun, who was hospitalised after she was dragged from her car and mugged in Melbourne on March 14, has forgiven her attacker.*

*Sr Bridget Arthur was expected to be released from hospital last week. She told reporters she had forgiven the man who broke her hip in the attack, and stole her purse with a small amount of money and a mobile phone. She said from hospital that she felt sympathy for her assailant.*

*“It’s a sign of desperate people and I feel very sorry that some people have got themselves into such a mess,” Sr Bridget said.*

*“I certainly hope he gets help in some shape or form so that he doesn’t go on attacking other quite defenceless people”*

*Sr Bridget was sitting in her car in a North Melbourne street, listening to the cricket and waiting for a friend, when the man attacked her. A nearby resident scared him off and obtained help for Sr Bridget.*

*Brisbane Catholic Leader  
25 March 2001*

### **Some Questions for discussion.**

1. When have you forgiven someone recently?
2. Would you have been able to forgive the mugger?
3. Why was Sr Bridget able to? Do you think there was something in her Christian faith that made her want to forgive him?
4. Is there someone who you are angry with at the moment? Do you think it is important to forgive that person?

## Paradox of our Age

We have taller buildings, but shorter tempers; wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints; we spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy it less.

We have bigger houses and smaller families; more conveniences, but less time; we have more degrees, but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgment; more experts, but more problems; more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get angry too quickly, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too seldom, watch TV too much and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom and lie too often. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life; we've added years to life, not life to years.

We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbour.

We've conquered outer space, but not inner space; we've done larger things, but not better things; we've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul; we've split the atom, but not our prejudice; we write more, but learn less; plan more, but accomplish less.

We've learned to rush, but not to wait; we have higher incomes, but lower morals; more food but less appease-

ment.

We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but have less communication;

we've become long on quantity, but short on quality.

These are the times of fast food, and slow digestion; tall men and short character; steep profits and shallow relationships.

These are times of world peace, but domestic warfare; more leisure and less fun, more kinds of food, but less nutrition.

These are the days of two incomes, but more divorce, of fancier houses, but broken homes.

These are the days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one-night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill.

It is a time when there is much in the show window and nothing in the stockroom.

Indeed it's all true.

### **Some Questions for discussion.**

1. What were your first thoughts when you heard this poem?
2. Can you identify with any of the situations in the poem?
3. Many people feel this poem is too negative. Do You?
4. Think of this poem as a call to action. What can you do to change some of the situations that you said you identified with?



## Australian Young Christian Students' Movement



Thankyou for using the AYCS Gospel Reflection Booklet.  
We hope it has been a useful resource in developing your faith as a student in today's world. To try out some of AYCS' other resources contact our national office on the details below, or check out our website.

### Never Underestimate The Students (NUTS)

NUTS is an 8 week introductory program for starting a YCS group in your school, parish or community. It provides a great introduction to the YCS through using the Review of Life to examine the issues of Racism, Body Image and Casual Work.

### AYCS Prayer Booklet

This Prayer Booklet has been designed for YCS leaders to help them run prayer in their YCS meetings. The booklet includes a variety of prayers for us ein YCS groups. Each prayer has been constructed into four key parts:

- 1) An introduction to the prayer style
- 2) Tips for running the prayer in YCS meetings
- 3) Equipment and resources needed for the prayer
- 4) Step by step instructions on how to run the prayer



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