

Broken Bay Theological Reflection Program



PARTICIPANTS BOOKLET

Overview

Welcome to the Broken Bay Theological Reflection program. Theological reflection is a method of reflecting on our ministry by bringing the Christian tradition (Scripture, prayer, church teaching) into dialogue with the experiences in our lives and ministries.

Theological Reflection helps us to be more reflective in our ministry. We live in such an outcomes driven world that sometimes our focus in ministry can be driven by the need to perform tasks. We can be so caught up in "doing" the work of a ministry that we lose sight of being a disciple. At times we need to stop and reflect on our experience so we grow as a Disciple.

Theological Reflection is the reverse process of bible study. In bible study we start with scripture and then apply it to our lives. For example in a bible study on the Good Samaritan in Luke 10, we might decide after reading the story that we need to help the strangers we encounter in our daily lives. In contrast, theological reflection might begin with a specific time when we helped a stranger, and then we recall the connection with scripture, such as the story of the Good Samaritan.



Why this style?

There are many different styles of Theological Reflection. In designing this program, we discovered at least twenty different styles that each has it's own unique emphasis. The program we have designed is not the only way, but there are several reasons why we use this model:

1. **Diversity:** with such a wide range of Parish Interns we needed a model that would suit both a young Intern who is beginning their ministry journey and the Interns with more life and ministry experience.
2. **Growth:** the program is designed to help Interns grow and mature as a minister. We want Interns to grow by learning to reflect on their own spiritual journey and ministry.
3. **Self Evaluation not assessment:** Interns will not be assessed on their understanding of ministry. We are not using this program to assess an Interns performance, however we would encourage Interns to use this program to self evaluate. We hope that Interns learn to self evaluation their ministry so that once they leave the program they will sustain themselves in ministry.
4. **Charism Neutral** – There are many styles of theological reflection that are influenced by the charism of a Religious Order or Movement. In designing a model for Broken Bay we didn't pick a style from a particular Charism. We hope that each group leader can adapt this model to their particular charism or experience.

Group Process

Theological reflection will be used as part of the Parish Internship program in a group setting. Each fortnight or month a group of Interns in a parish or cluster will gather for a group session. There are a few things to remember:

1. Commitment – it is helpful for everyone to commit to meeting as a group. Pick a time that is suitable to everyone in the group. Inform your boss/supervisor or coach that you are unavailable for work or training at the times for your group meeting.
2. This is not therapy or counselling – please share as much or as little as you need to. This group time is to help you evaluate and reflect on your ministry, not your personal issues unless they impact on your ministry.
3. Please keep comments within the group – There are certain reflections that are best kept within the group. The group is not a secretive meeting, but it is helpful to know that people won't take someone else's sharing outside of the group.
4. Reflection rather than social – the theological reflection group will be enjoyable, even light hearted at times, but the goal is reflection not social. It might not be helpful to conduct the theological reflection group in the local café; create times outside of the group sessions for Interns to socialise.

Group meeting Format

There are many forms of group facilitated theological reflection, we ask you to use this format:

1. Prior to the group meeting, each group member will write up a theological reflection using the scaffold provided. After you have done this a number of times you can use this style without having to use the sheet provided
2. At the group meeting each person will take a turn at sharing their written theological reflection experience. You may like to present a more condensed version to the group if your *explain* section is very long. There might also be some information that you would like to reflect on privately that can't be shared with the group for a variety of privacy reasons. This is not a time for group therapy or to share your deepest secrets.
3. After a person has shared their Theological reflection with the group there should be some time for quiet reflection.
4. After the period of quiet reflection open up the conversation for the group to make a comment following these guidelines:
 - a. Start by asking questions of the person who has just shared.
 - b. Group members should avoid making judgements of others.
 - c. Group members could offer suggestions for the *connection* section.
5. At the conclusion of the group meeting, finish with prayer. The group should respect the sharing of each member of the group by not sharing anything outside the group.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION SCAFFOLD
USE THIS AS YOUR GUIDE

Choose

Choose an experience in your ministry that you would like to explore further

Suggestions: Pick an experience that was either new, difficult, positive or different. You should pick the most recent experience.

An encounter with other people is usually best

Avoid choosing an event that you had little to do with

Choose an encounter or experience that had an effect on you

You don't have to choose a "Holy" or "worthy" encounter

Explain

Describe what happened from a balanced perspective

Suggestions: Give a brief outline of the facts

Write down exactly what happened rather than what you saw

Recall any comments from other people

Give a "bird's eye view" to the experience

This is not a verbatim, you don't have to give every little detail.

Response

Describe your response to what happened outlining how you felt before, during and after the experience

Suggestions: how were you feeling going into the experience?

What are the feelings you recall during the experience?

How did you deal with your internal response at the time?

Did you respond to the actions of others?

Connections

What connections can you make between this experience and Scripture?

Suggestions: Does this remind you of a bible story?

Does a bible passage help you with this experience?

You could check the readings for the Mass of the Day

Connections

Participants Journal

What connections can you make between this experience and the teaching of the Church?

*Suggestions: Does this connect with something in the teaching of the Church?
Have you experienced something similar in Church before?
Is there a song or hymn that connects with you
You could take a look at the Catechism or the lives of the saints*

Are there any connections between this experience and mainstream culture?

*Suggestions: Does this remind you of a story, book, article or movie?
Have you experience something like this with your family or friends?*

This is not a test; you don't have to "get it right". Please write what connects you make and present them to the group. If you struggle to find any connections, then write down your struggles and take that to the group. The group may be able to suggest connection between your experience and Scripture and the Christian Tradition.

Understanding

What have you learnt from this experience?

*Suggestions: What have you learnt about yourself because of this experience?
What have you learnt about ministry because of this experience?
Have you gained any new insights about being a Disciple?*

What new understand does this experience teach you about God?

Actions

What will you do with this reflection? How will you act differently?

Suggestions:

How will your actions reflect what you have learnt?

Are there practical things that you can do differently from now on?

How is God challenging you? What are you being called to?

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BROKEN BAY
Youth Ministry

Prepared by Broken Bay Youth Ministry
Parish Support Unit
Caroline Chisholm Centre Pennant Hills

Extra copies are available for download on our website:
www.brokenbay.catholic.org.au/youth/wyd11