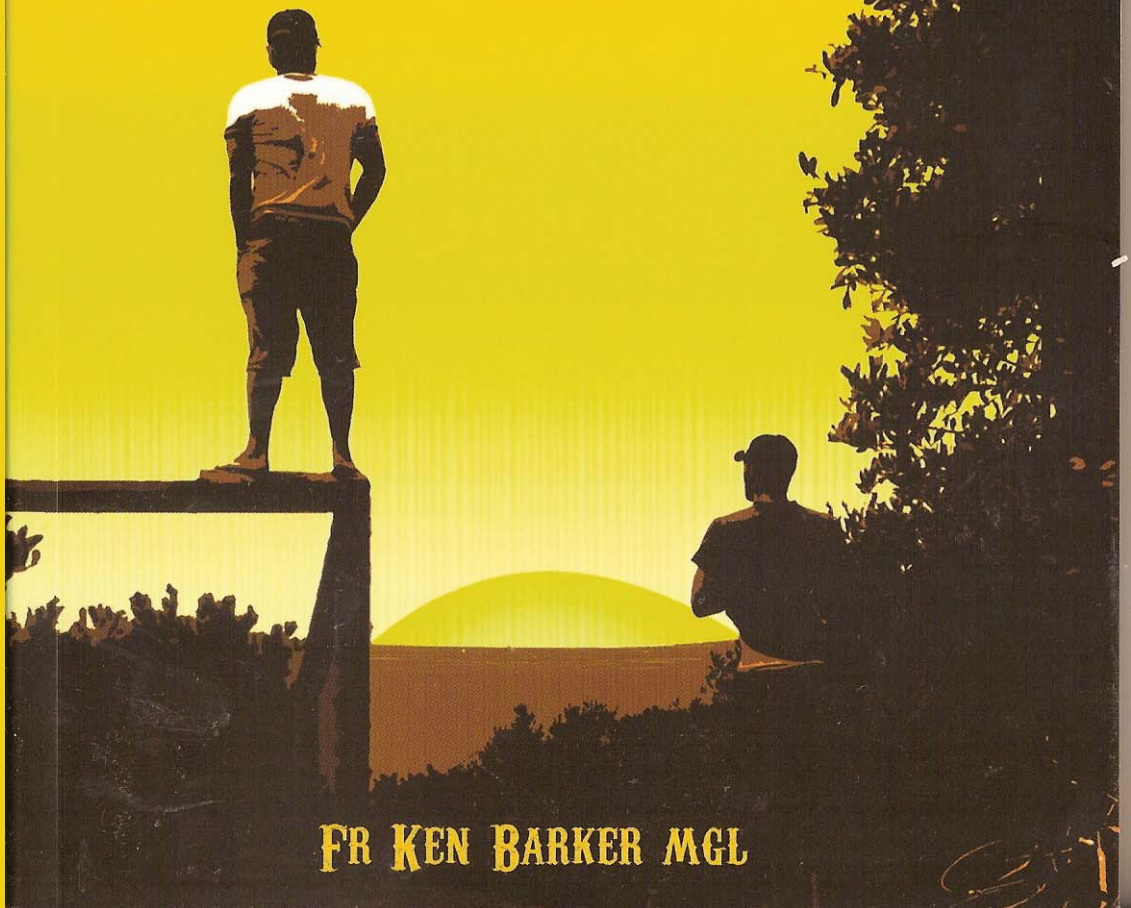


# YOUNG MEN RISE UP



**TEACHING AND STUDY GUIDE**

## SMALLGROUPS

### Aim

To meet regularly to discuss and share about message of different sections of the book *Young Men Rise Up*, and hence to use it as a means to bring positive change to our lives.

### Composition and Time

The best size for the group is 6-10 young men (age 18-35).

The group needs a leader/facilitator, whose role is simply to help the group function well.

The group is formed for the sessions around the book *Young Men Rise Up*. Members are asked to make a commitment to come to all sessions.

Sessions may be fortnightly, and on the same night of the week to make it easier to remember. Some really keen groups may meet once a week.

There are discussion questions provided for ten sessions.

Some groups may want to have a barbecue beforehand, or even attend a parish Mass together before the group meeting.

### Suggested Format for Meeting

- 1) Begin with some common prayer. This can vary depending on the group. E.g. the rosary, or some songs of praise, or some shared prayer, or listening quietly to music (15 min).
- 2) If some members of the group have not read the section of the book intended for discussion, the leader may briefly summarize the content of the section (10 min).
- 3) Begin to share in response to the questions given. Take one question at a time. If the question does not generate much response, freely move to the next question. The leader of the group should make sure everyone in the group has an opportunity to respond to each question if they desire (45 min).
- 4) Group leader informs the group of the next section of the book to be read, and place and time of next meeting.

### Some principles to remember during the discussion/sharing

- a) Seek to create a non-judgmental, accepting atmosphere; best to speak from your own experience, rather than becoming argumentative.
- b) Remember that listening is more important than speaking.
- c) However, when it is your turn to speak don't be shy, but express yourself honestly.
- d) Sharing of ideas is good, but a group grows even more through sharing of personal experiences. The questions given invite the group members to share from their own experience about the issues being discussed.
- e) This requires a readiness to be vulnerable and to trust the other group members.
- f) For this reason the group needs to agree that what is shared in the group stays in the group.
- g) While remaining open to new members coming to the group, it is best if a stable core remains throughout; this enables trust to grow and a group identity to form.
- h) To this end the group may decide to have a social night together half way through the program; this does wonders for freedom of sharing in the group as relationships grow and a sense of brotherhood develops.
- i) Some groups may choose to alternate between a sport/recreational night and a discussion group night.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **FAITH**

#### **QUESTIONS (pp. 15-35)**

- 1) If Jesus was standing before you right now and he asked you the question: “Who do you say I am?” What would you say to him in reply? (Mt.16:17).  
(Try to avoid giving a “smart” answer or something straight from the Catechism – rather share from your own personal experience of who Jesus is for you now)
  
- 2) “Many young men don’t feel a need for Jesus. They think they are doing fine. But the reality is that many suffer a deep emptiness in the heart, which they try desperately to cover over with endless activity, sensual stimulation and self-indulgent pleasure. Underneath the “cool” outward appearance there is a deep gnawing, interior hunger for love, which only Jesus can ultimately satisfy. Some have aching questions of the heart. What’s my life about? Where am I going? Is there any meaning to my life at all? Only Jesus, who is proclaimed by the Church, can fully answer the deepest questions of the human heart”. Does this describe the search of young men today? What about you? Can you identify with this search?
  
- 3) Image your present life as a house with many rooms. If you were to ask Jesus into your house, would there be some rooms into which you may be reluctant to invite him to enter? What would these rooms be? Are you free to allow Jesus to be Lord of your whole life?
  
- 4) Do you find it challenging to put your trust in God’s love for you in all circumstances? Share an example of a time you found it difficult to trust the Lord. How has your relationship with your earthly father influenced your concept of God as your Father?
  
- 5) Each one of us has a deep needs for a healthy sense of self-worth, to feel secure and to know that I am significant. What are some of the inadequate ways that you may have sought to fulfill these needs. Discuss how in discovering Jesus that these needs become fulfilled.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **NOTES**

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **PRUDENCE**

#### **QUESTIONS (pp. 36-50)**

- 1) “Emotions are good servants, but lousy masters”. Share an example of how your emotions led you to make a decision, or to say or do something, which you later regretted. How could this have been avoided?
  
- 2) To what degree are you swayed in your decision-making by the need to be popular, or to be regarded highly by your peers? To what degree do you allow the opinions or values of your work-mates or peers influence you in your decisions?
  
- 3) Our conscience enables us to make a judgement about what is truly right or wrong in any situation. Do you think you have an informed conscience on most moral issues? If not, how can this be remedied?
  
- 4) How are you when it comes to setting right priorities in your life, and scheduling accordingly? Where is the challenge in this for you ?
  
- 5) What do you consider is the greatest advantage in having a “mentor” in your life? What is your personal experience?

**CHAPTER 2:**

**NOTES**

## **CHAPTER 3 (a)**

### **SOBRIETY**

#### **QUESTIONS (pp.57-65)**

- 1) Share whether there been a time in your life when you have struggled to moderate your alcohol consumption? Would you say you now have self-mastery in this area?
  
- 2) What are the circumstances that would make you more vulnerable to getting drunk? How can you avoid this happening?
  
- 3) Many people today don't consider it to be wrong to get drunk "as long as you don't hurt anyone". What do you consider are the main reasons why drunkenness is wrong?
  
- 4) Have you ever been caught up in other compulsions or addictions e.g. food, drugs, gambling etc. Is there an addictive agent that you find yourself returning to often for a "quick-fix", an immediate relief from the inner pain or discomfort? If so, what can you do about it?
  
- 5) Examine together as a group the fundamental steps towards living a sober life given on page 62. Which of these steps are important for you to put into place in your life?

**CHAPTER 3 (a):**

**NOTES**

## **CHAPTER 3 (b)**

### **CHASTITY I**

#### **QUESTIONS (pp. 66-78)**

- 1) The genital dimension of our sexuality is unpredictable and pressing in its demands. Share about your own personal struggle to gain self-mastery over these desires and drives. Don't be afraid to share not only your victories, but also your failures.
  
- 2) How have you learnt to deal with images and fantasies that arise unexpectedly in your mind? What to you consider is the best way to handle them?
  
- 3) Have you ever experienced having a "crush" on someone? What did you learn from the experience?
  
- 4) "A truly human sexual act is one that speaks of truth and love". Do you agree with this statement? What do you think makes a sexual act one that is true and loving?
  
- 5) "When dominated by lust men look on women as objects for their sexual gratification". In our contemporary world many do not see anything wrong with looking at another lustfully; "after all it doesn't hurt anyone". What do you think?

## **CHAPTER 3 (b)**

### **NOTES:**

## **CHAPTER 3 (b)**

### **CHASTITY**

#### **QUESTIONS II (pp.79-95)**

- 1) Why do you think young men become fascinated with pornography? What is the particular attraction of pornography on the internet? What is your experience?
  
- 2) Some people claim that engaging with pornography on the internet is harmless, unless it is child pornography or other forms of gross perversion. What do you think are the damaging effects of internet pornography? If possible share from your own experience.
  
- 3) Young men, both single and married, get into difficulty when they cultivate a pattern of disordered sexual behaviour which is kept secret and hidden from others. They are afraid of “being found out”. How do you think we can encourage one another to be vulnerable about our sexual struggles?
  
- 4) “Chastity is the right ordering of our sexual drives according to the plan of God for our state of life”. What are some of the important habitual practices we need to have in place in our lives in order to grow in chastity? With the help of the group try to make a full list.
  
- 5) The young Augustine, after coming to know Jesus, still struggled to overcome the power of lust in his life. What can we learn from his story? What can it tell us about the way to find victory in the battle against our flesh desires?

**CHAPTER 3 (b):**

**NOTES**

## CHAPTER 4

### LOVE

#### QUESTIONS (pp. 97-113)

- 1) Have you ever experienced a conflict between your love and loyalty towards your family, *storge*, and your love and loyalty towards Jesus and his mission, *agape*? Have you ever come across this conflict in others you know? When this conflict occurs what are some of the ways we can handle it?
  
- 2) Jesus commands us: “Love one another as I have loved you” and “love your enemies”. This is more than liking someone through natural attraction. How is it possible to love those who we find unattractive, or those who we find repugnant, or those for whom we have a strong natural aversion?
  
- 3) Love involves many daily decisions to die to oneself. Share some practical examples of how you have been challenged to love in this way.
  
- 4) “It is not the number of our works that is important, but the intensity of the love we put into every action” How do you interpret this statement? How can it be the rule of your life?
  
- 5) When you look at the heroic self-sacrifice of men such as Damien the Leper or Maximilian Kolbe what do you find most inspiring? How is it possible to love in this way?

**CHAPTER 4:**

**NOTES**

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **JUSTICE AND MERCY**

#### **QUESTIONS I (pp. 115-121)**

- 1) “A young man needs a positive vision of work.... He needs to take pride in his work... God’s plan for us”. What is your experience of work? Do you find it boring and unfulfilling? Or challenging and satisfying? Do you enjoy your work? Why or why not?
  
- 2) “Being truly just in our workplace is a real test of character”. Share with the group ways in which from your experience it is possible to be unjust in the workplace
  
- 3) Discuss the tensions that can arise between the demands of your work and the responsibility of spending time with your family. Married men can share from their experience first-hand. All can share from how things have happened in your family of origin.
  
- 4) Australia has been called “the land of the absent father”. Many fathers abdicate their responsibility to their family, especially having quality time with the children, and taking responsibility in their growth in faith and moral character. Discuss this problem and how best to meet your responsibilities (now or to come) in this regard.
  
- 5) “There is an old saying ‘My word is my bond’. If a promise is made then it is sacred and I will keep it”. Can you remember times when you have found it difficult to keep a promise? How can we grow to be men who can be relied upon to keep promises? Discuss this challenge.

**CHAPTER 5:**

**NOTES**

## **CHAPTER 5 (b)**

### **JUSTICE AND MERCY**

#### **QUESTIONS II (pp.122-133)**

- 1) “Young men must be thoroughly convinced of the inviolable dignity of human life from the moment of conception until the moment of natural death”. What are your convictions in relation to abortion, euthanasia, “in vitro” fertilisation, embryonic stem cell research? Are you a witness of life?
  
- 2) “Not to share our goods with the poor is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs” St. John Chrysostom. What do you think of this statement? How can we best adopt a “preferential option” for the poor?
  
- 3) What do you find most inspiring about the life and death of Pier Giorgio Frassati? Discuss.
  
- 4) When someone has hurt us deeply we naturally want to see that person paid back for what they have done. Violence begets violence. Discuss how an attitude of mercy and a decision to forgive can break this cycle of violence.
  
- 5) “If a crime has been committed then the course of justice must prevail, but for the offended person freedom will only come through forgiveness.” Discuss.

**CHAPTER 5:**

**NOTES**

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **FORTITUDE**

#### **QUESTIONS (pp.135-154)**

- 1) Share about some of your experiences of trying to resist a strong temptation. In the thick of the spiritual battle what can help us to stand firm against the enemy?
  
- 2) Share about a time in your life when you experienced disappointment, or failure, or loss of a loved one, or unexpected calamity, or bewildering suffering. Are you able to see how with the Lord these moments can become a source of grace and inner strength for us?
  
- 3) Most men carry hidden fears inside of them, but are reluctant to talk about it. With the Lord we can face into our fears and not allow them to conquer us. Share from your own experience about ways of dealing with fear.
  
- 4) “Jesus calls us to greatness, but not as the world would have it.” How would you define a truly “great” man? Do we measure “greatness” by the “popular celebrities”, or by the “sporting heroes”, or by the “successful business men”? Where is true “greatness” to be found? How do you aspire to be “great”?
  
- 5) “Today the Church has need of witnesses, especially young men, who will be brave in facing the current opposition to the Christian message, and not be afraid to speak the message boldly, but especially to live it with their lives”. Discuss this. Is this you?

**CHAPTER 6:**

**NOTES**

## CHAPTER 7

### HOPE

#### QUESTIONS (pp. 156-167)

- 1) “Science cannot redeem humanity. That kind of hope is proven to be deceptive. Our hope is in our knowledge of the salvation that has come in Jesus Christ”. What do you make of that statement?
  
- 2) Pope Benedict in his encyclical *Spe Salvi* says “the capacity to suffer for the sake of truth is the measure of our humanity”. This capacity will depend on the hope that is within us. Have you ever had to pay a price for standing for the truth? Maybe the group could suggest an example of someone who they admire who has suffered for the truth. What qualities were in the person’s heart?
  
- 3) When we experience life’s disappointments we can quickly fall into discouragement. From there we can become sad of heart and despondent, and then even slide into despair. Most of this arises from negative thinking, which leads us to lose hope. How do you think we can best combat this spiral into negativity and despairing thoughts?
  
- 4) While in prison, Archbishop Francis Xavier van Thuan discovered that every moment in life, no matter how difficult, is full of grace. God is not to be found in the future, nor in the past, but in the present moment. “Let every moment of our life be the first moment, the last moment, the only moment”. We must fill every moment with love. Discuss how this perspective could bring positive change to our lives.
  
- 5) “We must desire virtue, and at every turn beg the Lord for it. This prayer offered confidently and perseveringly he cannot refuse”. Notice the words “beg”, “confidently” and “perseveringly” – all are important. Do you pray for virtue this way? Why or why not?

**CHAPTER 7:**

**NOTES**

**Fr Ken Barker. *Young Men Rise Up*. Connor Court Publishing. Ballan, 2008.**

Available from all good Catholic and Christian Bookstores.

**Young Men of God**  
[www.ymgmovement.org](http://www.ymgmovement.org)

**Missionaries of God's Love**  
[www.mglvocation.org](http://www.mglvocation.org)  
**Disciples of Jesus**  
[www.disciplesofjesus.org](http://www.disciplesofjesus.org)

**Archdiocese of Canberra/Goulburn**  
[www.cg.catholic.org.au](http://www.cg.catholic.org.au)

**Connor Court Publishing**  
[www.connorcourt.com](http://www.connorcourt.com)

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