



Breakthrough program for crime survivors

Now running in over 20 countries.

APPLY NOW FOR BRISBANE PROGRAM! (FREE OF CHARGE)

Almost one third of Aussies have been victims of some kind of crime. Chances are, you know a few. We would like them to know about our remarkable program called the Sycamore Tree Project.

You may have seen the Sycamore Tree Project featured on ABC-TV programs like Australian Story or Street Stories. It is highly regarded by crime victims, inmates and officials. Not just here but in many countries around the world.

Listen to the voices of Australian victims who participated in Sycamore Tree Project:

"I only wish that other secondary victims of crime could experience what I have and see that we don't need to be prisoners of pain and hate... and fear. There is a better way to experience life in the aftermath of violent crime.... and it is really the only way we will ever be free. Forgiveness is not a word to be bandied about lightly and it is almost always difficult to achieve, and indeed sometimes impossible, but when you experience forgiveness, either as a recipient, or as someone who forgives another... it sets

you free. ...This course has helped me to forgive myself for past transgressions and has helped me to move to a place where I can see that forgiving the person who killed my daughter is possible. **Karen, Crime Victim**

"In that course I found a safe place in the middle of a prison with a group of prisoners – ironic. I was able to grieve not only for the act of crime which happened a long time ago but for its legacy which was with me daily... I found I had to say it out loud, 'I have been damaged by other men's actions and I am very angry'. Only this group could acknowledge this because prisoners are the 'missing link' for victims of crimes. These men also wanted to be allowed to make restitution though they couldn't undo the past and this was healing for me too." - **Elaine, Crime Victim**

"Seeing the pain that most of the Sycamore Tree Project participants had overcome, and in turn, witnessing first hand their desire to spread compassion, was in fact the very first time in many years that I have witnessed the testimony of Christ in practice and this was an experience that rocked me." - **Peter, Prison Inmate**

"For me personally, there has been a huge amount of healing. I had created my own personal hell and thought I was quite happy the way things were. But I needed some closure. I can't change what has happened but I can certainly change what happens next." - **Elizabeth, Crime Victim**

Please contact our Sycamore Tree Project Coordinator, for further details.

Call 07 3399 3190 | sycamoretree.qld@prisonfellowship.org.au | www.pfqueensland.info

This program has featured on ABC Radio, Courier Mail Magazine, Family Radio 96.5fm. It brings crime victims and prisoners together in a secure area of a local correctional centre, to discuss the effects of crime.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Victims and offenders meet for eight 2 hour sessions, usually over a period of 8 weeks. The facilitator leads the group through a series of topics leading naturally to a time in which both victims and offenders can share letters and covenants which express how they feel and how they wish to move forward. Offenders are invited to explore ways of making restitution for the harm caused by their criminal behavior. Victims are given the opportunity to consider ways in which they can take control of their lives and begin their journey toward healing and restoration. Finally, the group meets for a public celebration and graduation.

Session 1 Introduction

To prepare offenders and victims to participate in the Sycamore Tree Project

Session 2 What is Crime?

Understanding that crime causes a ripple effect of damage and our justice system does not yet address that extent of harm.

Session 3 Responsibility

To understand what it means to take responsibility for committing an offense

Session 4 Confession & Repentance

To understand the meaning, power and importance of confession and repentance

Session 5 Forgiveness

To understand the meaning, power and importance of forgiveness

Session 6 Restitution & Reconciliation

To understand restitution as a response to crime and to explore the possibility of reconciliation

Session 7 Act of Restitution

To participate in symbolic restitution

Session 8 Celebration and Graduation

To reflect on and celebrate the new awareness that group members have about crime and healing

FIVE PROJECT FEATURES

There are five core features which make up the Sycamore Tree Project. Each of these directly relate to five parts of the Zacchaeus story.

1. The prisoners and victims volunteer to participate.
2. The project is a way of showing prisoners the love and mercy demonstrated in the story.
3. Crime victims are given the opportunity to tell prisoners how they have been affected, and the hurt that they feel.
4. The prisoners are given an opportunity to consider how they can try to make things right with their victims.
5. The prisoners and victims are given the chance to explain - in a public celebration - what they have learned about the meaning and importance of healing the hurt and making things right.

**Sycamore Tree
Project**



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