

# FIAT 40

## Group Leader Guide

CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
TE TAKIWĀ Ō TE PĪHOA

OF  
CHRISTCHURCH

*Thank you for your willingness to lead a FIAT40 group. You do not need to have done Fiat before or be an experienced facilitator to lead a group - you may simply have the desire to experience this programme together with others. Here's what you need to know to get started ...*

### Role of a FIAT 40 Group Leader

- **Creating a supportive environment:** Help to establish a welcoming and spiritually safe environment where women can be open and vulnerable in their journey.
- **Facilitating weekly meetings:** Lead the weekly meetings to provide guidance, and encouragement as participants reflect on their experiences, challenges, and growth.
- **Encouraging accountability:** Help participants stay accountable to the program's disciplines while reminding them that FIAT 40 is about progress, not perfection.
- **Praying for the Group:** Intercede for your group members throughout the 40 days, lifting up their needs, intentions, and growth.

### Preparing for FIAT 40

- ① **Invite participants:** Share the FIAT 40 flyer with others, through your parish, social media, and friends. FIAT 40 is open to women of all ages, so talk to anyone you think might be open to a challenge this Lent.
- ② **Establish meeting times and location:** Decide on a weekly meeting time and location that is accessible and convenient for the group. Meetings can be held in person at a church, home, or even virtually to accommodate all participants. Organise the first meeting prior to Lent so women can prepare together, including organising the anchor or buddy for each person.
- ③ **Prepare a weekly meeting outline:** Familiarize yourself with the suggested meeting outline to ensure a balanced time of prayer, sharing, and reflection.
- ④ **Gather resources:** Provide participants with the programme booklet. You might also have some ideas for the scripture reading or devotional materials they could use alongside the suggested reading. Encourage them to bring a notebook or journal for personal reflections.

### First group meeting

To enable everyone in the group to start well prepared, ensure the following is covered at an initial meeting.

- **Each person has an anchor** - an anchor is a buddy or partner within the group. During the 40 days of Lent, participants contact their anchor daily (a quick phone call or text) to check in and to encourage each other. At this first meeting, ensure anchors are organised and phone numbers etc exchanged.
- **Decide on disciplines** - encourage everyone to consider which lifestyle sacrifices they feel called to make. Fiat 40 is about removing distractions rather than adding additional activities, it should be a challenge but not feel insurmountable.
- **Select devotional material** - Fiat 40 includes 15 minutes of spiritual reading daily. There are 2 options included in the Fiat booklet, however participants can also choose their own Lenten devotional for this time, or read about the lives of saints or follow a scripture study of their choosing.

### Tips for Leading Effectively

- **Set the tone:**
  - Be mindful that your leadership sets the tone for the group. Lead with humility, patience, and encouragement, modeling the virtues of Mary.
- **Foster confidentiality:**
  - Remind participants that what is shared in the group is to remain confidential. This trust will help build a safe space for honest sharing.
- **Promote encouragement, not perfection:**
  - Gently remind the group that FIAT 40 is about growing in faith, not achieving perfection. Encourage them to see each stumble as a chance to rely on God's grace.
- **Be flexible and compassionate:**
  - Recognize that each participant is in a unique season of life. Some may struggle more than others, and adjustments may be necessary. Offer compassionate support and avoid rigid expectations.
- **Pray for your group regularly:**
  - As a leader, commit to daily prayer for each member of your group, asking for the grace and strength they need. Consider setting aside a specific time each week to lift up their intentions.

“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Luke 1:38