



## Marking the End of the Year of Faith

**On National Youth Sunday 2013, Pope Francis will officially close the Year of Faith which began on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012**



As this Year of Faith draws to a close it is a fitting time to reflect on both the content of our faith and what faith personally means to us.

The reflective activity below could be used in a youth group or catechism class. It can easily be adapted to suit a wide range of age groups and could either be the sole focus of a meeting or could be used as a time of reflection at the start or ending of a meeting.

It is based upon a catechetical session given by Archbishop Vincent Nichols at a pre-world youth day event in London in July 2013 for children and young adults aged 11+.

- The leader gives a brief introduction to the Year of Faith and asks the young people to take a few moments to think about what the word 'faith' means to them.
- They then discuss this in pairs or small groups and note three words or short phrases that express what faith means for them.
- The leader then invites the assembled group to share some of their responses; where appropriate he/she may comment briefly to develop an understanding of what is being expressed.
- The leader may then say something about what faith means for him/her before moving on to share what Pope Francis said about faith in his recent encyclical, *Lumen Fidei*. This could be done in varied ways, depending on the time and age of the group but the points below may be used. When anything Pope Francis says links to answers the young people have given it is good to point this out.



## Faith is hearing

- God has entered into a relationship of love with us and speaks his word to us.
- St Paul describes faith as coming from hearing (cf. *Rom 10:17*) and speaks of the “obedience of faith” (cf. *Rom 1:5; 16:26*), for as we recognise the voice of the one speaking we are empowered with the freedom to follow him in obedience.
- In St John’s Gospel we read that the hearing of faith is personal, for example, where the voice of the Good Shepherd is recognized (cf. *Jn 10:3-5*). It is a hearing which calls for discipleship, as was the case with the first disciples: “Hearing him say these things, they followed Jesus” (*Jn 1:37*).

## Faith is seeing

- While hearing emphasizes personal vocation and obedience, and the fact that truth is revealed in time, sight provides a vision of the entire journey and allows it to be situated within God’s overall plan. Without this vision, we would be left only with unconnected parts of an unknown whole.
- In John’s Gospel, to believe is both to hear and to see. Seeing the real nature of the signs which Jesus worked led to faith; for example, the Jews who following the raising of Lazarus from the dead, “having seen what he did, believed in him” (*Jn 11:45*).
- Joined to hearing, seeing then becomes a form of following Christ.

## Faith is touch

- Together with hearing and seeing, St John speaks of faith as touch, as he says in his First Letter: “What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life” (*1 Jn 1:1*).
- By his taking flesh and coming among us, Jesus has touched us, and through the sacraments he continues to touch us even today; transforming our hearts, he unceasingly enables us to acknowledge and acclaim him as the Son of God.
- In faith, we can touch him and receive the power of his grace. Saint Augustine, commenting on the account of the woman suffering from haemorrhages who touched Jesus and was cured (cf. *Lk 8:45-46*), says: “To touch him with our hearts: that is what it means to believe”.



Download *Lumen Fidei* \_\_\_\_\_

Information about the Year of Faith \_\_\_\_\_