



YEAR OF FAITH²⁰¹²₂₀₁₃

THE YEAR OF FAITH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

BACKGROUND NOTES

Pope Benedict XVI has declared a Year of Faith to begin on 11 October 2012 and ending on 24 November 2013, the Feast of Christ the King.

A SIGNIFICANT DATE

11 October 2012 is a significant date in the life of the Church. It marks the 50th anniversary of the opening, by Pope John XXIII, of the Second Vatican Council and the 20th anniversary of the publication, by Blessed John Paul II, of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

WHY A YEAR OF FAITH?

The Year of Faith offers all of us the opportunity to renew our commitment to what we believe as members of the Church. It invites to step once again through the door of faith which was opened for us on the day of our baptism and to take time to strengthen our relationship with Jesus Christ. In his letter to begin the Year of Faith, Pope Benedict XVI suggests four ways in which we can do this:

- Pray
- Deepen our own knowledge
- Witness
- Serve

You can read the full text of this letter by following the link on this page
<http://www.kandle.ie/year-of-faith-2012/>

THE LOGO

The logo, which you can see at the top of this page, is composed of a square, bordered field on which a boat, symbolizing the Church, is represented as sailing on a graphically minimal representation of waves. The main mast of the boat is a cross from which sails are displayed in the form of dynamic signs which compose the trigram of Christ (IHS). The background to the sails is a sun which, associated with the trigram, refers also to the Eucharist.

LAUNCHING THE YEAR OF FAITH

The Year of Faith begins in the diocese of Kildare & Leighlin with Evening Prayer during which Rev Prof Brendan Leahy will speak. This event takes place on Thursday 11, October at 7:30 p.m. in the Cathedral of the Assumption, Carlow. All are welcome

DIOCESAN CONGRESS

This will take place on **March 8 & 9** in Carlow. Further details will be available soon. Keep an eye on www.kandle.ie



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PRAYER SERVICE TO BEGIN THE YEAR OF FAITH

‘OPEN WIDE THE DOOR OF FAITH’

YOU WILL NEED

- A Candle for the Sacred Space and one for each classroom
*Customise the candle using the label on page 5 of this document. **Each class should bring their candle to the Prayer Service and place it in the Sacred Space.** The children could also colour in the text and the label could also be placed in their Prayer Space in the classroom , school entrance area or in their Religion copies*
- Bible
- Holy Water
- Green Cloth
- Some mustard seeds and a candle for each classroom. **Nominate children who will carry the mustard seeds and candle back to their classroom/s**
- Poster of each of the four ways in which we are going to try and live the Year of Faith this year: Pray Learn Witness Serve
- **Nominate four children to hold these posters**

OPENING SONG:

This is the Day

LEADER:

Let us begin our time of prayer together by marking ourselves with the sign of our Faith.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

INTRODUCTION:

We gather today to mark the beginning of a special year, a Year of Faith. Faith is a gift which was given to us when we were baptised. On the day of our baptism, a candle was lit for each one of us. That candle was another sign of our faith. It is also a challenge to each one of us to keep that light of faith burning in our homes, our school and our parish. Today we will light our school candle for the year of faith and we will promise to keep that light burning. *Invite child or staff member to light the candle in the Sacred Space.*

Now we will light the other candles in the Sacred Space from our school candle. These are the candles that will be lit in your classrooms during the year when you pray together. *Invite teacher from each class present to light their candle in the Sacred Space.*

One of the ways that we keep the light of faith burning is by growing in our faith. We grow in our faith every day when we pray, when we learn about God, when we show love to one another and when we care for those who are not as lucky as we are. This year we are going to try to be people of faith and live like Jesus wants us to. We are going to use four words to help us to do this.

Invite the children who have the words to come forward one by one and to stand with the posters where they can be seen by everyone.

What is the first word?

PRAY: We already pray a lot in our school. But this year we are going to pray even more. Each class can decide what prayer they are going to learn and say together at 12 o'clock (*this can be any suitable time*) each day. That way we will know that we are all praying at the same time.

LEARN: We all know a lot about our faith. We learn about our faith during religion time. This year each class will try to make a special effort in learning more than what is in their religion books. Some classes might do a project on a local Saint or religious place. Others might make a presentation on the bible, or decorate a notice board, or visit the church and come back and tell us what they learned. You might invite someone to talk to you about faith. There are lots of things we can do. After our prayer, today, I want you to go back to your class and decide what you would like to do with your teacher.

WITNESS: Witness might be a new word to some of us. Sometimes we use the word witness when we talk about accidents, they are the people who saw what happened and can help the Gardai. But witness can also mean how we live our lives, how we treat one another, how we talk to one another. This year we can try to be more like Jesus in our classrooms, in the playground, in how we talk and in what we do. We might have an award at the end of each month for the person who was most like Jesus in our classroom.

SERVE: Before Jesus shared his last meal with his friends he did something very strange. He washed their feet and he told them that they must do what he did. They must serve others. What this means is that we must take care of those who are not as lucky as we are. We do lots of things already in our school to help those in need (*name some of the projects you are involved in as a school*). This year we will try to do more, particularly in Lent when the Trócaire boxes arrive.

LEADER: Now that we have decided how we will celebrate the Year of Faith in our school let us listen to what Jesus said about faith.

READER: Lk 17:5-6
The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' The Lord replied, 'If you had faith like a mustard seed you say to this mulberry tree; be uprooted and planted in the sea and it would obey you.'

LEADER: Mustard seeds are tiny. I have one in my hand. Can you see it? You know that even though this seed is so small it will grow if we plant it. Do you think that it will grow all by itself or will it need some help? Yes it will need light and water and us to care for it. Imagine that Jesus tells us that we only need to have faith that is this size and then we can do great things. But we need help too. That is why we promised to do four things at the beginning of our time together today. Can you remember what they were? We promised to pray, learn, witness and serve. When we do these things together our faith grows stronger and then we can do great things. Before you go back to your class/es I will give you some mustard seeds to plant and take care of so that you can see what will grow.

LEADER: Let us stand and pray the prayer that Jesus taught us together

Our Father.....

LEADER: Before you go back to your class/es I want the two people who are going to take the mustard seeds and the candle back to their classroom to come and take them from the Sacred Space and then to come and stand beside me while we sing our closing song; *Christ be Our Light or This Little Light of Mine*

We are celebrating The Year of Faith



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