

# Explore: Living Faith

The disciple Peter represents faith. The story of Peter walking on the water illustrates what faith does in our spiritual lives. Faith lifts us up above the sea of worldly concerns and enables us to move towards the Lord.



This activity explores New Church teachings about faith, using an experiment (select from 3 options) to explore how faith relates to action. Students will respond to a series of statements about faith and then try to do one or more tasks without and then with tools.

**Materials Needed** (see following pages for handouts)

- copy of *What Does the New Church Teach about Faith?* for each student
- one Teacher Copy of *What Does the New Church Teach about Faith?*
- copy of *Faith, a Tool of Heavenly Life* for each student
- pen or pencil for each student
- supplies for the experiment activity of your choice (see choices on the next page)

## Activity

1. Distribute the page *What Does the New Church Teach about Faith?*
2. Without discussing the topic, ask students to circle all of the answers that they feel complete the sentences correctly.
3. Using the Teacher Copy provided, discuss the answers with the group.
4. Choose one of the experiments on the following page to do with the students as an illustration of how faith works in our lives.

## Discussion

1. Which is easier: doing tasks with or without tools? Hands and feet are tools, too!
2. How did having a better tool affect your ability to succeed?
3. Distribute the page *Faith, a Tool for Heavenly Life* to the students.
4. Faith acts as a tool in our lives. If our goal is to go to heaven, our task becomes to live a life that can get us there.
5. How does faith help you with this task? Read *Faith, a Tool for Heavenly Life* together as a basis for discussing this question.
6. Some people have faith but only know a few true ideas, e.g. there is a God. How would their faith change if they knew more truths?—e.g. Jesus Christ is the God of heaven and earth. He Himself came to save us.

7. How can your faith save you?
8. Do New Church people have a responsibility to share their tools of faith with others?
9. In what ways might sharing your faith impact your own life?
10. The incident in the story of the Lord walking on water records that the disciples all saw the Lord. When and how might we see the Lord in our lives? (Remember, it was in the dark of night, in the middle of a storm.)
11. In what ways does your faith help you “walk on water” to the Lord?
12. Conclude the discussion by reading the *Summary of the Faith of the New Heaven and the New Church* with the students from the bottom of *Faith, a Tool for Heavenly Life*.

### ***Experiment Choices***

#### ***I. Hammer and Nails***

1. Provide students with two pieces of wood and a nail.
2. Instruct them to join the two pieces of wood using the nail. Encourage students to discuss or work on the problem for a while.
3. After students have struggled, provide a hammer so that they can do the job.

#### ***II. Move the Water***

1. Fill one container with water, and place a second empty container about 10 feet (3 meters) away.
2. Instruct the students to move the water from one container to the other container without moving the containers closer to each other, and without using anything that you have not provided.
3. Observe how students approach the problem. It is likely that they will use their hands as tools. Allow them to work on the problem for a while.
4. After some time, provide the students with a cup or ladle to complete the task.

#### ***III. Move the Dirt***

1. Provide a pile of dirt or sand. Ask the students to move the pile about 10 feet (3 meters) from where it is standing without using any resources that have not been provided.
2. Observe how students approach the task. It is likely that they will use their hands or feet as tools. Allow them to work on the task for a while.
3. After some time, provide a shovel or bucket to finish the task.

# WHAT DOES THE NEW CHURCH TEACH ABOUT FAITH?

Read the following statements carefully.  
Circle *all* of the answers that complete the sentence correctly.

1. Having faith means
  - a. doing what we believe.
  - b. knowing what we believe.
  - c. believing what we think.
  - d. following our conscience.
  
2. People can be saved when they
  - a. understand their faith because they think about it.
  - b. have all the facts of faith in their memory.
  - c. carry their faith in their hearts from living it.
  - d. have confidence in the Lord.
  
3. Knowing a lot of true facts
  - a. is helpful for being saved.
  - b. is vital to being saved.
  - c. is useless because salvation is about what you do with your life.
  - d. won't save you unless you act on them.
  
4. Faith is
  - a. attained in an instant.
  - b. developed through a lifetime of practicing what is believed.
  - c. gained when the Lord works through our conscience.
  - d. strengthened by reading and thinking about the Word.
  
5. True faith is
  - a. action.
  - b. life.
  - c. thought.
  - d. nothing but charity.
  - e. love to the Lord and the neighbor.

# WHAT DOES THE NEW CHURCH TEACH ABOUT FAITH?

## TEACHER COPY

Read the following statements carefully.

Circle *all* of the answers that complete the sentence correctly.

Correct answers appear in red.

References for passages from the Heavenly Doctrines for the New Church are provided for your interest or further study. It is not necessary to share these with students.

1. Having faith means
  - a. doing what we believe. (*Apocalypse Explained* 250:9)
  - b. knowing what we believe. (*Apocalypse Explained* 427:6)
  - c. believing what we think. (*Apocalypse Explained* 895)
  - d. following our conscience. (*Arcana Coelestia* 896)
  
2. People can be saved when they
  - a. understand their faith because they think about it. (*Apocalypse Explained* 242:5)
  - b. have all the facts of faith in their memory. (*Apocalypse Explained* 895:1-2)
  - c. carry their faith in their hearts from living it. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8034)
  - d. have confidence in the Lord. (*True Christian Religion* 2)
  
3. Knowing a lot of true facts
  - a. is helpful for being saved. (*True Christian Religion* 349-353)
  - b. is vital to being saved. (*Apocalypse Explained* 837:10-11)
  - c. is useless because salvation is about what you do with your life. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10083:5)
  - d. won't save you unless you act on them. (*Apocalypse Explained* 838)
  
4. Faith is
  - a. attained in an instant. (*Apocalypse Explained* 781:5)
  - b. developed through a lifetime of practicing what is believed. (*Apocalypse Explained* 250:9)
  - c. gained when the Lord works through our conscience. (*Arcana Coelestia* 896)
  - d. strengthened by reading and thinking about the Word. (*True Christian Religion* 349-353)
  
5. True faith is
  - a. action. (*Spiritual Experiences* 2491)
  - b. life. (*Spiritual Experiences* 4078)
  - c. thought. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1076:2)
  - d. nothing but charity. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3121)
  - e. love to the Lord and the neighbor. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2116:2, 2228:2)