



2025 NCYC Digital Encounter with Pope Leo XIV

Youth Ministry Gathering Four-Part Series:
A Formation Series Inspired by the Papal Digital Encounter

Series Title: "Voices That Matter: Dialogue, Faith, and the Future"

Purpose: Equip young people to understand and practice dialogue, reflect on Pope Leo XIV's encounter, and explore their role as listeners, sharers, and faith leaders in their own communities.

NIGHT 1 - "What Is Dialogue?"

NIGHT 2 - "Your Voice Matters"

NIGHT 3 - "Listening Like Christ"

NIGHT 4 - "Faith in Action Through Dialogue"

NIGHT 1 - "What Is Dialogue?"

Theme: Dialogue is the path where listening, humility, and connection create space for the Holy Spirit.

Welcome & Icebreaker (10 mins)

Opening Remarks:

- Share with the young people gathered some highlights from the Document: [Introduction to the Series Carrying the Dialogue Forward](#).
- This will help to set the tone for what they are about to journey through as they unpack the importance of dialogue.
- After your journey through this four-part series, we encourage you to also use the subsequent sessions that break open each theme more fully with your young people.

Icebreaker:

- "Two Truths and a Deep Thought": Invite each participant to share two fun facts and one faith-based question they've wondered about. This helps to promote vulnerability and sets a tone for dialogue.

Opening Prayer (4 mins)

Instructions:

Begin with prayer that invites the Holy Spirit into the conversation. The focus will stem from James 1:19 - "You must understand this, my beloved, let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger."

Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit.
We ask You to be present in this conversation
to open our hearts, soften our words,
and guide us in listening with humility and love.

Teach us to "...be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger" as Scripture calls us (James 1:19).
Form us into people who seek understanding before being understood.

Lord Jesus, You remind us that every person has a place in Your Church
and that our voices matter when we speak with honesty and hope.
Help us carry forward the spirit of dialogue we witnessed with Pope Leo—
a dialogue that builds trust, creates peace, and helps us draw closer to You and to one another.

Holy Spirit, make this moment sacred.
Make our listening generous.
Make our sharing courageous.
And make our hearts open to whatever You desire to teach us today.

Amen.

Watch The Designated Video Clip (4 mins)

You will show a video clip from 4:37 to 8:00

- This short video clip from the Nov 21 Digital Encounter highlights the opening address by Pope Leo XVI to participants gathered at NCYC and should be viewed before moving into the session below. You can share the full opening if time allows up until the 8:00 minute marker.
- [Full Pope Leo XIV's LIVE Digital Encounter with U.S. Youth | NCYC | November 21, 2025](#)

Reflection on Dialogue (2 mins)

After viewing the video clip, share the following reflection...

Today, we step into something sacred. Even though you weren't sitting in the stadium with the Holy Father, his invitation is for you just as much as for the young people who were there. He wants to enter into dialogue with you — your questions, your hopes, your worries, your story.

But before we can enter that kind of conversation, we need to understand what real dialogue actually is.

Dialogue is not debate. It is not about winning a point or proving we are right. True dialogue seeks to understand.

It begins with humility — the kind that meets another person with openness instead of assumptions. It grows when we listen with the heart, because listening is the first act of love. And when we really listen, something beautiful happens: walls fall and bridges rise.

Dialogue is the path where truth and charity walk together. It is the space where the Holy Spirit can move, soften us, and even turn us into peacemakers. And without dialogue, there can be no real community — not in our families, not in our friendships, not in our Church.

So, I want to invite you to reflect silently on a few simple questions as we continue:

- What would change in our Church — and in our world — if we listened twice as much as we spoke?
- Who in your life needs you to slow down long enough to truly hear them?
- How might God be speaking to you through someone you disagree with?
- And what difference could one honest, compassionate conversation make this week?

As we move forward, remember this: your voice matters in the Church, and Jesus desires to meet you in what you share. Dialogue is the road that brings us closer to Him and to one another.

Let's walk that road together today.

Small Group Discussion (15–20 mins)

Encourage leaders to actively model listening and refrain from giving quick answers.

Questions:

1. What part of the opening address from Pope Leo XVI stayed with you — and why do you think it stood out? Or what piece of the reflection just shared stood out to you and why?
2. How can we carry the spirit of this encounter into our schools, homes, or parishes? How can our voices and our listening help create unity in the Church today?
3. If you could ask a Church leader — or even the Holy Father — one honest question, what would it be?
4. What makes someone a truly good listener? What gestures, attitudes, or behaviors make you feel safe to share?
5. How does it feel when someone really hears you — not just your words, but your heart? Why does being “heard” matter so much in friendships, families, and the Church?
6. What makes dialogue possible? Where do you see a need for more dialogue — in your school, family, parish, or online life? What difference could listening make in that

space?

Reflective Activity or Journaling (10–15 mins)

Give each participant a “Dialogue Reflection Card” or journal sheet with the prompt below.

“What would YOU ask the Pope?” Use your journal to gather your initial thoughts.

Write a short, honest message or prayer — to the Church, to a leader, to someone who needs to hear your voice, or even to God.

Consider:

- What do you hope adults understand about your life?
- What do you wish the Church could see more clearly about young people?
- What encouragement, question, or challenge is on your heart today?

Option: Invite two or three participants to share if they wish.

Sending Challenge (5 mins)

- Encourage young people to choose one intentional act of dialogue to live out this week:
- Have a real, face-to-face conversation with someone you normally wouldn't talk to.
- Be the listener in at least one conversation, practicing being “quick to listen and slow to speak.”
- Share one faith question online or in a trusted group setting — something honest that might help someone else feel less alone.
- Ask someone in their life a thoughtful question and genuinely listen to the answer.

Provide a small card or digital graphic with the theme title:

“Voices That Matter: My Dialogue Challenge This Week” and a blank space for them to write down the challenge they commit to.

NIGHT 2 - “Your Voice Matters”

Theme: Your voice is needed now. Young people are not only the future; they are the present of the Church.

Welcome & Icebreaker (10 min)

Opening Remarks (2 mins):

Last time we were together, we talked about what real dialogue is — not arguing to win, but listening to understand. We reflected on how listening is the first act of love and how our Church needs spaces where people can be truly heard.

Today, we're going to focus on something really important: your voice. It's easy to hear adults say, "You're the future of the Church," but Pope Leo and so many others remind us that you are also the present of the Church. Your questions, your struggles, your dreams — they matter right now.

We're going to explore what it feels like to be heard, what keeps us silent, and why your voice is a gift that the Church needs.

Icebreaker: "Stand If..." (8 mins)

Explain:

I'm going to read a few statements. If the statement is true for you, I invite you to stand. You don't have to explain anything, just stand, look around, and sit back down. This isn't about embarrassment; it's about realizing we're not alone.

- Sample prompts (you can add or adapt):
- Stand if you've ever felt unheard by an adult.
- Stand if you've ever felt like your opinions didn't matter.
- Stand if you've wanted to ask a Church leader a really honest question but held back.
- Stand if you've ever thought, "The Church doesn't really get what teens go through."
- Stand if you've ever wished someone would really ask how you're doing and mean it.

Brief Debrief...Ask:

"How did it feel to stand?"

"How did it feel to see others stand with you?"

Reassure:

If you felt anything during that activity — maybe uncomfortable, maybe relieved — that's okay. Those feelings are part of what we'll talk about tonight.

Opening Prayer (1 min)

Lord Jesus,
You remind us that every person has a place in Your Church.
You see each heart in this room — the joys, the worries, the questions we carry.

Give us courage to speak honestly,
and humility to listen deeply.
Help us to trust that our voices matter to You
and to the community You are building through us.

When we are tempted to stay silent out of fear,
give us confidence rooted in Your love.
When we feel ignored or misunderstood,
remind us that You always hear us.

Holy Spirit, guide this time.
Make this a space where we can be real,
where we can share from the heart,
and where we can hear how You are speaking to us.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Guided Reflection: “Being Heard” (3 min)

Leader shares this short reflection (you can read or adapt):

Think about a time when you really felt unheard — maybe at home, at school, even at church.

When you feel unheard, it's not just your words that feel ignored — sometimes it can feel like you are being ignored. Our dignity gets shaken. We might start to believe that what we think or feel doesn't matter.

Now think of a time when someone really listened to you. They didn't rush you, didn't make fun of you, didn't turn it into a joke. They just stayed with you, paid attention, and cared.

When someone listens, your dignity is restored. You remember: “I matter. My voice matters.”

The Church needs young people who speak with honesty, courage, and hope. That doesn't mean you have to have everything figured out. It means your real questions, your real experiences, your real stories are important to the Body of Christ.

What you say — and how you say it — matters.

I want you to quietly ask yourself:

- What do I long for adults to understand about my life?
- If I knew I would be truly listened to, what would I say?
- What might the Holy Spirit be stirring in my heart to share — not just for me, but for the good of others?

Pause for 30–60 seconds of silence.

Small Group Discussion (20 min)

Invite young people into groups of 4–6 with an adult leader.

Remind leaders: Your job is to listen more than you talk. Ask open-ended questions, don't rush to fix, and thank the young people for sharing even small things.

Questions:

1. What holds you back from speaking honestly in the Church or at home?

2. What do you wish leaders (pastors, parents, teachers, youth ministers) understood about teens right now?
3. What is one thing you would want to say to the Church?
4. What's one question you would ask the Pope if you knew he would hear you and respond thoughtfully?
5. When you hear, "You are the Church of today," not just the future, how does that make you feel — excited, skeptical, pressured, hopeful?

If time allows, invite each group to share 1–2 "big ideas" (no names, just themes).

Dialogue Skill Practice: "Sharing Your Story with Courage" (12 min)

Set-Up/Introduction (2 min):

Sometimes we stay silent because we don't know how to say what's inside us. One way to share in a way that's honest but not attacking is to use this simple pattern:

My Experience → My Emotion → My Hope

- My Experience: What happened?
- My Emotion: How did it make me feel?
- My Hope: What do I hope could change, grow, or be understood?

Example:

"When I hear adults talk about young people like we're all lazy or on our phones all the time (experience), I feel discouraged and unseen (emotion). I hope we can have more real conversations where adults ask what's really going on in our lives and listen without judging right away (hope)."

Paired Practice (8 min):

Have youth pair up. Ask them to choose a low-stakes topic first (e.g., a time they felt misunderstood about music, hobbies, or school stress).

Each takes a turn...share using the pattern: Experience → Emotion → Hope.

The listener's only job is to listen and then say: "Thank you for sharing that." No fixing, no debating.

Quick Debrief...Ask the group (2 min):

- What felt easy about this?
- What felt challenging or awkward?
- How could this pattern help you share something deeper with a parent, teacher, or Church leader?

Creative Activity: Dialogue Cards (12 min)

Give each teen a "Dialogue Card" that has the prompt at the top: "What I want to tell the

Church..."

Instructions: You can write, draw, doodle, or use symbols. This isn't a graded assignment. It's a space to put on paper what's on your heart.

Think about:

- What do I want adults in the Church to really understand?
- What do I wish they knew about my friends, my school, my mental health, my faith?
- What do I want them to stop assuming about teens?
- What message of hope, challenge, or honesty is on my heart?

Give time for quiet work. Play soft instrumental music if that helps.

Optional Sharing: Invite a few participants to share their card aloud. Thank them sincerely.

Let them know what will happen with the cards (e.g., "You can take this home," or "If you're comfortable leaving it with us, we'll share these themes with parish leadership.")

Sending Challenge (2 min)

Leader:

Tonight, you've named some deep-level things: what's hard, what you wish adults understood, and what you hope for. That's sacred.

This week, I want to invite you to take one small step in using your voice.

Invite them to choose one:

1. Share your Dialogue Card (or parts of it) with a trusted adult, minister, or leader.
2. Start an honest conversation with a parent or guardian using the Experience → Emotion → Hope pattern.
3. Write a letter or text to someone in leadership (teacher, pastor, campus minister) thanking them for listening — or asking for a chance to share more.

Close with:

Your voice matters. The Church needs it. Jesus hears it.

We'll keep walking this road of dialogue together.

NIGHT 3 - "Listening Like Christ"

Theme: To listen like Jesus is to be present, patient, and loving. Listening is a way of becoming more like Christ.

Welcome & Icebreaker (10 min)

Opening Remarks (2 min):

Last time, we talked about your voice — how it matters and how the Church needs it. Tonight, we're going to flip the lens a bit.

Dialogue isn't just about what we say; it's also about how we listen. Jesus shows us a powerful kind of listening — patient, curious, and full of love. We're going to practice that together.

Icebreaker: “Silent Line-Up” (8 min)

Explain:

Without talking, I want you to line up in order... [choose one or more: birthday (month/day), height, shoe size, or alphabetical by first name]. You can use gestures, facial expressions, or movement — but no words.

Once they line up, check/order quickly and then debrief:

- What was hard about not using words to communicate?
- How did you communicate without speaking?
- Did you feel frustrated? Did anyone try to “cheat” and talk?

Tie it back:

We're so used to filling space with words. Tonight we're going to explore how powerful it can be to hold back our words and really pay attention.

Opening Prayer (8 min)

Lectio Divina on Luke 24:13–35 (Road to Emmaus)

The process in simple steps:

- Read the passage slowly once out loud. Invite participants to listen.
- Pause and ask: “What word or phrase stands out to you?”
- Invite brief sharing from a few teens.
- Pause and repeat the process again, this time asking what new word or phrase struck you? It is totally fine if the same phrase remains with them.

Pray:

Lord Jesus,
On the road to Emmaus, You walked beside Your friends,
listened to their sadness, and let them pour out their hearts.

Teach us to listen like You —
with patience, with compassion, with love.
Help us to be present to people who are struggling
and to notice when someone just needs us to stay and listen.

Open our ears, our minds, and our hearts.

Amen.

Guided Reflection: “The Emmaus Way” (7 min)

Leader shares:

In the Emmaus story, Jesus could have shown up and immediately said, “It’s Me! I’m risen! Everything’s fine!”

But He doesn’t.

Instead, He walks with them.

He asks questions.

He listens to their confusion, their heartbreak, and their disappointment.

Only after listening does He begin to teach and reveal the truth.

That’s what Christian listening looks like:

- Presence before answers.
- Compassion before correction.
- Staying with someone in their confusion before fixing it.

Think about your life:

- Who needs your presence more than your advice?
- Where could Christ-like listening bring healing — in your friend group, your family, etc?
- How might Jesus be inviting you to “walk with” someone who is struggling, even if you don’t have all the answers?

Pause for 30–60 seconds of silent reflection.

Small Group Discussion (15 min)

Questions:

1. When has someone truly listened to you — without interrupting or rushing you? What happened?
2. How did that kind of listening change your level of trust with that person?
3. What usually gets in the way of listening well (phones, distractions, wanting to fix it, thinking of our response, etc.)?
4. How does it feel when you’re talking, and you can tell the other person is just waiting for their turn to speak?
5. What would it look like for your friend group to be better listeners?

Encourage leaders to be extra mindful not to dominate the conversation.

Dialogue Skill Practice: “3-Minute Silent Listening” (8 min)

Instructions:

We’re going to try something that might feel a little awkward but is really powerful. It’s a listening exercise.

One of you will share for 2 minutes about something that matters to you — it can be a joy, a stress, a fear, or even a hope for the future. The other person's job is to listen. No interrupting, no jumping in with your own story, no advice. Just listen. Make eye contact. Show with your body language that you care. Then you'll switch.

Steps:

1. Pair everyone up.
2. Round 1: Person A speaks (1-2 minutes), Person B listens silently.
3. Round 2: Switch roles (1-2 minutes). Person A listens silently, while Person B speaks.
4. After both rounds, give each pair (1 minute) to say "Thank you" to one another and share what it felt like.

Large Group Debrief (3 min):

- What was it like to talk for 2 minutes without being interrupted?
- How did it feel to only listen?
- What did you notice about your own habits — wanting to jump in, give advice, or change the subject?
- How might this kind of listening change a friendship or help someone who's having a hard time?

Reflection Activity (10 min)

Invite young people into quiet journaling with the following prompts:

1. "Lord, help me listen to..." (Who is God placing on your heart who needs to be listened to — a sibling, friend, parent, classmate?)
2. "What I need to listen for in Your voice is..." (Is it comfort? Challenge? Direction? Reassurance?)
3. Where might God be speaking — Scripture, prayer, a trusted friend, quiet moments?

Give them time to write. Encourage them to turn these into short prayers.

Sending Challenge (2 min)

Invite them to choose one of these this week:

1. Sit with a friend who is stressed or upset and just be present, asking gentle questions and listening more than talking.
2. Spend 5–10 minutes in silent prayer — no music, no phone — asking Jesus to speak to you.
3. In one conversation, choose not to respond immediately. Instead, repeat back what the other person said to show you heard them.

Closing line: Listening like Christ is something we grow into over time. Every small act of listening is a step closer to His heart.

NIGHT 4 - "Faith in Action Through Dialogue"

Theme: Dialogue is not just a skill — it is a Christian mission. Dialogue builds peace, unity, and hope.

Welcome & Icebreaker (10 min)

Opening Remarks (2 min):

Over the last few sessions, we've explored what dialogue is, why your voice matters, and how to listen like Christ.

Tonight is about putting it all together. Dialogue isn't just for this room or for big Church events — it's meant for your daily life: your group chats, your classrooms, your family conversations.

We're going to look at how dialogue can actually change things — how it can build bridges, repair relationships, and bring Christ's peace into tense or divided places.

Icebreaker: "Team Bridge Builder" (8 min)

Explain:

In small groups, you're going to build a bridge out of tape and straws (or similar simple materials). The only rule: no talking. You can plan with gestures or pointing, but no words.

Give them 5–6 minutes to build, then have them pause and look at their "bridge."

Debrief:

- How did you communicate without talking?
- What moments were frustrating?
- Did anyone take over? Did anyone hang back?
- What helped you actually work together?

Transition: Even when we're silent, we're trying to connect. Dialogue is what happens when we add words, listening, and love to that desire to connect — and use it to build real bridges between people.

Opening Prayer (1 min)

Prayer:

Lord, make us instruments of Your peace.

In a world that often shouts,
teach us to speak with gentleness and courage.

In places that are divided,
show us how to build bridges instead of walls.

Help us to bring Your presence
into the conversations we have —
at school, online, at home, and in our Church.

Holy Spirit, give us wisdom to know when to speak,
when to listen, and how to respond with love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Guided Reflection: “Dialogue Builds the Future” (4 min)

Leader shares:

Dialogue isn't just about feeling good in a conversation. It's part of how God builds the future of the Church and the world.

Every time you choose to listen instead of arguing...
Every time you ask a question instead of assuming...
Every time you speak truth with gentleness instead of sarcasm or cruelty...

...you are taking part in the mission of Christ.

Dialogue is how we build bridges between people who are different.
Dialogue is how we become peacemakers instead of bystanders.
Dialogue is how we bring Christ into places of tension, hurt, and confusion.

Ask yourself:

- What kind of future do I want to help build — in my school, my family, my parish?
- What can I offer the Church right now (my gifts, my ideas, my time, my prayers)?
- Where, specifically, is there a situation that needs peace — and how might God be inviting me to respond differently there?

Pause for a moment of silence and brief journaling.

Small Group Discussion (20 min)

Questions:

1. Where do you see division or tension in your world right now? (School, friend groups, online, family, even in the Church.)
2. What usually happens in those spaces — gossip, avoidance, blow-ups, passive-aggressive comments?
3. What would a “dialogue response” look like instead? (e.g., asking questions, listening to both sides, naming your own experience calmly.)

4. Who in your life needs peace right now? What might be one small way you could bring Christ's presence into that situation?
5. How could this group — your youth ministry or parish community — be a place that models dialogue and peace for others?

Encourage each group to name one concrete “bridge-building” idea they could actually try.

Dialogue Skill Practice: “Peacemaker Questions” (14 min)

Explain:

Sometimes, the most powerful thing in a tense situation isn't a speech — it's a question.

Peacemaker questions are the kind that open someone up instead of shutting them down.

Share sample questions written where everyone can see:

- “Can you help me understand what you're feeling?”
- “What matters most to you in this situation?”
- “What do you wish the other person understood about your side?”
- “What would peace look like here?”
- “How can I support you without taking sides?”
- “Tell me more.”

Role-Play Practice:

In pairs or triads, give simple, made-up conflict scenarios (e.g., friends upset about being left out, disagreement on a group project, drama in a team or club).

One teen plays Person A (upset), one plays Person B (listener/peacemaker).

Person B can only respond with peacemaker questions, not solutions or arguments.

Run for a few minutes, then switch roles. Pause when needed to help groups navigate the activity.

Debrief:

1. What did it feel like to be “Person A” and to be asked good questions?
2. What was challenging about being “Person B” and not jumping in with your own opinion?
3. How might these kinds of questions help in a real-life conflict?

Activity: Dialogue Commitment Card (10 min)

Give each teen a card or small sheet titled: “My Dialogue Commitment This Week”

Invite them to complete these lines:

- This week, I commit to listen more deeply to: [name or group]

- A place where I will try to bring peace is: [situation]
- I will try to speak with more gentleness when I: [specific context: at home, online, with siblings, etc.]
- One thing I will ask God to help me understand is: [person/situation/teaching]

Encourage them to keep this card somewhere visible (Bible, mirror, backpack).

If appropriate, you may invite them to come forward and place their card in a basket as an offering — or keep it with them and hold it during the final prayer.

Sending Prayer (1 min)

Lord Jesus,
thank You for the voices, stories, and hearts of each young person here.

Send us out as peacemakers.
Help us use our words to build up,
our ears to listen with love,
and our hearts to stay rooted in You.

Bless our families, our schools, our parish,
and every place where dialogue is needed.

May we never forget that our voices matter,
that listening is holy,
and that You walk with us in every conversation.

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