

# Milepost moments: Reflecting on the school year

I once visited with a group of friends from high school and looked through our freshman yearbook. As we reviewed our pictures taken just days after we had entered that intimidating high school world, we joked about how baby-faced and wide-eyed we were and how much we had changed.

However, the conversation took place not at some distant, future class reunion but barely a year after those pictures were taken, when we were in 10th grade!

When you are young, a year is a long time. Some of this is a matter of perspective.

After all, 12 months for a teenager represents a sizeable chunk of life, and the person a teen has become by the end of a school year may be very different from who he or she was at the beginning.

Understanding this can provide a point of entry for those ministering to young people.

Helping them make sense of the changes – physical, emotional, social and spiritual – they have experienced gives them perspective on life's journey and guidance for the future. If you can make sense of the path behind you, it is easier to face the one ahead.

These milepost moments make youth particularly open to the invitation to pause and reflect. One such moment comes at the end of a school year.

Following is an exercise to help teens reflect on the past school year and where they go from here. It could complement a classroom lesson or parish youth gathering, or be part of an end-of-the-year group retreat.

We also invite you to check out other youth ministry resources at [walkwiththepoor.org](http://walkwiththepoor.org).

There you will discover the stories of other young people from throughout the world who have the same feelings, hopes and dreams as the youth you serve, but with the additional challenge of extreme poverty. You will also find activities and information that will help you form your young people in the Church's social tradition and the Gospel call to serve the poor.



*Honduran youth in the CFCA program marked a milepost moment when they graduated from high school in December 2010.*



# Walk Through the School Year

START

SEPTEMBER

Who were you when it began?

What were your hopes for the year?

OCTOBER

Which people touched your life?

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

What events influenced you?

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

Did your hopes change? If so, how?

Who are you now? How does knowing yourself help you look toward the future?

Where have you felt God's presence during this year's journey?

Were there times when you didn't feel that presence?

What have you learned about God and yourself from this year?

END

