

Testimonies from Young People at St Pauls given at their confirmation

N. (2004)

I'm really not sure why I came to church in the first place. My Grandma always encouraged me to come so one day I did, but I wouldn't go out to PUSH, I just stayed in the service. Soon, going to church became more frequent and before I knew it, it had become a very regular thing. One day I was talking about PUSH in a lesson at school with Clare when Becky came along and invited me to come to an Easter party that was happening one Friday. So I went to that and talked to Ally for quite a while about Sunday mornings, and I agreed to come out to PUSH next time. Well.....the Sunday morning came and I was determined to go out.....almost..... but when the time came it seemed my legs didn't want to move, so I ended up staying in church – but not for long, as about 5 minutes later I saw Becky run round the back of church to come and get me and so I went out to PUSH for the first time and to this day I've never forgotten what we did that morning. I came along to the Friday club nights more and more and felt more confident each time I went. PUSH has changed my life so much. I use to be so shy. I wouldn't speak to anyone – other members of PUSH know how much that has changed!!

After my parents got divorced I got incredibly upset and started not really bothering with anything, being indifferent to everyone and generally being not a very nice person. I believe God really helped me when I let him into my life. I can't imagine my life without him. Now I've got to this stage I feel that I can confirm the vows made by my parents at baptism. I can't imagine having to sacrifice my child for a world full of sin. If God can do this huge thing for all mankind, I can definitely live my life how God wants me to live it.....with him.

A. (2004)

My first memories of any form of Christian life are a Sunday school my Nan would regularly take me to in Dartford. After we moved to Crofton I was too old for Sunday school and I didn't know anyone but once I started senior school at Darrick Wood it all changed.

In September 2001, my very good Christian friend Amanda, told me about a youth group for Christian teenagers, they were having a disco on Friday night and she asked me if I'd like to go along. It was an offer I could not refuse.

That night was the closest I'd been to God for years. I was surrounded by people my age, laughing, chatting and having a great time. I met Nicole and Becky who went to my school and also met Ally. That was it. PUSH, the name of the youth group, the most fun I had had in ages, the start of my journey.

Two years later and I still go to PUSH. I meet with PUSH PLUS on Tuesdays and Fridays and I go to church every Sunday that I can.

Every year as a group we go away for a weekend to Herne Bay Court. This year was rather special for me. Ally had been asking us all about whether or not we felt ready to be confirmed. I had been asked but I didn't know, so I prayed to God for advice and asked Ally for more information. On the Sunday we were holding our very own service. Up on an OHP was a photo of me taken 2 years ago on my first trip away with PUSH. I looked so young! Looking at this picture made me think about how far I had come since then, how much I had done, how much I had changed and grown, not only physically but spiritually as well. At our service Ally's Dad, Grandbob to all of us in PUSH, gave his testimony. As I listened I began to see my future, what I wanted for my life, in my life, with my life. I felt like God had reached down from heaven and touched me. It all made sense. I would get confirmed. I immediately told Ally and she put my name down for the confirmation classes. I confess I made her have tears in her eyes, as she was that pleased for me. I knew I had made the right decision.

I have attended the classes and discussed my faith and here I am giving you my testimony. I want to be confirmed because I want to re-confirm the baptism vows made on my behalf by my parents and to commit myself to serving God. God has done so much for me; he gave his only son to die for me so that I can have eternal life with him and to be free of sin. So, I want to give my life to him.

Amanda, I owe so much to you, you have helped me on my journey and have always been a great mate who is there for me. Thank you to Ally and my parents for their teaching and support. I believe that my confirmation is not the end; it is still very much the beginning.

S. (2008)

Testimony...I used to think that word meant something to do with religion, but about two and a half years ago I realised it meant a lot more than that. It's the story of how you came to know Jesus. I see Jesus as my best friend; and as with any relationship there is a deeper story than just "I meet Him at church once a week".

The story starts when I was born; I was christened as a baby somewhere in Sidcup and then raised by mum and dad. Neither of them went to church so I wasn't brought up as a Christian. I soon got past my screaming tantrums of a toddler and came to primary school age where I went to a Church of England school. Assemblies were generally based on christen stories, I heard about some bloke who built a boat and I sung songs about having the "whole world in his hands". These stories meant nothing more to me than a boring assembly with lots of clapping.

Secondary school came and I went to the local school, Darrick Wood, where I met some interesting people. Up until 2005 I pushed a lot of boundaries and often found myself doing things that I'm not so proud of. A combination of difficult friends and a terminally ill dad meant I quickly became further and further away from my primary school teachings.

In September 2005 (I was 15 by this point) I got dragged along by some friends to a youth group in Bromley. Yeh it was great, we got to meet new people and spend lots of money on sugary sweets before going home. It kept me safe and I had fun. I slowly got more involved and started to help out in the youth group. Little did I know that this youth group was attached to a church called Bromley Christian Centre. This was another thing I got dragged along to.

The first time I went to church I was there purely because to help with the youth group I had to 'do church'. Anyway I clapped to the worship and sung a couple of lines and then when the Pastor did his talking I was unwillingly crying for a reason that I could not explain. I guess this was my first encounter with Jesus.

Anyway, weeks and months went by and I got more involved, I was going to church each week and the worship I sung along to slowly began to mean more to me. I bought myself a bible and still helped out at the youth group there. In September 06 I was baptised by full emersion and things took off from there.

Friendship groups at school changed, where I met my now 3 best friends. I gave myself a label of 'Christian' and started to change in the small ways at first. November 06 came along where the 3 best friends took me to some lady's house in Petts Wood. The house turned out to be Ally's and I was at my first home group. This is where things really started happening. I was introduced to the Holy Spirit and this uncontrollable crying was happening more and more frequently. I learnt more in the first few weeks of home group than I think I've learnt in my whole life.

I started to really believe in what was being said on a Sunday morning and I began to tell other people about Jesus who was my new best friend. I came to St Paul's about a year ago in March 07 since then I

haven't been able to get enough. I help out with PUSH as much as they'll have me and I look forward to meeting with Jesus everyday as I read my bible on the train on the way to college.

Becoming a Christian is the best thing that I've ever done, I've seen great things happen. My brother is now in church, my friend from college is testing it all out, my back has been healed and I know my purpose in life. Today I'm getting confirmed as a way of showing the massive change in my life. I love Jesus, I believe in prayer and I love being a Christian. I want to be more involved in my church and I want to show you how important The Lord is to me.

E. (2008)

I've been brought up in a Christian family and have been going to church all my life. I used to go to a Methodist church in Hextable, Swanley, where my grandparents often preached. When I was seven, our family moved further away from Hextable, and so we decided to change to a church which was much closer to home. So I started coming to St. Paul's and joined YJC. At this point, I didn't really have any faith. I went to church and accepted Christianity, but it never really was a part of my life.

This changed about a year ago, when I started to notice all the little things that I had never observed before. Like when the lyrics of the hymns actually began to mean something, rather than just being words on a screen. Or how when you start to read the Bible a lot, you realise more and more how much Jesus loves us, and how big a part he plays in our lives. After I started to realise all that, I started to pray more, asking for help when I needed it and thanking Him for the wonders He has done in my life. Since then, my faith has grown massively, and that is why I decided to get confirmed.