



SYNOD LISTENING SESSIONS For Parents of Parish Faith Formation Programs*

An Example for an Evening Session

7:30 PM to 8:30 PM or can be adapted to a one-hour Morning Session

**Session can also be adapted for parish catechists / parish ministry leaders.*

7:30pm **Welcome**

7:35pm **Gathering Prayer**

Leader Come Holy Spirit

All fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Leader Send forth your Spirit and they shall be re-created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.

All O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the same Spirit
we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation,
through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Leader Come Holy Spirit,
as we move into our reflection session

All Be with us as a discerning guide to speak what is in our heart,
our experience of Church, our joys and sorrows, hopes and dreams.
May we listen carefully to each other
so that we may discern how you, Holy Spirit,
are calling us be church at this time in our history.

Leader We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All Amen.

7:40pm **Listening Session Process**

Recall the preparation prior to the session

- [Video by Cardinal Tobin](#) – What is the Synod on *Synodality* - why it is important
- [Our disposition](#) – “Preparing our Hearts and Voices”

Explanation of the process by Main Facilitator

- Table Facilitator
The table facilitator ensures that all participants have the opportunity to dialogue about the questions, taking care to focus on the dynamics of group sharing and listening.
 - Table Scribe
The table scribe records key points of the conversations and all discern what are the key themes to present to the Holy Father through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (USCCB)
 - Feedback
A few groups may give feedback toward the end of the session.
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Focus of the Synod on Synodality

How is the Holy Spirit calling us as a Church in the 21st Century?

A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.”

The word “synod” traces its roots to the first centuries of the Church. Coming from Greek words meaning the “same road,” synod and synodality are expressions of the fundamental mystery of the Church: people who are gathered from every corner of the earth to be “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2,9).

---- Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, CSsR

As we begin our listening and sharing, all are invited to consider what the Holy Spirit is calling us to, what paths are being opened, and what our "inner spiritual movements" are: joy or sadness, confidence or anxiety, hope or no hope, or other.

Table Process Suggestions to Help Participants Focus

- Facilitator asks all to reflect silently for five minutes, preparing their thoughts on each question.
- Each person can share his/her ideas for a maximum of three minutes.
- All reflect silently again, then sharing for a few minutes what enlightened or resonated with them.

7:45pm **Core Question ONE – 20 Minutes**

How is this “journeying together” happening today in your parish community, campus ministry, university, school, youth group, religious congregation, or other area of Church life that you might participate in?

Pope Francis talks about “journeying together” or “walking together” down the same road. This means that we collaborate together and share responsibility for the building up of the whole Church and our parish or other ministry through evangelization, participation in worship, social justice, councils, and governance. As you reflect on the questions below, describe about how you have or have not experienced “walking together.”

- Share a few examples of ways that you have experienced this “walking together” in your parish.
- What prevents us from “walking together?” What hinders you from being a part of the parish and/or speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly?
- Pope Francis encourages us to reach out beyond our active parish community and observe who is in our local area. Who would you identify as feeling left out or on the margins?
 - How do we as a parish, reach out collectively or individually to those on the margins? What helps or hinders us?

8:05 pm **Core Question TWO – 15 Minutes**

How are we “walking together” as a Church, and what steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?

Table Discussion

- By our deep listening today, what actions do you hear the Holy Spirit asking our parish and the universal Church to take?

IN YOUR PARISH

IN THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

The table scribe records key points of the conversations and all discern what are the key themes to present to the Holy Father through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (USCCB)

- 8:20pm **Feedback from a few groups**
Ask two or three groups to give a flavor of their discussions
- 8:25 pm **Sending Prayer**
You may pray the following prayer or opt to end with [the Synod Prayer](#).
- Leader** Let us take a moment of quiet as we reflect on what we have done here today...
- Reader** A reading from the Letter of Saint James Jas 1:21-22 Dearest brothers and sisters:
Humbly welcome the word that has been planted in you...[and] Be doers of the word and not hearers only.
- Leader** Come Holy Spirit,
we ask you, that by your inspiration,
all of our prayers and actions always
begin from you and inspire others to
know you more deeply.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
- All** Amen
- Leader** Let us go forth sharing a sign of peace.

You may choose to invite participants to complete an online questionnaire in order to elicit some thoughts regarding the local questions and this experience.

Local Questions – 10 Minutes

How are we “walking together” as a Church, and what steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?

For further reflection

- How can your local parish better support you and your family?
- Recalling the themes and topics that have been brought to the surface today, what are three steps your parish can take to move forward in areas where growth is needed?

**If you would like to use this listening session outline with parish catechists or other parish ministers you can adapt the local questions as follows:*

- How can your local parish better support you in your ministry?
- Recalling the themes and topics that have been brought to the surface today, what are three steps your parish can take to move forward in areas where growth is needed? What are some steps that you can take in the context of your catechetical programs (or other ministry) in order to promote growth in those areas?

Evaluation of the Time spent together

- How has this discussion given you the opportunity to listen and express and share your own experience of your parish and the universal Church?
 - What is one hope you have for the Church as we continue to grow and listen to the Holy Spirit
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