



SYNOD LISTENING SESSIONS For Parents of Parish Faith Formation Programs*

An Example for a two-hour Evening Session

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM or can be adapted to two one-hour sessions

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

7:00pm **Welcome**
Introductions in the table groups

7:10pm **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.

The Word of God **Acts 2: 1-11, 14-19**

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together and suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were.

Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused

because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

They were astounded, and in amazement they asked,
“Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans
Then how does each of us hear them in his native language?
We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites,
inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia,
Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia,
Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome,
both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs,
yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.”

They were all astounded and bewildered, and said to one another,
“What does this mean?”

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them,
Let this be known to you, and listen to my words.

This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

‘It will come to pass in the last days,’ God says,
‘that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh.
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your young men shall see visions,
your old men shall dream dreams...
And I will work wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below...

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Silent Scripture Reflection Question

- How have I experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in my life?

Prayer

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.

7:25pm **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

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.

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.

7:30pm **Core Question ONE – 30 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 individuals or groups who are not present at the parish and/or those who might feel left out or on the margins.
 - How do we as a parish, reach out collectively or individually to those individuals and groups? What helps or hinders us?
 - What are some ways we can work to discover why they are disconnected from our parish family?
 - What do we have to offer and attract those who are not connected to our parish?

8:00 pm **Core Question TWO – 30 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 THE PARISH

IN THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

- What practical steps are needed to include people in the areas of leadership, governance, and inclusion in the universal Church?

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8:30 **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?

Table Discussion

- 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?

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)

8:40pm Feedback from a few groups
Ask two or three groups to give a flavor of their discussions

8:50pm Evaluation of the Time spent together (optional)

- 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?

8:55pm

Leader

Sending Prayer

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
brothers and sisters:
Humbly welcome the word that has been
planted in you...[and] Be doers of the word
and not hearers only.

Jas 1:21-22 Dearest

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.

If you would like to allow more time for discussion of the Core and Local questions, you may choose to invite participants to complete an online questionnaire in order to elicit some thoughts on the "Evaluation of the Time Spent Together".



