

# CATECHETICAL RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN



For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

Pope Francis has called the People of God  
to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit

in the Church today, with a view to the future.

He desires that we listen to the experiences and longings of the  
entire Body of Christ, and this includes the young church.

St. Benedict emphasizes how “the Lord often reveals the most prudent course to be followed” to those who do not occupy important positions in the community (in that case, the youngest); thus, the Bishops should take care to reach out to everyone, so that, in the orderly unfolding of the synodal journey, what the apostle Paul recommends to the communities may be realized:

“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances.

Test everything; retain what is good” (1 Thess 5:19-21).

# CATECHETICAL RESOURCES

The Synod on Synodality has created a two-fold opportunity for catechetical leaders and catechists.

First, to engage young people and their families in meaningful conversation about the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church, our call as baptized Catholics to participate fully in the mission of the Church, and living synodality could look like going forward.

Second, the synod has created an opportunity for catechesis and formation aimed at helping all the faithful to better understand and assimilated the idea of synodality.

This resource is intended to be used by Parish Catechists and Catholic School Teachers in order help the young Church to make the most of these unique opportunities. It is designed to be a "menu" of activities that parish leaders, catechists and Catholic school teachers can choose from. A variety of options are offered so that the activities can be easily implemented according to the needs and the resources of each individual parish/school.

We hope this tool assists leaders in the engagement and formation of the children and young people in our parishes and Catholic schools.

**“All the baptized are called to take part in the Church’s life and mission.”**

~ Pope Francis

## INCLUDED IN THIS RESOURCE

### Catechetical Materials for Grades K - 2 (Page 3)

- Adapted Synod Prayer and Activity
- Synod Logo Coloring page and Activity
- Topics Foundational for a "Synod"
- Synod Question Activity

### Catechetical Materials for Grades 3-5 (Page 9)

- Adapted Synod Prayer and Activity
- Synod Logo Coloring page and Activity
- Topics Foundational for a "Synod"
- Synod Board Game (including possible discussion questions)

### Catechetical Materials for Grades 6-8 (Page 17)

- Synod Prayer, Activity and Prayer Service
- Synod Logo and Instagram Activity
- Topics Foundational for a "Synod"
- Whatsapp Activity (Synod discussion questions)
- Synod Board Game (Synod discussion questions)

### Additional Resource Links (Page 26)

- Vatican Resources
- Archdiocese of Newark Resources

### Appendices (Page 27)

- A - Logos and Coloring pages (Gr. K - 5)
- B - Synod Game (Gr. 3-8)
- C - Synod Prayer Service (Gr. 6-8)
- D - Synod Questionnaire (Gr. 6-8)
- E - Participant Participation Resource (Catechists)



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# CATECHETICAL RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN GRADES K - 2

## INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION

- Adapted Synod Prayer and Activity
- Synod Logo Coloring page and Activity
- Topics Foundational for a "Synod"
- Synod Question Activity

## CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES K - 2

### SYNOD PRAYER ACTIVITY

Prayer is an essential pillar of the Synodal journey. This activity includes:

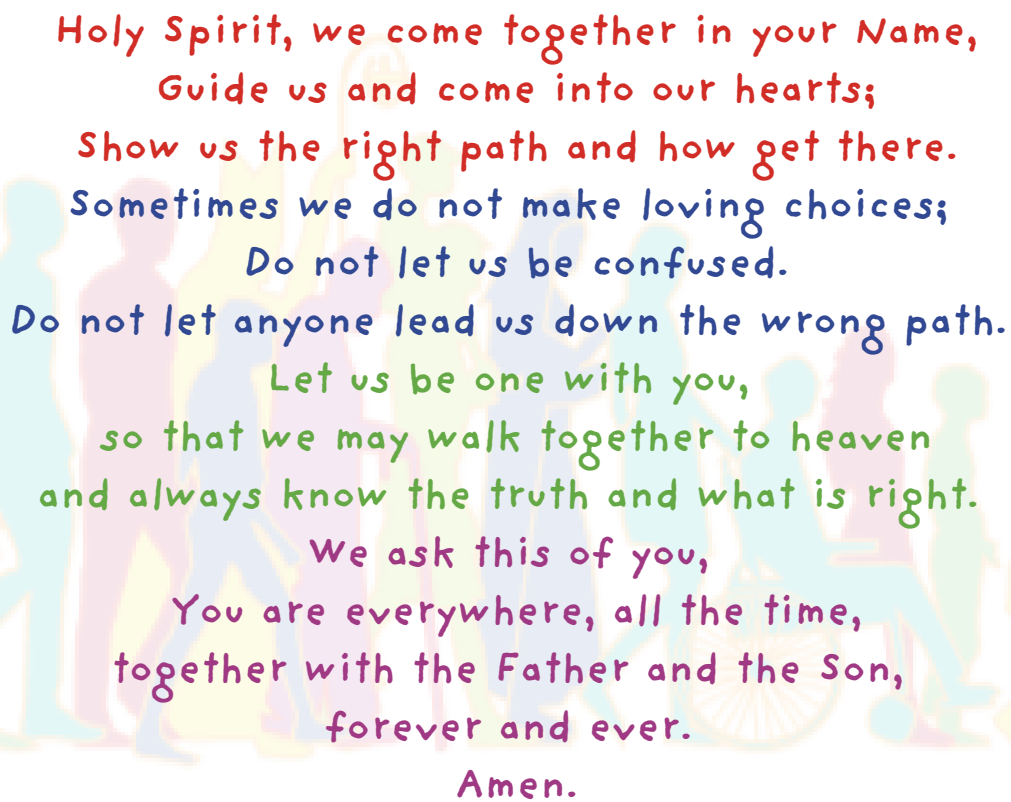
- A simplified version of the Synod Prayer, "Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus"
- A brief history of the prayer
- An activity that can help children understand the prayer.

Parish catechetical programs and Catholic schools may opt to use this prayer regularly with their younger children.

"The Holy Spirit is the protagonist of the Church's mission"

~ Pope Francis

#### Synod Prayer - Adapted for Grades K-2



Holy Spirit, we come together in your Name,  
 Guide us and come into our hearts;  
 Show us the right path and how get there.  
 Sometimes we do not make loving choices;  
 Do not let us be confused.  
 Do not let anyone lead us down the wrong path.  
 Let us be one with you,  
 so that we may walk together to heaven  
 and always know the truth and what is right.  
 We ask this of you,  
 You are everywhere, all the time,  
 together with the Father and the Son,  
 forever and ever.  
 Amen.

# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES K - 2

## Synod Prayer - History

This prayer was written by St. Isadore of Seville almost 1,500 years ago. Since then, the Church prays this special prayer whenever the Bishops gather for a meeting - a Synod. This year, Pope Francis invited all people around the world to the biggest meeting ever in the history of the Church. We will all pray that we can listen to the Holy Spirit during this time. Every time we pray this prayer, we are part of history!



## Understanding the Synod Prayer

**Slowly read a section of the prayer. Each section is a different color. For each section:**

- Ask the children what words they heard. Ask if they know what all the words mean. Then ask what word they feel is their favorite or most important word. Ask them why.

**Follow up questions for each section:** *(You may want to have images available to help the children (e.g. families, Church, nature, etc.)*

- **Section 1:** What do you think it feels like when God comes into your heart? How does God guide you? (e.g. family, Church, etc.)
- **Section 2:** Why is it sometimes hard to making loving choices? What are some things we can do to show people we love them?
- **Section 3:** When do you feel close to God?
- **Section 4:** Where are some places that you see God? When have you felt God's love and care for you?
  - *You can also invite the children to draw a picture to give an example of some of their answers above.*

# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES K - 2

## SYNOD LOGO AND COLORING PAGE

A great deal of thought and time went into the development of the Synod logo. It was designed to visually express the meaning of the Synod on Synodality. This activity includes:

- Looking at the Logo and discussing what it might mean.
- Learning about its significance as it was intended by the designer, *Isabelle de Senilhes*
- Coloring the logo

Parish catechetical programs and Catholic schools are encouraged to print posters with the Synod logo and to place them around their facilities as a visual reminder that the Church is currently engaged and praying for the Synod.

**Synod LOGO** A full page image of the logo can be found in Appendix A.



### Questions to help the children explore the meaning of the logo.

Ask the children about each section of the logo.

- What does the large orange circle look like? What does it remind you of?
- What do the large orange brush strokes look like? What do they remind you of?
- What do the circle and brush strokes remind you of when you look at them together?
- What kinds of people do you see in the picture? What does it look like they are doing?
- Why do you think they are all in different colors?

### Synod Logo - Explanation

It is a big and strong tree, full of knowledge and light that reaches the sky. It is a sign of life and looks like it is moving. It also reminds us of the cross of Jesus. The Eucharist shines like the sun. The branches also look like open hands and like the wings of the Holy Spirit. God's people are walking together under the shadow of the tree of life. There are 15 different types of people that symbolize all the people in the world. The bright colors give us joy. They are all together and everyone is equal. God loves everyone!

<https://www.synod.va/en/news/synod-official-logo2.html>

### Logo Coloring Page

A full size (8 1/2 X 11) ready-to-color image of the logo can be found in Appendix A.



# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES K - 2

## FOUNDATIONAL TOPICS

In order to better help the children understand the concept of the Synod, it will be helpful to introduce some basic concepts.

- Below is a list of topics that can help to support the other Synod activities.
- Consider that young children need as many concrete, hands on, and visuals examples in order to help them understand these concepts.
- The major Catholic publishers have materials that can help you plan lessons that will introduce the children to these topics. We encourage parishes and Catholic schools to utilize their current catechetical materials for this purpose. Throughout the year, as these topics are addressed catechists can make connections with the Synod.

### Who is the Holy Spirit?

- Teach children the Sign of the Cross.
- Use the lessons and activities in your book that teach about the Trinity
- Use the different symbols used for the Holy Spirit (e.g. use images/coloring pages of doves, fire, etc.)



### What is the Church?

- Talk about the meaning of the word "Catholic".
- Use a world map to emphasize the Church's presence throughout the world. Ask the children what countries they and/or their families are from.
- Ask the children to draw a picture of what they think "Church" means. (You may get lots of church buildings.)
- Show images of people gathered in churches. Show images of people engaged in works of mercy as a way of explaining the Church in action and on mission.

### Who is the Pope, the Archbishop of Newark, Parish priests, laity?

- Use images of Pope Francis. Use the Pope Francis coloring page (Appendix A)
- Visit the Archdiocese of Newark website to find pictures of Cardinal Tobin, Archbishop of Newark, and to find pictures of the Auxiliary Bishops.
- Invite the pastor and parish priests to visit the children during a Faith Formation session.
- Invite some lay leaders in your parish to speak with the children about how they serve and lead in the Church.



# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES K - 2

## FOUNDATIONAL TOPICS

### How can we love one another better?

- Ask the children to name movies they've seen where people have helped one another and/or been kind to one another.
- Ask the children what they can do in the coming weeks to show someone they love them.
- Invite the children to draw a picture or make a card for someone they love.



## ADDRESSING THE SYNOD QUESTION!

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- 1) Ask the children what they like most about God and about the Church.
  - Invite them to draw a picture.
- 2) Ask the children what is happening in the world that makes them sad. Ask them how they think Jesus and the Church can help the world be a better place.
  - Invite them to draw a picture of Jesus and or people in their church helping those who need it.







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# CATECHETICAL RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN GRADES 3 - 5

## INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION

- Adapted Synod Prayer and Activity
- Synod Logo Coloring page and Activity
- Topics Foundational for a "Synod"
- Synod Board Game (Including possible discussion questions)

# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 3-5

## SYNOD PRAYER ACTIVITY

Prayer is an essential pillar of the Synodal journey. This activity includes:

- A simplified version of the Synod Prayer, "Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus"
- A brief history of the prayer
- An activity that can help children understand the prayer.

Parish catechetical programs and Catholic schools may opt to use this prayer regularly with children in grades 3-5.

The Synod is a process of spiritual discernment, of ecclesial discernment, that unfolds in adoration, in prayer and in dialogue with the word of God.

~ Pope Francis

### Synod Prayer - Adapted for Grades 3-5

Holy Spirit, we gather together in Your name.  
 You alone guide us, come into our hearts;  
 Teach us the way we must go and how we can get there.  
 We are sinful; sometimes we do not make loving choices.  
 Do not let us become confused.  
 Do not let anything lead us down the wrong path.  
 Help us to think before we act.  
 Let us find our unity in you so that we can  
 journey together to eternal life  
 and always know the way of truth and what is right.  
 All this we ask of You, who are everywhere, all the time,  
 in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.  
 Amen.

## CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 3-5

### Synod Prayer - History

This prayer was written by St. Isadore of Seville almost 1,500 years ago. Since then, the Church prays this special prayer whenever the Bishops gather for a meeting - a Synod. Until now, only Bishops gathered for a Synod.

But, this year, Pope Francis invited all people around the world to participate in the Synod for the first time ever. That means that over one billion people will participate! We will all pray that the entire Church can listen to the Holy Spirit during this time. Every time we pray this prayer, we are part of history!

[LEARN MORE ABOUT ST. ISADORE OF SEVILLE](#)



### Understanding the Synod Prayer

#### Slowly read the prayer.

- Ask the children if they know what all the words mean and explain if necessary. Then ask what section of the prayer is their favorite or what section they feel is most important. Ask them why. (Each section is a different color.)

#### Follow up questions for each section:

- **Section 1:** What are some ways you know that God lives in your heart? What are some ways that God guides you? (e.g. family, Church, etc.)
- **Section 2:** Why is it sometimes hard to making loving choices? What are some things we can do to show people we love them? What are some things we need to avoid in order to not hurt others?
- **Section 3:** When do you feel close to God? How do you know God is close to you?
- **Section 4:** What are the people and places where you see God? When have you felt God's love and care for you?

#### For any of the above sections - Break the children up into small groups and select an activity:

1. Re-write a section of the prayer in their own words.
2. Make a poster that explains the section.
3. Think of an example that illustrates the meaning of the section and act it out in a skit.

## CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 3 - 5

### SYNOD LOGO AND COLORING PAGE

A great deal of thought and time went into the development of the Synod logo. It was designed to visually express the meaning of the Synod on Synodality. This activity includes:

- Looking at the Logo and discussing what it might mean.
- Learning about its significance as it was intended by the designer, *Isabelle de Senilhes*
- Explore what the logo tells us about the reason and the goals of the Synod.
- Coloring the logo (*Optional*)

Parish catechetical programs and Catholic schools are encouraged to print posters with the Synod logo and to place them around their facilities as a visual reminder that the Church is currently engaged and praying for the Synod.

**Synod LOGO** A full page image of the logo can be found in Appendix A.



### Questions to help the children explore the meaning of the logo.

**Ask the children about each section of the logo.**

- What does the large orange circle look like? What does it remind you of?
- What do the large orange brush strokes look like? What do they remind you of?
- What do the circle and brush strokes remind you of when you look at them together?
- What kinds of people do you see in the picture? What does it look like they are doing?
- Why do you think they are all in different colors?
- Who is leading the group? Where is the Bishop?

### What can we learn about the Synod from the logo?

**Use the following questions to encourage responses.**

- What do the different parts of the logo tell us about this Synod?
- What is the Church saying about the Eucharist?
- What is the role of the Holy Spirit in this Synod?
- Why do you think it is important that everyone is together?
- What do you think the order that the people are in tells us about the members of the Church and the people of the world?

# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 3 - 5

## SYNOD LOGO AND COLORING PAGE

### Synod Logo - Explanation

It is a large and majestic tree, full of wisdom and light that reaches the sky. It is a sign of life. It is in motion moving in the wind. It tells us about the hope that we have when we see the cross of Christ. The Eucharist shines like the sun. The branches also look like open hands and like the wings of the Holy Spirit. God's people are moving forward, walking together, united under the shadow of the tree of life where their journey begins. There are 15 people that represent humanity throughout the world and in different situations. The bright colors give us joy.

Everyone is together. Everyone is equal: young people, the elderly, men, women, adolescents, children, laity, religious, parents, healthy and disabled, single, couples. The bishop is among them, next to them. He is not the first in line. Children and teens open the path.

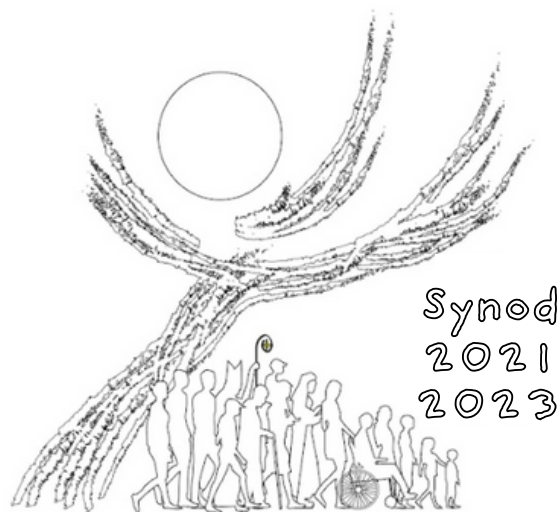
*"I praise you Father, Lord of heaven and earth,  
because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned,  
and have revealed them to the simple." (Mt 11, 25)*

<https://www.synod.va/en/news/synod-official-logo2.html>

**"Synodality is more than just a word or a slogan.  
Synodality is an expression of the very nature of the Church –  
the process of discerning how the Spirit is moving us,  
so that we may continue to fulfill our mission to evangelize in the world.."  
- Pope Francis**

### Logo Coloring Page

A full size (81/2 X 11) ready-to-color image of the logo can be found in Appendix A.



**For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission**

# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 3 - 5

## FOUNDATIONAL TOPICS

In order to better help the children understand the concept of the Synod, it is necessary to introduce some basic concepts.

- Below is a list of topics that can help to support the other Synod activities.
- Consider that elementary age children need as many hands on, visual examples in order to help them understand these concepts.
- The major Catholic publishers have materials that can help you plan lessons that will introduce the children to these topics. We encourage parishes and Catholic schools to utilize their current catechetical materials for this purpose.

### Who is the Holy Spirit?

**Check your catechetical materials for the following topics:**

- The Sign of the Cross
- Trinity
- Pentecost
- The Apostles Creed



### What is the Church?

**Check your catechetical materials for the following topics:**

- Chapters related to the Church.
- Church mission and discipleship
- The Sacrament of Baptism
- Church leadership and hierarchy

**Other Optional Activities:**

- Talk about the meaning of the word "Catholic" / Universal. Use a world map to emphasize the Church's presence throughout the world.
- [Learn more about Pope Francis](#) / [Pope Francis Quick Facts for Kids](#)
- Visit the [Archdiocese of Newark](#) website to find pictures of Cardinal Tobin, Archbishop of Newark and to find pictures of the Auxiliary Bishops. Their biographies are also available and can be easily simplified.

# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 3 - 5

## FOUNDATIONAL TOPICS

**How can we include and love everyone the way Jesus does?**

**Check your catechetical materials for the following topics:**

- Commandments
- Beatitudes
- Christian Service
- Forgiveness / The Sacrament of Reconciliation / Peace

**Other Optional Activities:**

- Ask the children where they have recently experienced love and kindness recently.
- Ask the children what they can do in the coming weeks to show someone they love them, in particular perhaps someone who they feel is left out of things or lonely.
  - Consider following up at a later time to ask the children how they felt after reaching out to someone.

**"This is the first step in order to group in our journey of faith:  
 Listening. Before speaking, listen."  
 ~ Pope Francis**

### Listening

**Listening is an essential part of the Synod. Following are some activities and questions to help children explore why listening is so important.**

**Discuss the following:**

- How do you know when someone is listening to you? How can you tell when someone is not listening to you?
- How does it feel when someone listens to you? How does it feel when they don't listen to you?
- Why do you think that sometimes it is difficult to listen to others?
- What are some things you think you can do to be a better listener?

**Listening Activities:**

- **Play "Telephone":** Play a fun and simple game of "Telephone" to illustrate the importance of listening carefully.
- **Tell a story:** Ask the children to think about their favorite day or to recall a story about something funny that happened to them.
  - Pair each child with a partner and ask one child to tell the other one all about his/her favorite day.
  - Ask the child who listened to then retell the story.
  - Then they can switch roles so that each child has the opportunity to practice listening.

# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 3-5

## THE SYNOD QUESTIONS | THE SYNOD GAME

The Synod game has been designed in order to encourage children to share their responses to questions addressing many of the issues that will be discussed at the larger parish sessions in an age appropriate manner.



A full size game board, complete instructions, place markers and questions are found in Appendix B.

### Game Overview

- Players begin at the space that says “START”. Players advance as many spaces as the dice indicate. Each time they land on a space they follow the instructions on the space.
- The player to reach the “END” first wins the game. If there is not enough time to finish the game during the session, the player who is farthest ahead wins.
- Spaces with questions marks indicate the player must share his/her response to a synod related question.
- More detailed instructions can be found in Appendix B.

### Question Categories

- **Listening**
- **Celebrating**
- **Participation and Responsibility**
- **The Church and the World**
- **Discern and Decide**

### Sample Questions

CATEGORY	QUESTIONS
Listening	What are three things you think the church should do to improve? If you had the opportunity, what three things about the Church would you say to the Pope? How would you feel if you were asked to share your opinion with your parish priest, Bishop or the Pope?
	Who do you talk to when you have a problem? Is there someone in the parish/church who you think would listen to you if you need to talk about a problem or something that worries you?
	Do you ever talk about Jesus with your friends? Do you ever talk about Jesus with your friends? When you talk about Jesus, how do other people respond?
	Who in your life talks to you about Jesus? Where are these people? Do they listen to you when you want talk to them about religion?
Options	Would you rather . . . Eat donuts or candy? Would you rather . . . Have an extra finger or an extra toe? Would you rather . . . Only be able to crawl or only be able to walk backwards? Would you rather . . . Be a famous singer or a famous actor?





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# CATECHETICAL RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN GRADES 6 - 8

## INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION

- Synod Prayer, Activity and Prayer Service
- Synod Logo and Instagram Activity
- Topics Foundational for a "Synod"
- Whatsapp Activity (Synod discussion questions)
- Synod Board Game (Synod discussion questions)

## CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 6-8

### SYNOD PRAYER ACTIVITY

Prayer is an essential pillar of the Synodal journey. This activity includes:

- The official Synod Prayer.
- A brief history of the prayer
- Activities that can help teens think more deeply about the words of the prayer and why they are important.

Parish catechetical programs and Catholic schools may consider incorporating the Synod Prayer into their regular school prayer routine during this time of Synod.

### Synod Prayer

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,  
 as we gather together in Your name.  
 With You alone to guide us,  
 make Yourself at home in our hearts;  
 Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.  
 We are weak and sinful;  
 do not let us promote disorder.  
 Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path  
 nor partiality influence our actions.  
 Let us find in You our unity so that we may  
 journey together to eternal life  
 and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.  
 All this we ask of You,  
 who are at work in every place and time,  
 in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.  
 Amen.

## CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 6-8

### Synod Prayer - History

This prayer was written by St. Isadore of Seville (560 – 4 April 636) almost 1,500 years ago. Since then, the Church prays this prayer whenever the Bishops gather for a meeting - a Synod. Until now, only Bishops gathered for a Synod. But, this year, Pope Francis has invited all people around the world to participate in the "Synod on Synodality". It is the first time the laity all throughout the world will officially have a voice in this process. That means over one billion people will participate! Besides contributing to the Synod conversations, we can also participate by praying. We are all called to pray that the entire Church can listen to the Holy Spirit during this time. Every time we pray this prayer, we are making history!



[LEARN MORE ABOUT ST. ISADORE OF SEVILLE](#)

### Understanding the Synod Prayer

#### Slowly read the prayer.

- Ask the teens if they know what all the words mean and explain if necessary. Then ask what section of the prayer is their favorite or what section they feel is most important. Ask them why. (Each section is a different color.)

#### Follow up questions for each section:

- **Section 1:** What are some ways you know that God lives in your heart? What are some ways that God guides you? (e.g. family, Church, etc.)
- **Section 2:** Why is it sometimes hard to do the right things and to avoid sin? What are some ways we show others that we really care about them and that they are important? What are some sins (individually and as a society) that we need to avoid in order to not hurt others?
- **Section 3:** When do you feel closest to God? How do you know God is close to you?
- **Section 4:** Where do you see God acting in the world today? When have you witnessed God's love and care for people around you? When have you felt God's love and care for you?

#### For any of the above sections - Break the teens up into small groups and select an activity:

1. Re-write a section of the prayer in their own words.
2. Make a poster that explains the section.
3. Think of an example that illustrates the meaning of the section and act it out in a skit.

### Synod Prayer Service

A complete Synod Prayer Service can be found in Appendix C. It can be used during a Faith Formation session, religion class, etc. You can also do this in the church / chapel and in the context of Eucharistic Adoration if you prefer.

# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 6 - 8

## SYNOD LOGO AND ACTIVITY

A great deal of thought and time went into the development of the Synod logo. It was designed to visually express the meaning of the Synod on Synodality. This activity includes:

- Looking at the Logo and discussing what it might mean.
- Learning about its significance as it was intended by the designer, *Isabelle de Senilhes*
- Explore what the logo tells us about the reason and the goals of the Synod.
- Design a new logo / social media post

Parish catechetical programs and Catholic schools are encouraged to print posters with the Synod logo and to place them around their facilities as a visual reminder that the Church is currently engaged and praying for the Synod. If the young people work to create new logos, they can also be displayed around the parish/school.

**Synod LOGO** A full page image of the logo can be found in Appendix A.



### Questions to explore the meaning of the logo.

**Ask the teens about each section of the logo.**

- What do you think of when you first see this logo?
- What do the circle and brush strokes remind you of? What about when you look at them together?
- What kinds of people do you see represented here? What do you think is the meaning of the different colors?
- Who is leading the group? Where is the Bishop?

### What the logo tells us about the Synod?

**Use the following questions to encourage responses.**

- What do the different elements of the logo tell us about this Synod?
- What is the Church saying about the Eucharist?
- What is the role of the Holy Spirit in this Synod?
- Why do you think it is important that *everyone* participates in the synod?
- What do you think the order that the people are in tells us about the members of the Church and the people of the world?
- What do you think this tells us about why Pope Francis has invited all people to participate in the Synod?

## CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 6 - 8

### SYNOD LOGO AND ACTIVITY

#### Synod Logo - Explanation

It is a large and majestic tree, full of wisdom and light that reaches the sky. It is a sign of life. It is in motion moving in the wind. It tells us about the hope that we have when we see the cross of Christ. The Eucharist shines like the sun. The branches also look like open hands and like the wings of the Holy Spirit. God's people are moving forward, walking together, united under the shadow of the tree of life where their journey begins. There are 15 people that represent humanity throughout the world and in different situations. The bright colors give us joy and represent diversity.

Everyone is together. Everyone is equal: young people, the elderly, men, women, adolescents, children, laity, religious, parents, healthy and disabled, single, couples. The bishop is among them, next to them. He is not the first in line. Children and teens open the path where we walk together.

*"I praise you Father, Lord of heaven and earth,  
because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned,  
and have revealed them to the simple." (Mt 11, 25)*

<https://www.synod.va/en/news/synod-official-logo2.html>

**"The journey of synodality is the journey that  
God wants from his church in the third millennium."**

*- Pope Francis*

#### New Logo and Instagram Post

##### **Have the teens work individually or in small groups:**

- Invite the teens to name the main points of the Synod that they have been able to learn from the logo.
- Have the teens work to design a new logo that can also express the main points of the Synod.
- Have the teens design an Instagram post that can help tell others about the Synod.
- Optional: If your parish has an Instagram/other social media page you may want to consider sharing the posts developed by the teens.



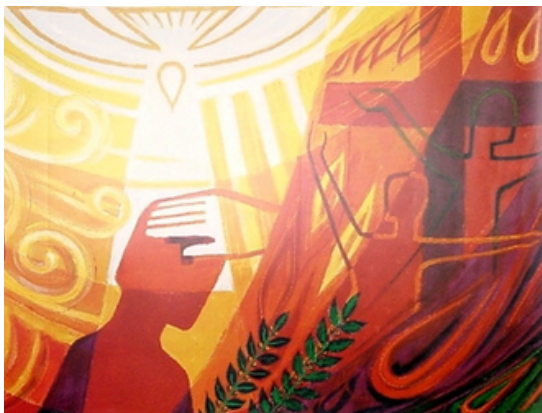
Instagram

# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 6 - 8

## FOUNDATIONAL TOPICS

In order to better help the teens understand the concept of the Synod, it is necessary to introduce some basic concepts.

- Below is a list of topics that can help to support the other Synod activities.
- Consider that middle school age teens are capable of more conversation and dialogue than younger children, but still greatly benefit from hands on, visual examples in order to help them understand these concepts.
- The major Catholic publishers have materials that can help you plan lessons that will introduce the children to these topics. We encourage parishes and Catholic schools to utilize their current catechetical materials for this purpose.



### Who is the Holy Spirit?

Check your catechetical materials for the following topics:

- Trinity
- The Apostles Creed
- Pentecost
- *The Sacrament of Confirmation*
- The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, The Fruit of the Spirit

### What is the Church?

Check your catechetical materials for the following topics:

- Chapters related to the Church.
- Church mission and discipleship
- The Sacrament of Baptism
- Church History
- Church leadership and hierarchy

#### Other Optional Activities:

- Talk about the meaning of the word "Catholic" / Universal. Use a world map to emphasize the Church's presence throughout the world.
- [Learn more about Pope Francis](#) / [Pope Francis Quick Facts for Kids](#)
- Visit the [Archdiocese of Newark](#) website to find pictures of Cardinal Tobin, Archbishop of Newark, and to find pictures of the Auxiliary Bishops. Their biographies are also available and can be easily simplified.
- **Working individually or in groups:**
  - Ask the teens to draw their image of the Church. How they see the Church right now.
  - Read 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27 (One Body, Many Parts).
  - Ask the teens what image of Church does St. Paul give us?
  - Ask the teens to draw a representation of what they feel Jesus wants the Church to be.
  - The young people can then present their drawings and explain their interpretation of the reading.



# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 6 - 8

## FOUNDATIONAL TOPICS

### How can we include and love everyone the way Jesus does?

#### Check your catechetical materials for the following topics:

- Commandments
- Beatitudes
- Life in Christ
- Catholic Social Teaching / Social Justice / Service
- Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
- Forgiveness / Sacrament of Reconciliation / Peace

#### Other Optional Activities:

- Ask the teens where they have recently experienced love and kindness.
- Ask the teens to identify a person or a group of people who need some kind of care. Think of ways in which they can do something to make a difference for that person / group. *If this is a Confirmation class connections to their service projects/activity can be made.*
  - Consider following through with carrying out a project that can help the young people to put their faith in action and to "be the Church" in the world.

"Peace will be lasting in the measure that we arm our children with the weapons of dialogue, that we teach them to fight the good fight of encounter and negotiation.

In this way, we will bequeath to them a culture capable of devising strategies of life, not death, and of inclusion, not exclusion."

- Pope Francis

## Listening

**Listening is an essential part of the Synod. Following are some activities and questions to help teens explore why listening is so important.**

- **Discuss the following:**
  - How do you know when someone is listening to you? How can you tell when someone is not listening to you?
  - How does it feel when someone listens to you? How does it feel when they don't listen to you?
  - What is your favorite way to communicate? (e.g. text, phone, in person, etc.) What do you think is the BEST way to communicate when you really need to have a serious conversation?
  - Why do you think that sometimes it is difficult to listen to others? What are some things you think you can do to be a better listener?
- **Listening Activities:**
  - Play a fun and simple game of "Telephone" to illustrate the importance of listening carefully.
  - Play a game of "Simon Says". Although this is typically a game for younger children, it can be adapted to older kids by incorporating more complex or silly directives. For example, "Simon says repeatedly high five your neighbor."\*
  - Find more "[Listening Activities for Middle School](https://teens.lovetoknow.com/listening-activities-middle-school)" here.

# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 6 - 8

## THE SYNOD QUESTIONS | WHATSAPP

Pope Francis is inviting all the people of God to share from their heart during this Synod. This includes our young people. Here is an activity that may be used to facilitate reflection and conversation with middle school age teens.

### Whatsapp Activity

1. Begin by having the teens complete an individual activity. (See appendix D)
2. Divide the young people into small groups and assign one color section/category to each group.
3. Ask each group to share their responses and the reasons for their responses to the questions in their assigned category. Ask them to summarize their responses to share with the large group.

*Collecting the responses is not as important as opening a space for dialogue and conversation and allowing for free expression.*

4. Then either divide the group into different groups or keep the young people in the same group.

5. Recalling their own responses to the survey as well as the sharing from all the groups, ask each group to discuss the following questions:

**What positive and valuable contributions does the Church make to the world today?**

**What do you think should be changed and what issues do you think the Church should pay more attention to?**

6. Ask the young people to share a summary of their responses by creating a "Whatsapp" message to Pope Francis with their opinions and suggestions.



Categories	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	There are ways for me to express myself and give my opinion in the parish, in the Church.					
	I feel heard when I have participated in some activity or event at the parish, in parish groups, etc.					
	I believe that the Church is interested in my life, my opinion and my contributions of the excluded, marginalized, etc.					
Celebrating	I believe that the Church is interested in the lives, opinions and contributions of the excluded, marginalized, etc.					
	I actively participate in the celebrations that take place in the parish.					
Participation and Responsibility	The religious celebrations in which I participate have meaning for my life.					
	In the Church, responsibilities and positions are shared among laity, religious and priests.					
The Church and the World	As young people, we can make suggestions and take action in the parish.					
	As a young person I feel encouraged and supported by people at my parish to be a leader in the Church.					
	There are opportunities for dialogue in the Church where young people, women and men can give their opinion.					
Discern and Decide	World problems are part of the life and message of the Church.					
	The voice of the Church is heard in our society, denouncing injustice and announcing the message of Jesus.					
	As a young person, when I need to make decisions, I can find support and accompaniment in the Church.					
	Decision-making in the Church is shared by all believers.					
	Transparency and accountability are promoted in the Church.					



# CATECHETICAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES 6 - 8

## THE SYNOD QUESTIONS | THE SYNOD GAME

The Synod game has been designed in order to encourage children and teens to share their responses to questions addressing many of the issues that will be discussed at the larger parish sessions in an age appropriate manner.



A full size game board, complete instructions, place markers and questions are found in Appendix B. For additional questions for Middle School see the survey in Appendix D.

### Game Overview

- Players begin at the space that says “START”. Players advance as many spaces as the dice indicate. Each time they land in a space they follow the instructions on the space.
- The player to reach the “END” first wins the game. If there is not enough time to finish the game during the session, the player who is farthest ahead wins.
- Spaces with questions marks indicate the player must share his/her response to a synod related question.
- More details instructions can be found in Appendix B.
- MIDDLE SCHOOL: Prior to playing the game, catechists/facilitators can invite the teens to complete the individual activity in Appendix D. This may help the teens prepare to better respond to the game questions.

### Question Categories

- **Listening**
- **Celebrating**
- **Participation and Responsibility**
- **The Church and the World**
- **Discern and Decide**

### Sample Questions

CATEGORY	QUESTIONS
Listening	What are three things you think the church should do to improve? If you had the opportunity, what three things about the Church would you say to the Pope? How would you feel if you were asked to share your opinion with your parish priest, Bishop or the Pope?
	Who do you talk to when you have a problem? Is there someone in the parish/church who you think would listen to you if you need to talk about a problem or something that worries you?
	Do you ever talk about Jesus with your friends? Do you ever talk about Jesus with your friends? When you talk about Jesus, how do other people respond?
	Who in your life talks to you about Jesus? Where are these people? Do they listen to you when you want talk to them about religion?
Options	Would you rather . . . Eat donuts or candy? Would you rather . . . Have an extra finger or an extra toe? Would you rather . . . Only be able to crawl or only be able to walk backwards? Would you rather . . . Be a famous singer or a famous actor?

# RESOURCES LINKS FOR CATECHISTS AND CATECHETICAL LEADERS

Included here are link for various resources that you may find helpful should you need additional materials to support the young people and families in your parish and/or school.

## GENERAL SYNOD RESOURCES

### Vatican Resources

- [Vatican Synod Website](#)
  - All Vatican Synod resources
  - Including the Synod Handbook (Vademecum) and the Preparatory Documents
- [The Synod Logo and Brand Information](#)
  - Various versions of the Synod logo, font, colors, etc.
- [Address for the Opening of the Synod - Pope Francis](#)
- [Homily for the Mass for the Opening of the Synodal Path - Pope Francis](#)

### Archdiocese of Newark Resources

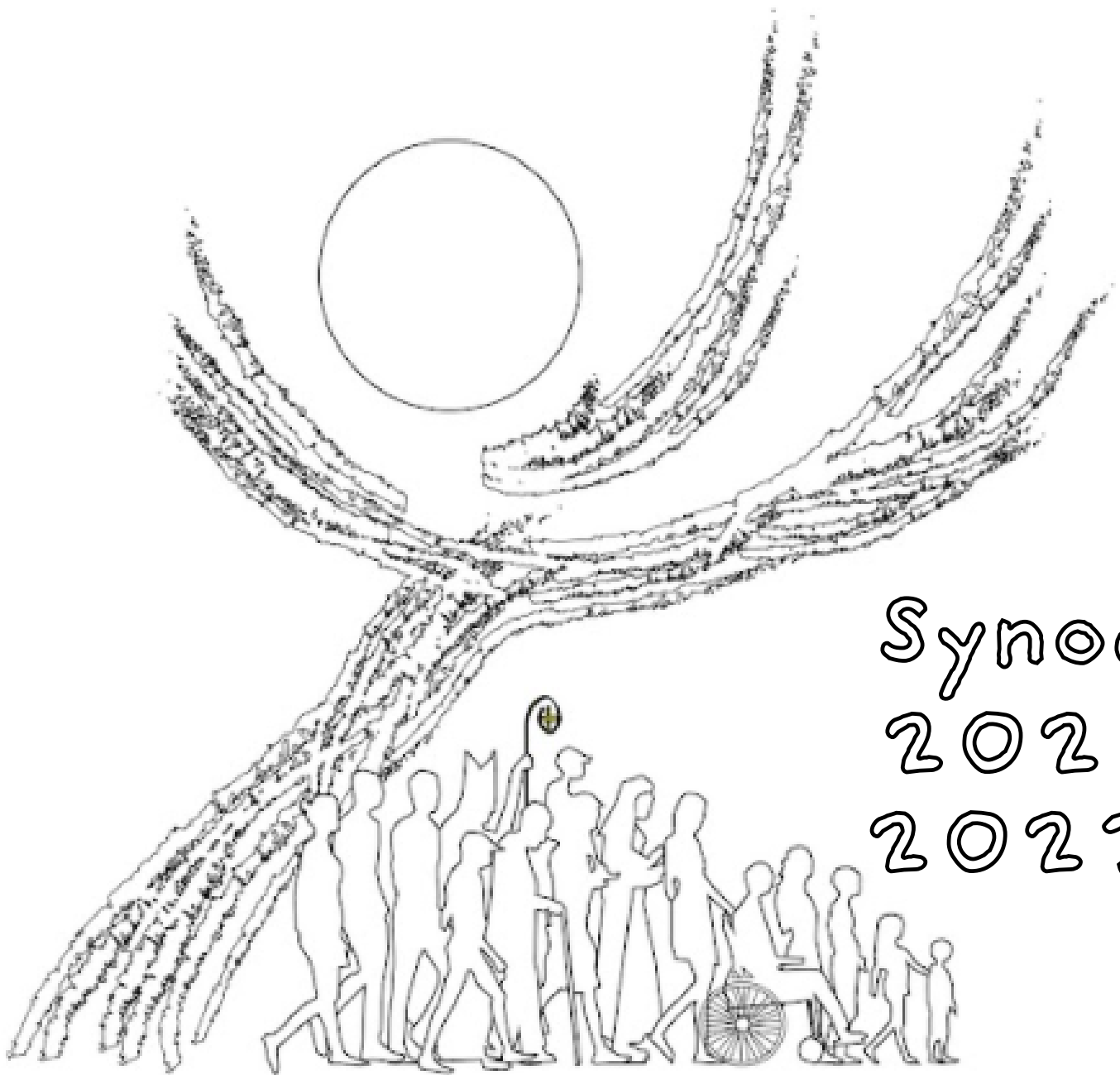
- [RCAN / Synod Website](#)
  - All Archdiocese of Newark resources
- [Cardinal Tobin's Synod Messages](#)
- [Synod Information Videos](#)
- [Parish Facilitator Guide, Facilitator Resources and Listening Session](#)
- [Adapted Listening Sessions for Faith Formation parents and catechists](#)
- [Resources for High School Youth Ministry / Campus Ministry](#)
- [Resources for Families](#)

. . . "We recall that the purpose of the Synod, and therefore of this consultation, is not to produce documents, but "to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands" . . .



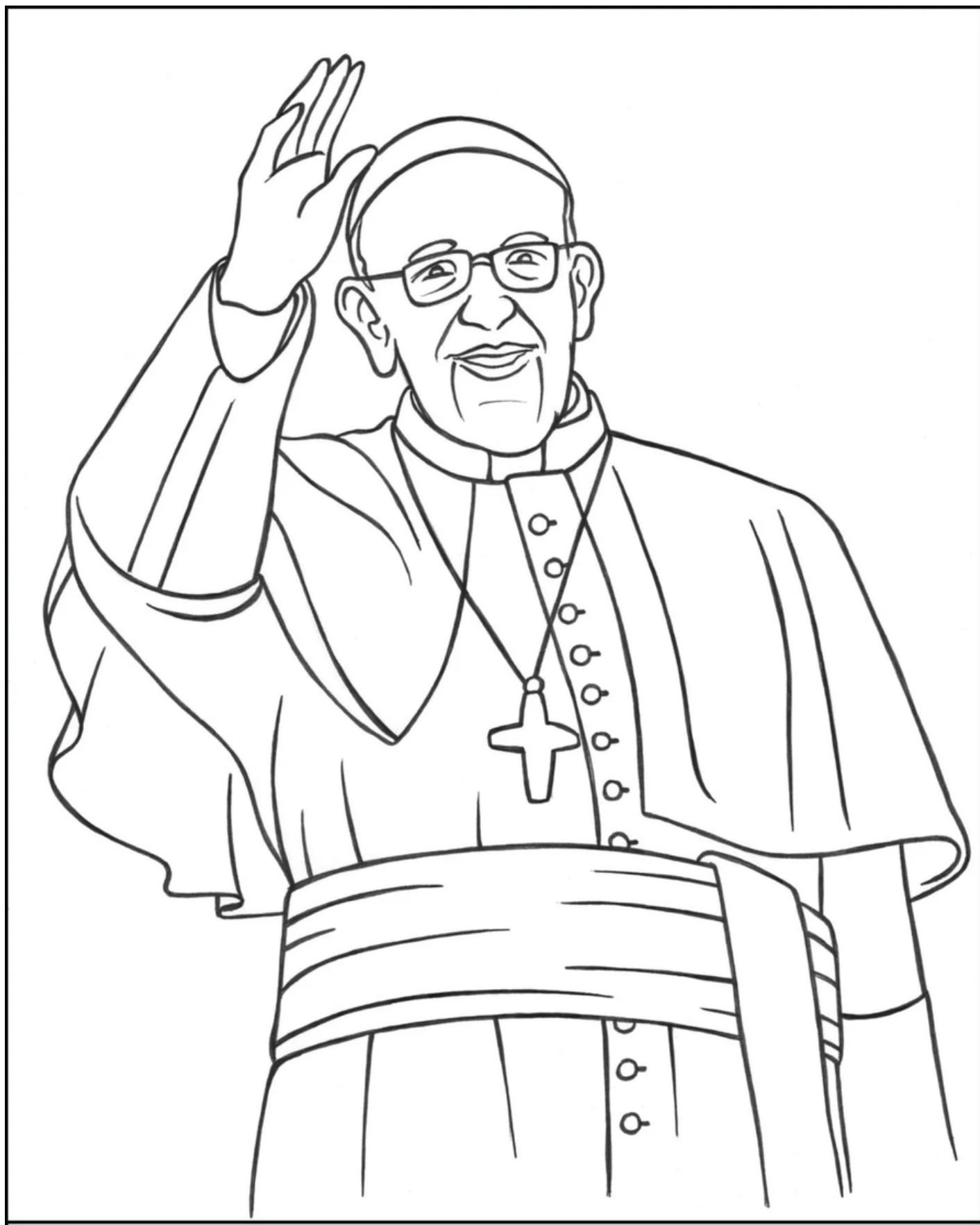
Synod  
2021  
2023

For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission



Synod  
2021  
2023

For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission



Free download from <https://www.thecatholickid.com/wp-content/uploads/pope-francis-coloring-page-2.jpg>.

# SYNOD GAME INSTRUCTIONS

## You will need:

- The printed game board
- The questions (Only the catechist/facilitator should see the questions.)
- Dice
- Space markers (Print and cut out)

Select a player to begin at the space that says “START”. (You can select a player by using the dice or a question. (e.g. Whose birthday is coming up the soonest?, Etc.)

Each player rolls the dice when it is his/her turn. Then the player advances as many spaces as the dice indicate.



If the player lands on a question mark “?” space, the facilitator selects a question from the corresponding color category for the player to answer.

**SKIP**

If the player lands on a “SKIP” space, the player can skip answering a question.

**ROLL AGAIN**

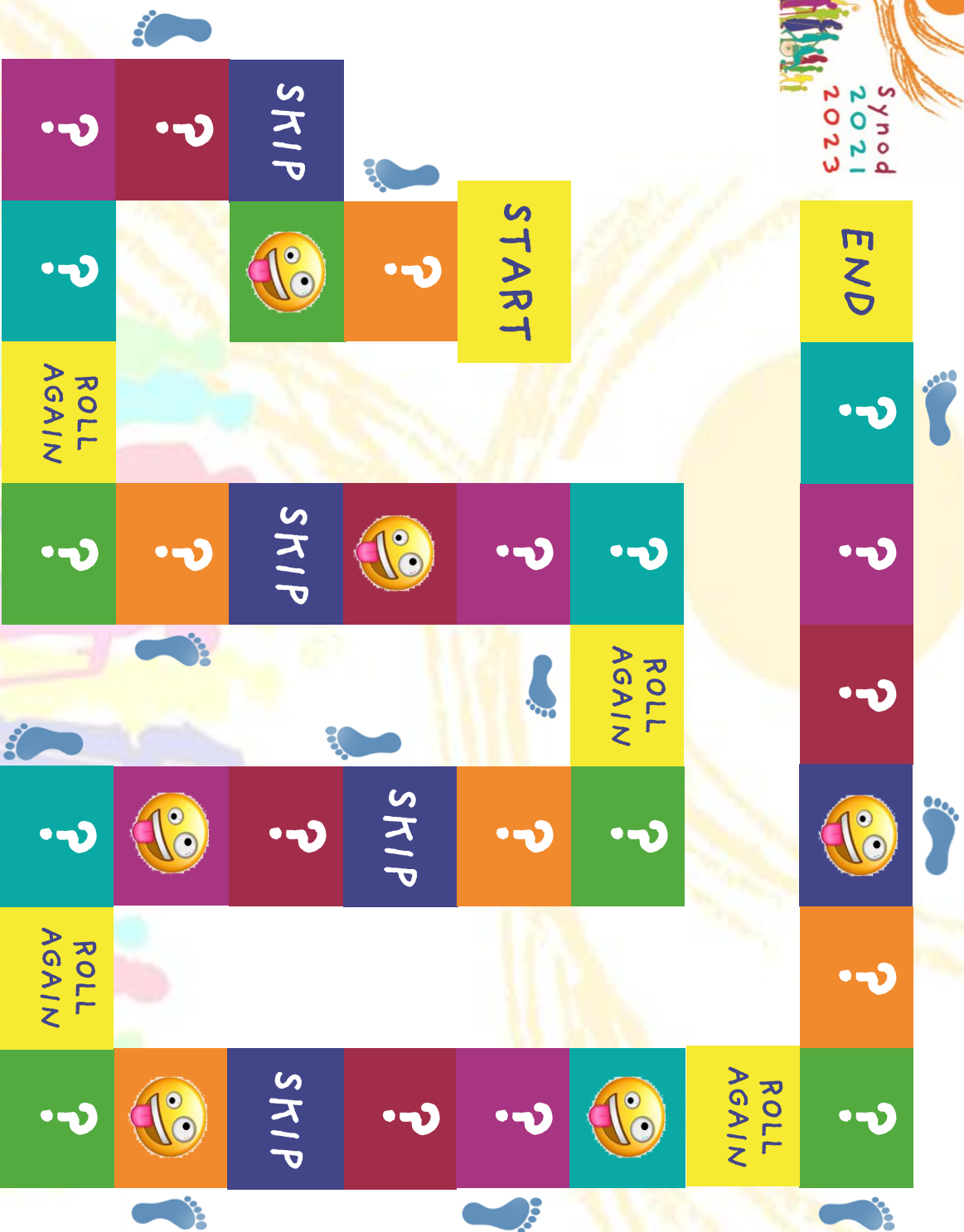
If the player lands on a “ROLL AGAIN” space, the player can roll again without answering a question and will follow the instructions on the next space.



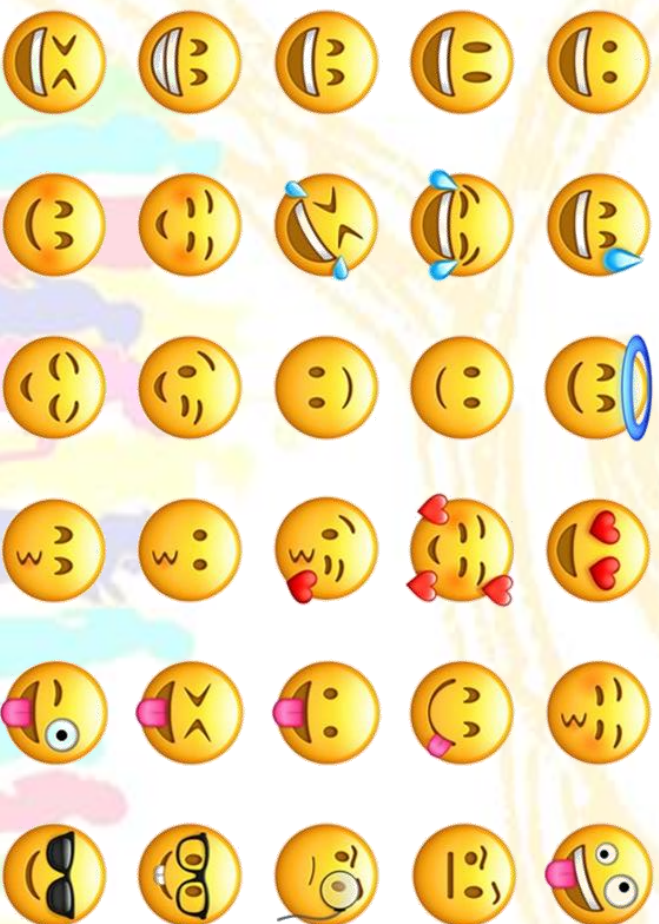
If the player lands on an EMOJI space, the facilitator can select a question from the “Would you rather...” question options.

The player to reach the “END” first wins the game. If there is not enough time to finish the game during the session, the player who is farthest ahead wins.

# APPENDIX B – SYNOD GAME



# Player Space Markers





CATEGORY QUESTIONS

# Listening

What are three things you think the church should do to improve? If you had the opportunity, what three things about the Church would you say to the Pope? How would you feel if you were asked to share your opinion with your parish priest, Bishop or the Pope?

Who do you talk to when you have a problem? Is there someone in the parish/church who you think would listen to you if you need to talk about a problem or something that worries you?

Do you ever talk about Jesus with your friends? Do you ever talk about Jesus with your friends? When you talk about Jesus, how do other people respond?

Who in your life talks to you about Jesus? Where are these people? Do they listen to you when you want talk to them about religion?

Would you rather . . . Eat donuts or candy?

Would you rather . . . Have an extra finger or an extra toe?


Would you rather . . . Only be able to crawl or only be able to walk backwards?

Would you rather . . . Be a famous singer or a famous actor?

 Options

CATEGORY QUESTIONS

# Celebrating

	<p>Would you invite your friends to come to Mass with you? What do you think they would tell you?</p> <p>Why do you go to Mass on Sundays?</p> <p>Can you participate fully at Mass the way it is celebrated?</p> <p>In the parish / church, when people talk about Jesus, is it joyful and celebratory?</p> <p>Do you celebrate other important moments in your life at Church or with your Church community?</p>
<p>Options </p>	<p>Would you rather . . . Be four years younger or four years older?</p> <p>Would you rather . . . Control the weather or talk to animals?</p> <p>Would you rather . . . Be invisible or be able to fly?</p> <p>Would you rather . . . Speak every language or play every instrument?</p>

CATEGORY QUESTIONS

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Participation &amp; Responsibility</h2>	 <h3 style="text-align: center;">Options</h3>
<p>Do you participate in the parish in any way? In what way and how do you participate?</p>	<p>Would you rather . . . Live in a desert or on an island?                      Would you rather . . . Live in the sky or in the ocean?                      Would you rather . . . Live in a big city or live on a farm with lots of animals?                      Would you rather . . . Live without music or without movies?</p>
<p>Do you have a task or a job that you are responsible for at your parish?</p>	
<p>What do you think children could do in their neighborhood or town and could help their neighbors?</p>	
<p>List how many groups you know about that people can join in the Church. Who do you know that meets in your parish?</p>	
<p>Who do you think is responsible for the Church? Do you feel responsible for the Church?</p>	



CATEGORY QUESTIONS

# The Church & the World

When you are at Church, do you talk about the problems that happen in the world? Are there times in the Church where you feel that you can talk about things that are going on in the world?

Give three examples of how the Church is involved with what happens in society. Are the social problems of the neighborhood / town spoken about in Church?

Do you hear people on TV, radio, internet, and social networks talk about the Church? When you hear people talking about the Church, what do you hear? What do people say about the Church? Where do you hear them talking about the Church? (e.g. At home, at school, on the internet, etc.?)

Have you done something together with other children, to try to solve a social problem? Where? When?



## Options

Would you rather . . . Play in the snow or in the sand?

Would you rather . . . Kiss a frog or hug a snake?

Would you rather . . . Be really fast or really strong?

Would you rather . . . Read people's minds or be invisible?

CATEGORY QUESTIONS

Discern and Decide	
 <p>Options</p>	<p>What do you like the most about the Church? What do you least like about the Church? What would you do to change what you don't like?</p>
	<p>Are there people in the Church who help you make decisions? Who has helped you? If you haven't needed help yet, but you did need help someday, do you think there is someone who could help you? Who would you go to?</p>
	<p>What things or what situations does the Church help us to think about or to make decisions about?</p>
	<p>Have you ever had to make a decision in the parish / group / Church?</p>
	<p>If you needed help, would you know how to find it in the Church? Do you know any place in the Church where you could find help?</p>
	<p>Would you rather . . . Discover a living dinosaur or discover a hidden treasure?                      Would you rather . . . Go to the movies or go to a waterpark?                      Would you rather . . . Be friends with Superman or be friends with Spiderman?                      Would you rather . . . Only be able to eat pizza or hamburgers for the rest of your life?</p>

## 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

**Reader:** 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.”

The Word of the Lord

**ALL: Thanks be to God**

## Reflection Song

Holy Spirit | Francesca Battistelli (lyric video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zARVp3420I>

## Quiet Reflection

**How and when do you experience the presence of God?**

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**What is something you need God's help for right now? Is there is sin, habit, relationship that you are struggling with? What would you say to God to ask him to help you?**

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**When was the last time you felt close to God? What can you do in the next week to grow closer to God?**

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**Where do you see God acting in the world today? Where do you think God is most needed in the world today? What is one thing you can do to be God's presence to someone who you know needs God's love?**

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**What do you think God wants you to tell you right now?**

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**Take this reflection home and continue to use it in your prayer ever day.**

## The Synod Prayer

All pray together:

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,  
as we gather together in Your name.  
With You alone to guide us,  
make Yourself at home in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.  
We are weak and sinful;  
do not let us promote disorder.  
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path  
nor partiality influence our actions.  
Let us find in You our unity so that we may  
journey together to eternal life  
and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.  
All this we ask of You,  
who are at work in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.  
Amen.

## Closing Prayer

**Leader:** Come Holy Spirit,  
as we continue to learn about the Synod  
and walk with one another

**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 understand 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



# APPENDIX D - WHATSAPP ACTIVITY

## Individual Activity - Synod Survey

**Instructions:** For each statement, select a value between 1 and 5 that indicates how true the statement is. 1 = Not true at all and 5 = Very True

Categories	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	There are ways for me to express myself and give my opinion in the parish, in the Church.					
	I feel heard when I have participated in some activity or event at the parish, in parish groups, etc.					
	I believe that the Church is interested in my life, my opinion and my contributions of the excluded, marginalized, etc.					
	I believe that the Church is interested in the lives, opinions and contributions of the excluded, marginalized, etc.					
Celebrating	I actively participate in the celebrations that take place in the parish.					
	The religious celebrations in which I participate have meaning for my life.					
Participation and Responsibility	In the Church, responsibilities and positions are shared among laity, religious and priests.					
	As young people, we can make suggestions and take action in the parish.					
	As a young person I feel encouraged and supported by people at my parish to be a leader in the Church.					
The Church and the World	There are opportunities for dialogue in the Church where young people, women and men can give their opinion.					
	World problems are part of the life and message of the Church.					
	The voice of the Church is heard in our society, denouncing injustice and announcing the message of Jesus.					
Discern and Decide	As a young person, when I need to make decisions, I can find support and accompaniment in the Church.					
	Decision-making in the Church is shared by all believers.					
	Transparency and accountability are promoted in the Church.					

# PREPARING OUR HEARTS AND VOICES

As we prepare to enter into  
this experience of Church  
we invite you to prepare through  
reflection and prayer.



## For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

"The Synodal Process is first and foremost a spiritual process.  
It is not a mechanical data-gathering exercise or a series of meetings and debates.  
Synodal listening is oriented towards discernment."\*  
We are being invited to listen to the Holy Spirit in the voices of the faithful.

### ATTITUDES TO CULTIVATE

#### Listening

We are called to listen humbly and to speak courageously; to listen in a manner that invites others to share authentically while we ourselves share our experiences and hopes with mercy and charity.

#### Newness and Conversion

We are invited to embrace the action of the Holy Spirit, particularly in the ways in which the Spirit inspires us to new views and new ways of being Church.

#### Allowing God to Lead

We are called to allow the Spirit to direct us. To set aside our own expectations so that we can listen more clearly to what God desires of us.

#### Focus on others

"The Synodal Process is an opportunity to open up, to look around us, to see things from other points of view, and to move out in missionary outreach to the peripheries".

### LEAVE BEHIND

#### Self-centeredness

We need one another. When we set aside self-centeredness "we are able to learn from each other, journey together, and be at the service of one another."

#### Division and Discord

We are challenged to suspend our judgments and ideologies in order to enter into dialogue that promotes mutual understanding and unity.

#### Fear

"For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control." 2 Tim 1-7 We are reminded that change is a necessary part of growth and fear inhibits growth.

#### Self-doubt

The participation of each person is essential for the synodal process to achieve its objective. You are called by virtue of your Baptism, to listen to the Holy Spirit in your life and to share your experience of God and His Church for the good of all His people.

\*Vatican Synod Handbook 2.2 - 2.4