

A Synodal Church is a Listening Church

SYNODAL LISTENING INTERIM PHASE SMALL GROUP FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



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For a synodal Church
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In this consultation, we will use the Conversation in the Spirit model which was used at the Rome Synod Assembly of October 2023. Here is an outline for a listening session. This session requires approximately two hours.

INTRODUCTION TO CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT

Read the following with your group:

Basics of Synodal Listening

- In synodal listening, each person shares in turn. The facilitator will keep time as needed. For rounds 1 and 2, there is no back-and forth, no responding, no agreement or disagreement. We simply listen without responding.
- In round three, we will have free conversation and back-and forth as we share about where we sense the Holy Spirit calling.
- Maintain confidentiality. Make the listening a “safe place” where people feel free to share openly.
- Even if someone else says exactly what you were going to say, go ahead and share from your own perspective.

SYNODAL LISTENING IN SMALL GROUPS

Approximately 96 minutes total. After explaining the Conversation in the Spirit model to your small group, choose a note taker and begin the listening session. An outline and sample script is below.

Question 1 – Round 1

Each person has two minutes to share.

Where have I seen or experienced successes within the Church’s structure(s) / organization / leadership / life that encourage the mission? How can we expand on that?

Sample script: “In this first round, each person will have two minutes to share. Do your best to stay within your allotted time. Please note, if you go over your time, someone else may not have a chance to share.”

Question 1 – Round 2

Five minutes

What did you hear in round 1? Very briefly, just a word, a phrase, a sentence.

Sample script: “Thank you for sharing. Now let us take a time of silence to reflect on what we have heard, and where we sense the Holy Spirit moving in our midst today.” *[After one to two minutes of silence:]* “Now I invite each person to share, very briefly, just a word, a phrase, a sentence about what is staying with you from the sharing in round 1. It can be a theme you hear emerging, or a thought that is staying with you.”

Question 1 – Round 3

Each person has two minutes to share.

What did you hear in round 2? Is there a common theme or word that Holy Spirit is bringing forward?

Sample script: “Thank you for sharing. Once again, let us take a time of silence to reflect on what we have heard, and where we sense the Holy Spirit moving in our midst today.” Is there a common theme or word that Holy Spirit is bringing forward? *[After one to two minutes of silence:]* “Now I invite each person to share, very briefly, just a word, a phrase, a sentence about what is staying with you. It can be a theme you hear emerging, or a thought that is staying with you.”

Question 2 – Round 1

Each person has two minutes to share.

How can the structures and organization of the Church help all the baptized to respond to the call to proclaim the Gospel and to live as a community of love and mercy in Christ?

Sample script: “In this first round, each person will have two minutes to share. Do your best to stay within your allotted time. Please note, if you go over your time, someone else may not have a chance to share.”

Question 2 – Round 2

Five minutes

What did you hear in round 1? Very briefly, just a word, a phrase, a sentence.

Sample script: “Thank you for sharing. Now let us take a time of silence to reflect on what we have heard, and where we sense the Holy Spirit moving in our midst today.” *[After one to two minutes of silence:]* “Now I invite each person to share, very briefly, just a word, a phrase, a sentence about what is staying with you from the sharing in round 1. It can be a theme you hear emerging, or a thought that is staying with you.”

Question 2 – Round 3

Each person has two minutes to share.

What did you hear in round 2? Is there a common theme or word that Holy Spirit is bringing forward?

Sample script: “Thank you for sharing. Once again, let us take a time of silence to reflect on what we have heard, and where we sense the Holy Spirit moving in our midst today.” Is there a common theme or word that Holy Spirit is bringing forward? *[After one to two minutes of silence:]* “Now I invite each person to share, very briefly, just a word, a phrase, a sentence about what is staying with you. It can be a theme you hear emerging, or a thought that is staying with you.”

Group sharing

Thirty minutes

Representatives from the small groups talk about what their group shared. Each group representative has two minutes to share.



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