



A RESOURCE FOR YOUTH

Pope Francis wants to hear from you!

The Holy Father has called for the entire Church to participate in a Synod on Synodality. Synodality is about journeying together. This happens through listening to one another in order to hear what God is saying to all of us. It is realizing that the Holy Spirit can speak through anyone to help us walk forward together on our journey as the People of God. Through this Synod, the Church is saying that the voice of everyone matters because God can talk through anyone – not only bishops, priests, deacons, brothers or sisters, but all of us!

Every voice matters, and Pope Francis wants to hear yours! You are being invited into this Synod experience with your unique perspective as a young person. This resource is focused on helping you participate in this process in two ways:

1. Helping you to share your experience of the Church
2. Equipping you to go out and listen to your peers who might otherwise not have a voice in this process

Your Experience of the Church

Your voice is important and needed if we are to be the synodal Church we are called to be. Below is a list of questions to get you thinking about your experience of journeying together with the Church.

1. How do you feel that the Church walks with you in your life?
2. In what ways or times do you wish the local parish or universal Church was more present in your life?
3. How do you feel heard by the Church to share ideas and concerns? How do you feel voiceless in the Church?
4. When you look at your broader community, whose is a voice that is missing in the Church?
5. How comfortable are you with sharing your faith? What makes it easier? What makes it more difficult?
6. How do you feel included in the celebration of the Mass? How do you feel excluded in the Mass?
7. In what ways do you experience the Church serving the needs of your local community or of the world? In what ways do you feel connected to those efforts?
8. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Church with power. That same Spirit is with us still, guiding us in the way we should go. How have you seen or experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church?
9. What are your dreams for the Church?
10. What do you wish adults understood about your experience of the Church?

Going Out to Listen

You can play a key role in seeking out those who would otherwise not be heard in this process! We would like you to take a moment to consider your circle of friends and family. Who are the people the Church needs to hear from who are not likely to participate in the synod process? Would you be willing to go to them, be a listening ear, and share on their behalf?

Tips for reaching out

1. Pray for wisdom to decide who to reach out to and for the Holy Spirit to accompany you. Begin now to pray for that person.
2. Identify or create a setting for listening. Invite the person to a quiet place without many distractions. For example, if you are at a family gathering, consider finding a spot where others cannot hear or are less likely to interrupt the conversation.
3. Engage people in a natural and polite way. Show authentic interest in hearing their perspective.
4. Do not treat the questions like a survey. If you are going to write about what they shared, do so after the conversation is over.
5. You do not have to ask every question. Use the questions as a way to get the conversation started and then **listen, listen, listen**. Some good follow up questions are: Tell me more about that. How did that make you feel? What are you learning from that?
6. Focus on listening. Do not interrupt or give advice. Naturally, what they share will spark memories or connect to your experiences. Instead of sharing yourself, try to focus on what they are saying, their feelings and their own experience as you listen.
7. Take note of any concrete requests and follow up on them. For example, do they need something specific from the parish or specific information that you can find out for them?
8. Pray in thanksgiving after the encounter. Continue to pray for the person you encountered.

Steps for the Encounter

1. **Invitation:** Say something like: “In our church, we’re discussing how we can listen better. It made me wonder what you thought. Can I ask you some questions?”
2. **Questions:** Use these suggested questions as a starting point. You don’t have to ask them all.
 - a. If you don’t already know them well, ask something to get to know them better. Where are you from? Where is your family from?
 - b. What are some things you worry about? What’s something that makes you really happy?
 - c. What are some obstacles that prevent you from achieving your hopes and dreams?
 - d. Do you consider yourself Catholic? Were you raised Catholic? Does faith have an impact in your life today?
 - e. Have you gone to a Catholic church lately? Do you feel like you belong or are welcome in the Catholic Church?
 - f. How can the Catholic Church be more present in your life?
3. **Follow up:** Depending on their openness during the conversation, consider inviting them to participate in your parish’s listening session, invite them to your youth group or to Mass or an upcoming social gathering. Consider suggesting another encounter to continue the conversation and respond to any questions or requests they may have brought up.
4. **Prayer:** Ask if there is a specific way you can pray for them. Ask if you can pray with them. If they say yes, lead a short, simple prayer for them and their intention. If they say no, assure them you will be praying for them and their intention. Share their prayer intention anonymously at the parish listening session.
5. **Appreciation:** Thank them for taking time to talk with you.
6. **Reflection and writing:** After your conversation, set aside some time to reflect on what you heard and fill out the following page to make sure their voice is heard as part of the synodal process. You can submit them online at <https://owensborodiocese.org/synod> or by email at synod@pastoral.org, or you can bring them to the youth group or parish listening session.

Questions for Reflection and Sharing After an Encounter in the Peripheries

Please fill out one page per encounter. Feel free to use extra pages if needed. Bring this form with you to the second listening session. You may also take a picture of your form and email it to synod@pastoral.org or you can submit input via the online portal at <https://owensborodiocese.org/synod>.

Tell us a little about who you encountered and why you chose them (without revealing private information or their identity):

What are some important takeaways from the conversation?

If they had specific prayer requests, please share them here (anonymously).



Diocese of
OWENSBORO