



FACILITATOR GUIDE FOR YOUTH SESSION

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.

Gathering in Prayer

Discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit is always rooted in prayer. So, we are inviting you this afternoon into a place of prayer, reflection, listening and sharing. You guys have been rooted in prayer for the last couple of days and have immersed yourselves in the sacramental life of the Church. So as we gather, we build on the experiences you've already had together.

(LEAD SONG “Holy Spirit” optional)

As part of our prayer time today, we are going to take time to reflect on a scripture passage from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. As you listen, be present to how the Holy Spirit might be drawing you into these particular verses and make note of anything you are drawn to.

1 COR. 12:12-26

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, “Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body,” it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say, “Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body,” it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. If the whole body were

an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," any more than the head can say to the feet, "I do not need you." Even those members of the body which seem less important are in fact indispensable. We honor the members we consider less honorable by clothing them with greater care, thus bestowing on the less presentable a propriety which the more presentable already have.

God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to the lowly members, that there may be no dissension in the body, but that all the members may be concerned for one another. If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members share its joy.

What word or phrase stood out to you from the scripture reading?

What might the Holy Spirit be trying to communicate to you from this reading?

You are invited now to spend some time in your small group sharing your reflections on the scripture, but also on how this passage and reflection might connect to greater 'synodal' theme. (5 Minutes)

(All Together) Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful. And kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you will renew the face of the earth.

Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit you have taught the hearts of your faithful. In the same Spirit help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Listening Session Rounds

For our small group sharing, each small group will need a **note taker** to record the highlights of the sharing that happens in your small group using the Note Taker Form. The goal is not to record verbatim what is said in your group, but rather to capture the spirit of the conversation. Take a moment to identify the note taker for your group and to locate the Note Taker Form provided for you. *Allow a moment for this to happen in each group.*

Small group members should also note that in addition to the official Note Taker Form, each small group member may also record comments on the note cards at your table and submit those at the end of the listening session as well.

Each small group will also need a **moderator**. The role of the moderator is to review with their small group the Respectful Communication Guidelines on the Participant Guide. Your role will also be to ensure that each person in your group has the opportunity to share if they so desire. Please take a moment now to name your small group moderator and to review the Respectful Communication Guidelines.

Round 1: Your Experience of the Church (20 minutes)

Take a couple of minutes to reflect in silence on these questions. You do not need to share on all the questions, but only those to which the Holy Spirit leads you. Read through all of them first and see where you are drawn to share.

After a time of silence, allow each person 2-3 minutes to speak. Anyone in the group can begin.

Once everyone has had a chance to share, discuss which one or two points could be shared with the larger group from this round.

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?

Large Group Sharing (15 min)

We would like to have representative from each group share some of what you discussed at your table.

Round 2: Fruit of Encounters in the Periphery (15 min)

Take a couple of minutes to reflect in silence on these questions. Again, you do not need to share on all the questions, but only those to which the Holy Spirit leads you. Read through all of them first and see where you are drawn to share.

After a time of silence, allow each person 2-3 minutes to speak. Anyone in the group can begin, then continue in the same manner as the first round. Once everyone has had a chance to share, discuss which one or two points could be shared with the larger group from these two rounds.

- 1) What is important to share from your encounter in the periphery? Please remember to respect the privacy of the person you encountered – share key takeaways without revealing their identity or private information.
- 2) How did you feel reaching out to listen to someone who feels disconnected to the Church? Did you feel the Spirit moving in the conversation?
- 3) If you have not had an encounter yet, who do you feel God has placed on your heart to encounter? What are your hopes for that conversation?

Large Group Sharing (15 min)

We would like to have representative from each group share some of what you discussed at your table.

Round 3: What is the Spirit calling us to do?

Pope Francis has spoken often of discernment, most recently in his book *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future* in which he lays out his vision for a synodal Church. To help us in our discernment today, we are going to hear excerpts from his book and then share in our small groups about some steps we feel the Spirit is prompting us to take in our local faith community.

“The Spirit shows us new things through what the Church calls ‘signs of the times.’ Discerning the signs of the times allows us to make sense of change. In interpreting and praying over events or trends in light of the Gospel, we can detect movements that reflect the values of God’s Kingdom or their opposite.

The discernment step allows us to ask: What is the Spirit telling us? ... Discerning what is and what is not of God, we begin to see where and how to act...How do we distinguish the spirits? They speak different languages; they use different ways to reach our hearts. The voice of God never imposes but proposes, whereas the enemy is strident, insistent, and even monotonous. The voice of God might correct us, but gently, always encouraging, consoling, giving us hope. The bad spirit on the other hand offers us dazzling illusions and tempting sensations, but they are fleeting. It exploits our fears and suspicions, and seduces us with wealth and prestige. If we ignore it, it responds with contempt and accusation, telling us: You’re worthless...

The voice of God opens your horizons, whereas the enemy pins you against a wall. Where the good spirit gives you hope, the bad spirit sows suspicion, anxiety, and finger-pointing. The good spirit appeals to my desire to do good, to help and to serve, and gives me strength to go forward on the right path. The bad spirit, conversely, closes me in on myself, and makes me rigid and intolerant. It is the spirit of fear and grievance. It makes me sad, fearful and irritable. Rather than freeing me, it enslaves me. Rather than opening me up to the present and the future, it encloses me in fear and resignation.

Learning to distinguish these two kinds of 'voice' allows us to choose the right path forward, which is not always the most obvious, and to avoid making decisions while trapped in past hurts or in fears of the future that risk immobilizing us.

So I invite you now to return to sharing in your small groups. The questions for this sharing are on page 10 of the Participant Guide. You have about 20 minutes to share and discern.

Round 3: What is the Spirit calling us to do? ***(20 minutes)***

Take a couple of minutes to reflect in silence on these questions. Again, you do not need to share about all the questions, but only those to which the Holy Spirit leads you. Read through all of them first and see where you are drawn to share.

- 1) What actions do you feel the Spirit is calling the Church to take – in your personal life, in our community, as a diocese, as a universal Church?
- 2) What concrete, practical steps could be taken to move forward together as Church?
- 3) How are you personally feeling called to put your gifts and talents at the service of these actions? (If you'd like, you may write your contact information on a notecard along with the area of ministry you'd like to be involved and submit that to the moderator at the end of this session.)

After a time of silence, allow each person 2-3 minutes to speak. Anyone in the group can begin, then continue in the same manner as the other rounds. Remember that participants may also write their comments on note cards if they feel uncomfortable or do not have a chance to share everything in this small group.

Once everyone has had a chance to share, discuss which one or two ideas could be shared with the larger group.

Large Group Sharing (15 min)

We would like to have representative from each group share some of what you discussed at your table.

Closing

I would like to thank you all for being here and for sharing and listening. Please remember that our work isn't finished yet. We hope each of you will consider participating at your parish and/or regional listening sessions. For our community, those sessions are **(date and time)**. After you leave here what you have seen and heard will continue to germinate in your mind and heart. The Holy Spirit will continue to move in you and inspire you and you will continue to ponder. Remember, as a Baptized person, the Holy Spirit speaks through you.

I would ask all note takers to hand their sheets to me after our closing prayer. You are also welcome to hand in individual comments either to me on the note cards or through the diocesan website. At the conclusion of all of our listening at our parish, the recorded comments from the groups will be submitted to the Diocese of Owensboro and incorporated by Bishop Medley into a report to be used in the next phase of listening on the continental level.

PRAYER FOR THE SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

Every session of the Second Vatican Council began with the prayer *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus*, the first word of the Latin original meaning, "We stand before You, Holy Spirit," which has been historically used at Councils, Synods and other Church gatherings for hundreds of years. For the Synod 2021-2023, everyone is invited to pray this simplified version of the *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus*.

(All 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.



Diocese of
OWENSBORO