

Participants Guide



OPENING PRAYER FOR THE NCCW LISTENING SESSION

Opening Prayer

L: Come, Holy Spirit

R: **Fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.**

L: Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created,

R: **and you shall renew the face of the earth.**

L: O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit instructed the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Spirit, we may know what is right and always rejoice in his consolation, through Christ our Lord.

R: **Amen.**

Psalm 100 L: Serve the Lord with gladness.

R: **Serve the Lord with gladness.**

L: Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness.

Come before him, singing for joy.

R: **Serve the Lord with gladness.**

L: Know that he, the Lord, is God. He made us; we belong to him. We are his people, the sheep of his flock. R: **Serve the Lord with gladness.**

L: Go within his gates, giving thanks. Enter his courts with songs of praise. Give thanks to him and bless his name. R: **Serve the Lord with gladness.**

And now let us pray in the words our Savior gave us. Our Father...

Prayer for the Synod (together)

Every session of the Second Vatican Council began with the prayer Adsumus Sancte Spiritus, meaning "We stand before you, Holy Spirit." This prayer, attributed to St. Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636) has been used historically at Councils, Synods, and other Church gatherings for centuries.

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.

NCCW LISTENING SESSION

Participant Ground Rules

Respectful Communication Guidelines (from the USCCB)

R: take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel, and speak with words others can hear and understand

E: use EMPATHETIC listening, not just words but also feelings being expressed, non-verbal language including silence

S: be SENSITIVE to difference in communication styles

P: PONDER on what you hear and feel before you speak

E: EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions

C: maintain CONFIDENTIALITY

T: TRUST the process because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong but to experience true dialogue

The Invitation Method is a way to include all people in the conversation in a very respectful atmosphere. While each person is speaking, the others listen. No one may interrupt the speaker or jump in to speak without being invited by name.

The Respectful Communication Guidelines are from, *Intercultural Communication: The Mutual Invitation Process* found in: USCCB, *Building Competence for Ministers: Bilingual edition*. Washington, D.C., 2014 accessible at: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/cultural-diversity-church/bicm-appendices>.

Facilitator & Note Taker Roles

The role of listening session facilitators is to guide the conversations. Please listen to their instructions. There will be a note taker for each session. The notes will be anonymous. The notes from all the listening session will be summarized into one report. This listening session report will be sent to the NCCW Office where we will create a summary of all listening sessions.



Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Reflection on Scripture and Synod Principles

Core principle:

Our Synod journey takes place in the midst of where the Church ordinarily lives and works in the day to day lives of the faithful. The Synodal process invites each one of us - the People of God to recall that we journey together. Moreover, in that journey of faith we are called to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. (c.f. Preparatory Document no. 27)

Word of God:

A Reading from Acts 2: 14-21

Then Peter stood up with the eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them ... “These people are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, 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.’ Indeed, upon my servants and my handmaids I will pour out a portion of my spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy. And I will work wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below: blood, fire, and a cloud of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and splendid day of the Lord, and it shall be that everyone shall be saved who calls on the name of the Lord.’

In your session, begin by reflecting on the following core principle and question:

A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.”

- *How is this “journeying together” happening today in your organization?*
- *How is the Holy Spirit inviting your organization to grow in “journeying together”? (Preparatory Document no. 26)*

Take a moment to write down your personal thoughts and reflection. In your reflection on “journeying together,” think about:

- *What experiences, in your local council, does this question bring to mind?*
- *What are the joys of your local council?*
- *What are the difficulties and obstacles to active council life that you have encountered?*

Listening Session: Each person shares without interruption, while other group members listen.

In view of the group discussion:

- Where in these experiences do you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit?



Please provide brief comments to the Synod’s Core Question: Listening

“Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice.” (Preparatory Document no. 30)

“The meaning of the journey to which we are all called is above all that of discovering the face and form of a Synodal Church, in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit.” (Preparatory Document no. 15)

- How is God speaking to you through the voices that are in your life?
- How is God speaking to you through voices we sometimes ignore, including those on the peripheries?
- What space is there in your life to listen to the voices on the peripheries of the Church, especially cultural groups, women, the disabled, those who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?



Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church
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Please provide brief comments to the Synod's Core Question: Speaking Out

All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, that is, in freedom, truth, and charity. (Preparatory Document no. 30)

"The Pastors, established by God as 'authentic guardians, interpreters and witnesses of the faith of the whole Church' should not be afraid to listen to the flock entrusted to them. The consultation of the People of God does not imply the assumption within the Church of the dynamics of democracy based on the principle of majority because there is, at the basis of participation in every Synodal process, a shared passion for the common mission of evangelization and not the representation of conflicting interests." (Preparatory Document no. 14)

- What enables or hinders you from speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in your council?
- What space is there in your council for the voice of people, including active and inactive members of our faith?



Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church
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Please provide brief comments to the Synod’s Core Question: Discerning and Deciding

In a Synodal style, we make decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community. Synodal style of decision-making is to listen first, dialogue, pray, discern, and then the pastor makes a decision on behalf of community. A Synodal Church does not make decisions to accomplish pre-identified priorities. “In a Synodal Church, the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to pray, listen, analyze, dialogue, discern and offer advice on making pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God’s will.” (Vademecum no. 1.4)

- How does your organization use the methods of listening and speaking (consultation) to make decisions?
- How does your organization promote participation in decision-making within the hierarchical structures of the Church?
- Do the decision-making methods of your organization help you to listen to all members of the community, including those who are on the peripheries of involvement in the organization?



Synod
 2021
 2023

For a synodal Church
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Please provide brief comments to the Synod's Core Question: With other Christian Denominations

- *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the holy Spirit.”* (Romans 15:13) The Holy Spirit sent by Christ and received in our Baptism and Confirmation guides our efforts, breathes life and vitality into the Church, and leads us into a deeper relationship with Jesus and deeper communion with the Church in order to proclaim the Gospel. This Synodal journey is guided by the Holy Spirit (c.f. *Vademecum* 1.2)

What relations do we have with the brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations? What areas do they concern? What fruits have we drawn from this “journeying together”? What are the difficulties?



Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission