



For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

## Facilitator Guide for Local Synodal Sessions



Archdiocese  
*of*  
Philadelphia

<https://archphila.org/synod/>



## Overall Purpose of the Synod on Synodality

The *“Synod on Synodality: Communion, Participation, and Mission”* is a two-year process of listening and dialogue beginning in 2021 and concluding in 2023.

Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: “It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.” This journey, which follows in the wake of the Church’s “renewal” proposed by the Second Vatican Council, is both a gift and a task: by journeying together and reflecting together on the journey that has been made, the Church will be able to learn through her experience which processes can help her to live communion, to achieve participation, to open herself to mission. (Courtesy of USCCB).

*“...synodality represents the main road for the Church, called to renew herself under the action of the Spirit and by listening to the Word.” (Preparatory Document, 9)*

*“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 be nourished, 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.” (Preparatory Document, 32)*

### **The fundamental questions for the consultation of the People of God:**

1. How is this “journeying together” happening today in your local Church?
2. What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”? (*Preparatory Document, 26*)

### **The Holy See has provided 10 themes that highlight significant areas of “lived synodality”**

1. Companions on the Journey
2. Listening
3. Speaking Out
4. Celebration
5. Sharing Responsibility for Our Common Mission
6. Dialogue in Church and Society
7. Ecumenism
8. Authority and Participation
9. Discerning and Deciding
10. Forming Ourselves in Synodality



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## Considering a local synodal session

The Holy See has asked that the Church go as far and wide as possible in inviting people to participate in this important time of listening and dialogue and has encouraged every parish, ministry, institution, and community to create spaces to welcome people.

A local synodal session can take many shapes and sizes depending on the unique contours of the community. In the case of the parish, ongoing dialogue with the existing councils and key ministry leaders can be an opportunity for encounter. Inviting existing faith sharing groups to reflect and engage the themes of the synod. Likewise, asking families to host conversations with relatives who are far from the Church could be another fruitful experience.

For the purposes of this guide, the context will be a parish looking to provide an open invitation to people in their larger community to participate.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive or restrictive policy but rather a resource for parish leaders interested in creating a fruitful experience.

## What is the synod and what it is not

The Holy Father has called us to engage in this global dialogue at this particular moment in the Church’s life for a very specific reason. It is not to solve one specific issue or revise a piece of doctrine. It is to regain our ability to listen, to demonstrate the interdependence of our respective journeys of faith, and to remind us as Archbishop Pérez frequently does that we should “never doubt the Holy Spirit is working in us, through us, and despite us.”

As you consider hosting a local session, reach out to others with invitation, and lead your session, it is important to ground yourself and others in what these sessions should seek to model and what they should seek to avoid.

What the synod is...	What the synod is not...
A global consultation of the faithful that will begin locally and eventually lead to a worldwide meeting of the bishops in 2023	A townhall or city council meeting
An opportunity for prayerful, serene listening and dialogue among the People of God	A legislative process to create new requirements or policies
An experience rooted in scripture and enriched by personal experience	A doctrinal review or revision process
An honest reflection on how the Church is journeying with Her people	A venting session



## Planning your local session

**Step 1: Develop a team:** There will be many opportunities to engage volunteers in this process. Consider forming a team of 4-6 individuals who will assist in the planning, outreach, and facilitation of the session.

The key responsibilities you will need some help with are:

- **Facilitation** – this may be done by the pastor or a member of the clergy but also could be done by a lay person who has expertise and comfort with leading groups
- **Invitation and Outreach** – this can involve many people who can reach out to those in the community, particularly those who are most distant. It will be helpful to have 1-2 people devoted to coordinating this effort
- **Hospitality and Welcome** – this involves the setup of session space and greeting of those participating
- **Synthesis** – this involves taking the feedback received and summarizing it authentically and effectively into a document that can be submitted

**Step 2: Choose a date, time, and venue:** Choose whether your sessions will be either onsite or virtual, and the date and time of when they will take place. When considering onsite sessions remember to:

- Consider amplification, room capacity, and ease of getting into small groups for onsite sessions
- Consider the time of day or day of week if you are targeting a certain group of people
- Consider accessibility of the space for people with different needs (See "[Considering Accessibility](#)")

**Step 3: Set up a registration system:** While you can welcome people who do not register, it may be helpful to have a sense of how many people you can expect. In the registration you can also ask if anyone has accessibility needs that you can try to support. For virtual sessions, this will be especially important as some platforms require registration. Lastly, the Holy See is asking for demographic information as to how many people participated and who they are so you can capture some of this information on your registration form. Some options for online registration include (see [sample registration form](#)):

- Signup genius
- Flocknotes
- Survey Monkey



## Extending outreach and invitation

Extending outreach and invitation is not only essential to the synodal process, but also to evangelization and the overall health of the Church. Below are some suggested steps to aid in your sharing of the opportunity for your local session.

**Step 4:** Identify individuals who can make personal invitation to the community, particularly those who are on the periphery and those often excluded or forgotten. Provide these individuals with a goal to invite 5-10 people individually to attend the session. Some examples of people who might be helpful include:

- A volunteer who serves regularly at the local food pantry or community center
- A parent of a child in each class or grade in your parish school
- A parent of a child in the public schools in your area
- A person who has an elderly parent in a nearby assisted living community
- A young professional who may work at a nearby business

**Step 5:** Draft a sample email for these individuals to send. It might be helpful to “load their lips” a little as well as provide the necessary information around date, time, location, and registration. The Holy See also recommends sharing in advance the questions that will be discussed.

**Step 6:** Begin publicizing the information about the session through regular means of communication with consistent frequency in the 3-4 weeks leading up to the session. Some examples of these regular forms include ([see samples](#)):

- Parish website
- Bulletin
- Social Media
- Flocknote
- Flyers or posters on campus or in community locations
- Ask every parishioner to tell ten people about the session
- Parish-wide email
- Pulpit announcements



## Providing welcome and hospitality

We know how important first impressions and environment are. As soon as a participant arrives in your parking lot, they will either be drawn into the synodal experience or perhaps have an experience that does not reflect the spirit of welcome and openness envisioned. In addition to considering accessibility for those with different needs (see [“Considering accessibility”](#)), think about the following items when you are hosting a local session:

- **Signage:** ample, easy to read, directive, welcoming
- **Greeters:** friendly and well-placed at potentially confusing spots along the path
- **Materials:** name tags, sharpie markers, pens, handouts located at each table and/or at tables at the entrances
- **Facilities:** through signage and greeters, explain the location of the restrooms
- **Food/Beverage:** water, coffee, and tea are sufficient

## Facilitating a synodal session

### A week prior to the session

#### 1. For Onsite Sessions:

- a. Determine room setup based on registration numbers.
- b. Determine the number of small groups and number of people per group that will work for your space. 4-6 people per group at round tables is recommended
- c. Print the materials you will need:
  - i. Participant Handout ([one per person](#))
  - ii. Scribe Recording Page ([one per small group](#))
  - iii. Parish Listening Session Synthesis Form ([one for the whole session](#))
  - iv. Agenda for Synodal Listening Session ([two – one for facilitator and one for hospitality volunteer](#))
- d. Procure enough pens for scribes to take notes
- e. Procure nametags for participants

#### 2. For Virtual Sessions:

- a. Determine the number of small groups and number of people per group. 4-6 people per group is recommended.
- b. Ensure that your virtual materials are in a format that can be easily shared onscreen

#### 3. Check in with Facilitator and Hospitality Volunteer

- a. Confirm date, time, and location of session
- b. Review responsibilities
- c. Ask them to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to session

#### 4. Spend time in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to bless the session and those who participate



## The day of the session

1. Pray!
2. For Onsite Sessions:
  - a. Prepare the session meeting space according to plan
  - b. Distribute copies of handouts and pens among tables or participants accordingly:
    - i. Participant Handout ([one per person](#))
    - ii. Scribe Recording Page ([one per small group](#))
    - iii. Parish Listening Session Synthesis Form ([one for the whole session](#))
    - iv. Agenda for Synodal Listening Session (two – [one for facilitator and one for hospitality volunteer](#))
    - v. Nametags and markers
  - c. Be ready to go at least 30 minutes before the start of the session
3. For Virtual Sessions:
  - a. Check your “virtual setup” including video and microphone
  - b. Open the digital files that will be shared onscreen with the group
  - c. Log into the virtual platform at least 15 minutes before the start of the session
4. At the end of the session:
  - a. For onsite sessions:
    - i. Thank participants
    - ii. Be sure to collect the “Scribe Recording Page” from each small group.
    - iii. Clean up your space
    - iv. Thank your facilitator and your hospitality volunteer
  - b. For virtual sessions
    - i. Share your email address in the chat.
    - ii. Be sure to have Scribes email you their notes right away.

## Within a week after the Listening Session (As soon as possible)

1. Complete the “Local Listening Session Synthesis Form” online following the directions on the form ([see form here](#))
2. Send a follow-up note to thank participants.
  - a. Those who registered online can be sent an email.
  - b. Place a note in your bulletin.
  - c. Make a pulpit announcement.





## Facilitation Agenda

The session is meant to be a time of prayerful listening. It is not envisioned to be a town hall or a school board meeting. Therefore, the session space and those leading and hosting should help to model and reflect a peaceful, simple, prayerful tone. You will notice that there is no powerpoint and the handouts are modest. This is intentional.

The below facilitation agenda is a sample. This reflects the experience of the regional sessions that will be offered throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Again, you are not required to follow this format. It is shared as a resource.

The session is designed to be 2 hours in length.

Activity/Leader	Facilitation Notes/Talking Points	Estimated Minutes
Welcome and prayer (Pastor or Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank you to pastor (if not facilitator) and thank you to participants</li> <li>• Introduction of facilitator</li> <li>• Opening prayer</li> <li>• Prayer for the Synod on handout</li> </ul>	3-5
Synodal process overview and ground rules for participation (Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight peacefully and prayerfully what the session is and what it is not and emphasis the spirit being requested</li> <li>• Speak to what will happen to their feedback – it will not be attributed to any one participant and we will look to capture themes and quotes that will be summarized and sent to the Archdiocese which will be further summarized and sent to the USCCB which will be summarized and sent to the Holy See</li> <li>• Overview and ground rules on handout</li> </ul>	5-7
Lectio Scripture Reflection (Lector or Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator introduces lectio approach and the questions for reflection after each reading</li> <li>• Lector reads the scripture once and pauses</li> <li>• Facilitator reads the first question – <i>“what word or phrase spoke to you as you heard this scripture”</i></li> <li>• Lector reads the scripture a second time and pauses</li> <li>• Facilitator reads the second question – <i>“where do you find joy or hope in this scripture?”</i></li> <li>• Lector reads the scripture a third time and pauses</li> <li>• Facilitator invites a moment of quiet reflection and then invites people to share their reflections on the scripture at their table</li> </ul>	30
Setup for engagement activity (Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator explains the movement of the questions and emphasizes norms.</li> </ul>	5-7



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitator explains the scribe role encouraging them to pass the role to the right so that 3 different people assist</li> </ul>	
Topic 1: Joys and Concerns about the Church from the people of God (Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitator reads questions and invites group to take 2 minutes in silence to reflect. Facilitator invites groups to begin.</li> <li><i>What fills you with joy about the Church?</i></li> <li><i>What concerns do you have about the Church?</i></li> </ul>	20
Topic 2: Listening Aspect of the Church (Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitator gives group a gentle time check and reads the questions. Facilitator invites scribe to pass the paper to the right and encourages group to continue.</li> <li><i>Do you feel the Church encourages you to speak up? Do you feel the Church listens to you or hears what you are saying?</i></li> <li><i>How can the Church create greater opportunities for people to be heard?</i></li> </ul>	20
Topic 3: Accompaniment/Journey (Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitator gives group a gentle time check and reads the questions. Facilitator invites scribe to pass the paper to the right and encourages group to continue.</li> <li><i>How can the Church help you and others to grow in your relationship with Jesus and your relationship with the Church?</i></li> <li><i>What can the Church do to support people on their faith journeys?</i></li> </ul>	20
Thank you and closing prayer (Facilitator and/or Pastor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitator thanks all for participating and asks the last scribe to bring their notes page to him/her before leaving. Facilitator leads the Lord's Prayer or asks pastor to lead prayer and provide blessing</li> </ul>	5-7



## Summarizing Feedback for Submission

In hosting a local synodal session you are encouraged to submit a summary of the themes shared from your participants to be included in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia submission which will be sent to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by June 30, 2022. We kindly ask you to submit your themes through an online form that can be found at: <https://archphila.org/synod/>

The online form will mirror the format of both the table scribe form and the local session form included in this guide. Please attempt to submit your summary within a week of your session as to keep the information fresh and clear and **no later than June 1, 2022** for inclusion within the archdiocesan summary.



## Local Synodal Session Summary Form – Archdiocese of Philadelphia

<b>Host Community</b> <i>(e.g. parish, school, religious community)</i>		<b>Date of Session</b>	
<b>Number of participants</b>		<b>Virtual or Onsite</b> <i>(please circle)</i>	
<b>Participant Composition</b> <i>(Estimated percentage)</i>	<b>Age:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Under 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-70 <input type="checkbox"/> Over 70  <b>Gender:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	<b>Ethnicity:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African-American <input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Middle-Eastern or North African <input type="checkbox"/> Native American <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<b>Themes of Feedback</b> <i>(Please use bullet points to capture themes or particular quotes that you want to record. If you want to indicate something repeated, please indicate with a (#) after the theme.</i>			
<b>Topic 1: Joys and Concerns about the Church from the people of God</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>What fills you with joy about the Church?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insert quotes or themes</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>What concerns do you have about the Church?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insert quotes or themes</li> </ul> </li> </ol>			
<b>Topic 2: Listening Aspect of the Church</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <b>In what ways or moments has the Church encouraged you to speak up? How does the Church listen to you or hears what you are saying?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insert quotes or themes</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. <b>How can the Church create greater opportunities for people to be heard?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insert quotes or themes</li> </ul> </li> </ol>			
<b>Topic 3: Accompaniment/Journey</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. <b>How can the Church help you and others to grow in your relationship with Jesus and your relationship with the Church?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insert quotes or themes</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. <b>What can the Church do to support people on their faith journeys?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insert quotes or themes</li> </ul> </li> </ol>			
<b>Submitted by:</b> <i>(name and email)</i>			



## Local Synodal Session Scribe Form

**Themes of Feedback** *(Please use bullet points to capture themes or particular quotes that you want to record. If you want to indicate something repeated, please indicate with a (#) after the theme.*

### Topic 1: Joys and Concerns about the Church from the people of God

1. What fills you with joy about the Church?

2. What concerns do you have about the Church?



## Topic 2: Listening Aspect of the Church

3. In what ways or moments has the Church encouraged you to speak up? How does the Church listen to you or hears what you are saying?

4. How can the Church create greater opportunities for people to be heard?



### Topic 3: Accompaniment/Journey

5. How can the Church help you and others to grow in your relationship with Jesus and your relationship with the Church?

6. What can the Church do to support people on their faith journeys?



## Considering Accessibility

Within our communities one in five of our parishioners has a disability. Planning ahead to reach out and accommodate assures that those with disabilities are able to meaningfully participate in this process so that truly we are walking with the entire People of God.

### 1. Extending outreach and invitation accessibility tips:

- Invite individuals with disabilities, families with members with disabilities and group home residents
- Plan to meet in physically accessible spaces
- Be sure that virtual platforms have captioning enabled
- Invitations and RSVP include accessibility information (sample below)

Statement of Accessibility

*[Parish Name] is committed to providing an accessible process for the Synod listening sessions that enables all to engage fully including individuals with disabilities. Please list accommodations needed when you register for a session. For more information about accessibility contact: [Name, # and email.]*

*Please list any accommodations needed: [Scroll down with options] (List only what you can plan to provide)*

- |                       |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| ✓ ASL Interpreter     | ✓ Assistive Listening Device                    | ✓ Adaptive material for an individual with ID |
| ✓ Program in Braille  | ✓ Electronic copy in a word doc sent in advance | ✓ Other – please note                         |
| ✓ Large Print Program |   |   |
| ✓ Wheel Chair Access  |   |   |

### 2. Providing welcome and hospitality accessibility tips

- Logistic coordinator assures that accommodations are in place
- Designate a team member to assist with facilitating access, inclusion and welcome
- Leave space for wheelchair users at the table and to navigate through out the space
- Speak directly to Deaf individuals and those with disabilities.

### 3. Facilitating a synodal session accessibility tips

- Adequate light and sound as well as the use of assistive listening devices helps those with hearing loss and low vision.
- Provide alternate format (large print) or adaptive format for those with intellectual disabilities or functional needs.

### 4. Summarizing feedback for submission

- Accurate syntheses that truly captures the range of perspectives of all responses, including views that are unique and seldom expressed.

### Helpful Resources:

- **ASL Interpreting:** Deaf Apostolate, [sr.kschipani@archphila.org](mailto:sr.kschipani@archphila.org), 215-587-3913
- **Braille Materials:** St. Lucy's School, [llettiere@saintlucyschool.org](mailto:llettiere@saintlucyschool.org), 610-352-4550; Xavier Society for the Blind, [www.xaviersocietyfortheblind.org](http://www.xaviersocietyfortheblind.org), 800-637-9193
- **National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities Synod Resources:** <https://ncpd.org/synodal-church-communion-participation-and-mission-synod-2021-2023>
- **Deaf Sessions:** Deacon William Griffin, [deafcatholic@archphila.org](mailto:deafcatholic@archphila.org) or 267-538-0702 (VP)
- **Adapted Sessions:** Office for Persons with Disabilities, [sr.kschipani@archphila.org](mailto:sr.kschipani@archphila.org) or 215-587-3530





## Understanding the Role of the Facilitator

Local synodal sessions will rely on the gifts and talents of volunteer facilitators. These women and men will ensure that the conversations and activities outlined for this vital consultation at the local level will embrace the spirit of the synod, stay on track, provide a meaningful opportunity for encounter, and generate the important feedback requested. The facilitators are meant to be a resource regarding the process, approach, and group dynamics.

Local Facilitators will have three primary responsibilities:

1. **Facilitation** - Guide and facilitate the local sessions to ensure that participants are engaged, the session is prayerful and welcoming and that it stays on track and that feedback is collected from every session to inform. Specifically, the facilitator will:
  - Call the meeting to order
  - Lead prayer
  - Set ground rules and expectations
  - Provide an overview of the synodal process
  - Lead the facilitation of small group conversation
  - Collect the feedback forms from each small group at the end of the session
2. **Logistics Coordination** - Coordinate, maintain and execute logistics related to the local sessions including initiating Zoom meetings or working with the host location and hospitality team to ensure a conducive space.
  - Work with the host venue to ensure a proper space
  - Work with volunteers on the setup of the space
  - Ensure all virtual details are covered if session is virtual
  - Ensure the appropriate number of copies of handouts are printed
3. **Communication and Collaboration** – Share the feedback from the session and elevate any issues, opportunities, or needs for further assistance to ensure good collaboration during the parish consultation process.
  - Reach out to CLI for assistance or questions
  - Share any best practices or learnings

When recruiting facilitators, the following criteria is helpful:

1. **Experience:**
  - Experience with group facilitation required.
  - Should be a practicing Catholic and have some knowledge of the Catholic Church.
  - Does not share or promote a personal agenda within his/her role as a facilitator
2. **Skills:**
  - Prayerful and calm demeanor
  - Good balance between self-assuredness and humility
  - Effective virtual/onsite meeting management skills.
  - Proficiency in Spanish is optimal.



# For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

## Welcome!

The Holy Father has called us to engage in this global dialogue at this particular moment in the Church's life for a very specific reason. It is not to solve one specific issue or revise a piece of doctrine. It is to regain our ability to listen, to demonstrate the interdependence of our respective journeys of faith, and to remind us as Archbishop Pérez frequently does that we should "never doubt the Holy Spirit is working in us, through us, and despite us."

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Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: "It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium." This journey, which follows in the wake of the Church's "renewal" proposed by the Second Vatican Council, is both a gift and a task: by journeying together and reflecting together on the journey that has been made, the Church will be able to learn through her experience which processes can help her to live communion, to achieve participation, to open herself to mission. (Courtesy of USCCB).

### The fundamental questions for the consultation of the People of God:

1. How is this "journeying together" happening today in your local Church?
2. What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together"?

*(Preparatory Document, 26)*

As we enter into this sacred time together, please help us to honor the spirit of synodality, by embracing and modeling the following norms to ensure a fruitful experience:

- **We are here to enter into prayerful, serene listening.** Avoid debate or argument or jumping in with your thought, rather ensure others have time to finish their thought and allow for some silence so that you can really process their offering.
- **We are here to share our respective journeys of faith.** Avoid advocating for programs, policies, procedures, rather focus on reflecting back on your journey and looking forward to the future with hope.
- **We are here to receive and honor the stories of others.** Avoid repeating specifics of what you've heard outside of the session, rather share the fruits and challenges of the overall experience of synodality.
- **We are here to discern the will of the Holy Spirit.** Avoid trying to persuade or pressure others into your will, rather listen for common threads and profound insights.



## Prayer for Synod on Synodality

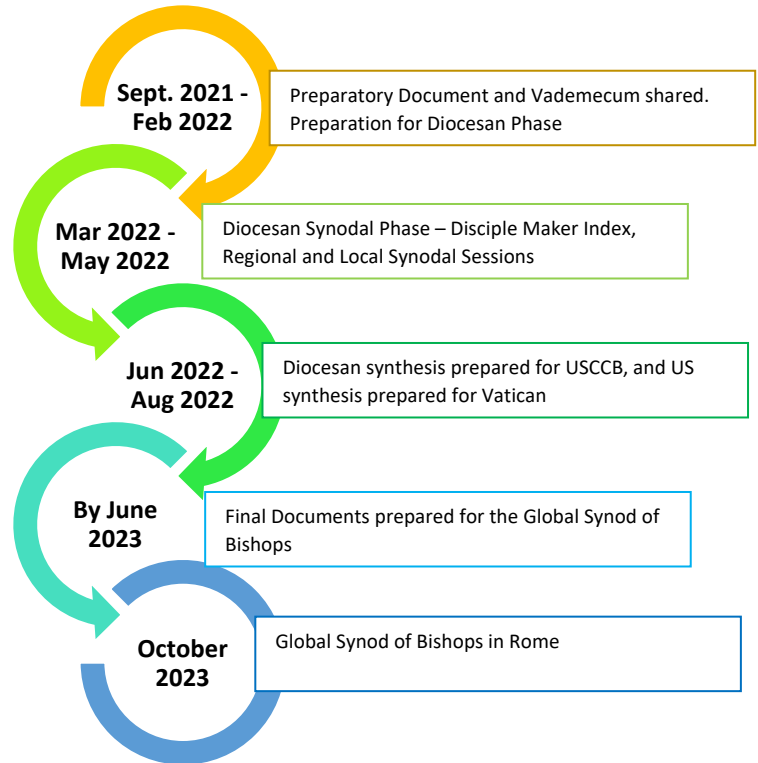
We stand before You, Holy Spirit,  
as we gather together in Your name.  
With You alone to guide us,  
make Yourself at home in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go  
and how we are to pursue it.

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.

## Synodal Timeline



## Our Time Together

- Welcome, Opening Prayer and Overview
- Scriptural Reflection
- Synodal Dialogue
  - Topic 1: Joys and Concerns
  - Topic 2: Listening Aspect of the Church
  - Topic 3: Accompaniment and Journey
- Closing Prayer



## Scriptural Reflection: The Road to Emmaus – Luke 24:13-35

<sup>13</sup> Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, <sup>14</sup> and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. <sup>15</sup> And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, <sup>16</sup> but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup> He asked them, “What are you discussing as you walk along?” They stopped, looking downcast. <sup>18</sup> One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?” <sup>19</sup> And he replied to them, “What sort of things?” They said to him, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup> But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. <sup>22</sup> Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning <sup>23</sup> and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see.” <sup>25</sup> And he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. <sup>28</sup> As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup> Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?” <sup>33</sup> So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them <sup>34</sup> who were saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” <sup>35</sup> Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

## Reflection Questions

1. *What word or phrase spoke to you as you heard this scripture?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. *Where do you find joy or hope in this scripture?*



## **Topic 1: Joys and Concerns about the Church from the people of God**

1. What fills you with joy about the Church?
2. What concerns do you have about the Church?

## **Topic 2: Listening Aspect of the Church**

3. In what ways or moments has the Church encouraged you to speak up? How does the Church listen to you or hears what you are saying?
4. How can the Church create greater opportunities for people to be heard?

## **Topic 3: Accompaniment/Journey**

5. How can the Church help you and others to grow in your relationship with Jesus and your relationship with the Church?
6. What can the Church do to support people on their faith journeys?



## Answering frequently asked questions

### What is a synod?

A synod is a council of the Church, usually convened to decide an issue of doctrine, administration or application. The word synod is from the Greek *sinodos* meaning “assembly” or “meeting” and is similar to the Latin *concilium* meaning “council”. Sometimes the phrase “general synod” or “general council” refers to an ecumenical council, like the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

### What is a Synod of Bishops and why do they happen?

At the end of the Second Vatican Council, Saint Pope Paul VI sensed the need for the Roman Pontiff to continue meeting periodically with the bishops of the world, which is why, on September 15, 1965, he established a new entity within the Church called the Synod of Bishops. The Synod of Bishops is a permanent institution that forms part of the Church’s long tradition of organizing ecclesial assemblies to deliberate on the most pressing issues of a particular place and time. Since its establishment in 1965, the Popes have called for and led a total of 15 General Ordinary Assemblies, 3 General Extraordinary Assemblies, and 11 Special Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops. The topics of each assembly are selected by the Pope. The most recent General Assemblies have been on Youth, Family, New Evangelization, the Word of God, and the Eucharist.

### What is Synodality?

In the words of Pope Francis, a synodal Church is a “listening Church knowing that listening is more than feeling. It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. We must all listen to the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Truth to know what the Spirit is saying to the Church. [...] This is what the Lord expects from the Church of the third millennium.” (Address at the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015) Synodality provides opportunities to listen to the Holy Spirit and the People of God in order to discern together and walk forward on a common path, accompanying each other on the spiritual journey as we live out our missionary call to personal discipleship with our Lord.

### What is the current Synod?

In the ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops in October 2015, Pope Francis declared that “the world in which we live, and which we are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the Church strengthen cooperation in all areas of her mission.” (For a Synodal Church handbook) This call to cooperate in the mission of the Church is addressed to the entire People of God. In April 2021, Pope Francis initiated a synodal journey of the whole People of God, to begin in October 2021 in each local Church and culminating in October 2023 in the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops.

### What is the goal of this Synod?

The objective of this Synodal Process is not to provide a temporary or one-time experience of synodality, but rather to provide an opportunity for the entire People of God to discern together how to move forward on the path towards being a more synodal Church in the long-term. Pope Francis characterizes the two interrelated goals of this process of listening: “to listen to God, so that with him we may hear the cry of his people; to listen to his people until we are in harmony with the will to which God calls us.”

### Why are we participating in a Synod at this time?

In October 2015, Pope Francis stated that “the world in which we live, and which we are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the Church strengthens cooperation in all areas of her mission.” This



process is especially important during times of changes in Church and society. We must reflect on the signs of the times in light of the Gospel.

*“The decision to ‘journey together’ is a prophetic sign for the human family, which needs a shared project capable of pursuing the good of all... We need to let ourselves be educated by the Spirit to a truly synodal mentality, entering with courage and freedom of heart into a conversion process that is indispensable for the ‘continual reformation of which [the Church] always has need, in so far as she is a human institution’” (Synod 2023 Preparatory Document, no. 9).*

### **Who can participate?**

All the baptized are invited to participate in this Synodal Process. Special care should be taken to involve those persons who may be at risk of being excluded: persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, the elderly, people who live in poverty, inactive Catholics, etc.

### **What is the role of the Archdiocese?**

Each diocese will carry out the Synodal Process in a way that best responds to their local circumstances. In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, we are working with Catholic Leadership Institute to implement the Disciple Maker Index (DMI) survey at every parish in the Archdiocese from March 2 to April 4. The DMI survey is a nationally recognized survey administered at parishes around the United States and Canada since 2013 by The Catholic Leadership Institute. The results from this survey will provide baseline feedback that will be added to the feedback received through the engagement sessions in March and April. Maximum participation will be encouraged through all Archdiocesan structures and communication channels to involve the greatest number of people as possible.

### **What is the role of the parish?**

Every parish in the Archdiocese will be offering the Disciple Maker Index (DMI) survey from March 2 to April 4 both online as a link from individual parish websites and as a hardcopy survey that can be filled out in-person at all parishes. Parishioners should take the DMI through their parish so the data can accurately reflect the feedback from each parish community. Parishes will provide a link on their website and make hardcopy surveys available through April 4. You can also take the survey through the Archdiocesan website at <https://archphila.org/synod/> by clicking on the link for your home parish.

### **How can I participate?**

There will be a variety of ways for people to get involved in the Synod Process, as individuals or as part of your parish community. We encourage everyone to participate in any additional informal activities for formation, fellowship and prayer, that are organized at the parish. The two primary ways you can participate are:

1. Participate in the Disciple Maker Index Survey which will be offered at every parish in the Archdiocese from March 2 to April 4. This is an opportunity for every Catholic to provide personal feedback towards this process.
2. Attend one of many Engagement Sessions held in-person and virtually throughout the Archdiocese in March and April. These facilitated sessions will allow the People of God to engage with one another and listen to each other’s journey. For more information and a schedule of engagement sessions, go to <https://archphila.org/synod/>

### **What will be the outcome of this Synodal process?**

Because the history of the Church gives ample witness to the importance of consultation of diocesan clergy and faithful in matters pertaining to the good of the Church, these discussions are given special attention. The



consultations are followed by discernment on the part of bishops chosen for the task, united in the search for a consensus that does not spring from worldly logic, but from common obedience to the Spirit of Christ. Attentive to the sense of the faith of the people of God – which they need to carefully distinguish from changing public opinion – the Synod Bishops will then work together for ecclesial consensus, which is not determined by the tallying of votes, but is the outcome of the working of the Holy Spirit which enlivens the one Church of Christ.

Pope Francis has affirmed that this Synod of Bishops must increasingly become an instrument for listening to the People of God. The results are then submitted to the Holy Father in his capacity as universal Pastor of the Church. Once the results have been accepted by the Holy Father, an implementation phase in every diocese follows, to initiate the reception of the Synod's conclusions. It must be remembered that given the diversity throughout the world, the results must be enculturated if they are to be respected and applied.

In this way, it can be seen that the synodal process not only has its point of departure, but also its point of arrival in the People of God, upon whom the gifts of grace bestowed by the Holy Spirit through the Synod of Bishops must be poured out.

### **¿Qué es un sínodo?**

Un sínodo es un concilio de la Iglesia, generalmente convocado para decidir un tema de doctrina, administración o aplicación. La palabra sínodo proviene del griego *sinodos* que significa "asamblea" o "reunión" y es similar al latín *concilium* que significa "concilio". A veces, la frase "sínodo general" o "concilio general" se refiere a un concilio ecuménico, como el Concilio Vaticano II (1962-1965).

### **¿Qué es un Sínodo de obispos y por qué sucede?**

Al final del Concilio Vaticano II, san Pablo VI sintió la necesidad de que el Romano Pontífice continuara reuniéndose periódicamente con los obispos del mundo, por lo que, el 15 de septiembre de 1965, estableció una nueva entidad dentro de la Iglesia llamada Sínodo de los Obispos. El Sínodo de los Obispos es una institución permanente que forma parte de la larga tradición de la Iglesia de organizar asambleas eclesiales para deliberar sobre los temas más apremiantes de un lugar y un tiempo particulares. Desde su creación en 1965, los Papas han convocado y dirigido un total de 15 Asambleas Ordinarias Generales, 3 Asambleas Generales Extraordinarias y 11 Asambleas Especiales del Sínodo de los Obispos. Los temas de cada asamblea son seleccionados por el Papa. Las Asambleas Generales más recientes han sido sobre la Juventud, la Familia, la Nueva Evangelización, la Palabra de Dios y la Eucaristía.

### **¿Qué es la sinodalidad?**

En palabras del Papa Francisco, una Iglesia sinodal es una "Iglesia que escucha sabiendo que escuchar es más que sentir. Es una escucha mutua en la que todos tienen algo que aprender. Todos debemos escuchar al Espíritu Santo, el espíritu de la Verdad para saber lo que el Espíritu está diciendo a la Iglesia. [...] Esto es lo que el Señor espera de la Iglesia del tercer milenio". (Discurso en la conmemoración del 50 aniversario del Sínodo de los Obispos, 17 de octubre de 2015) La sinodalidad ofrece oportunidades para escuchar al Espíritu Santo y al Pueblo de Dios para discernir juntos y caminar hacia adelante en un camino común, acompañándonos mutuamente en el camino espiritual mientras vivimos nuestra llamada misionera al discipulado personal con nuestro Señor.

### **¿Qué es el Sínodo actual?**

En la ceremonia para conmemorar el 50 aniversario de la institución del Sínodo de los Obispos en octubre de 2015, el Papa Francisco declaró que "el mundo en el que vivimos, y que estamos llamados a amar y servir, incluso con sus contradicciones, exige que la Iglesia fortalezca la cooperación en todos los ámbitos de su misión". (Para un manual de la Iglesia sinodal) Esta llamada a cooperar en la misión de la Iglesia está dirigida a todo el Pueblo de Dios. En abril de





2021, el Papa Francisco inició un viaje sinodal de todo el Pueblo de Dios, que comenzará en octubre de 2021 en cada Iglesia local y culminará en octubre de 2023 en la Asamblea del Sínodo de los Obispos.

### **¿Cuál es el objetivo de este Sínodo?**

El objetivo de este proceso sinodal no es proporcionar una experiencia temporal o única de sinodalidad, sino más bien proporcionar una oportunidad para que todo el Pueblo de Dios discierna juntos cómo avanzar en el camino hacia ser una Iglesia más sinodal a largo plazo. El Papa Francisco caracteriza los dos objetivos interrelacionados de este proceso de escucha: "escuchar a Dios, para que con Él podamos escuchar el grito de su pueblo; escuchar a su pueblo hasta que estemos en armonía con la voluntad a la que Dios nos llama".

### **¿Por qué estamos participando en un Sínodo en este momento?**

En octubre de 2015, el Papa Francisco declaró que "el mundo en el que vivimos, y que estamos llamados a amar y servir, incluso con sus contradicciones, exige que la Iglesia fortalezca la cooperación en todos los ámbitos de su misión". Este proceso es especialmente importante en tiempos de cambios en la Iglesia y la sociedad. Debemos reflexionar sobre los signos de los tiempos a la luz del Evangelio. "La decisión de 'caminar juntos' es un signo profético para la familia humana, que necesita un proyecto compartido capaz de perseguir el bien de todos... Necesitamos dejarnos educar por el Espíritu a una mentalidad verdaderamente sinodal, entrando con valentía y libertad de corazón en un proceso de conversión que es indispensable para la "reforma continua de la que [la Iglesia] siempre tiene necesidad, en la medida en que es una institución humana" (Documento Preparatorio del Sínodo 2023, no. 9).

### **¿Quién puede participar?**

Todos los bautizados están invitados a participar en este proceso sinodal. Se debe tener especial cuidado en involucrar a aquellas personas que pueden estar en riesgo de ser excluidas: personas con discapacidad, migrantes, refugiados, ancianos, personas que viven en la pobreza, católicos inactivos, etc.

¿Cuál es el papel de la Arquidiócesis?

Cada diócesis llevará a cabo el Proceso Sinodal de la manera que mejor responda a sus circunstancias locales. En la Arquidiócesis de Philadelphia, estamos trabajando con el Instituto de Liderazgo Católico para implementar la encuesta Índice de Creadores de Discípulos (DMI) en cada parroquia de la Arquidiócesis del 2 de marzo al 4 de abril. La encuesta DMI es una encuesta reconocida a nivel nacional administrada en parroquias de los Estados Unidos y Canadá desde 2013 por el Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI). Los resultados de esta encuesta proporcionarán información de referencia a partir de la cual se desarrollará el contenido de las sesiones de escucha en marzo y abril. Se fomentará la máxima participación a través de todas las estructuras arquidiocesanas y canales de comunicación para involucrar al mayor número posible de personas.

### **¿Cuál es el papel de la parroquia?**

Cada parroquia de la Arquidiócesis ofrecerá la encuesta Índice de Creadores de Discípulos (DMI) del 2 de marzo al 4 de abril, tanto en línea como un enlace de los sitios web de las parroquias individuales y como una encuesta impresa que se puede completar en persona en todas las parroquias. Los feligreses deben tomar el DMI a través de su parroquia para que los datos puedan reflejar con precisión los comentarios de cada comunidad parroquial. Las parroquias proporcionarán un enlace en su sitio web y harán disponibles encuestas impresas en papel hasta el 4 de abril. También puede realizar la encuesta a través del sitio web de la Arquidiócesis en <https://archphila.org/synod/> haciendo clic en el enlace de su parroquia de origen.

### **¿Cómo puedo participar?**



Habr  una variedad de formas para que las personas se involucren en el Proceso del S nodo, como individuos o como parte de su comunidad parroquial. Alentamos a todos a participar en cualquier actividad informal adicional para la formaci n, el compa nerismo y la oraci n, que se organicen en la parroquia. Las dos formas principales en que puede participar son:

1. Participe en la Encuesta del  ndice de Creadores de Disc pulos que se ofrecer  en cada parroquia de la Arquidi cesis del 2 de marzo al 4 de abril. Esta es una oportunidad para que cada cat lico proporcione retroalimentaci n personal hacia este proceso.
2. Asistir a una de las muchas sesiones de escucha que se llevan a cabo en persona y virtualmente en toda la Arquidi cesis en marzo y abril. Estas sesiones facilitadas permitir n que el Pueblo de Dios se comprometa entre s  y escuche el viaje de los dem s. Para obtener m s informaci n y un calendario de sesiones de escucha, vaya a <https://archphila.org/synod/>

### ** Cu l ser  el resultado de este proceso sinodal?**

Debido a que la historia de la Iglesia da un amplio testimonio de la importancia de la consulta del clero diocesano y de los fieles en asuntos relacionados con el bien de la Iglesia, estas discusiones reciben una atenci n especial. Las consultas son seguidas por el discernimiento por parte de los obispos elegidos para la tarea, unidos en la b squeda de un consenso que no surja de la l gica mundana, sino de la obediencia com n al Esp ritu de Cristo. Atentos al sentido de la fe del pueblo de Dios, que necesitan distinguir cuidadosamente de la opini n p blica cambiante, los obispos sinodales trabajar n juntos por el consenso eclesial, que no est  determinado por el recuento de votos, sino que es el resultado de la obra del Esp ritu Santo que anima a la  nica Iglesia de Cristo.

El Papa Francisco ha afirmado que este S nodo de los Obispos debe convertirse cada vez m s en un instrumento para escuchar al Pueblo de Dios. Los resultados se presentan al Santo Padre en su calidad de Pastor universal de la Iglesia. Una vez que los resultados han sido aceptados por el Santo Padre, sigue una fase de implementaci n en cada di cesis, para iniciar la recepci n de las conclusiones del S nodo.

Hay que recordar que dada la diversidad en todo el mundo, los resultados deben ser inculturados si se quieren respetar y aplicar. De esta manera, se puede ver que el proceso sinodal no s lo tiene su punto de partida, sino tambi n su punto de llegada al Pueblo de Dios, sobre quien deben derramarse los dones de gracia otorgados por el Esp ritu Santo a trav s del S nodo de los Obispos.



## Sample Bulletin Announcements

### **Participate in the Global Synod in March and April – Register Today!**

Don't miss the opportunity to participate in the local synodal process. Archbishop Pérez is inviting all Catholics to attend an engagement session offered in English and Spanish throughout the archdiocese in March and April. Participants can attend any of the 26 engagement sessions held at a variety of times and locations, including nine sessions offered virtually on Zoom and 16 sessions offered in-person at parishes throughout the five-county area. Registration is necessary to ensure adequate space for in-person sessions or to receive a Zoom link or webinar information via email for the virtual sessions.

Pope Francis invites the whole Church to participate in the preparatory process for the upcoming Synod of Bishops on Synodality. This unprecedented opportunity will facilitate discussion and reflection to help shape the Church's understanding of herself and her mission of evangelization and forming disciples.

For more information and to register for an engagement session, go to: <https://archphila.org/synod/>

### **Bulletin Announcements – ESPAÑOL**

#### **Participe en el Sínodo del Papa Francisco en marzo y abril – ¡Inscríbese hoy!**

No pierdas la oportunidad de participar en el proceso sinodal local. El Arzobispo Pérez está invitando a todos los católicos a asistir a una sesión de escucha ofrecida en inglés y español en toda la arquidiócesis en marzo y abril. Los participantes pueden asistir a cualquiera de las 26 sesiones de escucha celebradas en una variedad de horarios y lugares, incluyendo nueve sesiones ofrecidas virtualmente en Zoom y 16 sesiones ofrecidas en persona en parroquias de toda la Arquidiócesis de Philadelphia. Se requiere inscripción previa para garantizar un espacio adecuado para las sesiones en persona o para recibir un enlace de Zoom o información del seminario web por correo electrónico para las sesiones virtuales.

El Papa Francisco invita a toda la Iglesia a participar en el proceso preparatorio del próximo Sínodo de los Obispos sobre la sinodalidad. Esta oportunidad sin precedentes facilitará la discusión y la reflexión para ayudar a dar forma a la comprensión de la Iglesia de sí misma y de su misión de evangelización y formación de discípulos.

Para obtener más información y registrarse en una sesión de escucha, vaya a <https://archphila.org/synod/>



## Sample Pulpit Announcements

**For use between February 21-March 2:** As your pastor (priest or deacon), I would like to personally invite you, on behalf of Archbishop Pérez to participate in an engagement session as part of the local synodal process in March and April. This is an unprecedented opportunity, so don't miss the chance to participate. Engagement sessions are being offered in English and Spanish throughout the archdiocese. Participants can attend any of the 26 engagement sessions held at a variety of times and locations, including nine sessions offered virtually on Zoom and 16 sessions offered in-person at parishes throughout the greater five county area. Registration is required to ensure adequate space for in-person sessions or to receive a Zoom link or webinar information via email for the virtual sessions. For more information, go to the Archdiocesan synodal website – <https://archphila.org/synod/>

**For use between March 2-April 4:** I wanted to remind you to participate in the local synodal process between now and April 4. If you have not attended an engagement session already, Archbishop Pérez is inviting all Catholics to participate. Sessions offered in English and Spanish, including sessions offered virtually on Zoom and in-person at parishes throughout the greater Archdiocese of Philadelphia area through April 4. Registration is required to ensure adequate space for in-person sessions or to receive a Zoom link or webinar information via email for the virtual sessions. Don't miss your chance to participate. For more information, go to the Archdiocesan synodal website <https://archphila.org/synod/>

**For use between February 21-March 2:** Como su párroco (sacerdote o diácono), me gustaría invitarles personalmente, en nombre del arzobispo Pérez, a participar en una sesión de escucha como parte del proceso sinodal local entre marzo y abril. Esta es una oportunidad sin precedentes, así que no pierdan la oportunidad de participar. Las sesiones de escucha se ofrecerán en inglés y en español en toda la arquidiócesis entre marzo y abril. Los participantes pueden asistir a cualquiera de las 26 sesiones de escucha celebradas en una variedad de horarios y lugares, incluidas nueve sesiones ofrecidas virtualmente en Zoom y 16 sesiones ofrecidas en persona en parroquias de toda la Arquidiócesis de Philadelphia. Se requiere inscripción para garantizar un espacio adecuado para las sesiones en persona o para recibir un enlace de Zoom o información del seminario web por correo electrónico para las sesiones virtuales. Para obtener más información, visite el sitio web sinodal de la Arquidiócesis – <https://archphila.org/synod/>



## Social Media Suggestions

- Below are general suggestions for how parishes can promote the synodal engagement sessions via your parish social media accounts.
- Refer to Vatican-issue social media resources and graphics <https://www.synod.va/en.html>
- Post three times a week on all parish social media accounts through the time of your session.

### Sample Ideas for posts:

**SAMPLE 1:** Don't miss the opportunity to participate in the local synodal process. Archbishop Pérez is inviting all Catholics to attend an engagement session offered in English and Spanish throughout the archdiocese in March and April. Participants can attend any of the 26 engagement sessions held at a variety of times and locations, including nine sessions offered virtually on Zoom and 16 sessions offered in-person at parishes throughout the greater five county area. Registration is required. For more information or to register, go to <https://archphila.org/synod/>

No pierdas la oportunidad de participar en el proceso sinodal local. El Arzobispo Pérez está invitando a todos los católicos a asistir a una sesión de escucha ofrecida en inglés y en español en toda la arquidiócesis en marzo y abril. Los participantes pueden asistir a cualquiera de las 26 sesiones de participación celebradas en una variedad de horarios y lugares, incluidas nueve sesiones ofrecidas virtualmente en Zoom y 16 sesiones ofrecidas en persona en parroquias de toda la Arquidiócesis de Philadelphia. Es necesario inscribirse con anticipación. Para obtener más información o para registrarse, vaya a <https://archphila.org/synod/>

**SAMPLE 2:** There is still time – don't forget to participate in an engagement session before April 2! Archbishop Pérez is inviting all Catholics to attend an engagement session offered in English and Spanish, including sessions offered virtually on Zoom and in-person at parishes throughout the greater five county area. Registration is required and sessions only run through April 4. For more information or to register, go to <https://archphila.org/synod/>


Todavía hay tiempo, ¡no olvides participar en una sesión de escucha antes del 2 de abril! El Arzobispo Pérez está invitando a todos los católicos a asistir a una sesión de escucha ofrecida en inglés y español, que incluye sesiones ofrecidas virtualmente y en persona en parroquias de toda la Arquidiócesis de Philadelphia. Se requiere inscripción y las sesiones solo se extenderán hasta el 4 de abril. Para obtener más información o para inscribirse, vaya a <https://archphila.org/synod/>

**SAMPLE 3:** Time is almost up – don't miss your chance to participate in an engagement session as part of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality. Both in-person and virtual sessions are still available through April 4 in English and Spanish. Registration is required. For more information or to register, go to <https://archphila.org/synod/>

El tiempo se acaba... no pierdas la oportunidad de participar en una sesión de escucha como parte del Sínodo de los Obispos sobre la sinodalidad. Tanto las sesiones presenciales como las virtuales siguen disponibles hasta el 4 de abril en inglés y en español. Es necesario inscribirse. Para obtener más información o para inscribirse, vaya a <https://archphila.org/synod/>



## Sample Registration Page (Signup Genius)



### In Person Synodal Listening Session - English Language

Please review the available slots below and click on the button to sign up. Thank you!

**Date:** 02/26/2022 (Sat.)

**Time:** 2:00pm - 4:00pm PST

**Location:** [St. Stephen Church](#)

Created by: [JF](#) Jennifer Fiduccia

#### MY RSVP

Will you be attending the event?

[RSVP NOW](#)

Did you already RSVP? You can [Edit your RSVP](#).

[Back to In Person Synodal Listening Session - English Language](#)

## My RSVP

Will you be attending on Sat., 02/26/2022 from 2:00pm - 4:00pm PST?

[Yes](#) [No](#) [Maybe](#)

How many will be attending, including yourself?

0

Public Comment (Optional)

Name

Email

Already have a SignUpGenius account? [Login](#)

By signing up, you agree to the SignUpGenius [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

[RSVP Now](#) [Cancel](#)

- Be sure to include the date, time, and address of the session.
- Include an option for others who might attend with them.
- Be sure to collect first and last name and an email address so that you can get in touch with them in the event of inclement weather or another issue



## Sample Parish Flyer



**Come to listen**  
**Come to share**  
**Come together**



You are invited to attend any of the regional synod gatherings throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in March and April.

The session closest to this parish is:

**March/April X, 2022**  
**Xam/pm-Xam/pm**

[INSERT LOCATION NAME]  
[INSERT LOCATION ADDRESS]  
[INSERT CITY, STATE, ZIP]

Don't miss the chance to participate in the local synodal process. Archbishop Pérez is inviting all Catholics to participate in this global opportunity!

This unprecedented opportunity will facilitate discussion and reflection to help shape the Church's understanding of herself and her mission of evangelization and forming disciples.

Registration is necessary to ensure adequate space for in-person sessions or to receive a Zoom link or webinar information via email for the virtual sessions.

**To register and for more information visit**  
**<https://archphila.org/synod/>**



## Troubleshooting concerns or issues

“We plan and God laughs!” goes the old saying. Whenever we gather people together, especially in our current environment, things can go differently than we had hoped or expected. Embracing this reality is in part, what it means to be a “synodal” Church. Our paths are never completely smooth but we continue to walk together.

In hosting a local session, some things may go differently than planned, but the most important thing in any issue that arises is to try and maintain for yourself and others a peaceful and serene tone. Below are some anticipated issues that you may experience and some guidance on how to respond.

1. **What if we have many more people than who register?** – Praise God! We would recommend anticipating a larger group than who registers. It is also helpful to have volunteers pre-determined who will bring out extra chairs or help people find open seats. Should you run out of materials, simply ask people to share the handout. Worst case scenario, the facilitator can simply read the questions more slowly and multiple times to help people engage.
2. **What if only very few people show up?** Praise God! “Where 2 or 3 are gathered, there so am I” said Jesus. An experience can be even more impactful in a small group. Listen to the Holy Spirit and don’t be discouraged. You may want to try to offer another session later. Synodality is not just for this moment, it is intended to be a way of life.
3. **What if the facilitator’s internet goes out or freezes while a virtual session is happening?** Don’t panic. It is good to have a volunteer who could serve as a backup facilitator just in case. This could also be the pastor or a member of parish staff. The volunteer should simply acknowledge to group that it appears as though the facilitator’s computer has frozen, and she/he will assume for responsibility for guiding the conversation.
4. **What if a small group conversation becomes tense or combative?** As a facilitator you should be moving throughout the room as small group conversations are happening to monitor how the dynamics are. If it becomes apparent to you that the interaction has become combative or it is brought to your attention, approach the table calmly and sit down. Ask if you can help facilitate and begin by praying with the table. Ask everyone to take a minute of silent reflection. Restate the hopes for the synodal conversations and ask who at the table hasn’t had a chance to speak or hasn’t spoken in a while. Restate the question and invite that person to begin sharing. If a participant or more than one participant is rude, disrespectful, and/or disruptive, address the behavior directly and invite them to take a break from sharing or leave the session altogether. If it is noticeable to the whole group, convene the entire room in prayer and silent reflection for two to three minutes to reset the dynamic.
5. **What if someone is upset that people aren’t wearing masks?** Remind the person that they are welcomed to wear a mask and if they would feel more comfortable space themselves from those who are not. Based on the current guidance, masks are optional.
6. **What if there is inclement weather?** If the session needs to be canceled, send an email to those who registered, post the announcement on your website and ideally place signs on the door of the venue to alert people that the session has been cancelled and will be rescheduled. If you can announce your rescheduled date in the same notice, that is ideal.





7. **What if your facilitator can't participate the day before or day of?** Prior to the session it is good to have a backup plan determined whether it be the pastor or another leader who plans to attend the session. Provide that person with this material and discuss the possibility of that situation and what the plan would be.
8. **What if someone demands that their quote be listed on the summary sheet?** The best thing to do is to capture the quote. You can also alert the person that the Holy See welcomes people to write directly to the Holy Father if they so choose.
9. **What if someone shows up who doesn't speak English?** We would recommend asking for any language-specific needs in addition to the including the statement of accessibility referenced in this guide. This will allow you to plan accordingly. If you know people who speak another language will be coming and you have 2 or more, consider creating a space for them to have a conversation at their own table(s) if it is more comfortable for them. If it is only one person, try to ascertain their language and direct them on a smart phone to the Vatican's website (<https://www.synod.va/en/news/opening-of-the-synodal-process.html>) which is translated into several languages. Invite them to stay and pray with you and even offer their thoughts at a table so that people can hear their voice heard.
10. **What if someone doesn't want to sit with a small group?** Honor their desire. Remind them that they don't have to answer every question or any question but do not force them to have to join a small group.