



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"> • Thank you to pastor (if not facilitator) and thank you to participants • Introduction of facilitator • Opening prayer • Prayer for the Synod on handout 	3-5
Synodal process overview and ground rules for participation (Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight peacefully and prayerfully what the session is and what it is not and emphasis the spirit being requested • 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 • Overview and ground rules on handout 	5-7
Lectio Scripture Reflection (Lector or Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator introduces lectio approach and the questions for reflection after each reading • Lector reads the scripture once and pauses • Facilitator reads the first question – <i>“what word or phrase spoke to you as you heard this scripture”</i> • Lector reads the scripture a second time and pauses • Facilitator reads the second question – <i>“where do you find joy or hope in this scripture?”</i> • Lector reads the scripture a third time and pauses • Facilitator invites a moment of quiet reflection and then invites people to share their reflections on the scripture at their table 	30
Setup for engagement activity (Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator explains the movement of the questions and emphasizes norms. 	5-7



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator explains the scribe role encouraging them to pass the role to the right so that 3 different people assist 	
Topic 1: Joys and Concerns about the Church from the people of God (Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator reads questions and invites group to take 2 minutes in silence to reflect. Facilitator invites groups to begin. <i>What fills you with joy about the Church?</i> <i>What concerns do you have about the Church?</i> 	20
Topic 2: Listening Aspect of the Church (Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <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> <i>How can the Church create greater opportunities for people to be heard?</i> 	20
Topic 3: Accompaniment/Journey (Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <i>How can the Church help you and others to grow in your relationship with Jesus and your relationship with the Church?</i> <i>What can the Church do to support people on their faith journeys?</i> 	20
Thank you and closing prayer (Facilitator and/or Pastor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	5-7