



Synod on Synodality

Listening Session – Selecting Reflection Questions

Suggested Themes to Consider for Synod Listening Session:

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

** Listening session Hosts are encouraged to select and focus on only 1-2 themes per gathering.*

Selecting Questions to Present at Listening Session:

For each suggested theme, the following section offers a series of possible reflection questions to stimulate dialogue on the topic. The listening session Host should not aim to cover all the themes or questions. Rather, in advance of the listening session the Host should review the list, identify 3-4 questions most pertinent to local context, and present only those questions for small group discussion.

If the Host prefers to develop alternative reflection questions, they should be relevant and brief. It is better to offer fewer questions that participants can deeply explore, than to have many questions covered superficially. A maximum of 3-4 questions, plus the Final Reflection Question (see bottom of page 3), is recommended for listening sessions.

1. Companions on the Journey

In the Church and in society we are side by side on the same road.

- In our local Church, who are those who “walk together”?
- Who are those who seem further apart?
- When do we need a companion to walk with us? When are we a companion to another?
- How are we called to grow as companions?

2. Listening

Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice.

- How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore?
- What facilitates or inhibits our listening?
- What are some limitations in our ability to listen, especially to views other than our own?
- What space is there for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?

3. Speaking Out

All are invited to speak with courage, and in freedom, truth, and charity.

- What enables or hinders speaking up courageously and candidly in our local Church and in society?
- When and how do we manage to say what is important to us?
- How do we actively or passively discourage others from speaking up courageously?
- What new or bolder voices might enrich our local Church?

4. Celebration

“Walking together” is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and celebration of the Eucharist.

- How do prayer and liturgical celebration inspire and guide our common mission in our community?
- How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy?
- Who are those missing from our prayer and liturgical celebration?
- What encouragement is offered to participate in the ministries of our local Church?

5. Sharing Responsibility for Our Common Mission

Synodality is at the service of the mission of the Church, in which all members are called to participate.

- Since we are all missionary disciples, how is every baptized person called to participate in the mission of the Church?
- What hinders the baptized from being active in mission?
- How do we encourage others by recognizing the good we see in them?
- What areas of mission are we neglecting?

6. Dialogue in Church and Society

Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it also enables mutual understanding.

- What are the places and means of dialogue within our local Church?
- How are conflicts, difficulties, or divergences of vision addressed?
- What particular issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to?
- How does the Church dialogue with and learn from other sectors of our overall society?

7. Ecumenism

The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey.

- What relationships does our Church community have with members of other Christian traditions and denominations?
- What do we share and how do we journey together?
- What fruits and difficulties have we drawn from walking together?
- How can we take the next step in walking forward with each other?

8. Authority and Participation

A synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church.

- How is authority or governance exercised within our local Church?
- How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice?
- How do synodal bodies function at the level of the local Church (Pastoral Councils, Finance Councils, etc.)?
- How can we foster a more synodal approach in our participation and leadership?

9. Discerning and Deciding

In a synodal style we make decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community.

- What methods and processes do we use in decision-making? How can they be improved?
- How do we promote participation in decision-making within hierarchical structures?
- Do our decision-making methods help us listen to the whole People of God?
- What is the relationship between consultation and decision-making, and how are these practiced?

10. Forming Ourselves in Synodality

Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation, and ongoing learning.

- How does our Church community form people to be more capable of “walking together”?
- How do we become better at listening to one another and engaging in dialogue?
- What prompted each of us to become involved in this synodal process?
- What formation is offered to foster discernment and the exercise of authority in a synodal way?

Final Reflection Question

As we conclude this time of listening and sharing personal views, experiences, and dreams for our Church:

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to us in this conversation today?