

ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE

UPDATED TOOLKIT FOR CHURCH LEADERS: GROUNDING IN OUR MISSION

This toolkit is provided to bring the Pastoral Plan to life.

KNOWING
JESUS CHRIST,
**EMBRACING
HIS MISSION**





The Archdiocese of Seattle's Pastoral Planning Process was developed after a broad consultative process with the people and ministries from 2020 through 2021. The guidance within is provided to support and encourage greater pastoral creativity across the Archdiocese of Seattle.

This toolkit is not designed to be directive or prescriptive – but to inspire you and your team to consider ways to help others know Jesus and embrace his mission – and to ground people in the pastoral plan and how to bring it to life.

Currently, we have a unique opportunity to build upon the momentum from the recent global synod. We encourage all parishes and ministries to keep that listening and discernment process alive.

Photos by Stephen Brashear

A TOOLKIT FOR MINISTRY LEADERS

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A TOOLKIT FOR MINISTRY LEADERS

THE PURPOSE

A successful pastoral planning process will result in a Church that reflects the Risen Christ to others. Our goal is to help people draw closer to Christ and joyfully share the Good News of His saving love with the world today.



"Your participation is needed to ensure our mission, the mission of Jesus Christ, takes root in the hearts and minds of our people and ministries. My hope is that by refocusing on the mission together, we can re-envision all our parishes, schools, and ministries to be a church, as Jesus, that is close to the people and that continually draws people closer to Christ, regardless of where they are in their faith journey."

- Archbishop Paul D. Etienne



PASTORAL PLANNING

There isn't one "right way" to live out our mission. People encounter Jesus in many ways, and our job is to bring more people closer to Christ. We use pastoral planning to continually examine how we are achieving this mission.

Continue to listen. To discern. To pray together.

We depend on the Holy Spirit to inspire and lead all of us toward discipleship, whether in liturgy, preaching, catechesis and education, administration or works of mercy. That's why ongoing prayer and encounter must be at the forefront of every pastoral planning effort, especially among your core team. The pastoral planning prayer can get you started.

PRAYER FOR PASTORAL PLANNING

Lord Jesus, we give you thanks for your ministry on earth, in which you proclaimed the Kingdom of God and conversion of life. We give you thanks for your passion, death and resurrection by which you manifested the perfect love of God, offering all who believe in you the gift of eternal life. We thank you for your promise to remain with us always as we faithfully carry out your mission.

As members of your Mystical Body, the Church, we come to you seeking the gift and guidance of your Holy Spirit. Help us to become who you call us to be and to accomplish all you ask of us according to the will of the Father.

Grant us the grace of knowing you, loving you and serving you in all our brothers and sisters. Grant that our faith in you may permeate every aspect of our lives. Help us to shed all worldly ways that we may live the Gospel with truth and integrity. Grant that we may be more perfectly conformed to you and live as your witnesses in the world today. Amen.

Mother of the New Evangelization, pray for us!

STEPS FOR PLANNING

As the Catholic Church in Western Washington continues to journey together on a multi-year process of re-envisioning Archdiocesan ministries, our vision continues to call for people to grow in relationship with Christ (Encounter), to journey together in this life (Accompany), and to continually integrate our faith into our daily lives as the People of God (Live the Joy of the Gospel).

Encounter: The mission of the Church, the Body of Christ, is the mission of Jesus. Thus, the mission is rooted in knowing Jesus. Parishes and ministries are encouraged to assemble their pastoral leadership teams (e.g.; staff, ministry leads, and consultative bodies) and make time for intentional encounter in both personal and communal settings. This toolkit seeks to provide guidance for how pastoral leaders may gather teams for encounter.

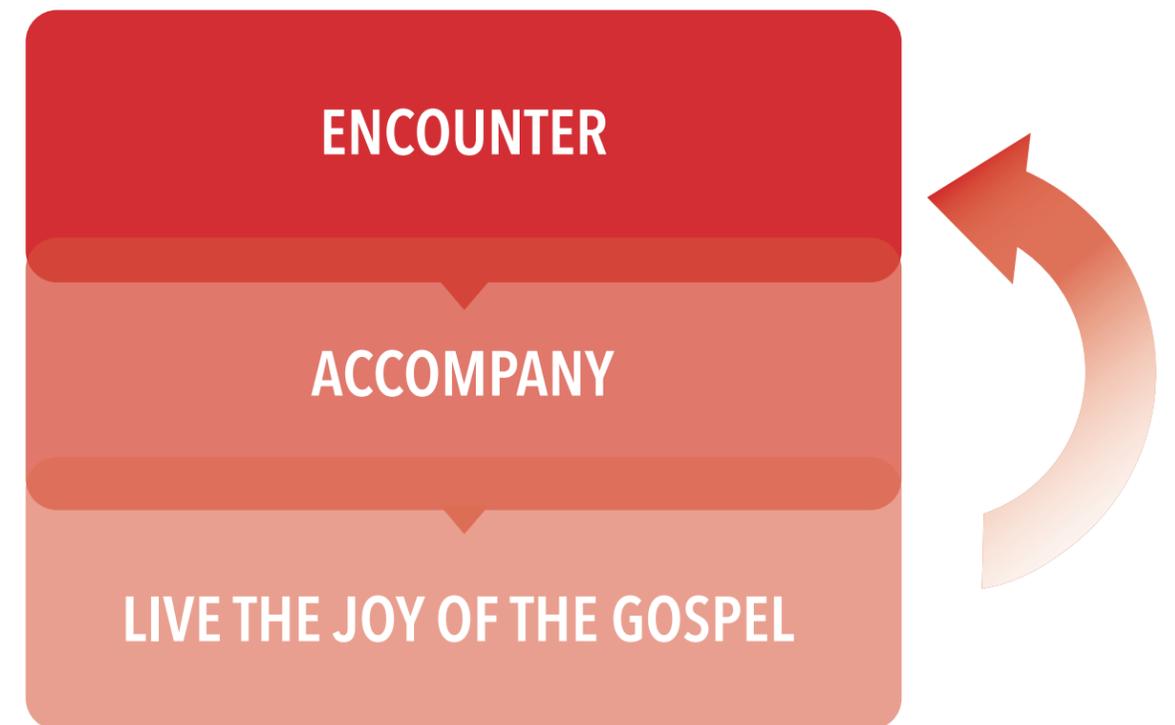
Accompany: Every act of discernment begins in humility and (even in personal matters) is done within a community of faith. This past year's synodal efforts have kickstarted dialogue and communal discernment for many parishes, but only serves as a beginning toward a spirituality of synodality. Ongoing discernment needs time and prayer to 'read the signs of the times' and listen for the Holy Spirit's call. Whether your parish leadership team is ready to continue or begin the dialogue, this toolkit seeks to provide ideas to build greater participation and communion in your parish so we may better discern the call of the Holy Spirit in service to our shared Mission.

Live the Joy of the Gospel: Ongoing encounter and accompaniment provide a well spring of opportunities to integrate our relationship with Christ more deeply into our daily lives and ministries. After rooting in Encounter and Accompaniment, parishes are encouraged to begin to assess possibilities for living the Gospel in the world.

STEPS FOR PLANNING

Each parish and ministry is unique and there is no "one size fits all" approach to pastoral planning.

The three themes of the pastoral plan build upon each other – and the cycle continues to build on itself. As we encounter Christ, we are then able to more fully accompany others so that together we can live the Joy of the Gospel.





ASSEMBLE YOUR TEAM

Now is the time to gather a team to focus on the pastoral plan for mission.

Pastoral leaders should call upon key leaders (staff, ministry leads, members of consultative bodies, or other excellent volunteers) who are inspired by their own encounter with Jesus, who desire to help others grow closer to Christ, and who can be relied upon as a steering committee for pastoral planning. We encourage these team members to ground themselves in the “Knowing Jesus Christ, Embracing His Mission” pastoral plan and help educate the wider community about the purpose and importance of ongoing pastoral planning.

This team will do much of the heavy lifting to ensure this process is grounded in prayer – and follows the synodal process of listening and discernment.



ENCOUNTER

Jesus invites all of us to have a personal relationship with him. Encounter is about entering into this relationship through real, authentic experiences and recognizing his presence in our lives and in others.

Suggested Scriptures: [Matthew 28](#) | [Mark 16](#) | [Luke 24](#) | [John 20–21](#) | [Acts 1: 1–11](#)

In encounter we come together as children of God. After assembling a core team for pastoral planning, invite team members to the first of a regular cadence of intentional prayer and encounter opportunities (e.g.; prayer services, eucharistic adoration, Mass). These encounter experiences and reflection opportunities for the team serve two purposes: The first is to ground the team in the pastoral plan, our mission as church, and to welcome the Holy Spirit into the work of this team. The second purpose is to provide the foundation to invite the larger community into encounter and reflection experiences.

For the first team meeting, we suggest asking leaders to pray on the pastoral needs of the community.

ENCOUNTER

Welcome the group to share their reflections among the team. You might develop your own discussion prompts, or you are free to consider the discussion prompts below.

- Start and end meeting with prayer.
- Welcome the group to share their reflections.
- Consider potential discussion prompts:
 - How is God at work in the life of our community?
 - In what ways does the community encourage greater openness to the Holy Spirit? (e.g.; pulpit, programs, ministries, faith formation)
 - How do the liturgies / outreach ministries / schools, etc. reflect the community's unique relationship with God and serve to deepen a person's relationship with God?
 - In what ways do we equip ourselves and others to encounter Jesus Christ? To encounter one another?
 - How do you see people actively growing in their spiritual maturity as followers of Christ?
 - List the various ways you see people going forth to share the Gospel.
 - How might we engage the broader community in pastoral planning?
 - Continue to communicate with Pastoral Leadership Teams and bring them together for encounter, reflection, dialogue, and discernment.



ACCOMPANY

Accompaniment is how we can spiritually support others, especially those who are struggling. It requires that we are genuinely present with them, listening to them and supporting them with the goal of helping them hear God's call for them. We are like a bridge of support, connecting others to Jesus Christ.

Accompany each other, as one human family, on the journey of discipleship.

Suggested Scriptures: [Luke 24: 15-17](#) | [Luke 22: 27](#) | [Matthew 25: 40](#) | [Acts 1: 8](#)

As you continue to bring your core team together for encounter, begin to consider how to engage the broader parish community in a process of communal discernment, which is a primary form of accompaniment.

ACCOMPANY

Here is a sample process to engage the broader community:

- Invite the broader community to dialogue and communal discernment, building on the synod experience. Here is a simple tool to follow when gathering people for a listening event, which outlines a framework provided for hosting synodal dialogue:
 - Host a liturgical event - not a town hall or parliamentary debate.
 - Encourage prayer in the lead up to the event, asking participants to prayerfully consider key questions.
 - Spend time sharing the pastoral plan and educating people about its purpose.
 - Designate a facilitator and note taker. Discuss key accompaniment questions such as:
 - i. How do we recognize one another as brothers and sisters in Christ?
 - ii. In what ways do we accompany one another?
 - iii. How might we provide better accompaniment?
 - iv. How are we responding to Jesus' call to live as his disciples?
 - v. You could also discuss elements from the Archdiocesan Synodal Synthesis
- After listening has taken place, reconvene the parish team to synthesize what was heard.
- Consider publishing "what we heard" to the parish via the bulletin or during a pulpit announcement.



LIVE THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

Our faith is always personal, but it should never be completely private. The love and joy we experience in our relationship with Jesus should radiate out to all those we meet.

Focus: Live the unconditional love and joy of the Gospel

Suggested Scriptures: [1 Peter 3: 15](#) | [John 13: 34-35](#) | [Luke 4: 16-21](#) | [Matthew 25: 31-46](#)

We should always be prepared to give witness to our faith, both by sharing the story of how Jesus has changed our lives and in acts of loving service to others. Encourage pastoral leadership teams to pray, dialogue, and share their own personal faith experiences.

LIVE THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

Here are some ideas for how to live the Joy of the Gospel:

- Encourage pastoral leaders to take inventory of their own faith:
 - Who gives witness to the Christian life in ways that I admire?
 - How do I publicly give witness with other Catholics?
In the broader community?
 - In what situations and with what people is this most challenging for me?
 - Are these challenges calling me to a deepening conversion and trust of Jesus?
- Inspire the broader community to share their love of Christ:
 - Highlight people in your ministry who are putting the love and joy of the Gospel into action for your community. You can do this through videos, bulletin inserts, stories on website or witness talks.
 - Highlight ways people can get involved in your various ministries.
 - Provide tips for how people can easily share their faith in small simple ways.





RESOURCES

Pastoral Plan

- **Pastoral Plan:** <https://archseattle.org/about-the-archdiocese-of-seattle/archbishop-etienne/pastoralplanning/pastoral-plan/>
- **Pastoral Plan Prayer PDF:** https://archseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/PastoralPlanning_Prayer.pdf
- **Pastoral Plan Toolkit for Catholics:** https://archseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/PastoralPlanning_Toolkit_fnl.pdf
- **Archbishop Etienne's Pastoral Plan video:** <https://vimeo.com/553104162>
Spanish subtitles: <https://vimeo.com/553559976>
- **Video about Accompaniment by Jaisy Joseph:** <https://vimeo.com/553531328>
- **Reflection Worksheet:** <https://archseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Reflection-Worksheet-Final.pdf>
- **Archdiocesan Synod Synthesis** <https://archseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Final-Synthesis-with-appendix-min.pdf>



OTHER RESOURCES

Encounter Christ

- **Encounter Jesus Christ page on Archdiocese website:**
<https://archseattle.org/about-the-archdiocese-of-seattle/archbishop-etienne/pastoralplanning/pastoral-plan/encounter/>
- **Faith Formation Online resource page on Christology**
<https://seattlearchmedia.weebly.com/christology.html>
- **Bishop Barron on Having a Personal Relationship with Jesus**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2KZDQSxwF4>
- **Encountering Christ (for kids-classroom/teacher resources)**
<https://www.thereligionteacher.com/encounter-christ/>

Accompany Others

- **Accompany Others page on the Archdiocese website**
<https://archseattle.org/about-the-archdiocese-of-seattle/archbishop-etienne/pastoralplanning/pastoral-plan/accompany/>
- ***Called by Name, Sent in His Name - Reflections on an Outward-Bound Church by Archbishop Paul-Andre Durocher (Book)***
<http://www.twentythirdpublications.com/cabynaseinhi.html>
- ***The Art of Accompaniment-Four Essential Conversations on Becoming the Kind of Parish the Church Needs Today by Bill Huebsch (Book)***
<http://www.twentythirdpublications.com/artofacniesc.html>
- **Accompanying Youth and Young Adults on Their Journey as Missionary Disciples**
<https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/catechetical-sunday/living-disciples/accompanying-youth-and-young-adults-on-their-journey-as-missionary-disciples>

OTHER RESOURCES

Live/Share the Gospel

- **Live the Gospel page on the Archdiocese website**
<https://archseattle.org/about-the-archdiocese-of-seattle/archbishop-etienne/pastoralplanning/pastoral-plan/live-the-gospel/>
- **Preparing Hearts and Minds: 9 Simple Ways for Catechists to Cultivate a Living Faith (Online Summer Series)**
<https://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com/tag/preparing-hearts-and-minds-series/>
- **Preparing Hearts and Minds: 9 Simple Ways for Catechists to Cultivate a Living Faith (Book Format)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU9zIE2dmWY>
- **Father Mike Schmitz on how to Share the Gospel (and How Not to)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU9zIE2dmWY>
- **The Joy of the Gospel**
<https://store.usccb.org/products/the-joy-of-the-gospel-evangelii-gaudium>
- **Faith Formation online resource pages**
<https://seattlearchmedia.weebly.com/beatitudes.html>
<https://seattlearchmedia.weebly.com/catholic-social-teaching.html>



