



Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Synod Coordinator Training Worksheet

Archdiocese of Seattle – December 2021

The mission of the Church requires the entire People of God to be on a journey together, with each member playing his or her crucial role. The purpose of this movement is for all the Church to unite in communion and participation how we move forward and become a more synodal Church in the long-term.

Please use this worksheet as a tool for you to use to consider these questions and kickstart your own planning efforts. In addition to this worksheet, you may find supplemental resources in the appendix which you might find helpful throughout the Synodal process.

When planning listening sessions, coordinators should consider the following questions:

- Who is planning and organizing?
- Who are we listening to?
- Where and when will it take place?
- How will we facilitate the listening?

Also recommended: [Process for Facilitating Synodal Consultations.](#)

Who is planning and organizing?

As His children, we have all received gifts from God. These gifts differ "according to the grace given to us," but no matter what they are, Christ calls us to use them (Romans 12:6). In planning the team who will oversee synodal efforts in your community, we should call to mind the gifts present in our communities, as well as the responsibilities we have to one another as children of God. When finding a team to lead this process, it is important to remember the following:

- Each local listening exercise must be guided by the principles of communion, participation, and mission.
- Fairness, ensuring that participation in the listening process treats each person equally, so that every voice can be duly heard.
- This is a process in discernment through listening. Aim to create space for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

What skills (e.g. prayer leadership, tech-savviness, etc) do you think it will be useful for your team to have when planning/ leading listening sessions?

Are there ministries or groups that might help finding people with these skills?

Consider ministry groups (prayer teams, food bank volunteers), cultural communities (Spanish speakers, immigrant families), lay movements (Knights of Columbus), religious Brothers and Sisters, and any other groups that may be active in your community.

Who are we listening to?

Each community is unique, and is itself made up of smaller communities. We seek to collect stories through this Synod that reflect this uniqueness. Based on our discussion, think about the various groups in your community and what you can do to encourage their participation. Remember, a major goal of this initial effort is to build a strong foundation for future listening; we dream big, start small, and do it well! Building connections with those we hear from now will help us to be better servants of all God's children moving forward.

What are some of the main groups that make up your community?

Consider ministry groups (prayer teams, youth groups), cultural communities (consider languages), lay movements, and other groups active in your community (families, the youth, etc).

What groups in your community can most easily be reached in this process?

Who are the voices in your community that might not always be heard?

Consider those with limited access to resources or events, those who speak different languages, and those who may have "fallen away" from the Church.

How will we facilitate listening?

A "Synod" is, literally, a path that we are on together. The beauty of this listening is that it calls us to come together both in the sharing our stories, and in making a space to listen. Take some time to consider where you will need help building this space, and the people who can help you do it. Some important things to consider when building a successful listening session are:

- **Accessibility** to ensure as many people as possible can participate, regardless of location, language, education, socio-economic status, ability/disability, and material resources.
- **Cultural Awareness** to celebrate and embrace diversity within your communities.

What people/organizations in your community can help you get the word out about listening?

What roles do you think will be important during a listening session? (e.g. microphone handler, prayer leader, etc) *Note, if you are having a hard time picturing this, we recommend reviewing the "Sample Content Outline for a Synodal Consultation" found on page 8 of [this resource](#).*

Are there people/organizations in your community who could help in hosting *their own* listening sessions?

How will we open ourselves to the Spirit?

The way we conduct our synodal encounters in our parishes and communities, whether large or small, will help people experience the Spirit's presence in these gatherings. We can help make room for the Spirit by grounding each and every gathering in prayer and the Word of God. It is important that we make the space we create inviting for the Spirit, and inviting for the children of God. To help you with this, we have developed a prayer guide for our Synod coordinators, which you can find on the next page.

What can we do to make sure our synodal process is grounded in prayer?

How can we make our listening session a holy space and one worthy of the work we are doing for God?

What can we do to make those attending comfortable in sharing their story during a listening session?
