



# Community Listening Complete Overview

## “What are our gifts?”

### Overview

Through these sessions, people will have an opportunity to provide direct input on the potential vision and initiatives of the parish family, guiding the One Parish Plan. This is a prayerful, synodal session where participants break into small groups. For harder to reach groups, provide additional opportunities, such as holding the listening session as part of smaller groups (youth, social justice etc.) that already have regular meetings. Or consider conducting an online meeting with participants breaking into smaller online meeting rooms for the discussion portion.

Provide the questions in advance and ask the faith community to pray over them and come prepared to discuss them. At the end of the session, have the notetakers combine what they heard into summarized responses to each of the questions and share these with the Parish Family Advisory Council. The PFAC will then be responsible for reviewing these input sheets and creating a report for the parish family.

### Setting Up

Every parish should host at least one community listening session. Depending on the parish, more may be necessary - especially if there are different language needs. Utilize the [synodal listening model in the Partners in the Gospel Handbook](#) to structure these discussions with sufficient moderators and notetakers to support and capture the conversation. Add the input sessions on the parish family public events calendar and promote them widely - through Mass announcements, bulletins, digital newsletters, etc. Consider using [this prayer to the Holy Spirit from the USCCB](#) to ground the session.

### Event Flow

The listening session should last about 90 minutes. The PFAC and PFLT will ideally provide notetakers and facilitators to manage discussions and, if they are unable to provide them, to train others to serve in these roles. Recording the notes directly on a laptop is preferred. The goal is not to seek consensus but ensure each participant's voice is heard and captured. A recommended flow for the session is as follows:

- Opening prayer (10 minutes)
- Review the process (5 minutes)
- Read the questions (10 minutes)
- Small group discussion (~65 minutes):
  1. How have your experiences in our parish brought you closer to God? What has been the spiritual impact of your participation in our parish?
  2. If you had to describe the main gifts and charisms of our parish to a newcomer in one sentence, what would you say? What is your favorite part about being a parishioner? What stands out to you as something to be proud of?"
- Concluding prayer (10 minutes)