



Listening Session: Planner Guide

“What opportunities and challenges exist for us?”

Overview

Hold a parish family-wide session, facilitated by the pastoral leader and the Parish Family Advisory Council, for each of the questions in this section. Provide the “What opportunities and challenges exist for us?” prompts to the faith community in advance, along with information drawn from the parish viability metrics and demographic reports provided to the community. Some may choose to share the entire demographics report with the community in advance, while others may prefer to walk through elements of the report at the start of the listening session.

Ask the community to prayerfully reflect on the questions and information provided. Hold discussions in a synodal fashion, gathering into small groups, allowing each person in the group to share without response or interruption. 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 be able to serve in these roles.

At the end of the discussion, the notetakers will combine what they heard into summarized responses to each of the questions, serving as the voice of the group, and share these with the Parish Family Advisory Council. The PFAC will then be responsible for reviewing these input sheets and creating a summary report to share with the parish family.

Event Flow (~2 hours)

- Opening prayer - 10 minutes
- Process overview - 5 minutes
- Background information and questions overview -10 minutes
- Small group discussion ~ 90 minutes – full walkthrough on next pages
- Concluding prayer -10 minutes

Questions to Ask

1. What challenges do you see that exist in the wider community? An example could be having a large homeless or undocumented immigrant population with specific needs.
2. What challenges do you see that exist in the parish? An example could be having a large number of families with teenagers but not being able to hire a youth minister.
3. What opportunities do you see (in our parish and in the wider community) to more effectively serve and accompany others?