

Parish Launch Packet
for
The Synod of Bishops 2023
for
The Diocese of Salt Lake City

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DOCUMENT INTRODUCTION

This packet is designed to help you launch the Synod of Bishops 2023 participation in your parish territory. Please review it and keep in mind this is only a guideline. Each location will know what works best for them. You are free to modify what you need. However, your results will need to be submitted in a very specific format. It is highly advised to understand the submission process before organizing and holding listening sessions.

PREPARATION

ROLES

The three main roles are pastor, facilitator, and note taker. In some situations, an interpreter, translator, check-in person or other helpers may be needed or desired. Also, in some situations a person may fulfill multiple roles, or repeatedly fulfill the same roles. It is recommended that your facilitator not also be the note-taker.

Pastors

There are three main responsibilities for you to fulfill:

1. It is important to understand that you are to invite the people of God, both Catholics in your parish, and non-Catholics in your parish territory. You will see more description on this later in this document.
2. You will need to recruit (1) a facilitator for each listening session; (2) a note-taker for each listening session; (3) an interpreter (if needed) for each listening session. Depending on how you conduct your listening sessions, the same persons could repeatedly hold these positions, or maybe you have more listening sessions and you prefer to have a small team of people. If your listening sessions are multilingual, your note-taker and facilitator should be able to speak/translate in the needed languages, or they will need an interpreter and/or translator. Your facilitator, note-taker, and you could be at the door to collect the necessary demographic information, or you could recruit someone to do this for you. The bottom line is you will want to recruit these people in advance.
3. It is advised that you are present for the listening sessions. If the people want something important to be heard, one must be present to hear and understand the sentiment that goes along with it.
4. Plan your listening sessions to be completed with your parish's responses to be submitted no later than July 15. With Thanksgiving, Advent Penance Services,

Christmas, and the many varied activities we carry out over late November and December, you may find it most suitable to hold your listening sessions in January. If you are able to start sooner, wonderful!

5. Your spiritual leadership is important to encourage the people of God to speak candidly, freely, and respectfully listen to others with differing opinions and thoughts.

Facilitators

Thank you for facilitating a listening session, you are very appreciated! Here are your responsibilities and some recommendations:

Facilitators

1. Welcoming: please welcome the participants and use the time before the formal start to greet them and help everyone feel welcomed. Remember, there will likely be non-Catholics attending, or those who have had negative experiences in the Church, who have come to share in this experience.
2. If there is not an additional volunteer to collect demographic information at the door, please work together with the note-taker and pastor to collect this information. See Appendix A for a recommended collection method.
3. Determine with your pastor or parish administrator and the people attending which topics you will address that day. In some cases, the topics may have been predetermined by way of survey or other mechanism. It is advised that a topic from the majority interest is used, and in a second listening session a topic from a minority interest is used.
4. When it is time to begin, please manage everyone's time well. Announce how long the listening session will be and keep to that time limit. Depending on the size of your group, thirty to sixty minutes should be enough time to hear what needs to be said. Some topics may go faster or take longer, but keep to your time limit as a maximum.
5. See the "Listening Session" section below for recommendations on how to run the session.
6. Guide the discussion to ensure that everyone who would like to speak has that opportunity. Be careful not to let one or a few people dominate the conversation or use too much of the available time. It is advised to have a pad of paper to write the order of who will speak next, in the event you have many people wanting to speak. If you have

a microphone on stand, people could always line up to speak and this would take care of this concern. Work with your pastor to setup what is most advantageous to your location.

7. Temper the conversation as needed. Sometimes, a person's attitude or comments can be aggressive, dismissive, condescending, etc. If this happens it is important to remain calm, and if necessary, remind everyone that it is important to be charitable, listen with respect, but also comment with respect, etc. Hopefully, this is a non-issue, but be prepared to temper as needed.
8. Thank everyone for both listening and speaking, and for providing valuable input to the Synod of Bishops 2023.

Note-taker

Thank you for helping with this most important aspect of the listening sessions. There are two main parts to your participation: (1) recording the main ideas, points, and sentiments of the listening session; (2) uploading your notes as your parish's official response to be collated and organized by the diocese. Your response that you submit will be combined with others from across the diocese and help us get a more complete view of the people of God on your chosen topic. Here are your responsibilities and helpful recommendations:

1. Before the event, be sure to have your supplies ready. If using a laptop or other electronic device, please have a pen and paper ready as a backup (just in case).
2. If you decide to audio record the conversation and you are in a large room, the recording may not be of good quality to pick up voices from far away. Audio recordings are very helpful, but be sure to be taking notes as you go along.
3. If there is not an additional volunteer to collect demographic information at the door, please work together with the facilitator and pastor to collect this information. See Appendix A for a recommended collection method.
4. During the listening sessions, try to capture the essence of the conversation and the sentiment. There is no need to quote everything, but you may find this helpful on occasion.
5. If a person making a statement wants to remain anonymous, please respect that in your response.

6. After the listening session, organize your notes according to the online submission form. On the input form, some questions are required and some are optional. You do not need to answer all the questions. It is very helpful to get acquainted with this form before your listening session. This will help you record your notes in a more useful fashion, and know what information is being sought.
7. The note-taker is to submit the demographic information and responses in the online reporting. It is strongly recommended to do this as soon as possible, to more easily recall the experience and the nuances of the listening session.
8. All submissions should be in English to ensure the correct translation and sentiments are being submitted. It will be impossible to do this unless one is at the listening session. This is to be done on the local level, then uploaded.
- 9. There is a hard deadline of July, 15, 2022 for submissions.**
10. Response Submission Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/zyBDMpfXuJ>

INVITING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

It is important to extend invitations to the listening sessions to people beyond who attend Mass and the parish life. Extending invitations to the marginalized, poor, people of other organizations, religious orders, university campuses, prisons, etc. are all examples of reaching beyond your parish property. Reach out to others within your parish territory and include them with the whole of others who plan to attend.

The goal of preparing the people of God prior to the start of the listening sessions is to invigorate a spirit of dialogue, collaboration, and synodality within the diocese as a crucial part of the synod process, which is focused upon all the baptized. However, others are invited too.

Insofar as others want to help the Church on her synodal journey of seeking what is good and true, others are invited. No one – matter their religious affiliation – should be excluded from sharing their perspective and experiences.

It is important to be listening in an inclusive manner, i.e., to ensure minority positions are recognized and included.

EUCCHARISTIC PARISH OPENING

Our bishop, the Most Rev. Oscar Solis, is calling us to celebrate the Eucharist together, in each parish, as our first sign of desired unity with God as we seek greater unity among the people of God and the Body of Christ. The spirit in which we begin together speaks of our desire to work

for greater unity and give focus to our faithfulness in following and seeking God, in journeying together in faith, hope, and love.

On the weekend of November 13-14, at all Sunday celebrations (including the Sunday Vigil), please pray the *Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus* prayer and have your pastor or delegated person announce the opening of the Synod in your parish territory. Secondly, encourage and invite participation in the coming month's listening sessions and give a brief description. The *Introduction to Attendees* in the Listening Session section below could be adapted for this purpose.

DECIDING WHICH TOPICS

There is no requirement to address all of the topics. The local listening sessions are to pursue what is of most interest to the people attending, and additional topics not on the list also may be submitted. Each location must decide for themselves what is the best method of determining the topics for the listening sessions. You will need to poll those who attend as to what is of interest to them. You could accomplish this at the listening session itself, or in advance with a survey. Perhaps, you will have other ideas for determining the interest and number of sessions you desire.

However, a word of caution! Naturally, there will be more popular topics that will be covered. Please be sure to include and take care for minority positions as well. It may be impossible to cover every person's interest, but in the feedback reporting be sure to note topics that were not covered (but desired) and why they could not be addressed. Try to address minority positions where possible.

Again, the local parish will need to determine their best method for determining which topics to address in their listening sessions.

Here is an example how one location could hold their listening sessions:

A bilingual parish decides to schedule three Wednesday evenings for listening sessions, and they want those attending to determine the topics to be addressed. Their desire is to keep everyone in one larger group to facilitate better listening and understanding. Varied people from within their parish and visitors from outside the parish have a better opportunity to understand varied experiences, ideas, positions, and thoughts. They feel it is important for the Latino parishioners and the Anglo parishioners to hear each others' stories, ideas, and input. Without bringing them together these major groups of the parish may not hear and understand the deeply important input from one another.

Wed. Week 1: Everyone gathers, is welcomed, and begins with the *Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus* and they discuss for fifteen minutes and vote on which interests them the most. The first listening session is the one that was most popular. The listening session is held and everyone has an opportunity to give their input. The listening session ends. The topic of the second listening session was selected by the pastor among the topics of the minority interests. This is to be sure to not let the majority drown out the minority. The listening session is held. Everyone is invited to return the next week for additional listening sessions.

Wed. Week 2: Repeat the process of week 1

Wed. Week 3: This evening's listening sessions are a bit different. Those attending are asked to submit topics that are not on the list. The format of weeks one and two is followed.

In the above example, a total of six listening sessions were held. If you prefer you could determine your listening session topics in advance by way of survey or other mechanism. However, the people answering the survey, might not be the same people attending.

MARKETING THE SYNOD

Each parish territory will market in their own way in a manner that is best suited to them. Of course, we most likely would use our existing methods of parish Sunday bulletins, newsletters, posters, bulletin board flyers, etc. If you are going invite and reach the peripheries, going beyond the normal methods is something that needs to be considered. Perhaps, bulk mail, social media, websites, and posting flyers around town might be of interest. Creativity for reaching those in nursing homes, homebound, prisoners, or others with mobility challenges may be considered. Some will have to cover great distances and maybe a Zoom or other video conference opportunity would be advantageous. Whatever marketing methods you employ, remember to invite others outside your immediate community.

LISTENING SESSIONS

Setup

1. Each listening session should have one facilitator and one note-taker. Keep in mind the note-taker will be the one to submit the response in English online after the session is over.

2. Select your scripture for proclamation and reflection and someone to proclaim it. This is a recommended option, but you may substitute a different spiritual preparation for the listening session.
3. Have a microphone ready (if needed).
4. At the event, collect demographic information that will be submitted in the formal reporting process. This will also serve to count how many people participated too.
5. Have appropriate Covid-19 safety and sanitization materials available.

Welcome

Welcome everyone, point out where the restrooms are located, and announce the length of the activity and how many listening sessions will be held that day.

Introduction to Attendees

Participation in the Synod of Bishops is an invitation to the people of God to discover where we have been, where we are, and where we would like to go as a Church. Past experiences have formed us, and sometimes have had very powerful positive or negative consequences that affect our relationship with God and one another. Current expressions of our faith (or lack of faith), relationships to God and neighbor, worship, sense of mission, present challenges, joys, and local realities shape the activity, prayer, and spirituality of the Body of Christ. The future beholds our aspirations and dreams. Your participation in the Synod of Bishops will give valuable input to the bishops and Church at large.

Your participation is not aimed at problem solving, or fixing the problem. Yes, we have areas that need improvement and we can articulate this. However, the Synod is about first listening to one another. We aim to journey together going forward, but first we must be willing to listen to one another for the purpose of understanding one another. This does not mean we will all agree, but in charity, gentleness, humility and kindness it is important that we listen to the experiences of others. There will be differences in faith, ideologies, opinions, and philosophies. We are seeking to understand the desire and lived experience of others.

Having listened to others for the sake of understanding it is important to be able to articulate what we understand. Paraphrasing, or restating what one understands to the other, is often a helpful tool. When someone's position is different from our belief, faith, or thought, we do not condemn, discount, and otherwise seek to diminish what was said. The goal is to listen, so as to understand.

Why is this so important? The feedback that results from our listening sessions will inform the bishops of where our faith and hearts are being directed. Not just the regular Catholic in the pew on Sunday, but the greater part of society. To articulate what we learn from one another is valuable input. It also allows us to show respect and offer dignity to others that may not understand the faith, have differing concerns or ideas. If anything, it will illustrate the scope of our most important concerns and desires going forward.

The theme of the Synod is “Communion, Mission, Participation.” If we keep in mind that working for these three aspects to be strengthened through listening first, perhaps we will learn more about the greater reality of our lives together and help us journey together as a Church in taking positive steps forward in the faithfulness. The work of the bishops will continue when our part is complete, but the fruit of the listening sessions may continue to help us in our local parishes, schools, and other locations long after our responses are given to the bishops.

Opening Prayer: *Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus*

The following prayer is recommended, and it is prayed by the bishops when they come together for a synod. Together we humbly acknowledge our human weakness, and call on the Holy Spirit to lead us in truth and unity:

Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus (Here we are, Holy Spirit)

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name. With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it. We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions. Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right. All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.

Scriptural Reflection

Proclaim a Gospel reading, and take a moment to reflect on it as a group. Perhaps ask those attending to offer their reflection on the scripture, read a commentary previously prepared, or have a deacon or priest offer or guide a reflection and elicit reflection from the group. These or methods of reflection could be employed.

The Word of God inspires and enlightens our journey together, giving us food to share with one another on the way. Participants are invited to comment on the attitudes of the characters and to react to them; they may be asked if a particular gesture or word of Jesus

reminds them of, or sheds light on, something in their daily lives. We can then look for how a particular Gospel passage renews our way of living in the Church. For example, we can read Mk 10:46-52, observing the attitude of the different characters, what it evokes of the Church as we know it, and then how Jesus allows the excluded Bartimaeus to walk forward with everyone. We can likewise pray over Luke 24:13-35, seeing Jesus transform the disciples' disappointment into missionary joy and dynamism on the road to Emmaus, as he made their hearts burn within them, walking with them on the way.

Proclaiming the Word of God and taking adequate time to reflect on it will help us in our synodal journey. Where are we being called to listen to one another, exercise greater humility and respect, and seeking deeper understanding of one another? Here are some Gospel recommendations:

Mt 4:23-25	Ministering to a great multitude
Mt 5:1-12	The Sermon on the Mount
Mt 8:5-13	The healing of the centurion's servant
Mt 17: 24-28	The conditions of discipleship
Mt 19: 21-35	The parable of the unforgiving servant
Mk 2: 1-12	The healing of a paralytic
Mk 4: 35-41	The calming of the sea
Mk 10:46-52	Bartimaeus
Lk 2: 120	The birth of Jesus and visiting of the shepherds
Lk 6: 20-26	The sermon on the plain
Lk 6: 37-42	Judging others
Lk 17: 11-19	The cleansing of ten lepers
Lk 24:13-35	The road to Emmaus
Jn 4:4-42	The Samaritan woman at the well
Jn 6:16-21	Walking on water
Jn 9	The man born blind

Jn 21: 15-19 Do you love me?

Select a Topic

Review the ten given topics, or prepare a handout suited to your needs for the people to use. Ask for input for which topic should be selected. Discover which is most interesting to the group. Alternately, the topics could be selected by survey or other means prior to the date of the listening session. This however, poses the problem that the survey interests may not match the interests of those who actually attend the listening sessions.

Topics

For your listening session address only one the following topics at a time. You can hold listening sessions for however few or many of the topics you desire. However, the goal in submission is NOT to include multiple topics in the same submission. The listening session should have a clear, and singular focus of one topic.

GROWTH IN THE JOURNEY

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.” How is this “journeying together” happening today in your local Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”?

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? How are we called to grow as companions? What groups or individuals are left on the margins?

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? How are the laity listened to, especially women and young people? What facilitates or inhibits our listening? How well do we listen to those on the peripheries? How is the contribution of consecrated men and women integrated? What are some limitations in our ability to listen, especially to those who have different views than our own? What space is there for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?

SPEAKING OUT

All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, that is, in freedom, truth, and charity. What enables or hinders speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in our local Church and in society? When and how do we manage to say what is important to us? How does the relationship with the local media work (not only Catholic media)? Who speaks on behalf of the Christian community, and how are they chosen?

CELEBRATION

“Walking together” is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist. How do prayer and liturgical celebrations actually inspire and guide our common life and mission in our community? How do they inspire the most important decisions? How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy? What space is given to participating in the ministries of lector and acolyte?

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? What areas of mission are we neglecting? How does the community support its members who serve society in various ways (social and political involvement, scientific research, education, promoting social justice, protecting human rights, caring for the environment, etc.)? How does the Church help these members to live out their service to society in a missionary way? How is discernment about missionary choices made and by whom?

DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Dialogue in the Church and society requires perseverance and patience, but it also enables mutual understanding. To what extent do diverse peoples in our community come together for dialogue? What are the places and means of dialogue within our local Church? How do we promote collaboration with neighboring dioceses, religious communities in the area, lay associations and movements, etc.? How are divergences of vision, or conflicts and difficulties addressed? What particular issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to? What experiences of dialogue and collaboration do we have with believers of other religions and with those who have no religious affiliation? How does the Church dialogue with and learn from other sectors of society: the spheres of politics, economics, culture, civil society, and people who live in poverty?

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 have we drawn from walking together? What are the difficulties? How can we take the next step in walking forward with each other?

AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION

A synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church. How does our Church community identify the goals to be pursued, the way to reach them, and the steps to be taken? How is authority or governance exercised within our local Church? How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice? How are evaluations conducted and by whom? How are lay ministries and the responsibility of lay people promoted? Have we had fruitful experiences of synodality on a local level? How do synodal bodies function at the level of the local Church (Pastoral Councils in parishes and dioceses, Presbyteral Council, etc.)? How can we foster a more synodal approach in our participation and leadership?

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 to listen to the whole People of God? What is the relationship between consultation and decision-making, and how do we put these into practice? What tools and procedures do we use to promote transparency and accountability? How can we grow in communal spiritual discernment?

FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY

Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation, and on-going learning. How does our church community form people to be more capable of “walking together,” listening to one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue? What formation is offered to foster discernment and the exercise of authority in a synodal way?

ADD YOUR OWN TOPIC

Your local listening session may desire to add a topic(s) that is not in the above list. Remember to keep your listening session to a single topic and not allow it to balloon into a laundry list of topics. You can cover multiple topics, but cover one topic at a time, each in its own listening session.

Thank Everyone

Be sure to thank everyone that spoke, listened and participated. Formally end the listening session, and perhaps take a short ten minute stretch break.

Repeat

Repeat the above process for additional listening sessions on the same day.

Invite, Thank

Invite everyone to return to whenever any additional listening sessions will be held. Thank them again for their valuable input to the bishops.

Closing Prayer: *Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus*

Close with the same prayer as used in the opening to remind everyone of the spirit in which we entered our listening, the spirit in which we desire to move forward. Or, another prayer of your choosing.

APPENDIX A: Anonymous Demographics

Anonymous Demographics <i>Demografía Anónima</i>	
ENGLISH	ESPAÑOL
<p>1. In your religious affiliation are you:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Catholic, practicing regularly</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Catholic, practicing infrequently</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Catholic, non-practicing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non-Catholic Christian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non-Christian of another religion</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No religion</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Atheist</p> <p>2. Male () or Female ()</p> <p>3. What is your age ____?</p>	<p>1. En su afiliación religiosa es usted:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Católico, practicando regularmente</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Católico, practicando con poca frecuencia</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Católico, no practicante</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cristiano no católico</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No cristiano de otra religión</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sin religión</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ateo</p> <p>2. Hombre () o Mujere ()</p> <p>3. ¿Qué edad tiene ____?</p>

Anonymous Demographics <i>Demografía Anónima</i>	
ENGLISH	ESPAÑOL
<p>1. In your religious affiliation are you:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Catholic, practicing regularly</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Catholic, practicing infrequently</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Catholic, non-practicing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non-Catholic Christian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non-Christian of another religion</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No religion</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Atheist</p> <p>2. Male () or Female ()</p> <p>3. What is your age ____?</p>	<p>1. En su afiliación religiosa es usted:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Católico, practicando regularmente</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Católico, practicando con poca frecuencia</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Católico, no practicante</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cristiano no católico</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No cristiano de otra religión</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sin religión</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ateo</p> <p>2. Hombre () o Mujere ()</p> <p>3. ¿Qué edad tiene ____?</p>

APPENDIX B: Diocesan Preparatory Team

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Parish Launch Packet

Synod of Bishops 2023

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