**Diagram

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Description automatically generatedGetting Started Implementing the Synod**

We’re hearing from some of you that you just can’t seem to “wrap your head around” what the Church’s vision is and how you’ll do your part to bring it to pass. Here are some first steps:

1. Read the Vatican’s documents found under “Synod documents” <https://www.synod.va/en.html>
2. Read, watch or listen to whatever instructions have come from your Diocese
3. Pray for the Spirit’s direction. The Vatican Synod website provides a special Spirit prayer.
4. Begin to make decisions about
5. The scope of the listening the Spirit wants you to do. The Church is hoping to hear from all the baptized, including your engaged parishioners, those who practice in other Christian denominations, those who are disaffiliated and loosely affiliated, and the poor. She also hopes to hear from other people of good will who have something instructive to say to her. Many dioceses are embracing this entire vision. Some are narrowing it. Decide what scope you can accomplish. This decision influences all others you make. As you think about this, be sure to consider the specialty issues listed below. You can find links and downloadable resources for all these issues and more at [www.pentecostvigilproject.org](http://www.pentecostvigilproject.org) . Feel free to re-create these methods within your organization if you’d prefer!
   * 1. Listening to the differently abled. A set of questions prepared by the Archdiocese of Newark for this population can be found on this site.
     2. Listening to children. Simple dinner table conversation cards are available.
     3. Listening to young people. Resources by Youth Minister, Bob McCarty.
     4. Listening to the poor you serve through your ministries: Easy, single question interview cards, available on the Pentecost Vigil Project site.
     5. Listening to the nones and dones: Check the site for a short answer survey and Facebook discussion board options.
     6. Listening to Christians of other denominations
   1. How you as the leader/pastor will persuade others to participate in this. You need 2 kinds of persuasive messages: a 1 minute “elevator” speech and a not-more-than 3 minute presentation. Decide
      1. What excites YOU about this process?
      2. What brings you HOPE?
      3. Why it’s important to participate. Need help thinking about this, check out the nine values of the Synod prepared by the Davenport Diocese: <https://davenportdiocese.org/documents/2021/12/Guidebook%20for%20the%20Synod%20on%20Synodality%20in%20the%20Diocese%20of%20Davenport.pdf>
      4. What you imagine the consequences will be if there’s widespread participation and if there’s not widespread participation?
      5. Craft these messages and practice them. See [www.pentecostvigilproject.org](http://www.pentecostvigilproject.org) for samples.
   2. Who do you need from your parish/organization to buy-in and to give their time and talent to this?
   3. How you will invite, persuade and form them to serve?
   4. How you will begin to pray intentionally and frequently for this process?
   5. Who you will invite to be part of a prayer team whose prayers are devoted to invoking the Holy Spirit’s presence in your listening sessions?
   6. What method(s) do you want to use to listen based on the scope you choose:
      1. Informal: 1-1 with shut-ins, guests who come to soup kitchens, food pantries, clothing shelters; individual families around the dinner table; existing small communities or ministerial groups in your organization. Take a look at the Davenport Diocese’s 58,000 cups of coffee initiative: <https://davenportdiocese.org/documents/2021/12/Guidebook%20for%20the%20Synod%20on%20Synodality%20in%20the%20Diocese%20of%20Davenport.pdf>
      2. Formal: organized listening sessions that take place face-to-face
         1. The USCCB recommends adapting the Leadership Roundtable’s listening process: go to [www.pentecostvigilproject.org](http://www.pentecostvigilproject.org) to find the link
         2. Determine the number of listening sessions you wish to have
         3. Choose time frames for the listening sessions
         4. Market first: let your folks know what this is, why it’s so important they participate (use those prepared speeches you’ve mastered!), and when to expect they will begin
         5. Advertise to the scale that is appropriate for the scope of listening you have already chosen
         6. Train facilitators Check our website for facilitator training resources.
         7. Determine the questions you will ask. Our website provides samples of questions. Keep in mind that every organization may not be equipped to respond to all 10 question areas. Focus your questions. Feel free to use different questions for different groups. Remember, this will all be compiled into a larger report so everyone does not need to try and do everything.
      3. Formal using Zoom or another online meeting platform: It may be that in your area or within your organization, it is more loving to invite people to gather to share their stories using Zoom. All the same marketing and advertising approaches belong to a Zoom meeting.
   7. How you want each group to report/share what they heard with you. Here are some approaches to sharing/reporting from which you can decide:
      1. Match a reporting form to the questions you have chosen. Write the question and then have the listener/recorder enter ideas/points of view. The second part of the reporting form can include suggestions, imagination, hopes and dreams for how the Church can be more of what Jesus intends. The single form would contain all the questions a group addressed.
      2. Create a reporting form for each main theme of the synod: participation, communion and mission. Group your questions in these areas, and then the listener/recorder lists ideas or points of view offered in Section 1 and suggestions, imaginations, hopes, and dreams in Section 2.
      3. Use a single question for all listening sessions and a simple reporting card. See <https://davenportdiocese.org/documents/2021/12/Guidebook%20for%20the%20Synod%20on%20Synodality%20in%20the%20Diocese%20of%20Davenport.pdf> for a sample of this.
      4. See the Archdiocese of Seattle’s online reporting form here [https://43.selectsurvey.net/SeattleArchdiocese/TakeSurvey.aspx#](https://43.selectsurvey.net/SeattleArchdiocese/TakeSurvey.aspx)

AFTER YOU HAVE THOUGHT THIS THROUGH YOURSELF as the Pastor (or the appointed Synod leader), gather the Team and share with them your thinking around each of these areas. Invite their thinking and then make the final decisions. DO NOT convene a Synod Listening Team and expect them to make all of these decisions in enough time to get started. Invite them instead to add their thinking to the thinking/deciding you’ve begun, pray with the ideas from that dialogue and make final choices as quickly as you can because you will need to delegate leadership responsibilities to these areas and those leaders need to be clear on what they are doing, why, how and by when.

For creative diocesan approaches, see:

Diocese of Davenport <https://davenportdiocese.org/documents/2021/12/Guidebook%20for%20the%20Synod%20on%20Synodality%20in%20the%20Diocese%20of%20Davenport.pdf>

Archdiocese of Seattle

<https://archseattle.org/about-the-archdiocese-of-seattle/archbishop-etienne/pastoralplanning/pastoral-plan/synod/>

Created by Debbie Stollery and The Pentecost Vigil Project. Permission to adapt and share with non-profit groups.