



Catholic Diocese of Wilmington

Synod Listening Session

Instructions for Reporters

Role of the Reporter

During a Synod Listening Session, if there is a large gathering, people present are broken up into small groups. Each small group has a *Reporter*. The primary task of the Reporter is to record accurately what was shared during the small group discussion. The Reporter strives to capture the main points of what each person had to say in the group in response to the *Two Primary Questions* as defined at the end of this document. The Reporter participates as a contributing member in the group by sharing his/her own thoughts while simultaneously taking notes and synthesizing a report of the group's dialogue.

Using the *Small Group Report Form*, which is a document provided separately, the Reporter with the help of the group or by oneself as necessary, must determine the main points of the discussion and then properly record them on this report form. At the conclusion of the small group discussion, the Reporter having succinctly written out the main points from the discussion, will then submit the completed *Small Group Report Form* to the head Facilitator of that Listening Session gathering.

Tips for Good Reporting

Good reporting on a small group sharing is characterized by the following attributes:

- Reporting does not include everything that is said.
- Reporting is not a verbatim account of the consultation.
- Use bullet points as much as possible.
- Record the points people made in the consultation without adding your own biases, emotions or experiences connected to content.
- Provide quotes where appropriate, without attribution to a particular person or group.
- Do not attribute comments to specific individuals for purposes of confidentiality.
- Record areas of agreement, whether that agreement is formally or informally established.

First Question with Adjoining Questions

The following represents the *First Question* of the Synod proposed by Pope Francis. Accompanying it are additional questions which speak to the *First Question* and help participants to articulate a response to this question. This question will elicit two types of responses either: (1) A ***Strength*** of how the Church *journeys together* well or (2) A ***Challenge***, an area where the Church may need improvement. The input shared from the group participants for this question should be placed in one of these two categories by the Reporter for the written responses on the form to be submitted.

FIRST QUESTION: The Church in announcing the Gospel journeys together. How is this “journeying together” happening today in your local Church?

Our Strengths

- What are our experiences of journeying together in our local Church?
- What joys did those experiences bring?

Our Challenges

- What difficulties and obstacles have we encountered?
- What wounds did those experiences reveal?
- What voices are missing or not present among us?
- What insights have those experiences elicited? (*Strengths/Challenges*)

Reporting on the First Question

Based on the group sharing for the *First Question*, the Reporter needs to write down on the form only **three** *Strengths* and then only **three** *Challenges* that came from the group discussion. It is very likely that the group discussion will generate more than three *Strengths* and three *Challenges*, however, the small group or the Reporter needs to identify and list in order of importance only three of each. For both *Questions*, if there is a lack of consensus, the Reporter will make the final determination what to record for the small group, making the best judgment possible about which ones should be submitted.

Second Question with Adjoining Questions

The following represents the *Second Question* of the Synod proposed by Pope Francis. Like the previous question accompanying it are additional questions which speak to the *Second Question* and help participants to articulate a response to this question. This question will elicit one type of response called an ***Action Step***. An *Action Step* is what someone thinks the Church is being called to do to *journey together* better. The input shared from the group participants for this question should be recorded in the appropriate section on the form to be submitted.

SECOND QUESTION: What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”?

Our Action Steps

- What paths forward are opening up for our local Church?
- Where in these experiences does the voice of the Holy Spirit resound?
- In what way is the Spirit calling us to reach out and how?
- What are the areas for change for our Church and what steps can be taken?

Reporting on the Second Question

Based on the group sharing for the *Second Question*, the Reporter needs to write down on the form at least three but no more than six *Action Steps* that came from the group discussion. As with the *First Question* if more than six *Action Steps* are generated, the small group or the Reporter needs to identify and list in order of importance at most six responses in total.

Length of Responses

Each *Strength*, *Challenge*, and *Action Step* that is recorded should be as succinct and to the point as much as possible – no longer than a sentence in length. A response written as a clearly developed bullet point is acceptable as well. It will be useful for the Reporter to take notes on a separate sheet of paper or notepad other than the *Small Group Report Form*. The Reporter can then use their notes as a guide to formulate the final responses that will be written on the report form that is to be submitted at the conclusion of the Listening Session.

The content contained in this document is adapted from the following:

- [Process for Facilitating Synodal Consultations](#) (Leadership Roundtable)
- [Official Vatican Synod website](#) (Vatican-Holy See Synod Office)
- [USCCB Synod website](#)