



For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

## Listening Circle Participant's Package

## Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria

### Synod Listening Circles

Together, listening to the Holy Spirit, let us be led by God

Thank you for participating in a listening circle, where we come together to share our experiences of “journeying together” and discern the movements of the Holy Spirit in those experiences. Please spend some time in prayerful reflection on the Fundamental Questions posed by Pope Francis and the [Synod of Bishops](#):

#### **Fundamental Questions**

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "journeys together": How is this "journeying together" happening today in your particular Church, or community? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take to grow in our "journeying together"?

#### **What is a Synod?**

A synod is a listening and discernment process. The word synod is derived from an ancient Greek term that means “coming together” or “travelling together.”

#### **What do we mean by a “Synodal Church”?**

The document from the Synod of Bishops explains that synodality is a path, a journey. In a Synodal Church, we journey together. The document goes on to say that this “journeying together” will help the Church – that is, us – learn which processes can help us live in Communion, achieve full Participation, and open up to our Mission as Church.

#### **What is a Synod on Synodality?**

As the global Catholic community sets on along the path to building a more “synodal” church, we explore the origin and meaning of this term, drawn from the pattern of discernment and decision-making from the earliest Christian tradition. Pope Francis is inviting Catholics everywhere to re-learn the ways of being Church together, to create spaces of encounter and mutual listening that incorporate the gifts of all the baptized as we face the many challenges of renewing the life of the Church for our time. [Synod.va](http://Synod.va) is the official Synod website, where there is more information.

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## What is a Listening Circle?

We have designed our Listening Circles to focus on listening to one another, in two parts:

Part One: Answering the fundamental questions: through our own experiences.

Part Two: Reflecting on what we heard from peoples' stories/experiences.

A third part, the discernment of the Holy Spirit, will be conducted by the Synod Team.

Many of us will bring our reflections to one of the *Listening Circles* in our parish, community groups, or online via Zoom.

At the *Listening Circles*, we will listen to one another as we share our experiences of journeying together in our churches within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria. As we listen, we will be invited to discern the Holy Spirit, in our individual and collective responses and discussions.

Each session will take up to two hours, in which you will share your experiences and responses in a small group of no more than six (6) people. The small groups collect the experiences and responses as a record of the sharing.

The records from each Listening Circles will be collected so that the synthesis from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria can be sent on to other levels of the Church. Eventually, syntheses from dioceses around the world will be used in the 2023 Synod of Bishops, For a Synodal Church: Communion-Participation-Mission.

We will begin to live our discernment of journeying together to better achieve "Communion-Participation-Mission" in our Diocese and its parishes.

## What are we not doing?

We are not identifying and solving problems, issues, or concerns.

We are not focusing on drawing conclusions from the experiences we reflect on and learn about.

## Who is included in the *Listening Circles*?

In a word...everyone! Pope Francis is asking that all baptized Christians participate in this synod. The Holy Father has emphasized that this process must not be solely for bishops, priests, or parish councils. We are being asked to go out of our way to involve individuals and groups whose voices are not always present at the highest levels of our Church—particularly young people, women, ethnic minorities, immigrants, and historically marginalized groups.

Furthermore, the Pope is urging us to seek out the perspective of Christians from other denominations, believers from other faith traditions, and those who have no religious affiliation. Finally, in a particular way, it is important that the Church listens to those who were raised in the Christian faith, but who no longer practice or have felt pushed away. Everyone is guaranteed a seat at the table, and, in many cases, that will require us moving the table outside of the church building to where people are.

## Adsumus Sancte Spiritus Prayer

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.

**If you wish to have more information, please contact [synod@rcdvictoria.org](mailto:synod@rcdvictoria.org)**