

Universal Synod Questions

Instructions for Parish or Group Consultation

The consultation for the Universal Synod “*For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission*” can take place in a number of ways, e.g., in-person and online meetings, the distribution of questionnaires, and the use of parish social media sites and websites.

Every parish is, however, encouraged to have at least one in-person meeting that is well advertised and open to everyone. Below you will find some basic instructions on running a listening meeting of this nature and on how to get the most out of the questions.

1. Set up the room/hall for groups of no more than eight people per table.
2. Introduce the background to the Universal Synod. In your introduction to the Universal Synod and the process involved the following points might be useful:
 - Synod means “Walking together”.
 - A synod is a gathering of the faithful which advises the Bishop or the Pope on issues of governance within the Church.
 - The earliest known synod was the Council of Jerusalem (66AD) and there have been many well-known synods since such as the Council of Nicaea (325), the Council of Trent (1545-1565) and the Second Vatican Council (1963-1965).
 - At most of these synods it was the Bishops who represented their dioceses.
 - Pope Francis wishes to broaden the scope of the consultation involved in such gatherings and to tune into the Holy Spirit speaking through all the faithful, both lay and ordained.
 - This Synod of the Universal Church which takes place over the coming two years will examine what life is like in the Church at this moment in time. How do we make decisions? How do we create community? How welcoming are we? Do we provide opportunities for people to participate and further the mission of the Church to bring the love of Christ into every corner of the world?
 - Today this group is part of this process. Your answers to the questions posed tonight will be collated into a diocesan report that will inform the meeting of Bishops from all over the world in Rome in 2023.
 - We now ask God to send his Holy Spirit to inspire and guide our deliberations so that they will help our Church to be renewed.
3. Synod Prayer (See below)
4. Distribute the question sheets and **make sure everyone has a pen.**

5. Go through the questions one by one.

- Emphasise that all answers are anonymous. No names should be written on the paper, either their own or others.
- Allow 15 minutes per question for group discussion followed by 5 minutes for participants to write down their own thoughts on the question.
- The session should last no more than 1 hour and 30 minutes.

6. Conclusion:

- Inform the participants that their feedback will be sent to the Pastoral Team to be collated with the help of the Diocesan Synodal Core Group.
- The findings will be discussed at a meeting in February/March 2022 with representatives from each Parish and Religious Order in the diocese and the Bishops.
- A ten-page report will be submitted to the Irish Bishops' Conference to form part of the national submission to Rome.
- This report will be available to read on the diocesan website after Easter 2022.
- The consultation and listening process for the Diocesan Synod 2024 will be broader in scope and will take place between Autumn 2022 and Summer 2023. It will also feed into the National Synodal Pathway.

The Synod Prayer – Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus

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.

