



Leader's Guide – Host a small group

Thank you for choosing to host a small group discussion with family or friends!

(This would include a gathering with youth or children, or an informal “coffee talk” type of meeting)

The Synod is an invitation for every diocese to embark on a path of profound renewal as inspired by the grace of God's Spirit. As stated in the Preparatory Document, the Synod considers a main question: How is our “walking together” in synodality realized today in the Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “walking together”?

The sensus fidei of the whole People of God is sought on this question. Since each diocese has a unique context, its path for seeking, promoting, and reaping the fruits of this sensus fidei will be unique.

Overall, the Synod guidelines remind us that:

- *The goal is to ensure the participation of the greatest number possible, in order to listen to the living voice of the entire People of God.*
- *This is not possible unless we make special efforts to actively reach out to people where they're at, especially those who are often excluded or who are not involved in the life of the Church.*
- *There must be a clear focus on the participation of the poor, marginalized, vulnerable, and excluded, in order to listen to their voices and experiences.*
- *The Synodal Process must be simple, accessible, and welcoming for all.*

-Discerning the path for your Diocese

Here are suggested guidelines for you to follow as the leader:

1. **Download all necessary material** from our diocese website (<http://www.whitehorsediocese.ca/synod-2021-2023.html>). Choose the button, “I want to: Host a small group discussion with friends and family”.

If you need a printed version, please notify your parish priest or lay pastoral associate as soon as possible.

2. **Choose the dialogue(s)** you would like to discuss with your group. In our Diocese, we've chosen to discuss the Synod theme of synodality by focusing on three questions reflected in separate dialogues. As a group you can choose to reflect on one, two or all three dialogues. All participants are invited to adapt and answer the questions according to where they are at in their faith journey.

Dialogue 1: How do we celebrate together in the Church?

Dialogue 2: How does the Holy Spirit inspire us when we communicate with each other in the Church and with others outside the Church?

Dialogue 3: How can we carry out together the mission of the Church within our faith community and in our broader society?

Alternate options:

- a) You can choose to create your own dialogue and explore a different question. *See the document titled "List of questions suggested for the Synod".*
- b) **If you are planning to host a family meeting or a meeting with youth or children**, you can consider a more interactive or different approach. *See the document titled "Suggested Tools".*
- c) **If you choose to host an informal family meeting or "coffee talk" type meeting with friends, colleagues, etc.**, you can adapt one of the dialogues and these guidelines to what is applicable to your type of meeting and participants.

If you need further assistance with this, please contact the Diocese and we will do our best to guide you.

Once you have consulted all material, feel free to adapt the process and all materials to your group's needs and expectations.

3. After compiling all the necessary material, as much as possible, set your meeting date **at least 2 weeks in advance.**

Immediately send out preparation material to all participants: i) The Synod 2023 Preparatory document, ii) the Vademecum (handbook), iii) the Synod Prayer, and iv) the dialogue outline. ***It is necessary that every participant has the opportunity to truly prepare their hearts and reflect on the questions before you meet.*** All participants should feel free to answer the questions and sub-questions according to what they relate to and to what applies to them.

4. **A week before the meeting:**

- **Send out a reminder** to all participants and encourage them to take some time to prepare.
- **Ask someone to be the recorder** for your meeting.
- You can also **ask someone to facilitate your meeting.** In this case, you should go over the dialogue outline with this person, and ensure they are familiar with all the materials.

5. **Day of the meeting:**

- Bring a Bible and pens and paper for the participants and the recorder
- Print a copy of the Small Group Hosting Guide, and of the Report Form for the recorder.

6. **At the end of the meeting**, kindly assist the recorder in reviewing his/her notes and as much as possible, and ensure the report summary is no more than two pages.

7. **Ensure the recorder sends in your group's report** to executiveassistant@whitehorsediocese.ca no later than the end of the day on **April 30, 2022.**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your parish priest, lay pastoral associate, or the Bishop's Office at 867-667-2052.

"A sincere word of gratitude to all those who organize, coordinate, and participate in this Synodal Process. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we make up the living stones through whom God builds up the Church that he desires for the third millennium (1 Peter 2:5). May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles and Mother of the Church, intercede for us as we journey together on the path that God sets before us. As in the Upper Room at Pentecost, may her maternal care and intercession accompany us as we build up our communion with one another and carry out our mission in the world. With her, we say together as the People of God: "Let it be with me according to your word" (Luke 1:38)."