

Small Group Participation Guide

Opening Song: “Companions on the Journey” or Song calling on the Holy Spirit

Opening Prayer:

O God, whose Son promised to all those gathered in his name
that he would be there in their midst,
grant, we pray,
that we may be aware of his presence among us
and, in truth and charity, experience in our hearts
an abundance of grace, mercy, and peace.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Scripture: John 16: 12-15

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Silent Reflection on the Word:

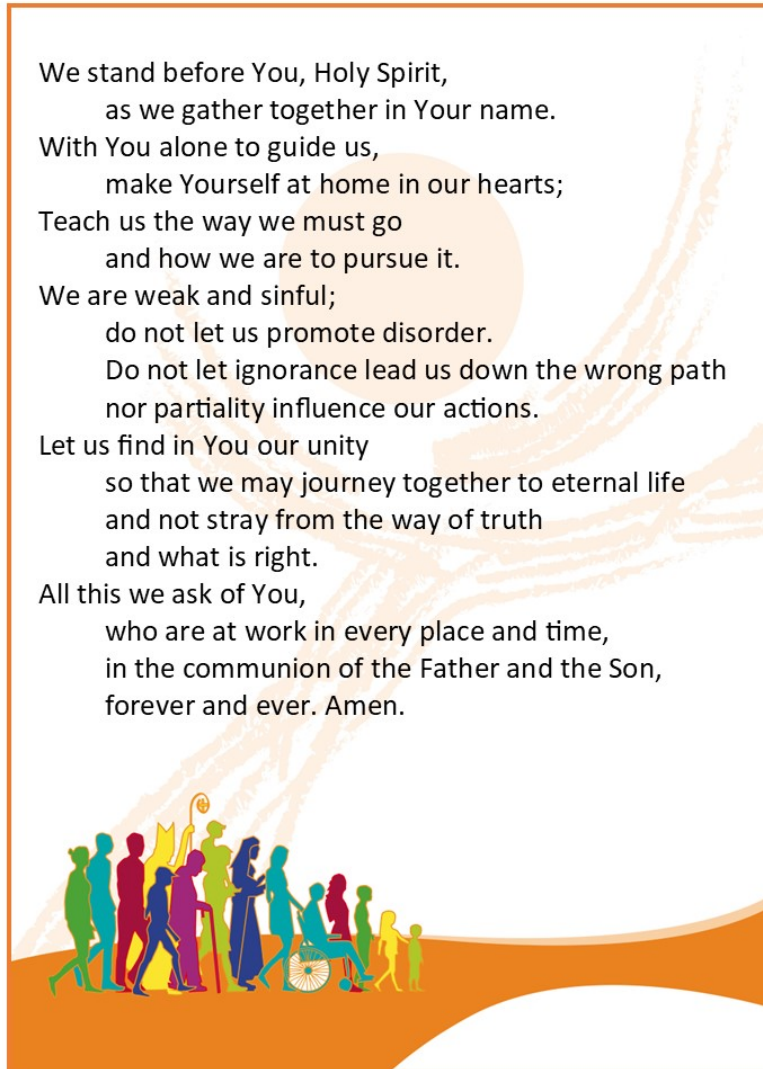
Intercessions:

As we await with longing the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, dear brothers and sisters, let us with renewed devotion beseech his mercy, that, as he came into the world to bring the Good News to the poor and to heal the contrite of heart, so in our own time, also, he may bring salvation to all in need.

1. For God’s holy Church: That it may be a light to the nations and the universal sacrament of salvation, walking with all peoples to the Kingdom of God.
2. For Francis our Pope, Stephen our Bishop, and the holy, faithful People of God in the Diocese of Prince Albert: that the celebration of this Synod may help us to discern God’s will and to boldly carry it out.
3. For all civil and public authorities: that they may always seek the common good, acting with justice and integrity.
4. For the sick, the lonely, the oppressed, and the suffering: That they may never be discarded, but rather treasured and cared for as the face of Christ in a suffering world.
5. For ourselves, gathered here: That this Synodal Process may lead us ever deeper into the communion of the Church, foster our participation in it, and equip us to go out on mission.

O God, our refuge, and our strength, hear the prayers of your Church, for you yourself are the source of all devotion, and grant, we pray, that what we ask in faith we may truly obtain. Through Christ our Lord.

Synod Prayer to the Holy Spirit



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.

Questions:

1. Do I feel I belong in my faith community/parish/church and that I have a role in the Church's mission? Which situations have made me feel I belong? Which situations have made me feel unwelcome or unheard? Are there those that my faith community excludes, values less or values more? Share your stories.
2. Is my faith community/parish/diocese a safe place for me to speak courageously, candidly, and responsibly about the church and about society? Do I feel heard? Share your stories.

Group Norms:

- Maintain confidentiality
- Participate as much as possible
- Remember that a person is allowed to pass on any question
- Turn off cell phones and pagers
- Respect other opinions...this is not the time to give advice or comment on other peoples' sharing
- Don't interrupt; let others finish speaking before you begin

The Spiritual Conversation Method

Round One

Each person shares the fruit of his or her prayer, in relation to the reflection questions. There is **no discussion** in this round. All participants simply **listen deeply to each person and attend to how the Holy Spirit is moving within oneself, within the person speaking, and in the group as a whole.** Encourage those listening to write a few notes, a word/phrase etc. to help them remember.

.....**Followed By A Few Minutes of Silence**

Round Two

Participants share what struck them most in the first round and what moved them during the time of silence. Some dialogue can also occur. Remember we are not here to bring people over to our way of thinking. **We strive for deep listening and understanding of the others' point of view.**

..... **Followed By A Few Minutes of Silence**

Round Three

Participants reflect upon what seems to be resonating in the conversation and what moved them most deeply. New insights and even unresolved questions are also noted.

Conclusion:

- Invite each person to share how the experience was for them.
- Review/Decide on the feedback they wish to communicate with the larger group.

Group Sharing

Round One – Ideas, Topics, Stories Shared (use back if needed)

Round Two – What struck/moved participants?

Round Three – What is the Spirit Asking of Us? –Unresolved Questions?

How was this experience for your group? High points/Low points. What will we bring back to the large group?