



Diocese of Charlotte - Guidelines for Synodal Conversations

Sample Schedule for Synodal Conversations

-Welcome and Check In

-Introduction

-Prayer

-First Question:

- The whole group spends 5 minutes thinking about how to answer the first question.
- People share with each other their answer to the first question in small groups.
- The whole group spends 5 minutes in silence to reflect on what they heard.
- Each one of the small group notetakers shares with the whole group the main fruits of the small group conversations.

-The same process is repeated for each one of the questions that the gathering considers.

-Closing Prayer, Greetings, and Refreshments or Meal Together.

Diocesan Contact Person for the Synod

Dr. Alessandro Rovati: synod@rcdoc.org

Attitudes Needed during Synodal Conversations

-To **encounter the Lord and what He calls us to**, we need to resist the divisiveness that characterizes much of our public discourse in society and tempts us to turn the Synod into a power struggle to affirm our ideas or positions. Instead, we must foster an authentic dialogue characterized by **prayer, humility, and openness** to what the Holy Spirit does in our midst.

-**Other people are gifts for our journey of faith.** We are all brothers and sisters in Christ, the pilgrim People of God, and it is our mission to learn to walk together, sustaining each other with our prayers and witness. We should not let our disagreements determine how we look at each other. Instead, it is essential to talk with one another with the **mutual respect and attentiveness** that comes from knowing that we are all members of Christ's Body.

-**The Lord uses all circumstances in our lives to summon us to closer union with Him.** Even the struggles we face and the questions we discover in ourselves are ways God uses to invite us into ever-growing unity with Him. We need to look with **honesty** at both the joys and the challenges we experience in trying to live as His disciples.

Goal of the Synodal Conversations

The synodal conversations are **listening sessions** in which the participants engage in **prayerful dialogue** with one another to discover what the Lord is doing in their lives and the steps to which the Holy Spirit is calling them.

Listening Is Not Debating

The purpose of the synodal conversations is not to debate different points of view or to argue in favor or against this or that proposal. Accordingly, participants should focus on **sharing honestly** their personal response to the questions proposed and to **listen prayerfully** to what others are saying, rather than worrying about commenting, debating, or arguing for or against it.

Confidentiality

To allow everyone the freedom to express himself or herself by sharing one's authentic thoughts, struggles, and questions, what is shared during the synodal conversations should be kept **confidential**.