

## STEP 05 CLOSE AND PRAY (Continued)

### WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Your small group may wish to come back together to share the other emerging themes from the beginning of the process.

As individuals, take the 'Listening and Dialogue Process' out further by inviting your friends, family, colleagues to engage in the Listening and Dialogue process around the questions "What do you think God is asking of us at this time?" And have them send in their responses online.

### THANKS

The Local Animator will thank participants.

### PRAY

At the end of the Listening and Dialogue you are invited to pray together and give thanks for the sharing with each other. You can use the prayer below, or you might like to pray a prayer of gratitude in your own words or both.

*Creator God, we thank you for the encounter with one another today.  
We know that where two or three are gathered, you are in our midst.  
Thank you for being with us and for the courage to speak boldly and with  
passion, and the humility to listen with open hearts.  
We ask you to continue to walk with us, as we discover the pathway  
toward the future you are calling us to.  
Amen.*

### Specialist Support Structures:

This process may have evoked thoughts and feelings that you may need to talk through with family, friends, priest, spiritual companion or counsellor.

For specialist assistance, please contact:

#### CatholicCare

Kelly Pavan  
E kpavan@catholiccare.org.au  
P 02 4979 1120

#### Spiritual Direction

Lynette Pearce  
E lynette.pearce@ssjl.org.au  
P 02 4930 9600

#### Acknowledgement:

This guide is based upon the text and concept of the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay.

Original author: Daniel Ang, Office for Evangelisation.

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For more information or support, please contact your Local Animator, community leader, or otherwise one of the contacts below. We are eager to support your participation and involvement in any way we can.

### Diocesan Core Team

Teresa Brierley  
E teresa.brierley@mn.catholic.org.au  
P 4979 1157

Brian Lacey  
E brian.lacey@mn.catholic.edu.au  
P 4979 1211

John Donnelly  
E john.donnelly@mn.catholic.org.au  
P 4979 1329

Bernadette Gibson  
E bernadette.gibson@mn.catholic.edu.au  
P 4979 1251

Lauretta Baker  
E lauretta.baker@ssjl.org.au  
P 4975 1436

Louise Gannon  
E louise.gannon@mn.catholic.org.au  
P 4979 1135

Mark Spencer  
E mark.spencer@mn.catholic.edu.au  
P 4979 1304

Anne Heaney  
E anne.heaney@mn.catholic.edu.au  
P 4979 1212

Brad Fuller  
E brad.fuller@mn.catholic.edu.au  
P 4979 1261

E plenary.synod@mn.catholic.org.au

# Listening and Dialogue Guide

FOR THE DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

## A FIVE STEP PROCESS:

**INTRODUCTION**  
(15 minutes)

**PRAY TOGETHER**  
(10 minutes)

**READ QUESTION AND REFLECT**  
(15 minutes)

**SHARE AND LISTEN**  
(60 minutes)

**CLOSE AND PRAY**  
(20 minutes)

## STEP 01 INTRODUCTION (up to 15 minutes)

Welcome and thank you for sharing your voice towards Plenary Council 2020 and the Diocesan Synod. Your Local Animator will share a brief introduction to the Council and Synod, outlining the process for your Listening and Dialogue Session, and if necessary invite you to break into small groups.

## STEP 02 PRAY TOGETHER (up to 10 minutes)

You are invited to pray together in your small group. You might like to read scripture, you can use the Plenary Prayer Card or just speak to God from your heart.

## STEP 03 READ QUESTION AND REFLECT (up to 15 minutes)

**What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?**

- ▶ **Reflect on the question** in silence for 5 minutes.
- ▶ **As individuals, write a list of all the responses to this question** that come to mind, writing each of your individual responses on separate coloured notes. When everyone has finished writing down their thoughts or ideas, share each one individually and place all of your notes together, in the middle of your table or group.
- ▶ **As a group, arrange these notes** into general categories (e.g. putting all the responses related to 'social justice' together, those related to 'the environment' together, and so on).
- ▶ Working together, **choose the theme** that generated the most responses or energy in your group to focus on for the next step, Step 4.
- ▶ **Our theme for our Listening and Dialogue Session is:**

*Remember that if your particular topic is not the one that generates the most responses in your group you may want to gather together again in future weeks and months to continue to talk with each other about alternative topics. If your topic is not chosen in this instance, the process that follows can be completed with other topics or themes in hand. You can also decide to submit your individual thoughts on your preferred topic directly to the Plenary Council website following the Listening and Dialogue Session (<http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/have-your-say>). See Step 5 for details on how to submit your insights directly.*

## STEP 04 SHARE AND LISTEN (up to 60 minutes)

**REFLECT What have I experienced in relation to this theme?** (5 minutes)

In silence, reflect on your personal experience of life and faith **related to the theme your group has chosen**. You may want to write your thoughts down, or simply sit quietly with your thoughts.

**SHARE AND LISTEN Tell a story of my experience related to this theme** (40 minutes)

Choose someone in your group to take general notes in the box provided on the following page (bullet points will suffice).

Now take turns to share with each other your personal experience of the theme your group has chosen. Your experience may be related to life, faith, or the Church. Make sure everyone in your group has at least one chance to share their experience. When others are speaking, remember to listen with an open and humble heart.

*Our stories of our experiences of life and faith . . .*

**REFLECT How has another perspective influenced my own?** (5 minutes)

After each person has shared, reflect in silence on how stories shared by other people in your group have influenced your own perspective on the theme and how this relates to the central question. You may want to write your thoughts down, or simply sit quietly with your thoughts.

**SHARE How has another perspective influenced my own?** (5 minutes)

Show that you have listened deeply and openly to each other. Some phrases you may find helpful are: 'I feel your sharing has helped me to...' or 'From what you have shared with me, I now understand...'

**REFINE How has reflection on each other's stories refined the theme?**

In light of your group listening and dialogue on the theme you chose, what response are you hearing to the central question: **What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?**

## STEP 05 CLOSE AND PRAY (up to 20 minutes)

If you have broken into small groups your Local Animator will now regather all participants for final instructions and prayer. Otherwise your small group will continue through this final step.

### RESPONDING

Your Local Animator will provide instructions on how **your shared insights are to be submitted** to the national Plenary Council website, to ensure they shape the agenda for the Plenary Council and the Diocesan Synod.

**Options are:**

- your small group leader submits a response on behalf of the group.
- every participant may submit their own response.

All submissions are made via the Plenary Council website:

<http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/have-your-say>

**You will be invited to respond to three questions:**

1. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?
2. What questions do you have about the future of the Church in Australia that you would like the Plenary Council to consider?
3. Would you like to share a story about your experience of faith or of the Church in Australia that has shaped you?