

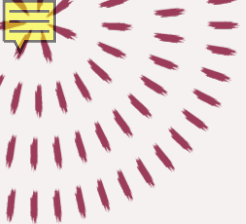
Session 3: Communal Discernment & Participatory Decision Making



Walking the Path of
Synodality
in the Footsteps of
Pope Francis



A Six-Session Synodal Leadership Formation Course





Overview of Session

- Welcome & Overview
- Revisit Previous Session
- Scripture Reflection
- Presentation: Communal Discernment and Participatory Decision Making
- Silent Reflection
- Breakout Group Discussion
- Large Group Sharing
- Conclusion and Closing Prayer
- Looking to the Next Session





Learning Objectives

1

Use skills of synodality

2

Consider how decision making can be an inclusive process

3

Reflect on participative decision making in the early Church

4

Experience spiritual conversation process

5

Consider how communal discernment and participative-decision making are essential

Revisit: Active Listening for Synodal Leadership



Scripture Reflection

- **Encounter** - Open to solidarity with people who are different from you
- **Listening** - Seeking to understand one another's perspective
- **Discernment** - Making space for the Holy Spirit



Scripture Reflection

Council of Jerusalem:
Acts 15:1-21



Small & Large Group Sharing

- How were the community members in the passage including the Holy Spirit in their discussions?
- Was there time for silent discernment?
- How were people encountering one another?
- How were they listening to one another to understand differing perspectives?



A Tool for Discernment: Spiritual Conversations

Presentation





A Spiritual Conversation

Meaningful conversation rooted
in active listening

Relaxed grip on certainty;
attention to possibilities

Paying attention to deep
meaning

Inviting the Holy Spirit to lead
Transformative conversation



Participation in Spiritual Conversations

Be brief... share
what matters most

Each person shares
once before anyone
speaks a second
time

Share the time so
everyone can speak

Speak slowly and
intentionally

Allow pauses;
silence is okay

Look at the person
speaking

Listen without
preparing a
response

Seek to build on
other people's
contributions and
not debate

There is no need to
convince anyone of
anything - only to
deepen our
understanding



Individual Responsibility for Group Reflection



Ask the Spirit to
guide your thoughts

What word or
phrase touched me?

What energized
me?

Where do I feel
resistance?

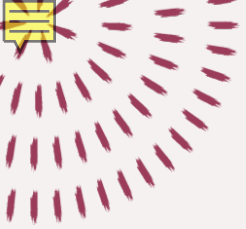
What two important
things do I want to
remember when I
go home?



Collective Discernment

- What are we saying, collectively?
- What do we think?
- Where do we note the Holy Spirit leading or calling us?
- What new possibility is emerging?
- What essential points are emerging?
- What needs to be shared with the whole group, for the good of the whole?





Silent Reflection

1. In my ministry or life, I can leave room for the Holy Spirit by...
2. In my ministry or life, I can encounter people of different perspectives by...
3. In my ministry or life, I can better understand people with different perspectives by...





Spiritual Conversation Experience



Part I - Please briefly share your personal reflection responses in your breakout group.

Part II - Now, look for common aspects of one another's insights. What were common elements from among each person's insights on:

- Leaving room for the Holy Spirit at meetings and other activities
- Encountering people of different perspectives in my ministry/life
- Understanding people with different perspectives

Concluding Commitments

- What is one way you will invite the Holy Spirit to guide the decisions you will make with others in the next two weeks?
- How will you invite the Holy Spirit to guide your collective decisions in the next two weeks?





Closing Prayer



Looking to the Next Session

Assignment: Reading (in handout)

Reflection: Can you think of ways to introduce the method of spiritual conversations into your life or ministry?

