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Description automatically generated*How to Host a Listening Session on Zoom*

“I would like to host a listening session via Zoom…can you help me?”

First, hooray for you! The Vatican’s instructions make it clear that we are to leverage technology to help us listen far and wide and this is one way to do it, for sure! The young and young-ish, whole families, those who don’t come out at night, those who aren’t comfortable in your host setting, and those who have something to say but aren’t coming to any church to say it are likely participants! Here are some basic steps:

1. Set up a Zoom account. To sign up for your own free account, visit [zoom.us/signup](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/zoom.us/signup) and enter your email address. You will receive an email from Zoom ([no-reply@zoom.us](mailto:no-reply@zoom.us)). In this email, click**Activate Account**.  Please note: This free account limits you to a gathering of just 40 minutes long. You have two choices here: everyone signs out and signs back in OR
2. Purchase a Zoom account. See pricing for various accounts here: <https://zoom.us/buy#zp_v1> OR
3. See if your parish or one of your participants already has a Zoom account that will allow your meeting to go beyond 40 minutes. NOTE: Most of these listening sessions need at least 60 minutes but should not go longer than 90 minutes.
4. If you have never done this before, go here for the walk-through for beginners: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360034967471-Getting-started-guide-for-new-users#h_b0c98dfa-d90f-486d-9617-71ab7b41a273>

Once you have an account and have practiced setting up meetings and seen what the Zoom platform can do, here’s how to begin:

1. **Invite people** to the Zoom based meeting using other forms: in-person invitation, E-vites, announcements, bulletin advertising, social media, and word of mouth. You will need email addresses for each person who would like to participate so that you can send them the meeting invitation.
2. **Collect participants and email addresses**.
3. **Test the email addresses by sending a welcome message to participants**. In the welcome message, include something like the following:
   1. “Thank you for agreeing to be part of our Spirit driven desire to listen to one another in order to discover the voice of the Spirit! You will be part of a global attempt to gather people, to listen with hearts and heads, to build bridges, heal hearts, and surface that small Spirit voice that arises when the People of God come together in prayer and conversation.

“To prepare for our gathering, you are invited to pray daily for our openness to the Holy Spirit. You can find the prayer the Vatican offered for us here: [Pentecost Vigil Project prayer page](https://www.pentecostvigilproject.org/copy-of-gather-1) .

“Look for the link for the meeting to come in a separate email!”

1. **Find someone to co-host the meeting with you**. This person will be able to help move things along, and can serve as the host if you are unable to do so.
2. **Create your Zoom meeting**. Make sure to set the meeting to begin 15 minutes before you will actually begin so that your participants have time to sign in and greet each other.
3. **Save it to your calendar and then copy the link from your calendar**. Be sure to include the link, the meeting ID and the passcode.
4. **Send another email in which you paste the link into the body of the email** and then send it to your participants. Mark your calendar for two days before the gathering so that you can re-send this link. Send the link a third time the day of your gathering.
5. **Set up breakout rooms**. For everything you need to know about breakout rooms, go here: <https://biz30.timedoctor.com/zoom-breakout-rooms/> Confused by the steps below? Go to that site! Depending on the size of your group, you can pre-determine break-out rooms before the meeting begins. This will be helpful if you have couples or families in the same group and you either want to keep them together, or separate them. Use this feature if you have more than 7 participants in your group. OR you can allow Zoom to randomly assign folks to their small group after the meeting begins. Use this feature if your meeting participants are 7 or less. Here’s how to use break-out rooms:
   1. Sign in to your Zoom account with your username and password.
   2. Go to My Account in the top right corner of your screen
   3. Search for either “Settings” or “Account Settings”
   4. On the “Meeting” Tab, navigate to the breakout room option and confirm that this setting is enabled. If it is disabled, click the toggle to enable it.
   5. If you want to pre-assign your breakout rooms, in the “Meeting Option” section, choose “Breakout room pre-assign” and click on “Create Rooms”
      1. Hit the +Create rooms label
      2. They will automatically appear as Group A, B etc. The pencil icon will allow you to rename rooms if you’d like.
      3. To assign people to a room, find their email address and under the group name, place that address in the box labeled “Add participants”. Do this with each participant in each room.
      4. When you are ready to use the breakout room function, hit the icon and your participants will automatically be directed to their room.
   6. Once that is done, log in to the Zoom app. This is different from your account!
   7. Creating breakout rooms if you have fewer than 7 participants:
      1. Click the breakout rooms icon on the bottom tool bar.
      2. Choose whether you want Zoom to automatically sort your breakout room participants into the number of rooms you select OR if you want to assign people to rooms manually during the meeting. Once you have chosen the desired setting
      3. Click the button that says “Create Rooms”
   8. If you have more than 7 participants, you can still use the above method OR you can pre-assign participants to a room. The instructions for that are above in 8(e).
6. Underneath that toggle will be a box to check that says “Allow host to assign participants to breakout rooms when scheduling.” Check that box.
7. Start the meeting before the 15 minute mark. Use this time to adjust your camera and lighting, and to test your microphone and speakers. Do this by going to the “Mute” button and clicking on the up arrow. A menu will appear and that menu will give you the option to test both of those items. Follow the instructions.
   1. If you have trouble with either of these, first unplug your camera and plug it back in. If that does not work, try signing out of Zoom and signing back in.
   2. If neither of those work, as soon as your co-host signs in, hover over the dots that will appear above their name/image and you will see that you can assign them host duties. Assign the host duties to them. If your sound and camera are working well, assign co-host duties to them. Let them know you have done this either by speaking or through the chat feature.
8. **The chat function:** As the meeting host, you can determine if you want to use the “chat” function during this meeting. Share your decision/preference with your participants and ask for their compliance.
9. **Recording the meeting:** It will be much simpler to capture the ideas shared in this group if you record the meeting, transcribe the ideas and send them to either your parish, the group you are affiliating with or directly to the Vatican. However, if you are going to record the meeting, all participants must be advised of this ahead of time, told what will happen with the recording and they must give their consent. Consent is presumed if everyone stays in the meeting after the recording function is explained and begun.
10. **Reporting:** If your parish or diocese has a method for you to report your findings, please use that. If they do not, you may send your synopsis (200 words or one page), directly to the Vatican’s General Secretariat for the Synod at any of the following addresses:
    1. **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/synod.va>
    2. **Twitter**  twitter.com/synod\_va
    3. **Instagram** Instagram.com/synod.va
    4. **Email: Segreteria Generale del Sinodo dei Vescovi**[**synodus@synod.va**](mailto:synodus@synod.va)
    5. **Mail:** Via della Conciliazione 34
    6. 00120 Città del Vaticano
    7. **Telephone: Tel. (+39) 06 698 84821 / 84324**
    8. **Fax: (+39) 06 698 83392**
11. **Hosting more than one Zoom listening session:** Follow the same instructions above. Collate data from each listening session and THEN go to page 57 of the Vatican’s instruction for carrying out the synod (<https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/document/common/vademecum/Vademecum-EN-A4.pdf> ) and prepare your report aligned with the process outlined here. Again, please remember that the Vatican wishes all this qualitative data be funneled to the offices responsible for Synod reporting in each diocese wherever possible. However, you may send your report, that follows the instructions, to the above addresses if you feel your input will not be received by your local ecclesial structures: parish, diocese, umbrella organization.