



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Small Group Reflection Guide

Note: This small group reflection model is adapted from the Vatican's own synodal-style small group model. It can be used when **any** small group gathers to listen, learn, discern, and make decisions. It is based on the belief that the Spirit speaks within all of God's People, and we can only fully discern God's direction by prayerfully listening to each other.

"The Lord often reveals the most prudent course to those who do not occupy important positions." St. Benedict

The Main Question(s): (place your main question here)

Based on your experience of listening, observing, and walking with people in your parish, what is helping your people draw closer to Christ? Be prepared to share their faith with others? Participate more fully, consciously and actively in the Mass? Know the healing touch of the Lord? Be prepared to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit in their own lives and in the life of the parish? What is the Holy Spirit trying to get you to see, hear, and then act upon?

Gather: in small groups of 7 or less, each led by a facilitator

Step 1: Pray Together (open with a short prayer asking the Spirit for guidance)

Step 2: Silently Read the Question and Reflect (2-5 minutes of silence)

- Listen to the Spirit speaking through your experience. What is your personal experience (or lack of) in this area? Reflect and write in silence.
- The Spirit is speaking through you. Identify your own personal stories. Avoid second-hand information, social media info, hearsay, etc.

Step 3: Share and Listen (Each person speaks for 2-3 minutes)

- Tell a story of your experience in this area. (take turns, listen with open hearts, no interrupting or commenting on others' responses)

Step 4: Silent Reflection, Listen to the Spirit (2-5 minutes)

- Reflect: How has another perspective influenced your own? (*reflect in silence*)
- Ponder: Is the Spirit calling us to new paths? Is the Spirit calling you to help create these paths?
- Prepare to Act: Name one step you can personally make to follow the Holy Spirit's inspiration?

Step 5: Share and Listen (Each person speaks for an additional 2 minutes)

- Share: How has another perspective influenced your own? (*show that you have listened deeply*)
- Is the Spirit calling us to new paths? If “yes”, how is the Spirit calling you to help create these paths?
- Name one step you can personally make to follow the Holy Spirit's inspiration.

Step 6: Discerning a Synthesis (optional, 5-15 minutes)

- A facilitator-led, free-form discussion to identify the key issues that have been surfaced.
- As a group, identify at least one issue that might be addressed in your local faith community(ies).
- Choose a group member to create a mini summary and decide who should receive copies.

Step 7: Pray and Respond

- Pray: Close with any prayer of gratitude.
- Act/Respond: (optional) Submit summary to the participants, and other interested parties (pastor, parish, etc.)

Additional resources:

Pentecost Vigil Project, Inc.: <https://www.pentecostvigilproject.org>