



Session 3 – Mission

Participant's Pack

Before the session

- If you have time, skim through the content of this pack. In particular, try to look at the questions that you will discuss in the session. Use the time before the session to reflect on them. You might like to make notes in the space provided, but this is not required.
- Remind yourself of the topics discussed in sessions 1 & 2.
- Check that you have the information needed to join the Zoom meeting.

To start your session

- Join the Zoom meeting, using the information emailed to you. It is the same as for previous sessions.
- You will be admitted from the waiting room as soon as your group leader is ready.
- Check that your name is displayed as you would like to be called.
- Initially you will be muted, so please unmute yourself before you speak.

Outline of session

The aim is for sessions to last about 1½ hours, but 2 hours may be more realistic.

- Welcome and introduction
- Opening liturgy
- Brief reminder of approach and protocols for discussions
- Discussion 8: Authority and Participation
- Discussion 9: Discerning and Deciding
- Discussion 10: Forming ourselves in Synodality
- Final prayer

Opening liturgy

Opening prayer

**Lord, the Word who is Life,
may all the people of our Diocese
grow in openness to the power of the Holy Spirit,
so that through a growth in understanding and courage,
and truly open to your call,
we may bear powerful witness to all around us,
for you are Lord for ever and ever. Amen.**

Scripture reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Reminder of approach and protocols for discussions

Our sessions use the 'encounter-listen-discern' model. The purpose of the discussions is to listen to each other's experiences and reflections, with the aim of hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit.

The following protocols are designed to help us use this model effectively:

- There are no right or wrong answers.
- Don't feel you need to answer all the questions – focus on those that are most meaningful to you.
- Be yourself - talk from the heart about your personal experiences.
- Encourage each other (even if you don't always agree).
- Don't be afraid of silence.
- Respect each other.
- Keep discussions confidential within the group.
- Everyone's voice needs to be heard.
- Listen actively – allow yourself to be challenged, surprised, or even shocked.

Discussion 8 - Authority and Participation

The first discussion today is about how we are supported to participate in the mission of the Church. The questions are:

- How is authority exercised in our communities?
- How do we preach the Gospel?
- How does our parish community bring people closer to Christ?
- What groups or courses are available? What initiatives are in place?
- What are the fruits of this collaboration, and what are the obstacles and challenges?

Space for your personal thoughts and reflections

Discussion 9 - Discerning and Deciding

The next discussion is about the Church makes decisions. The questions are:

- How do we discern together the direction in which the Holy Spirit is leading us?
- Is there freedom to exercise my particular gifts in the Church, and participate in this common work of discernment and decision making?
- Is my parish community accountable and transparent in decision making? What can help improve this?
- Do I support the Bishops and the Priests in arriving at their decisions?

Space for your personal thoughts and reflections

Discussion 10 - Forming ourselves in Synodality

The final questions look forward, to how we can make this Synod the start of a new way of working within the Church. The questions are:

- What additional formation do I need to be a missionary disciple?
- Is the local community effective in catechising and passing on the faith?
- What tools are necessary for the Church to be truly synodal, listening and journeying together?
- How do we continue the listening and dialogue beyond this process so that the Church have a 'lived synodality' as the Holy Father asks?

Space for your personal thoughts and reflections

What next?

The final discussion topic reminds us that this is a Synod about Synodality. A key aim of the process is to transform the way the Church works and makes decisions. The discussions that you have been involved in need to continue and be extended.

The outcomes of your discussions will be used to inform a response to the Diocese on behalf of the Parish. If your group so wishes, your group leader can also submit a response on behalf of the group. After a period of discernment, Bishop Richard will present a summary for the Diocese. This will take the form of an online presentation at 7:30pm on Wednesday 9th March. You can reserve a place on the Diocesan website: <https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/synod>.

Collated outcomes from all the discussions that have happened at St Joseph's will be shared with the Parish via the Synod newsletter. Fr Bill will reflect on all the discussions to see what developments could be taken forward within the Parish.