



Theme 3 – Mission



Who is this guide for?

- This guide can be used by individuals or, ideally, self-formed groups to engage with the Synodal questions without joining one of the official Parish groups.
- Groups could encounter each other in person, online or by phone – whatever works for you.
- There are three sets of questions, so you could think about them over three short sessions or one longer one – again, whatever works for you. Each set of questions is likely to take between 20 and 30 minutes.
- Once you have completed all three themes (this is the final one) you can submit your summary to the Diocese. We also hope that you will share it with us for inclusion in the official Parish response.
- To share feedback with us, please email synod@st-josephs-epsom.org.uk.
- Use this website to submit responses to the Diocese: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PTZKV3L>.

How does it work?

- Each session begins with a short liturgy. It is important to be aware that everything we do is done in the presence of God and made better through acknowledging his presence. The liturgy also links to the theme.
- There are three sets of questions unpicking the theme. There is space for you to record your considered thoughts. If you use the Word version of this guide, you can type these in the space provided. The pdf version is intended to be printed and completed by hand.
- There is no need for a group to reach a consensus. Your written summary can reflect a diversity of views.
- Each set of questions ends with a statement for you to respond to, indicating to what extent you agree or disagree with it. Individuals can simply put a cross in the appropriate box; groups can add the number of people giving each response.
- Once you have finished all the questions, end with a time of prayer.

Encounter – listen – discern

Follow the encounter–listen–discern model. This is trickier if you are using this guide on your own, but discuss the issues raised by the questions with others you meet (in an appropriate way) and reflect carefully on what you hear.

Remember these two important principles:

- We listen to one another in order to listen to the Holy Spirit.
- We discern together so that the decisions made are for the good of all.

The aim of your discussions is to listen to each other's experiences and reflections, with the aim of hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit. Last September, Pope Francis said this about the Synod: 'It's not about gathering opinions, no. This is not a survey, but about listening to the Holy Spirit.'

Guidelines for using the questions

The following suggestions will help you to use the questions most effectively:

- 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.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- Encourage each other (even if you don't always agree).
- Don't be afraid of silence – silence is useful time to reflect about what we have heard or, simply, time to think.
- Respect each other.
- Everyone's voice needs to be heard.
- Listen actively – allow yourself to be challenged, surprised, or even shocked.
- Try to cover all areas for discussion in each section.

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.**

THE
WORD
WHO
IS
LIFE

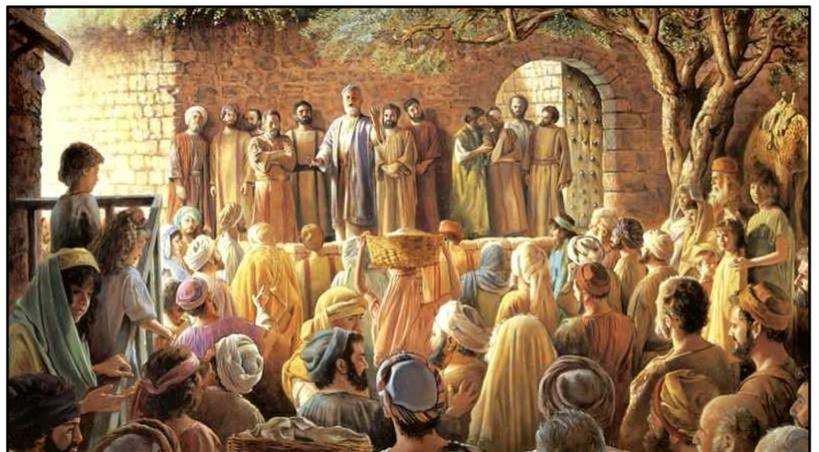
Scripture reading

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.

After the reading, pause for a while for silent prayer and reflection.

Lord, we thank you for bringing us together
to reflect on the joy of your love and how we, as your people,
can work together to share your joy and peace with others.
We ask you to guide our conversation and all the conversations taking place across the world.
We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Discussion 8 - Authority and Participation

The first discussion for this theme (and eighth overall) 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?

Response to questions about 'Authority and Participation':

Response to questions about 'Authority and Participation':					
The Church is good at empowering participation.					
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree

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?

Response to questions about 'Discerning and Deciding':

Response to questions about 'Discerning and Deciding':					
The Church is good at discerning and deciding.					
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree

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?

Response to questions about 'Forming ourselves in Synodality':					
The Church is good at being synodal.					
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree

Final prayer

We have a few moments to bring everything we have discussed to God. We give thanks for all the good that our Parish has done and continues to do, but we also pray for the strength and guidance that will allow us to grow as a community. I invite you now, either out loud or in the silence of your heart, to offer a prayer for any of the topics that we have discussed today.

Allow people to offer prayers or simply have a period of silent prayer.

We gather all our prayers, both spoken and unspoken, and offer them to you Father, using the words our saviour gave us...

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day, our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil. Amen.**

St Philip Howard... **Pray for us.**

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom... **Pray for us.**

St Joseph... **Pray for us.**

All Holy men and women... **Pray for us.**

Sign of the cross