



Format for a Parish Meeting

All called and gifted by God

Before the Meeting

You will need:

- Copies of *Reflections from Scripture and Tradition*
- Paper for writing proposals on
- Pens
- Synod Prayer cards

You might also consider having a prayer focus including a Synod Candle and some cloths in the Synod colours.

Introduction and Welcome

We are meeting to reflect on our first Synod Theme, **All called and gifted by God**. We will hear a little of what was said to inspire this Theme, reflect on Scripture and Tradition as we try to understand God's dream for his Church, and generate proposals for action to put forward to the Synod.

Opening Prayer

Lord,
I thank you for the wonder of my being,
and for all the goodness in my life.
I thank you that you have called and gifted me
that I might make a difference in the world
in which you have placed me.
Open my heart more fully to your Spirit
that I may rejoice in all that you have done
and will do in me and through me.
Amen.

Reflecting on the Synod Listening

This first part of our reflections looks at what was said during the Synod Listening. Some of the things that led to this Theme are:

- Gifts of lay people should be appropriately used.
- Young people have a vital and valuable contribution to make.
- Priesthood is valued.
- Young people need particular support as they discern their life choices.
- Priests need to be better supported.
- The role of women in the Church should be celebrated.
- Be more inclusive and welcoming of diversity.
- And much more!

In the light of what people said invite the participants to reflect on the following questions:

- What different models of leadership in parishes could we explore?
- How should we encourage and equip people to use their different gifts in mission and ministry?

- How do we enable people of all ages, especially young people, to grow, flourish and contribute as part of our communities?
- What needs to change about the way priests are recruited, trained, appointed and supported?
- What structures need to be put in place to ensure effective collaboration and decision making between ordained and lay people?

You might like to invite some sharing of people's responses to these questions.

Gospel Reading (Matthew 9:9-13)

As Jesus was walking on, he saw a man named Matthew sitting by the customs house, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him.

While he was at dinner in the house it happened that a number of tax collectors and sinners came to sit at the table with Jesus and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When he heard this he replied, 'It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. Go and learn the meaning of the words: What I want is mercy, not sacrifice. And indeed I did not come to call the virtuous, but sinners.'

Questions for Reflection

- How do I hear the call of God in my life today?
- How do I feel about being called by God?
- What changes in me because God has called me?
- What does it mean for us to be a church of saints and sinners?

Give an opportunity for people to ponder these questions before inviting them to share anything that strikes them. You could consider using stones and the listening technique here.

Reflections from Scripture and Tradition

Distribute the reflections from Scripture and Tradition and invite people to reflect on them, underlining anything that strikes them. Participants are then invited to share their reflections.

Generating Proposals

Having reflected on the situation, how our faith informs us and what needs to be done in order to become the Church God is calling us to be, what is your proposal for action?

Invite everybody to write one proposal and collect them in. Thank people for taking part in this meeting and explain what will happen next:

- All proposals submitted in the Parish will be brought to a discernment meeting.
- At this meeting the five proposals that our Parish will submit to Synod 2020 will be decided.
- We will let you know what the final choices are.

The meeting concludes with the Synod prayer.

Other Resources

There are video resources – Archbishop Malcolm's introduction to the Theme and a Theological Reflection – available on the Synod 2020 website that you may like to use should the facilities be available. See www.synod2020.co.uk/themes/vocation

Reflections from Scripture and Tradition

All called and gifted by God

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is in Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12

To respond to our vocation, we need to foster and develop all that we are. This is about finding our true selves in the light of God and letting our lives flourish and bear fruit.

Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 257

In God's plan, every man and woman is meant to seek self-fulfilment, for every human life is called to some task by God.

Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 257

The eyes of faith behold a wonderful scene: that of a countless number of lay people, both women and men, busy at work in their daily life and activity, oftentimes far from view and quite unacclaimed by the world, unknown to the world's great personages but nonetheless looked upon in love by the Father, untiring labourers who work in the Lord's vineyard. Confident and steadfast through the power of God's grace, these are the humble yet great builders of the Kingdom of God in history.

Pope St John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, 17

