

What a Listening Session Is and What a Listening Session is *Not*

What It Is

The listening session is the phase in the Synod process in which Catholics of all ages and all levels of participation in the life of the Church are invited to come together to reflect on five key elements of church life: Worship, Faith Formation, Community, Administration / Stewardship and Service.

Participants consider how the local church can “Be the best Church we can be” by identifying strengths on which the church can build and areas for renewal and development. An introduction to each of the key elements will help set the parameters for each area under consideration. With this in mind the listening session:

- Is a structured conversation toward the goal of identifying proposals for growth and fidelity to the mission of the Church
- Is a collaborative experience of clergy, religious and laity in assessing the vitality of the local church and submitting their input to be considered during the Synod preparatory sessions.
- Is a time for listening and recording people’s thoughts and impressions
- Is an opportunity for evangelization
- Is designed to involve the parishioners in a simple and easy to implement format

What It Is Not

- Is not a forum for people to question Church teaching. While questioning can be an important part of learning, that is not the objective of this process.
- Is not an opportunity for Catholics to get something “off their chest”
- Is not an open-ended town hall meeting – the process will summarize the input of the parish
- Is not restricted only to active faithful Catholics – parishes are free to invite those who are away from the faith
- Is not directed at assessing only the vitality of the parish, but is also a session to assess the vitality of the larger local church