



Archdiocesan Synod 2022
Parish Consultation Process With Small Groups Fall 2021
Parish Small Group Process and Documents

I. SPRING/SUMMER PLANNING – BASELINE APPROACH

- Step 1. Form Core Team
- Step 2. Plan Baseline Approach: Parish Hosted Open Invite Small Groups & Existing Small Groups
- Step 3. Reserve Parish Calendar and Space
- Step 4. Prepare Communications Plan and Calendar
- Step 5. Recruit Facilitators and Scribes (Spring through September)

II. FALL IMPLEMENTATION – BASELINE APPROACH

- Step 6. Attend 1 of the Trainings Offered in Late August and Early September
- Step 7. Communicate and Invite Parishioners
- Step 8. Implement Parish Small Groups
- Step 9. Report Feedback to Archdiocese

III. START NEW SMALL GROUPS

- Option 1. Parish Hosted Open Invite Small Groups for Parents of School Age Children
- Option 2. Parish/Facilitator Hosted Common Interest Small Groups
- Option 3. Parish/Facilitator Hosted Open Signup Small Groups
- Option 4. Parishioner Initiated Small Groups

TRAININGS

1. Spring/Summer Training: Planning for fall Parish Synod small groups

- Baseline Approach for all parishes: Attend one training. Trainings are offered every Thursday now through May 27 in the afternoon (1-2:30 p.m.) and evening (7-8:30 p.m.).
 - “Start New Small Groups”: If your parish wishes to start new small groups, attend one additional training. Trainings are offered the first Tuesday of each month through May (March 2, April 6, and May 4) in the morning (10-11:30 a.m.).
- Invitees: Small Group Process Managers, ambassadors, and interested parish staff.

2. Fall Training: Implementation of Synod small groups

- Attend one training. Trainings will be offered late August and early September. Training includes (i) Synod small group material use and reporting parish feedback, (ii) Fall implementation of small groups, and (iii) facilitator and scribe training.
- Invitees: Small Group Process Managers, facilitators and scribes, ambassadors and interested parish staff.

1. Archdiocesan Assistance:

- The Archdiocese is here to assist you with your fall Synod small groups. If you have any questions or suggestions, please email ambassadors@archspm.org.
- If you wish to continue your small group ministry after the fall, the Archdiocese can assist you. See the Archdiocese Small Group Ministry web page at archspm.org/smallgroups or contact Jean Stolpestad, Director of the Office of Marriage, Family and Life; office phone: (651) 291-4438; Email: stolpestadj@archspm.org.

2. Purpose of Website and General Overview: The purpose of this website is to assist your parish with planning and implementing the Parish Consultation Process with Small Groups this fall.

- **Reserve Parish Adult Faith Formation Calendar Fall 2021**
 - Synod small groups will take place six weeks between September 19 and November 14, 2021.
 - Sacramental prep should continue uninterrupted.
 - Avoid other adult faith formation activities during this timeframe to encourage Synod small group participation.
- **Baseline Approach for Fall Synod Small Groups:** At a minimum, parishes are expected to offer the following Synod small groups:
 - Parish Hosted Open Invite small groups, and
 - Invite and encourage existing small groups to use Synod materials fall 2021.
- **Optional Approaches - Start New Small Groups:** For those parishes wishing to start new small groups, training will be offered covering four approaches to starting new small groups:
 - Parish Hosted Open Invite Small Groups for Parents of School Age Children,
 - Parish/Facilitator Hosted Common Interest Small Groups,
 - Parish/Facilitator Hosted Open Signup Small Groups, and
 - Parishioner Initiated Small Groups.
- **Small Group Materials & Reporting:**
 - For purposes of the Synod small group process, parishes are to use the Synod small group materials provided by the Archdiocese without adjustment and provide feedback to the Archdiocese as requested.
 - Small group materials will be provided and explained at the late August and September trainings. Materials will include a two-hour video that includes significant and multiple built-in times for discussion. The process is designed for participants to stay at their same tables for the entire two hours. Parishes should consider space and video screens accordingly.
- **Parish Flexibility:** Beyond the requirements noted above, the approach, structure and example documents on this website are tools provided to assist the parish with this work. As you plan your parish Synod small groups, feel free to customize these tools.

3. Value of Parish Consultation Process with Small Groups

- **Value to Synod:** Parish feedback on the focus areas will inform the Deanery Consultation process. The Deanery Consultation will occur January and February 2022 and will help determine Synod topics at the Archdiocesan Synod Assembly. The Archdiocesan Synod Assembly will be held Pentecost weekend June 2022. After considering the resulting Synod recommendations, Archbishop Hebda will write a Pastoral Letter (November 2022, Feast of Christ the King), leading to a Pastoral Plan to move our Archdiocese into the future.

- **Value to Parish:** Small groups also provide value in the life of the faithful and the parish, including:
 - Effective faith formation and growth, as outlined in *Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic* by Matthew Kelly:
 - Prayer: Individual and prayers of the Church - Mass and sacraments,
 - Continuous learning : Spiritual growth, support and accountability in Christian living,
 - Evangelization: Emboldens members to share their faith, and
 - Generosity: Encourages service to parish and community.
 - Building strong fellowship and community, connecting people to others, their parish and Christ.
 - Facilitators who are trained and can be a source of evangelized, future parish leaders.
 - Adults who are evangelized and catechized who then pass on the faith to their children and grandchildren, strengthening families.

4. Parish Time and Financial Resources

- **Pastor Time**
 - Although the Pastor may choose to be more involved, he can limit his involvement to (i) receiving periodic updates from the Core Team, (ii) approval of facilitators and scribes, and (iii) messaging from the pulpit.
- **Parish Staff and Time**
 - Time of the Small Group Process Managers (or other parish staff) overseeing the ministry.
 - Time of the Communications staff (updating the website, parish electronic communications, etc.).
 - Time of the Administrative staff (booking rooms, putting up posters, copying small group materials).
- **Parish Financial Resources**
 - Printing bulletin inserts or other advertising materials.
 - Printing the small group materials for parish small groups.



STEP 1: FORM CORE TEAM (SMALL GROUP PROCESS MANAGERS)

1. Connect with your parish Synod ambassadors

- Locate a list of your parish Synod ambassadors.
- Meet or speak with them and encourage them in their work: on the core team, as facilitators and scribes, or as ongoing ambassadors of prayer, invitation and communication.

2. Plan your core team and review with your pastor

- **Your parish core team may be small or large.**
 - Small Group Process Managers may opt to oversee the effort without additional team members.
 - If you wish to engage a team, review the core team member job description and scope of work, found under #3 below.
- **Ideas for people to consider inviting include:**
 - DRE/Faith Formation staff person: This individual is likely already a Small Group Process Manager.
 - Ambassadors: We encourage you to consider your trained parish Synod ambassadors.
 - School rep: If your parish has a school, a school parent can assist with inviting school parents.
 - Other parishioners: Other parishioners with the desire and available time, including:
 - Names provided by your Pastor,
 - Parishioners whom Core Team members know and recommend,
 - Parishioners who attended the Archbishop Flynn Catechetical Institute,
 - Parishioners who have facilitated small groups at your parish in the past, and others recommended by those facilitators,
 - Parishioners who have taken leadership roles (past or present) such as faith formation teachers, members of various councils, and schools teachers if your parish has a school,
 - Parishioners who take a weekly Adoration hour, and
 - Other names identified from a review of your parish directory.
 - If you are going to start new small groups (see Section III):
 - A woman as a coordinator for women's small groups (and couples), and
 - A man as a coordinator for men's small groups.
- **Note Regarding Other Parish Staff**: Other parish staff will be critical to the success of the small groups, but may not need to be a member of the core team:
 - **Communications**: Parish communications staff member (website, parish electronic communications, social media, parish bulletins, etc.).
 - **Administrative**: Parish administrative staff member (booking parish calendar, reserving parish space, copying materials, hanging posters, etc.).
- **Review list with your Pastor.**

- Core team invite list:

○ Name	Phone Number	Email
○ _____	_____	_____
○ _____	_____	_____
○ _____	_____	_____
○ _____	_____	_____
○ _____	_____	_____

3. Invite core team members

- Email invitation
 - See "Sample Invite - Core Team Member," which includes a job description and scope of work.
 - Download and edit it to fit your parish planning.
- Core team member job description and scope of work.
 - Job Description:
 - Faithful/Desire: Faithful practicing Catholic who desires to help others grow in their faith through the Synod small group process.
 - Available Time: Has the time available to meet and fulfill the scope of work.
 - Experience: Preferably has participated in and/or facilitated small groups.
 - Scope of Work:
 - Spring Training: Attend one training. Trainings are offered by the Archdiocese every Thursday now through May 27 in the afternoon (1-2:30 p.m.) and evening (7:00-8:30.p.m.). Training will cover planning and implementing the baseline approach for Synod small groups at the parish.
 - If your parish wishes to start new small groups, attend an additional training. Trainings are offered the first Tuesday of each month through May (March 2, April 6, and May 4) in the morning (10-11:30 a.m.).
 - Fall Training: Attend one training. Trainings will be offered by the Archdiocese in late August and early September 2021. Trainings will cover (i) Synod small group materials use and reporting parish feedback, (ii) Fall implementation of small groups, and (iii) facilitator and scribe training.
 - Attend parish core team meetings.
 - Complete assigned ministry tasks, and otherwise support the Small Group Process Managers.

4. Set core team meetings and manage the work

- Set core team meetings.
- Manage the work of the core team (based on the steps provided).

5. Small Group Process Manager scope of work (for reference)

- Pastor assigned.
- Scope of Work:
 - Spring Training: Attend one training. Trainings are offered by the Archdiocese every Thursday now through May 27 in the afternoon (1-2:30 p.m.) and evening (7-8:30.p.m.). Training will cover planning and implementing the baseline approach for Synod small groups at the parish.

- If your parish wishes to start new small groups, attend one additional training. Trainings are offered the first Tuesday of each month through May (March 2, April 6, and May 4) in the morning (10-11:30 a.m.).
- Fall Training: Attend one training. Trainings will be offered by the Archdiocese in late August and early September 2021. Trainings will cover (i) Synod small group materials use and reporting parish feedback, (ii) Fall implementation of small groups, and (iii) facilitator and scribe training.
- Form the core team, and facilitate core team meetings.
- Plan and implement the Synod small groups, working with the core team, parish staff, ambassadors, facilitators and scribes.



STEP 2: PLAN SMALL GROUPS - BASELINE APPROACH

1. Baseline Approach to Synod Small Groups

- At a minimum, parishes are expected to offer the following Synod small groups fall 2021:
 - Parish Hosted Open Invite small groups, and
 - Invite and encourage existing small groups to use Synod small group materials.

2. Small Group Materials

- Parishes are to use the Synod small group materials provided by the Archdiocese without adjustment, and report parish feedback to the Archdiocese as requested.
- Small group materials will be provided and explained at the late August and early September trainings. Materials will include a two-hour video that includes significant and multiple built-in times for discussion. The process is designed for participants to stay at their same tables for the entire two hours. Parishes should consider space and video screens accordingly.
- The process for providing feedback will be explained at the late August and early September trainings.

3. Parish Hosted Open Invite small groups

- Parish plans and hosts
 - Parish plans and hosts an onsite opportunity that is open to all parishioners each week (whether they register or not). This structure is to provide for maximum flexibility for parishioner involvement.
 - Parish should consider hosting one in the morning and one in the evening to encourage participation.
 - Sample advertisement:

Join our Synod small groups Thursday evenings from 7-9 p.m. starting in September!
Come with your own small group, or the parish will place you in one.
Registration is appreciated, but not required. All are welcome!
 - Administration of small groups
 - Parishioners who attend as a small group will meet with their small group during this time at the parish (with one member facilitating, and one member acting as scribe).
 - For all other parishioners who register or just show up, the parish will place them in a small group for that week, and the parish provides a facilitator and scribe.
 - Facilitators and scribes report to the Small Group Process Manager.

4. Existing small groups

- Invite and encourage existing parish small groups, and other small groups meeting at or related to your parish (for example, Cursillo or Bible studies) to use the Synod small group materials fall 2021.
 - See "Sample Invite - Existing Small Groups." Download and edit as needed.
- Facilitators and Scribes

- Each existing small group should recruit a scribe from the group, and the group's normal facilitator and scribe should attend one training late August/early September.
- Facilitators and scribes communicate with the Small Group Process Manager.



STEP 3: RESERVE PARISH CALENDAR AND SPACE

1. Reserve six weeks for Synod small groups

- Reserve six weeks between September 19 and November 14, 2021 on your parish Adult Faith Formation calendar for Synod small groups.
 - Sacramental prep continues without interruption during this time frame.
 - Avoid other adult faith formation opportunities during this time frame to encourage Synod small group participation.

2. Reserve parish space

- Reserve rooms for Synod small groups to meet at your parish.
- Materials will include a two-hour video that includes significant and multiple times for discussion. The process is designed for participants to stay at their tables for the entire two hours. Parishes should consider space and video screens accordingly.



STEP 4: PREPARE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN AND CALENDAR

1. Prepare communications plan through late August

- Prepare your communications plan through late August. Consider electronic and traditional means:
 - Electronic: website, electronic communications, social media, and
 - Traditional: bulletin text/insert, pulpit announcements, and parish posters.
- Visit the Synod promotional web page archspm.org/synodpromo for promotional materials including:
 - Synod Overview, Year 2 (Synod Overview, Year 3 posted to web page later spring),
 - Parish Poster 2021 (posted later this spring),
 - Parish Editable Poster 2021 (posted August),
 - Bulletin announcements (which can also be used for pulpit announcements),
 - Videos and more.

2. Prepare a specific communication plan for the weekends in late August and September

- Prepare a specific communications plan for the following weekends:
 - August 28/29,
 - September 4/5 (Labor Day weekend),
 - September 11/12 (consider homily messaging and a testimony after Masses), and
 - September 18/19.
- Consider electronic and traditional means:
 - Electronic: website, electronic communications, and social media.
 - Traditional: bulletin text/insert, pulpit announcements, and parish posters.
- September 11/12 (first weekend after Labor Day)
 - Consider pastor homily messaging and a testimonial after all Masses this weekend.
 - Pastor homily messaging:
 - If possible, the pastor may incorporate the Synod Parish Consultation process with Small Groups into his homily.
 - He can briefly explain the Synod and expound on the value of participating in the small groups and giving feedback on the focus areas, and invite and encourage parishioners to attend the fall small groups.
 - Testimonial:
 - A testimony of a personal experience in a small group is a powerful and moving means of communicating the value of small groups and inviting and encouraging parishioners to attend.
 - Select a person (or couple) who is comfortable speaking at the podium, is relatable, and can speak from the heart about the value of their small group experience.
 - Review and approve the content and length with the speaker(s) prior to the testimony.



STEP 5: RECRUIT FACILITATORS AND SCRIBES

1. Estimate numbers of facilitators and scribes to invite

- Estimate the number of small groups you will have using the following calculation.
 - Estimate the number of parishioners who will attend.
 - Divide by 8 (plan for 8 people in a small group, including the facilitator and scribe).
 - The resulting number is the estimated number of small groups you will have.
- Plan 1 facilitator and 1 scribe for each small group.
 - If you have more small groups than expected, recruit more facilitators and scribes from the groups. If you have backups, assign them.
 - If you have less small groups than expected, the remaining facilitators and scribes can be backups in the small groups.
- Example calculation:
 - Estimated number of parishioners who will attend: 100.
 - Divide by 8.
 - Estimated number of small groups: $100 / 8 = 12.5$ (round up to 13).
 - Recruit 13 facilitators and 13 scribes. Recruit more if you can for back-ups.

2. Prepare list of facilitators and scribes to invite

- Prepare a list of parishioners to invite. Consider the following:
 - Names provided by your pastor,
 - Ambassadors,
 - Parishioners whom the Core Team know and recommend,
 - Parishioners who attended the Archbishop Flynn Catechetical Institute,
 - Parishioners who have facilitated small groups at your parish in the past, and others recommended by those facilitators,
 - Parishioners who have taken leadership roles at your parish (past or present) such as faith formation teachers, members of various councils, and schoolteachers if your parish has a school,
 - Parishioners who take a weekly Adoration hour, and
 - Other names identified from a review of your parish directory.

3. Review list with your pastor for approval

- Given the facilitators and scribes will be in a leadership position, review the invitation list with the pastor for his approval.

4. Invite facilitators and scribes

- The Small Group Process Manager and/or core team members extend a personal invitation (with email follow-up) or just an email invitation.
 - See "[Sample Invite - Facilitators and Scribes](#)" which includes a job description and scope of work. Download and edit as needed.

- Where applicable, ask for your pastor's assistance. For example, your pastor may send the email, or your pastor may personally invite parishioners as they leave Mass.