



**Plenary Council 2020**  
Listen to what the Spirit is saying...

# Listening and Dialogue Guide

for the Diocese of Broken Bay

## A FIVE STEP PROCESS:

**INTRODUCTION**  
(10 minutes)

**PRAY TOGETHER**  
(10 minutes)

**READ QUESTION AND REFLECT**  
(20 minutes)

**SHARE AND LISTEN**  
(60 minutes)

**REGATHER AND PRAY**  
(20 minutes)

**STEP**  
**01**

**Introduction**  
(up to 10 minutes)

Welcome and thank you for sharing your voice towards Plenary Council 2020. Your Local Animator or facilitator will share a brief introduction to Plenary Council 2020, outline the process for your Listening and Dialogue Session, and invite you to break into small groups.

## STEP 02

### Pray Together (up to 10 minutes)

You are invited to pray together in your small group. You might like to read scripture, you can use the words written below or just speak to God from your heart.

*Come, Holy Spirit of Pentecost.  
Come, Holy Spirit of the great South Land.*

*O God, bless and unite all your people in Australia  
and guide us on the pilgrim way of the Plenary Council.*

*Give us the grace to see your face in one another  
and to recognise Jesus, our companion on the road.*

*Give us the courage to tell our stories  
and to speak boldly of your truth.*

*Give us ears to listen humbly to each other  
and a discerning heart to hear what you are saying.*

*Lead your Church into a hope-filled future,  
that we may live the joy of the Gospel.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
bread for the journey from age to age. Amen.*

*Our Lady Help of Christians, pray for us.  
St Mary MacKillop, pray for us.*

## STEP 03

### Read Question and Reflect (up to 20 minutes)

**What do you think God is asking  
of us in Australia at this time?**

- **Reflect on the question** in silence for 5 minutes.
- Then, **as individuals, write a list of all the responses to this question** that come to mind, writing each of your individual responses on separate post-it notes. When everyone has finished writing down their thoughts or ideas, place all of your post-it notes together in the middle of your table or group.
- **As a group, arrange these post-it notes** into general categories (e.g. putting all the responses related to 'liturgy' together, those related to 'clergy' together, and so on).
- Working together, **choose the topic** that generated the most responses in your group to focus on for the next step, Step 4.
- **Our topic for our Listening and Dialogue Session is:**

*Remember that if your particular topic is not the one that generates the most responses in your group you may want to gather together again in future weeks and months to continue to talk with each other about alternative topics. If your topic is not chosen in this instance, the process that follows can be completed with other topics or themes in hand. You can also decide to submit your individual thoughts on your preferred topic directly to the Plenary Council website following the Listening and Dialogue Session (<http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/have-your-say>). See Step 5 for details on how to submit your insights directly.*

## STEP 04

## Share and Listen (up to 60 minutes)

### **REFLECT** What have I experienced in this area? (5 minutes)

In silence, reflect on your personal experience of faith, life and the Church **related to the topic area your group has chosen**. You may want to write your thoughts down, or simply sit quietly with your thoughts.

### **SHARE AND LISTEN** Tell a story of my experience in this area (40 minutes)

Now take turns to share aloud with each other your personal experience of faith, life and the Church. Make sure everyone in your group has at least one chance to tell their story. Also choose someone in your group to take general notes in the box provided below (bullet points will suffice) if you have not already done so. When others are speaking, remember to listen with an open and humble heart.

*Our stories of our experiences of faith and the Church . . .*

### **REFLECT** How has another perspective influenced my own? (5 minutes)

After each person has shared, reflect in silence on how stories shared by other people in your group have influenced your own perspective. You may want to write your thoughts down, or simply sit quietly with your thoughts.

### **SHARE** How has another perspective influenced my own? (5 minutes)

Show that you have listened deeply and openly to each other. Some phrases you may find helpful are: 'I feel your sharing has helped me to...' or 'From what you have shared with me, I now understand...'

**PRAY** (5 minutes) At the end of your listening and sharing as a small group, you are invited to pray together and give thanks for your sharing with each other. You can use the prayer below, or you might like to pray a prayer of gratitude in your own words.

*Creator God, we thank you for the encounter with one another today.*

*We know that where two or three are gathered, you are in our midst.*

*Thank you for being with us and for the courage to speak boldly and with passion, and the humility to listen with open hearts.*

*We ask you to continue to walk with us, as we discover the pathway toward the future you are calling us to.*

*Amen.*

## STEP 05

## Regather and Pray (up to 20 minutes)

Your Local Animator or facilitator will now regather all participants as one.

The nominated spokesperson of your small group will be invited to share their group's collective sense of **'What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?'** It is important that all listen with an open and humble heart. Not every group has to share if they do not wish to.

Your Local Animator or facilitator will also provide instructions on how **your shared insights are now to be submitted** to the national Plenary Council website to ensure they shape the agenda for Plenary Council 2020, whether your small group leader submits on your behalf, every participant submits their own response, or the Local Animator or facilitator agrees to submit on behalf of all gathered participants. All submissions should be made to <http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/have-your-say>

**We thank you** for taking part in this Listening and Dialogue Session and giving your voice to Plenary Council 2020 and the future of the Catholic Church in Australia.

**For more information or support**, please contact your Local Animator, facilitator or community leader, or otherwise one of the contacts below. We are eager to support your participation and involvement in any way we can.

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