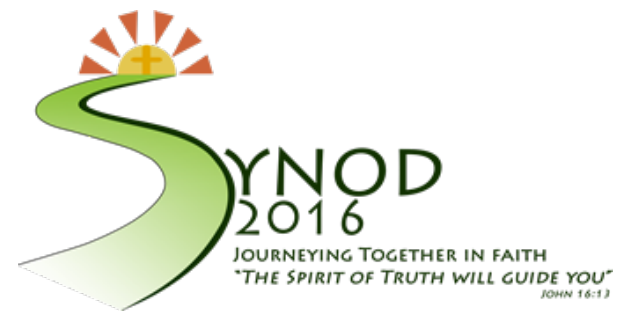




Gathering of Parish Delegates

Preparing for Listening and Discernment in our Parishes





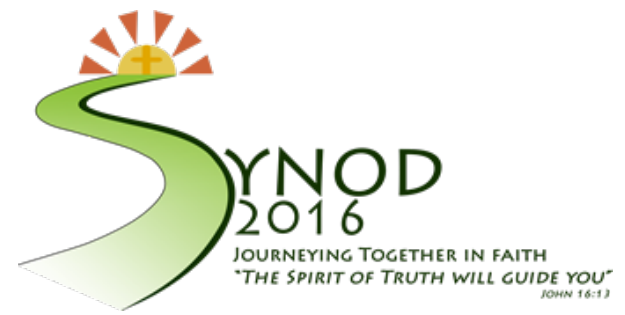
Agenda

- ⊕ **Welcome & prayer**
- ⊕ **Introduction & meeting objectives**
- ⊕ **Revisit workshop with Chris Schoch**
- ⊕ **Skills for Hunter-gatherers**
- ⊕ **3 Questions underpinning listening and discernment process**
- ⊕ **Models for listening and discernment**
- ⊕ **Choosing the right model(s) for your parish ecosystem**
- ⊕ **Support available to parish delegates**
- ⊕ **Local and diocese level working arrangements**

Meeting objectives

- Bring forward **learnings** from Chris Schoch workshop (Jan 31st)
- Clarify the **questions** to be asked during the listening and discernment process
- Provide **menu of options** for parish listening and discernment
- Determine **which option(s)** is (are) most suitable for each parish



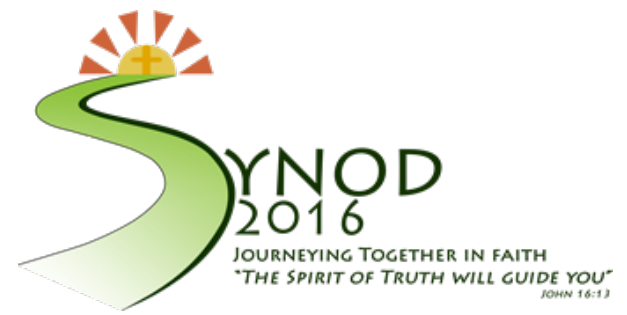


Revisit Chris Schoch workshop (Jan 31st)

Working in parish groups:

- Confirm list and contact details of delegates
- Review experience, feedback and parish ecosystem

Skills for Hunter-gatherers



Listening



Facilitating

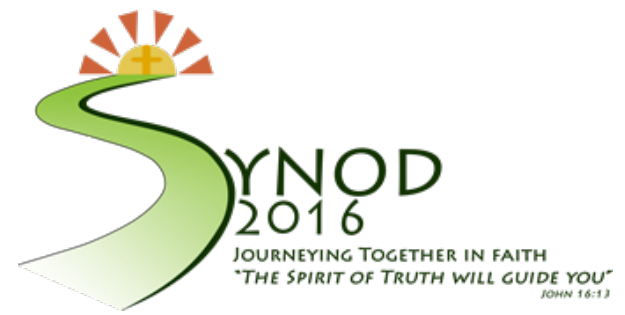


Listening

“Listening is an art, a skill and a discipline”

DO

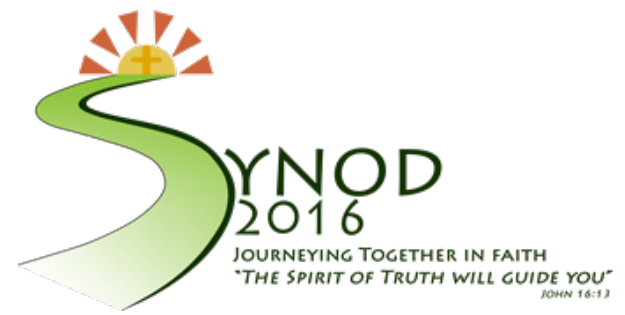
- Show interest/look at the person/adopt a relaxed posture/be natural, but sincere and genuine
- Concentrate/give full attention
- Decide to be interested; be aware of body language
- Try to make the person feel listened to
- Reflect, summarise if necessary



AVOID

- Interrupting the speaker/arguing
- Passing judgement too quickly in advance
- Jumping to conclusions
- Being over concerned about what your own response will be
- Showing irritation/annoyance
- Being drawn into personal agendas
- Giving Answers

Facilitating



Role of facilitator

- Helps the discussion to **flow** easily
- Remains **neutral** and **objective** throughout the discussion
- Ensures others **voice their opinions**
- Does **not talk too much** themselves



*Feel safe, accepted,
valued, appreciated,
useful*

Individual

Task

Group

*Get job done,
watch
timing,
clarify,
answer
questions*

*Unity of purpose,
co-operate, all feel
heard & understood*

The facilitator keeps in balance

- The needs of **individuals**
- The **task** that needs to be undertaken
- The needs of the **group**

🌻 Skills for Hunter-gatherer - personal exercise



Complete the following exercise for yourself

I find it easy to listen when.....

I find it hard to listen when.....

The type of people I find it hard to listen to are.....

I really like listening to people who.....

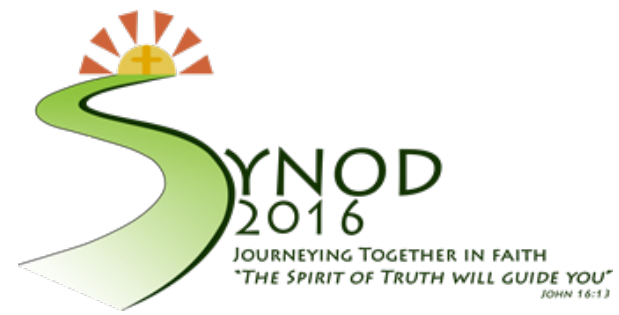
I don't bother listening when.....

It is good to listen when.....

It is better not to listen when.....

Think of an experience when you felt a group was well facilitated...

What would you find most challenging when facilitating a group?



Three questions underpinning the listening and discernment process:

- 1) Where do we see **God at work**, the Spirit active, the Kingdom of God breaking in – where do we see God in the words of Kavanagh:
God is in the bits and pieces of everyday – a kiss here and a laugh again, and sometimes tears, a pearl necklace round the neck of poverty
- **Where do we experience love, truth, goodness, hope, joy?**
- 2) What can be done to be **inclusive** of those who don't feel connected to the faith community? **Why** do you **continue to participate** or why do you **not continue to participate**?
- 3) What are the **most important religious/social issues** facing the Diocese of Limerick? (What are the issues you would like to see on the agenda of the Synod in 2016?)

8 Models for listening & discernment



**Parish
Assembly**

**Small
Group
meeting**

**Informal
listening
survey**

**Focus
Group**

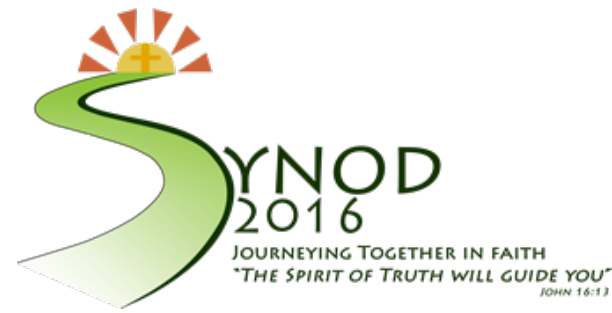
**Written
survey
*(questionnaire)***

**Online
survey
*(questionnaire)***

**Bespoke
Research
*(opinion polls)***

**Open
Space**



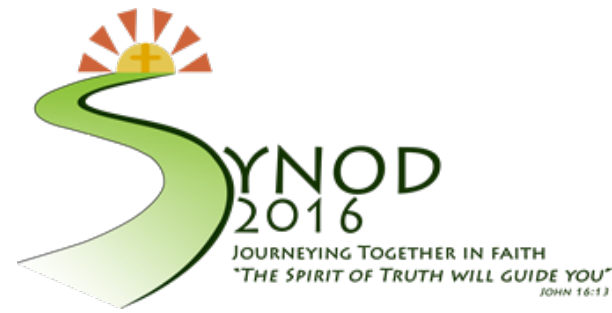


Model 1 – Parish Assembly

- Invitation is issued widely; involve as **broad a range of parishioners** as possible
- **Everyone** should feel **welcome** to attend; those who practice regularly, occasionally or rarely
- Need large enough **venue** plus room for break out discussions
- Needs extensive **publicity** through notices, newsletters, posters, personal invitations (*letter or flyer delivered to people's homes*)
- Will need **support** with welcome, prayer, name tags, tea/coffee etc.
- Need **facilitators** and **reporters** – facilitators must remain **neutral**; can have own opportunity to share their perspectives



☩ Model 2 – Small Group meeting

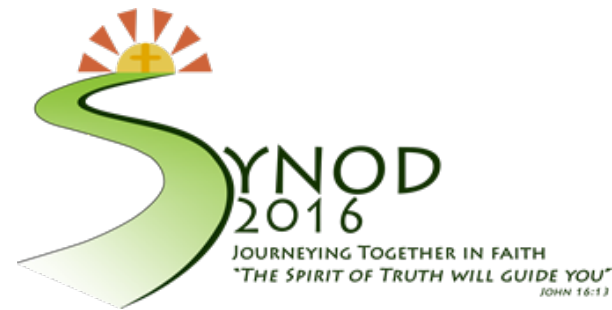


- Used for **smaller numbers**; could be a **specific group** (e.g. liturgy group, youth group) or a **cluster of homes**
- (Can break into sub-groups of 4-6 if necessary depending on numbers)
- Need **facilitator** for the discussion and someone to **record** discussion
- May need a **host** for the group; e.g. someone to host in their home for a group of neighbours
- Will need **invitation cards** or flyers for hosts
- Can have **multiple small group meetings** to cover different parts of the parish



Model 3 – Informal Listening Survey

Based on the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire's psycho-social method of education



The steps for putting the method into practice are:-

- Finding out **what people feel strongly about**, what is **relevant** to them now, by listening actively for any issues, problems, situations that people in the community are talking about with strong feelings.

- What are people:

- Happy about?
- Hopeful about?
- Worried about?
- Sad about?
- Angry about
- Afraid of?



- Sharing the findings that come out of the listening in weekly meetings and **establishing** what **the main themes** seem to be (generative themes) focusing on each of the six areas of life (*basic needs, relationships, community, education & socialisation, recreation and belief & values*).

Model 4 – Focus Group

- The focus group method is often used by **market researchers** to **seek** the **views** of potential consumers
- Usually involves 6 to 12 participants



- **Group interaction** and how people are **influenced by others** are key factors
- Facilitates **participation** by those who might otherwise not easily participate
- Allows **views of several people** to be explored in one group
- There is however **less control** over what information is produced and can produce more **'chaotic data'**
- Results can be **biased** by **dominant members**

❁ Model 5 – Written Survey (*questionnaire*)

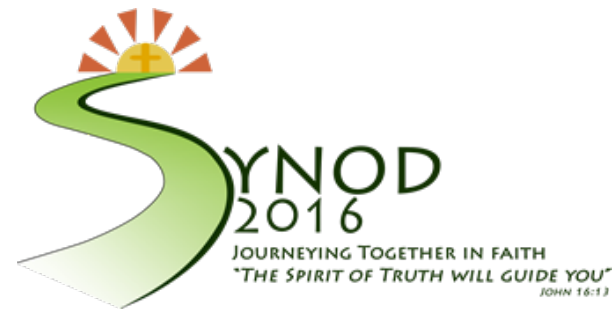


- The three questions are provided in written format; people could take the questionnaire and complete it themselves however;



- Unless a method is chosen that includes some form of interview where people actually voice their opinions to a person that is sitting in front of them, they will often not feel listened to or heard. Just filling in a form is very impersonal and people may not experience it as an actual process of consultation.

❁ Model 6 – Online Survey (*questionnaire*)



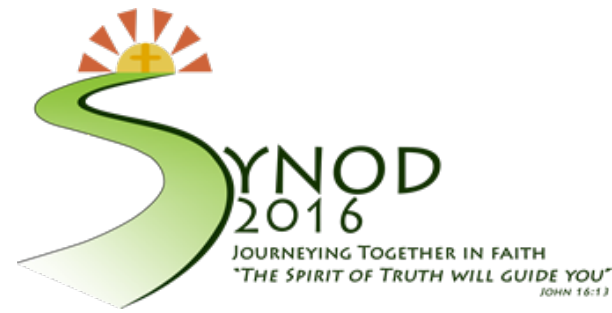
- The three questions will be provided in an online survey on the Synod website; people can be invited to go on to the website and click on to the survey.



- May be more inviting for young people to provide their perspective
- Will need to publicise this facility widely so people are aware of the opportunity to provide their input

Model 7 – Bespoke Research

(opinion polls)



- Facility offered by commercial research companies such as Amarach Research to target specific groups of consumers to interview them and poll their views through online, mobile and telephone and/or personal interviews

Model 8 – Open Space

- Model based on the Law of Two Feet – a foot of passion and a foot of responsibility. Uses a four phase approach:
 - Opening; theme is introduced, format is explained



- Create a 'marketplace of ideas'; participants write down issues of concern to them, put poster up, explain their issue to others, draw people who identify with their issue to a breakout session
- Breakout sessions; everyone invited to participate in the session(s) of interest to them; the issue(s) get discussed
- Closing session; everyone shares their findings

Choosing the right model for your Parish ecosystem?



Parish Assembly ?

Small Group meeting?

Informal listening survey?

Open Space?

Music

Youth Ministry

Finance

Liturgy

XYZ
PPC

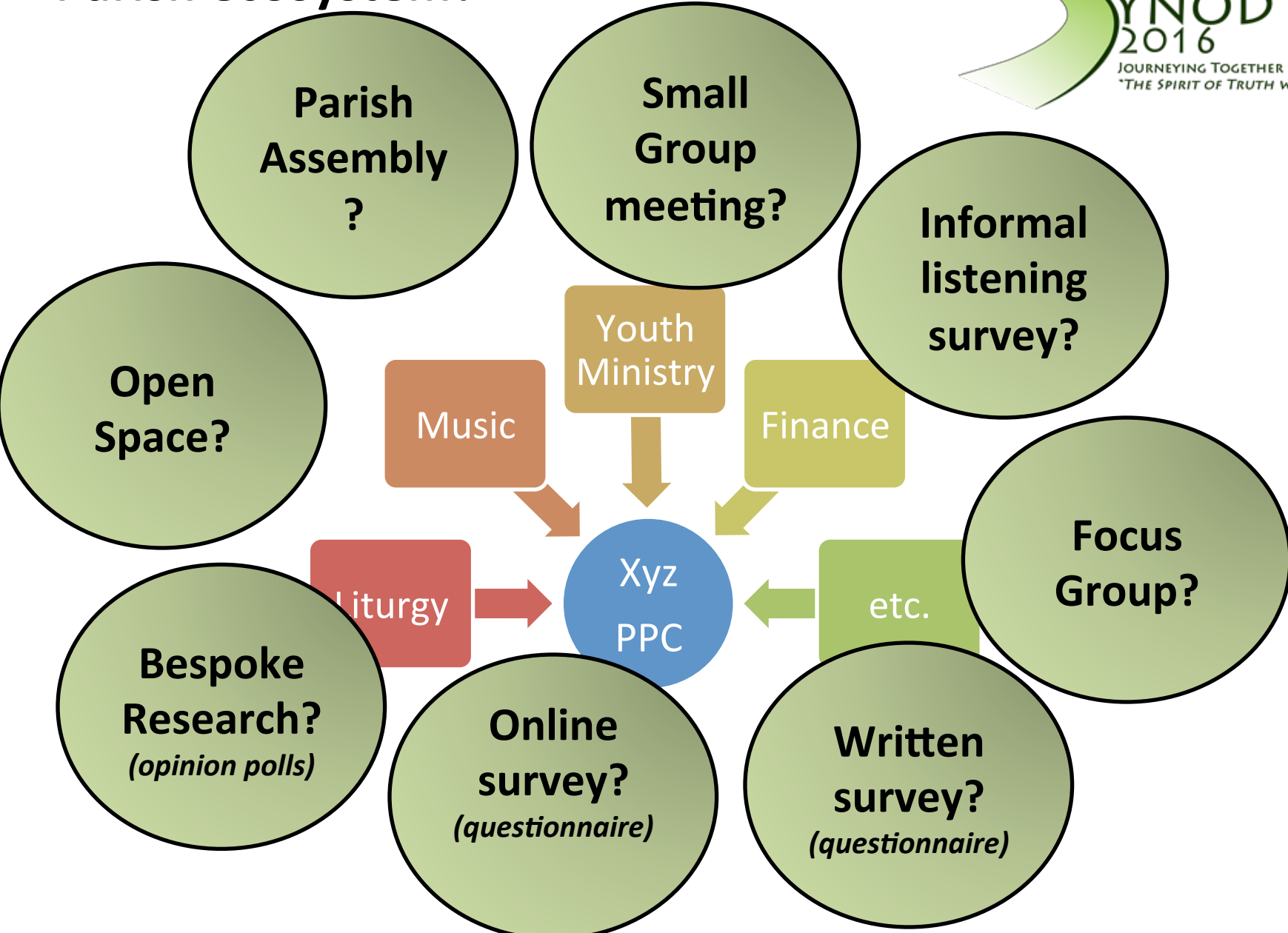
etc.

Focus Group?

Bespoke Research?
(opinion polls)

Online survey?
(questionnaire)

Written survey?
(questionnaire)



☘ Support available to parish delegates



- Support is available where required through a delegate support team:

- Betty Baker
- Rose O'Connor
- Margaret O'Sullivan
- Donal Fitzgibbon



- Further training for delegates on specific methods is available where required (Saturday March 14th John Weafer on Focus Groups – 11a.m. – 1p.m. MIC)

Local and diocese level working arrangements

