



## The Synod Process

### What is a Synod? What is the purpose?

Quotes below are from Archbishop Hebda's June 6, 2019 article in *The Catholic Spirit*. Find the full article at [www.archspm.org/synod](http://www.archspm.org/synod).

- "A Synod is a formal representative assembly designed to help a bishop in his shepherding of the local Church."
- The purpose is "to discern and establish clear pastoral priorities in a way that will both promote greater unity and lead us to a more vigorous proclamation of Jesus' good news."

### What is a Listening Church?

- The pre-Synod process has been designed to engage in a "sincere and respectful 'mutual listening' in which everyone has something to learn."
- "Moreover, it is not just listening to one another but to the Holy Spirit, the 'Spirit of Truth' (Jn 14:17), to know what the Spirit is 'saying to the Churches' (Rev. 2:7)."

### What is the Synod process?

- The pre-Synod process began fall 2019 engaging the People of God — laity, clergy, consecrated men and women and bishops — all walking together at the personal, parish, deanery, and Archdiocesan levels.
- The process culminates in the Archdiocesan Synod Assembly to be held Pentecost weekend, June 3-5, 2022, followed by a Pastoral Letter leading to a Pastoral Plan.

### Year 1 (2019-2020): The Church Listens

#### Prayer and Listening Events

- 30 Prayer & Listening events (19 open and 11 focus) held and attended by Archbishop Hebda.
- Over 8,000 faithful attended providing over 35,000 comments on what is working well in the Archdiocese and challenges and opportunities as we move forward together.

#### Synod Focus Areas

- Based on this feedback, along with other consultations and discernment, Archbishop Hebda determined the three focus areas that will shape the Year 3 Consultation process.
  1. Forming parishes that are in the service of evangelization,
  2. Forming missionary disciples who know Jesus' love and respond to his call, and
  3. Forming youth and young adults in and for a Church that is always young.

### Year 2 (2020-2021): The Church Prepares

#### Praying with Scripture

- Five-part video series on praying with scripture and growing in holiness, including 25 prayer companions with reflections.

#### Healing and Hope

- Five-part video retreat to encounter Jesus' love and mercy to bring healing and hope and to provide resources for next steps.

#### Faith and Culture

Videos with expert teachers, testimonials, and panel discussion on four topics:

- Sources of Catholic teaching,
- Sexual morality and the family,
- The dignity of women, and
- The priesthood (both baptized and ordained).

#### Synod at Home

Five-part video series to create a faith plan to live as an intentional disciple based on four pillars:

- Prayer & sacraments,
- Lifelong learning,
- Generosity & service, and
- Traditions & fun.

### Year 3 (2021-2022): The Church Engages

#### Fall 2021: Parish Consultation Process with Small Groups

- Small groups meet in every parish to learn, pray, and discuss the focus areas.
- Parish feedback on priorities within each focus area will help inform the Deanery consultation.

#### January/February 2022 Deanery Consultation Process

- Pastors and parish representatives gather one Saturday to learn, pray, and discuss the focus areas.
- Deanery feedback will help determine the Synod topics.

#### June 2022: Archdiocesan Synod Assembly (Pentecost Weekend):

- Approximately 500 appointed delegates (including two from each parish) gather to learn, pray, and discuss the Synod topics and recommend pastoral priorities to Archbishop Hebda.
- After considering the Synod recommendations, Archbishop writes a Pastoral Letter (November - Feast of Christ the King) leading to a Pastoral Plan to move our Archdiocese into the future.



ARCHDIOCESE  
OF  
SAINT PAUL &  
MINNEAPOLIS

All these free resources are available at [archspm.org/synod.com](http://archspm.org/synod.com)

Join a  
**Synod small group  
at your parish this fall!**

*See reverse side for details.*



## IF YOU DO ONE THING THIS FALL JOIN A SMALL GROUP AT YOUR PARISH!



### What will be discussed in the Synod small groups?

- **Three Focus Areas:** Small groups will discuss the three focus areas that arose from feedback given in the Prayer and Listening events.
  - **Focus area #1:** Forming parishes that are in the service of evangelization.
  - **Focus area #2:** Forming missionary disciples who know Jesus' love and respond to his call.
  - **Focus area #3:** Forming youth and young adults in and for a Church that is always young.

### Why should I participate in a Synod small group?

- **Help Archbishop Hebda determine priorities under each focus area.**

In his August 13, 2020 article for The Catholic Spirit, Archbishop Hebda unpacked each of the focus areas with hard-hitting questions such as:

  1. What can we do to make parishes more welcoming and accessible?
  2. How can we offer meaningful life-long formation for discipleship?
  3. How can we better assist parents in forming children as disciples who know and love Jesus and his Church?

*See [archspm.org/synod](http://archspm.org/synod) to read Archbishop Hebda's August 13, 2020 article in the Catholic Spirit for more details.*

### How will Synod small groups work?

- **Pray. Learn. Discuss. Respond:** Small groups of approximately 8 people will gather to:
  - **Pray:** Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
  - **Learn:** Experience the compelling truth of the Catholic faith in today's cultural context.
  - **Discuss:** Examine questions under each focus area, sharing perspectives among a small group of sisters and brothers in Christ.
  - **Respond:** Weigh in on how we as a Church might respond to these questions to help Archbishop determine priorities.
- **Facilitation:** A trained facilitator will promote a meaningful and charitable dialogue between group members.
- **Feedback:** Participants will complete an Individual Feedback Form. A trained scribe will submit the information, which will then be provided to your parish and Archbishop Hebda.
- **Location/Dates:** Small groups will meet weekly at parishes across the Archdiocese for 6 sessions between September 19 and November 14. Each meeting will last 2 hours.

### How can I join a Synod small group?

- **Open invite small groups at your parish**
  - Come alone or with others and the parish will build a group for you. All are welcome!
  - Registration may be encouraged but not required.
  - Watch for more details regarding dates/times at your parish.
- **Existing small groups**
  - Already in a small group at your parish? Meet with your group using the Synod small group materials and provide feedback.
  - Contact your parish for more information.

*Your parish may offer additional types of Synod small groups.*

**To make sure all Catholics have an opportunity to participate, every pastor in the archdiocese has been asked to host Synod Small Groups this fall.**

**If an average of 100 participants gather in small groups at each parish, Archbishop Hebda will hear from nearly 20,000 Catholics!**

**Be part of this historic moment now, and the future of our local Church.**