



Synod
2021
2023

Facilitating a Synodal Consultation

As leader you will be asked to:

- Encourage, affirm, support, challenge. Create an open atmosphere where the Lord's presence can be felt.
- Establish clear boundaries of time for each topic and discussion for table sharing.
- Gently interrupt a speaker who talks disproportionately more than others, for example, "You've really thought about that - let's hear what others have to add..."
- Keep the members on the topic. Gently re-focus a speaker who is preoccupied with an issue that is not pertinent to the topic or inhibits the participation of others in the group: "Let's look at the question (or topic) again to see if we are really getting to the heart of the matter."
- The table facilitator and scribe are participants as well as group leaders. You might need to lead off with input to a question but do not dominate and make sure that all have the opportunity to speak

Practical Suggestions for Successful Facilitation

1. It helps to set ground rules and expectations at the start of the listening session by emphasizing the need for participation of all and that this is a safe place to speak.
2. A facilitator can help stimulate discussion by offering to synthesize the comments made from time to time, when participants are not quite sure of the question, or when the flow of conversation seems to be stalled.
3. If it is necessary to interrupt a speaker, it helps to acknowledge their contribution by providing a brief synthesis of what you heard them say, thank them for their contribution and move on through the discussion.