



GROUP DISCERNMENT

A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

A suitable method for group dialogue which resonates with the principles of synodality is the Spiritual Conversation method, which promotes active participation, attentive listening, reflective speaking, and spiritual discernment.

Participants form small groups of about 6-10 persons from diverse backgrounds. This method takes about an hour and comprises three rounds. It is a prayerful process.

In the **first round**, after a time of silent prayer everyone takes equal turns to share the fruit of his or her prayer, in relation to one of the reflection questions circulated beforehand. There is no discussion in this round and all participants simply listen deeply to each person and attend to how the Holy Spirit is moving within oneself, within the person speaking, and in the group as a whole. This is followed by a *time of silence to note one's thoughts and feelings*.

In the **second round**, participants share what struck them most in the first round **that someone else has shared**, and what moved them during the time of silence. Some dialogue can also occur, and the same spiritual attentiveness is maintained. Once again this is followed by a *time of silence*.

Finally in the **third round** participants reflect on what seems to be resonating in the conversation and what moved them most deeply. New insights and even unresolved questions are also noted. Spontaneous prayers of gratitude can conclude the conversation. Usually each small group will have a facilitator and note-taker.

Once the group dialogue has taken place, participants should **review and share** about their experience of the process within their small group.

- How was their experience?
- What were the ups and downs?
- What new and refreshing insights might they have discovered?
- What have they learned about the synodal way of proceeding?
- How was God present and at work during their time together?

Participants should then **decide on the feedback** they wish to communicate. The guiding questions for the diocesan synthesis as outlined can be used as a basis for this feedback at the local level.