



DIOCESE OF  SALFORD
SYNOD 2023-2025

‘THE BIG LISTEN’

Additional Resources for Synod Members

October 2023

Dear Synod Member,

These additional resources are designed to assist you in your role as Synod Member during ‘The Big Listen’ taking place between Sunday 15th October and mid-January 2024.

Further resources can be found in the **Guide for ‘The Big Listen’** at the following link - www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Diocese-of-Salford-Synod-A-Guide-for-The-Big-Listen.pdf

If you have any questions, or would like additional support, please contact the Synod Office, details can be found at the end of this resource.

Thank you for being involved in this vital part of our Synodal Journey.

The Synod Team

Please find attached to this email the following resources:

- Synod Logo (version 1 and version 2 as PNG picture files)
- Signing in sheet template (Word)
- A Guide to ‘The Big Listen’ (Word)
- Prayer Handout - version 1 (PDF & Publisher)
- Prayer options - versions 2-4 (Word)
- Printable Prayer Cards (Word)
- Poster Template to advertise ‘The Big Listen’ & poster for church noticeboards linking to the Synod Online Form (PDF)
- Synod Listening Record (Word) - if you prefer to submit responses this way instead of via the Portal.

1. 'The Big Listen' Questions

1. Where in your everyday life do you experience love, hope, or joy?
2. What concerns or worries make it hard to live a life of faith and hope?
3. What do you sense is the role of the Catholic Church in the world today?
4. Having reflected on these things, what do you sense God is asking of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Salford at this time?

Please note, there is no need to share 'The Big Listen' questions with attendees ahead of the Listening Sessions. The methodology is designed so that attendees respond from the heart as they hear the question from a place of prayerful discernment.

These questions will also be used on the Online Form, which individuals can access, by visiting www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/faith/synod/, scrolling down to the Portal window, and clicking 'Submit a response to the Synod'.

2. Listening Exercise Questions for under 18s

1. What do you hope for in life?
2. How does faith fit into your hopes and dreams?
3. What would you like to see the Church doing that would help you in your life?
4. What makes it hard to engage with faith?

You may wish to use these questions for any existing parish group gatherings of under 18s. If an additional session needs to be arranged, any under 18s must be accompanied by parents/carers or volunteers who have been safely recruited, along with parental consent. This is in line with our safeguarding guidance.

The Diocesan Youth Team along, with the appointed Education Synod Members, will lead a 'Listening Exercise' in our Diocesan schools and colleges and all that is said will feed into our Listening Report. Please note, in line with our safeguarding guidance, Synod Members should not lead Listening Sessions in our schools and colleges.

If you have any queries about this, please contact the Synod Office.

3. Various ways people can engage with 'The Big Listen'

- Attend a parish/deanery Listening Session. We are asking parish/deanery Members to offer and facilitate at least **one** Listening Session as part of 'The Big Listen' but you may wish to arrange additional sessions catering for various groups. If there is no Synod Member in a particular parish, parishes in an area/deanery may wish to work together as a team with the support of neighbouring Synod Members and Deanery Synod Members.
- Signpost to the Online Synod Form available at www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/faith/synod/, scrolling down to the Portal window, and clicking 'Submit a response to the Synod'. You may wish to display a poster with a QR code/link to the Synod Form on your church noticeboard (to be provided), include a newsletter insert containing the link and include the link on your parish/school newsletter and social media channels.
- The Diocesan Youth Team and Synod Education Members will ensure our Diocesan schools and colleges are part of 'The Big Listen' by interacting with the parents, staff, governors and young people in our school and college communities.
- The Synod Team, with the support of other Diocesan organisations such as Caritas Diocese of Salford and the clergy of the Diocese, will be arranging specific 'Focus Groups'.
- Deanery Synod Members may wish to arrange Deanery-wide listening initiatives.
- Religious Synod Members and Retired Clergy Synod Members may wish to arrange a Listening Session to ensure their communities have an opportunity to take part.

Further suggestions can be found in Section 7, Ideas to help support Parish Activity during 'The Big Listen'.

As additional resources are developed throughout 'The Big Listen', these will be shared with you. If you have any resources/ideas for resources you think others might find useful, please contact the Synod Office.

4. Methodology of Group Listening

1. One Synod Member introduces the session, principles and methodology to the whole group and leads the time of prayer. The Table Leaders check everyone understands, is in agreement and is ready.
2. One Synod Member reads out Synod question 1.
3. Table Leaders establish and agree the first person to speak in their group and invite them to pick up the talking piece and respond to Synod Question 1 for up to 60 seconds. They will then pass on the talking piece to the next person in a clockwise direction.
4. The next person speaks and the same process continues until everyone in the group has shared a response to the current question. People may choose not to respond and that is to be respected; they will respectfully pass the talking piece to the next person.
5. One Synod Member invites the group to reflect in silence on what they have heard for one minute and then to write down one thing which struck them most from the sharing (either what they said or what someone else said) on a coloured post-it/card (Table leaders will let the group know which colour of post-it note/card corresponds to which question. You may wish to write it on the envelopes in advance).
6. The post-its/cards are collected by the Table Leader and placed in the appropriate envelope.
7. The process is repeated for Synod Questions 2, 3 and 4 collecting the post-its/cards following each question. One Synod Member is responsible for the time keeping and reading out the question to the whole group. The Table Leader may repeat the question for their small group.
8. At the end of the listening session, the Table Leaders hand the post-its/cards in their relevant envelopes to the Synod Member.

5. Submitting Responses

We are asking the Parish Synod Members (or someone on their behalf) to send the content of all the post-it notes/cards to the Diocese either by:


- Typing what has been written in response to each question on the Synod Portal. The Portal can be accessed at www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/faith/synod/, scrolling down the page and clicking the Synod Members link (further details about the Synod Portal can be found in section 6).
- Typing what has been written in response to each question onto the 'Listening Record' form (attached to this email) and returning it by email to the Synod Office.

If this is not possible, the post its/cards can be sent in the post to the address at the end of this resource. These must be sent in by Friday 19th January 2024 at the latest, but as soon as possible is preferred.

6. The Synod Portal

- An email will be sent from noreply@salfordsynod.co.uk prior to the launch of 'The Big Listen' which will contain a link to set up your account on the Synod Portal (you may need to check your spam/junk box).
- To access the Portal, visit www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/faith/synod/ and scroll down the page until you find a window similar to the image below.
- Each time you wish to access the 'Members' area' of the Portal, you will need to click 'Synod Member login' (Button 2 on the image below). You will then be asked to enter the email address registered with the Synod office. This is to ensure only Synod Members can access the Portal and removes the need to remember usernames and passwords. After entering your email and clicking 'Send Login Link', please go to your emails and find the link sent from 'Diocese of Salford noreply@salfordsynod.co.uk' (you may need to check your spam/junk box). Clicking this link will take you to your account on the Synod Portal.
- To submit a response from a Listening Session, click '1. The Big Listen' on the left hand menu and type the responses to each of the four questions into each specific text box. You may do this in paragraph or bullet points. If there was duplicate responses, please write in brackets the number of times a comment was made, e.g. (+3). This text will be saved automatically as you type. Once you have completed the response to all four questions, please click finish. You may wish to first type the responses into a Word document and copy and paste the responses to each question into the Portal.
- If you have any technical difficulties, please email help@salfordsynod.co.uk. For any other questions, please email synod@dioceseofsalford.org.uk or call 0161 817 2214.

help@salfordsynod.co.uk'."/>


Diocese of Salford Synod Portal

Please select the button below if you would like to submit a response to the Synod, or choose the login link if you are a Synod Member:

[Submit a response to the Synod](#)
[Synod Member login](#)

Button 1 - 'Submit a response to the Synod' takes the user to the 'Synod Online Form' where anyone can make a response to 'The Big Listen'

Button 2 - 'Synod Member login' is the area of the Portal for Synod Members only.

If you need any technical help, please email: help@salfordsynod.co.uk

7. Ideas to help support Parish Activity during ‘The Big Listen’

The Synod Moderators encourage all parishes to engage with ‘The Big Listen’ by holding facilitated parish sessions where responses can be truly discerned listening to the Holy Spirit.

Secondly there is an opportunity for individuals to answer the questions in their own time and words.

We do however appreciate that in some parishes there maybe individuals and groups that need some encouragement or alternative ways to journey with us in this Synod. Therefore, we have made some suggestions of how we might approach gathering answers from within our parishes and the wider community.

These ideas are to supplement the main facilitated meetings and to expand the group we receive responses from.

Parishes are best placed to understand their own needs and will have many ideas themselves. Please share these with the Synod Team. The contact details for the Synod Team are at the end of this resource.

We will be sharing our journey via our diocesan website and social media so please keep checking for updates.

Alternatives to Parish Meetings

- **Group conversations**

Group conversations will work well in parishes that host regular groups and coffee mornings.

They will allow informal conversations in familiar settings and depending on the group in question may allow us to reach non regular or non-attenders at church.

Please ensure that answers are still recorded and fed back via the Synod Portal or by emailing synod@dioceseofsalford.org.uk.

- **Paired conversations in parishes e.g. Older/younger parishioners**

This approach could appeal to those who are not comfortable speaking in large groups.

In this approach these conversations should still take place in a public setting with facilitators on hand.

One member of the conversation should be charged with taking notes.

Interactive Parish Responses

These suggestions will not work for every parish and should be seen as a way of visibly encouraging involvement in the Synod by those parishioners who would not usually attend meetings.

- **‘Listening wall’**

A Listening Wall provides a place where parishioners can share their thoughts any time.

A space would need to be provided at the back of church and paper and pens should be made available.

This approach is about shorter answers and may only focus on one question. It encourages people to read and engage with other people’s answers.

We believe it could also work well at Christmas fayres etc as well as after Mass to increase the range of parish voices you are hearing from.

You may need to consider moderating the responses on the wall. This isn’t about removing negative responses, all responses are valid but there may be individuals who take the opportunity to raise their own issues or grievances publicly and this would distract from the purpose of the wall.

- **Take a stand at local events/markets**

This approach is truly following Pope Francis’ instruction to open our doors.

It will reach a wide selection of people, many who have little or no interaction with the Church. Therefore we do need to be prepared for a possible non positive reaction and ensure that you have the right people helping with this.

This approach could be done in conjunction with a listening wall.

If your parish decides to take part in any activity of this kind please let us know by contacting the Synod Team.

8. Contact Us

Synod, Cathedral Centre, 3 Ford Street, Salford, M3 6DP

T: 0161 817 2214

E: synod@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

W: www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/faith/synod

Facebook - www.facebook.com/salforddiocese/

Twitter/X - www.twitter.com/SalfordDiocese

Instagram - www.instagram.com/salforddiocese/

YouTube - www.youtube.com/channel/UCLlzCEYrdV5SopVghvc28kw