

# First Gathering: Communion

## LEADER

*Welcome and introductions. You may want to invite everyone to share something about themselves and why they have chosen to contribute to this process. Explain that in this session the focus will be on **Communion**.*

(5-10 minutes)

## ADSUMUS PRAYER

**We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.**

**With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts;**

**Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.**

**We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.**

**Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path  
nor partiality influence our actions.**

**Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together  
to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.**

**All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.**

*Invite someone to proclaim the following passage of scripture*

## **A Reading from the Gospel of Luke**

24:13-35

Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' 'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus of Nazareth' they answered 'who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.'

Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening' they said 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

The Gospel of the Lord  
**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

*Reflect for a moment in silence*

## Questions for Discussion

### I. Our Journeying Companions

#### **Who are we on the journey with and what persons or groups are marginalised and why?**

Think of those who form our parish community as we journey together. Which people or groups are on the edges of our community? Whom do we know who no longer walks with us, those who used to and now we don't see? How do we engage with those for whom the experience of Covid has prompted thoughts about faith? How do we welcome people?

(15 minutes)

We are all on a journey of faith and community but not all going at the same speed, for instance Covid has caused some to pause – felt this was a big impact. During Covid, media i.e. Mass online, has helped many but we need to bring people back.

Some of those on the edge of our community include the sick and housebound, people who are nervous to return to Church due to Covid. Young people also who have lost their way in going to Church and perhaps people who moved into the area during Covid or know that Church is open again.

People want to bring children back to Mass but the challenge is to encourage this, perhaps a welcome back occasion within or after a Mass to try and recreate a sense of belonging for the faithful. Ideas raised how to welcome people back into the Church included music at Mass for young people and families as some felt that some music a bit 'old' for younger generation. We have some of this in our family Mass which perhaps could be developed by encouraging young people to choir, maybe even once, to influence the music. There was a feeling that the voice of women and young people was missing in the Church.

For question below overall the group response was - agree

Based on your discussions do you agree/disagree with this statement?

#### **'We feel connected to the Church community' (Please tick one box)**

Very Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>		

## II. Listening

### How might our local Church community listen better?

Do we listen to each other? How do we best do this – people to people, clergy to clergy, bishops to bishops? How do we deepen our listening, making it a “a listening of the heart” and not just of the issues and subjects at hand? How do we ensure that the Church responds to the culture and needs of society?

(15 minutes)

The group was not sure that the Church community listens to us. Opportunity for listening is missing as generally the faithful get together for the Mass which is a time of worship and not discussion. The Church needs to create opportunities for discussion, especially listening, to specialist groups such as our Youth to enable them to ask questions and be heard. Ideas included youth time away at places such as Castlerigg to nurture the youth in our diocese.

At the same time, we need to retain what our faith is about and not lose meaning. A particularly good way of communicating our faith to the broader community is by example to members of our community. For instance, someone mentioned providing refreshment to a neighbour who acclaimed they were good people to which they explained that they were Catholics, and their faith leads them to looking after their neighbours.

Ideas about communicating and listening at every opportunity such as preparation for baptism, marriage or even school application/reference.

Overall, need more opportunity for listening, maybe coffee with priest, Deacon, just a chance to chat and open up.

Church should respond to culture and needs of society by considering the role of women in the Church who have an equal role in society – one example suggested was Female Deacons.

Based on your discussions do you agree/disagree with this statement?

### ‘We feel that the Church community listens to us’ (Please tick one box)

Very Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Very Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>		

### III. Speaking Out

#### How can everybody be encouraged to communicate properly?

What is the communication like in our group/parish/diocese? Do we have the freedom to speak freely, openly, and respectfully? How are we living out our Christian lives?

(15 minutes)

Communication is good for those who want to participate, the confident and active members of the Church. We need to consider the less active and quieter members of the community and reach out to them which is not easy.

The group felt that people were able to speak and communicate openly, freely and respectfully but we need more people to be involved. Ideas to reach out including better communications through such methods as 'Whats App' although it was recognised that many are busy with family and work life to commit. Some discussion on effectiveness of newsletter, how many read it, and should we consider more focused communication at Mass when people are there, perhaps at the end, a few words on a specific issue such as this Synod to explain and encourage.

Although we feel able to speak some people are not bothered so the challenge is to engage with these, not sure how.

How we are living out our Christian lives was touched upon in the last discussion where people are engaging with their neighbours, helping and communicating particularly with those housebound due to Covid or other illness.

Once more, we felt that Youth was important, so the Children's Liturgy Group was seen as a way of living out our Christian lives. Again, more help is needed, how do we encourage a sense of Church community to busy people pre-occupied with their lives. No clear way forward but we should not give up!

Based on your discussions do you agree/disagree with this statement?

**'We feel able to speak our minds confidently to other Church members.'**  
**(Please tick one box)**

Very Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

## **LEADER**

*Thank everyone very much for all their contributions and invite them to a short time of intercessory prayer. You may use the following wording: 'We have a few moments to bring everything we have discussed to God. We give thanks for all the good that our parish has done and continues to do, but we also pray for the strength and guidance that will allow us to grow as a community. I invite you now, either out loud or in the silence of your heart, to offer a prayer for any of the topics that we have discussed today.' Allow people to offer prayers*

We gather all our prayers, both spoken and unspoken, and offer them to God our Father, using the words our saviour gave us...

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name..... Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen**

END