



**Pastoral
Discernment**
Northern Beaches

Consultation Facilitator Guide



Manly, on Sydney
Northern Beaches.

As we journey forward together we are invited to consider:

How is God calling the people of the Northern Beaches to journey forward together as pilgrim and missionary people of God?

Welcome

Thank you for your engagement in the Pastoral Discernment Northern Beaches project as **Consultation Facilitator** for your community. In this phase of the project, we are invited to give God thanks for the way in which the Spirit is at work in the life of the local Church, and to consider new possibilities for both its growth and future of the region.

Our Pastoral Discernment invites all people in the community to listen and dialogue together, to consider the circumstances, opportunities, and challenges to achieve a sustainable and thriving ecclesial community in the Northern Beaches region of the Diocese. Journeying forward together requires us to discern, as a community, our context through connection, prayer, reflection, sharing with one another, and seeking God's direction.

INTRODUCTION

To Your Role as Consultation Facilitator

This **Consultation Facilitator Guide** outlines your role as the Consultation Facilitator for your community, it also outlines the consultation methodology that will support your community. You will work with your Community Leader (Parish Priest, School Principal, CatholicCare Leader etc) to develop your consultation plan and then implement the agreed plan in your community.

You and your community group are encouraged to make this consultation as extensive as possible, to involve not only the regulars of your community **but also those who are on the periphery**.

Please also try to engage children and young people by seeking their input and involvement throughout the community consultation phase, so that their voices are also heard and considered.

Use the Consultation **Facilitator Toolkit** to assist you with your planning - it can be found at www.catholic.org.au/pdnb

In Appendix 1 of the Toolkit, you will find a template **Community Consultation Plan** which you can use to record the practical details of your plan for your community's consultation.

North Head Manly.



Pastoral Discernment

To assist each community in its discernment, the following guidelines will assist when planning your listening and dialogue **community consultation forum**. The Pastoral Discernment consultation methodology will provide your community with the structure for rich and engaging conversations.

As Consultation Facilitator, you will need to consider with your Community Leader when and how to run your listening and dialogue group discussions. You could gather for either a half-day weekend session or evening session/s (in person or online).

It is envisaged that your listening and dialogue consultation forums, will take approximately two hours.

Once you have determined these preliminary matters, you will then assist your group to form smaller sub-groups representing the diverse backgrounds of the community. Each sub-group should nominate a skilled facilitator to lead the conversation and a note-taker to capture the responses.

You can work with existing teams or even better, organise open meetings and invite everyone, so that there is as much mixing as possible! The aim is to ensure the participation of as many people as possible, in order to be able to listen to the voice alive of all People of God in this region of the Diocese.

RECALL THEIR EXPERIENCES

What experiences of our region of the Northern Beaches does this question call to mind?

RE-CONSIDER THESE EXPERIENCES IN GREATER DEPTH

What joys did they bring? What difficulties and obstacles have they encountered? What wounds did they reveal? What insights have they elicited?

GATHER THE FRUITS TO SHARE

Where in these experiences does the voice of the Holy Spirit resound? What is the Spirit asking of us? What are the points to be confirmed, the prospects for change, the steps to be taken? Where do we register a consensus? What paths are opening up for our local community of the Northern Beaches?

In the group listening and dialogue rounds, you should encourage:

- **active participation**
- **attentive listening**
- **reflective speaking**
- **spiritual discernment**





The Community Consultation Forums

Gathering the fruit of the Conversations

The practice of Conversation in the Spirit integrates active listening, intentional speaking, moments of silence, and respect for each participant's input. It can transform the way we listen to the Spirit moving in and through the group as we pray and discern together.

The pastoral discernment consultation methodology is outlined below, as a five-step process:

STEP 1 Prayer Together

STEP 2 Time to Reflect

STEP 3 Share and Listen (Round 1, Round 2, and Round 3)

STEP 4 Group Response

STEP 5 Prayer and Respond

STEP 1 Pray Together

Conversation in the Spirit begins with a significant time for each participant to engage in personal prayer with scripture. To assist you in the Conversation in the Spirit method, you may like to use one of the following, or prepare your own;

Psalms 133:1 “How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity.”

1 Cor 12:13 “For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body.”

Matt 5:14-15 “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill can not be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and gives light to all in the house.”

Proverbs 2:2 “Making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding.”

Luke 24:13-15 “That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.”

STEP 2 Time to Reflect

Allow time for silence for personal prayer and personal reflection before moving to Step 3, Round 1.

This allows participants the opportunity to reflect on what others are saying and how this is informing each person’s own thoughts in response to the question/s presented. (Allow 1-2 minutes)

STEP 3 Share and Listen

Conversation in the Spirit Process

ROUND 1 SHARING MY REFLECTION

Everyone takes equal turns to share with each other the fruit of their prayer, in relation to the guiding consultation question/s. Allowing three minutes per person.

What were the main movements, modes, feelings, and/or insights in my prayer time? Each person shares with the group, beginning with **‘In my prayer, I..’**

There is no discussion or ‘response’ in this round. All participants simply listen deeply to each person and attend to how the **Holy Spirit is moving within themselves**, within the person speaking, and in the group as a whole. When others are speaking, participants are reminded to listen with an open and humble heart. The focus is on listening to others rather than simply thinking about what participants want to say.

Allow time for quiet prayer before moving to Round 2. (About 1-2 minutes)

This time allows participants the opportunity to reflect on what others are saying and how this is informing each person’s own thoughts in response to the question/s presented.

STEP 3 ROUND 2 REFLECTING ON THE SHARING

(cont.)

Participants share what struck them most in the first round and what resonated with them during the time of silence. Some dialogue can occur, at the same time attentiveness to what is being said and heard by others is maintained. Allowing 2 minutes per person.

After reflecting quietly, each person shares with the group, beginning with **'In the group, I heard... and it left me feeling... OR I was moved by...'**

Participants may consider;

- What did you hear in the first round?
- Were you struck by a common theme or comment?
- Did you experience harmony or dissonance with others as they shared?
- What are you feeling now?

Once again this is followed by a time of silence. (About 1-2 minutes)



STEP 3 ROUND 3 WHAT IS THE GROUP SAYING

(cont.)

In this round, participants are not obliged to speak and can speak spontaneously. This is an opportunity to discern together the main themes and discernment of the conversation.

Each participant is invited to share with the group what seems to be resonating in the conversation of the group, from what they are hearing from the group, and what moved the group most deeply. This is an open conversation and all in the group have the opportunity to contribute. New insights are also taken note of.

Is there a particular question to be considered or an opportunity to give feedback to the larger group, this is the time that a communal response may be formulated.

Small groups may consider;

- Thinking about what was shared, what should be included in our group's response?
- Is there a common thread? Is there something missing?
- Have we received any particular insight or revelation? What is it?
- Where did we experience a sense of harmony with others as we shared with one another?
- What are the feelings of the group? Is there consensus or disagreement?

Conclude this time of small group conversation with a '**Glory Be**'.

STEP 4 Group Response

After everyone has finished speaking, the Table Scribe works with the group to complete the **Small Group Conversation Summary report**.

Provide approximately **20 minutes** for groups to complete their Small Group Summary report. The Table Scribe re-confirms the key points with the group.

You may consider inviting each small group to share a 1-2 minute verbal summary to all that have gathered at this conversation forum gathering.

STEP 5 Pray and Respond

After each small group has had the opportunity to share the fruits of the table conversations, the Consultation Facilitator invites all that have gathered to reflect on their prayer and conversation and what they have heard from the Holy Spirit and each other.

At the end of the reflection time, you are invited to pray together. You can use the words below, or you might like to say a prayer of gratitude in your own words.

*Creator God, we thank You for the encounter with one another today. We know that where two or three are gathered, You are in our midst. Thank You for being with us and for the courage to speak boldly and with passion, and the humility to listen with open hearts. We ask You to continue to walk with us, as we discover the pathway toward the future You are calling us to. **Amen***

Summary Report

After the group listening and dialogue rounds, as Consultation Facilitator you will collate and synthesise the responses that have been received from your small groups, into a summary report.

When completed, please share the final summary report with your community leader for their consideration before finalising and sharing it with your community.

Pastoral Discernment Submissions

Once the summary report is finalised, your community is invited to submit a Pastoral Discernment Submission, for Bishop Anthony's consideration.

Submissions can be submitted by completing this form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/3Uis368ci0>

Additional documents to support your application can be uploaded at www.bbcatholic.org.au/pdnb

Important Calendar Dates

2 MAY 2024

Consultation Facilitator's Formation.

4 May 2024

Community Forum

5 May 2024

Community Groups begin their discernment journey, deciding how to implement the consultation process within their community.

May 2024 through to 1 July 2024

Community Discernment: Community groups consult with their local community through listening and dialogue consultation, resulting in the preparation of a formal submission for consideration.

1 July 2024

Pastoral Discernment Submissions close.

27 July 2024

Conversation Forums: All are invited to participate in a face-to-face gathering. Hear what the data is saying and discover the themes that are beginning to emerge. More information about the Conversation Forums will be circulated in the coming weeks.

For further information and regular updates visit
www.bbcatholic.org.au/pdnb

or email Patti Beattie Director of Pastoral Discernment and Accompaniment PDNB@bbcatholic.org.au