



**Pastoral
Discernment**
Central Coast

Facilitator Guide



CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF
BROKEN BAY



As we Journey forward together we are invited to consider,

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

Welcome

Thank you for participating in the consultation phase of the Pastoral Discernment, Central Coast project. 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.

Introduction to your role as Facilitator

This **Facilitator Guide** outlines your role as Facilitator and the consultation methodology which will support your community to discern the local needs of the Central Coast region within your community. You will work with your Community Leader (Parish Priest, School Principal, CatholicCare leader etc) to develop your consultation plan 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 voice is also heard and considered.

Use the **Facilitator Toolkit** to assist you with your planning – it can be found at www.bbcatholic.org.au/pdcc. At **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.

Pastoral discernment by your community group

The pastoral discernment invites each member of your community to **REVIEW, REFLECT, RESPOND**, considering the circumstances, opportunities and challenges to achieve a sustainable and thriving ecclesial community in the Central Coast 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. We invite the Holy Spirit to guide us as we begin this journey.

Pastoral Discernment Themes

To assist each community in its discernment, six **Pastoral Discernment themes** have been identified. Each theme is supported with questions to provide your community the structure for rich and engaging conversations. The **themes and guiding questions** are outlined in **Appendix 1**.

For each of the themes, it is envisaged that you will arrange the 3 group **listening and dialogue rounds**; allow about **1 hour for each theme**:

1. **Review** round
2. **Reflect** round; and
3. **Respond** round

As Facilitator, you will need to consider with your Community Leader:



how many, and which themes your community would like to discern, according to your community's circumstances and particular context.



when and how to run your **listening and dialogue** group discussions. You could gather for either a half day weekend session, or several evening sessions (in person or online).

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, to respond to the themes and guiding questions. 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 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.

For your chosen themes, each member of your community will;



RECALL THEIR EXPERIENCES: What experiences of our region of the Central Coast 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 Central Coast?

Community Consultation

Before your first consultation session, please download and print copies of the **Participant Handbook** to provide each participant the opportunity to make notes during the listening and dialogue rounds. Remember to print only the pages you need as you may not need all 6 themes and guiding questions pages.

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



active participation



attentive listening



reflective speaking



spiritual discernment

- **Listening and Dialogue round 1 – REVIEW**

REVIEW: Everyone takes equal turns to **share with each other the fruit of their prayer**, in relation to the reflection questions circulated beforehand for each chosen theme.

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.

This is followed by a **time of silence** to reflect on what others are saying and how this is informing each person’s own thoughts in response to the questions presented in each theme.

- **Listening and Dialogue round 2 – REFLECT**

REFLECT: 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. Once again this is followed by a time of silence.

- **Listening and Dialogue round 3 – RESPOND**

RESPOND: 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**. New insights are also taken note of.

Summary Report

After the group listening and dialogue rounds, as 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 with your community.

Pastoral Discernment Submissions

Once the summary report is finalised, your community is invited to submit a Pastoral Discernment Submission online. A template Submission form can be accessed at www.bbcatholic.org.au/pdcc. The link will include an upload function to allow your community to provide additional documents to support the submission.

Important Calendar Dates

22 November 2021 Pastoral Consultation Leader's briefing.

23 November 2021 Community Groups begin their discernment journey, deciding how to implement the consultation process within their community and identifying which themes will be used to guide the consultation.

November 2021 through to 31 March 2022 Community Feedback: Community groups consult with their local community through listening and dialogue consultation, resulting in preparation of a formal submission for consideration.

31 March 2022 Pastoral Discernment Submissions close.

15 May 2022 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 early 2022.

For further information and regular updates visit www.bbcatholic.org.au/pdcc or email Patti Beattie; PDCC@bbcatholic.org.au

Appendix 1: Pastoral Discernment Themes



Walking together

Guided by the Holy Spirit helping us discover and share the variety of gifts, charisms, and ministries of our communities.

- In our community who are those who walk together with us?
- Who are those in our community who are further apart?
- How are we called to grow as companions?
- What groups or individuals are left on the margins?
- In which ways can we walk together and share our gifts, charisms and ministries within our community and beyond?



Listening

Having an open heart and mind to hear what others are saying.

- How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore?
- How are people listened to, especially women and young people?
- How well do we listen to those on the peripheries?
- What space is there for voice of minorities, especially people who have experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?
- How can we involve listening opportunities that include all those in our community and beyond?



Sharing the Story

Allowing all to express themselves, to be heard, and to speak with authentic courage

- What enables or hinders speaking up courageously, candidly and responsibly in our community of the Central Coast and society?
- When and how do we manage to say what is important to us?
- How do we provide opportunities that allow others to share their story with us?



Participation in Mission

An invitation to participate and journey together as pilgrims and missionary people of God.

- Since we are all missionary disciples, how is every baptized person called to participate in the mission of the Church to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with everyone on the Central Coast?
- What hinders the baptised in being active in mission?
- What areas of mission are we neglecting on the Central Coast?
- How does our community support members who serve our local community in various ways?
- How does our community help these members to live out their service on the Central Coast in a missionary way?
- How is discernment about missionary choices made and by whom?



Dialogue with Others

Dialogue requires perseverance and patience to enable mutual understanding

- To what extent do diverse peoples in our community on the Central Coast come together in dialogue?
- What are the places and means to dialogue within our community?
- How do we promote collaboration with religious communities, lay associations and movements, schools, CatholicCare, neighbouring dioceses, etc., in faithfulness to our mission?
- What do we share and how do we journey together?
- What particular issues in our community and the Central Coast community do we need to pay more attention to?
- What experiences of dialogue and collaboration do we have with believers of other religions and with those who have no religious affiliation?
- How might we dialogue with and learn from other sectors of the Central Coast: the spheres of politics, economics, culture, civil society, and people who live in poverty?



Moving Forward

Allows for participation in mission, formation for all, and opportunities to engage in dialogue.

- What methods do we use in decision making to enable our community group to move forward?
- How does our community form people to be more capable of “walking together,” listening to one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue?
- How does our Church community identify its evangelisation objectives and the steps to achieving those objectives?

