

## INVITATION LETTER FOR NON-EX OFFICIO PROSPECTIVE SYNOD EVANGELIZATION TEAM MEMBERS

As a next step in the renewal of our Archdiocese through the Synod, each pastor is being asked to form a parish Synod Evangelization Team. The Team is meant to be the catalyst within the parish for renewed discipleship, fruitful evangelization, and assisting me in evangelistically implementing the Synod Priorities that will be given in Archbishop Hebda's November 20 pastoral letter. Based on the Synod discussions and voting, the Archbishop will be setting the vision; we will then determine how to express that vision here at The Church of St. Genevieve. The team has the unique purpose of building missionary disciples within the parish, not only for Synod implementation, but also to fuel a vigorous proclamation of the Good News in the broader community.

As you may recall, forming missionary disciples is one of the three focus areas of the Synod process, and I see a great potential for that in you. Thus, I **am asking you to consider serving with me on our parish's Synod Evangelization Team**. The team will be made up of about a dozen people, some who are staff members and others who are lay faithful at large. Furthermore, recalling that the 12 apostles received special formation in the company of Jesus before being sent on mission, we are being asked to prepare for this important role by:

- Reading and praying with Archbishop Hebda's November pastoral letter.
- Participating in a kick-off event in January. There will be multiple options; details TBD.
- Attending the seven-session [School of Discipleship](#) on Tuesday evenings: February 7-March 21, 2023, 7:00-8:30 p.m. These will be held in a chosen parish in each deanery. The formation culminates with a guided 40-day discipleship challenge to help put what is learned into practice, ending on April 30, Good Shepherd Sunday.

Equipped through this formation and inspired by the Holy Spirit, the team will assist me at our parish in the following ways:

- Play an active role in implementing Synod Priorities in our parish according to each person's talents and interests. Not every team member will actively implement every Synod Priority.
- Attend regular team meetings at the service of this implementation (frequency to be determined).
- Participate each spring in an annual parish Synod Evangelization Team Planning Day. The first one will take place on a weekend day in late April or early May 2023. Our parish will pick the specific day that works for our team members.

In light of the formation and team-building involved, the hope is that you plan to remain on the team through the first three years of Synod evangelization: ending June 2026. I know that this is a big ask, but our Synod is an unprecedented movement in our Archdiocese and the Holy Spirit is work.

Please pray about this call to mission and let me know if you are interested.

In Christ,  
Fr. Greg



## Parish Synod Evangelization Teams FAQ

- 1. What is the "elevator speech" explanation for a parish Synod Evangelization Team?**
  - The parish Synod Evangelization Team is to be the catalyst within the parish for renewed discipleship, fruitful evangelization, and assisting the pastor in evangelistically implementing the Synod Priorities that will be given in Archbishop Hebda's pastoral letter.
  - The team works in close collaboration with the Parish Pastoral Council, parish staff and other parish leadership, but has the unique purpose of building missionary disciples within the parish, not only for Synod implementation, but also to fuel a vigorous proclamation of the Good News beyond the parish.
  
- 2. Who is on a parish Synod Evangelization Team?**
  - Approximately 12 members not counting the pastor.
  - Up to six *ex officio* members (if a parish has such persons in the following roles): (1) parochial vicar, (2) permanent deacon, (3) school principal, (4) DRE, (5) Parish Pastoral Council delegate, and (6) discipleship and evangelization director or youth director.
  - "Six" additional members (lay faithful or other staff) who are selected by the pastor for their 1) proven charism of evangelization and/or 2) their potential to draw others to Christ (the "influencers" in the parish).
  
- 3. What if my parishes are "clustered"? Does there need to be one team per parish?**
  - No, a group of parishes that are "clustered," i.e. having a single pastor, can have a single team for the entire cluster.
  
- 4. I am at a small parish. Does my team have to include 12 members?**
  - Though 12 is a number of great Biblical symbolism, not every parish will be able to have 12, especially parishes/clusters with a small staff and few *ex officio* members. But it is also important to have a functional team for true transformation to occur. It is hard to imagine a parish Synod Evangelization Team being effective with fewer than nine members. Six would be a minimum.
  
- 5. What are qualities that one would want in a Synod Evangelization Team member? What are qualities to avoid?**
  - Pastors are encouraged to discern and let the Lord lead them in this process. A "Going Up the Mountain" reflection has been developed for that purpose.
  - Qualities that seem helpful are: 1) proven charism of evangelization and/or 2) a person's potential to draw others to Christ (the "influencers" in the parish). Among the team (including the *ex officio* members) there should to be some who can also carry vision and provide leadership.
  - Qualities that might be best to avoid include: 1) people who have difficulty working on teams, 2) those who are adamant only for their personal agenda, or 3) those who are reticent to change and always want things as they have been.

**6. What is the difference between a parish Synod Evangelization Team, Parish Pastoral Council, and a parish leadership team?**

- A **Synod Evangelization Team** consists of members, selected by the pastor, who: (1) will be formed in missionary discipleship and (2) then work with the pastor to bring to life our Synod Priorities within the context of the specific parish (or cluster of parishes).
- A **Parish Pastoral Council** is a consultative body, meeting at least quarterly, that researches the needs, ideas, hopes, life and activity of the people of God, so that the whole parish community can effectively carry out the mission of the parish and fully participate in the ongoing conversion that is central to its life (it has a much broader scope than the SET).
- A **leadership team** is typically an operating team of four or five individuals who meet weekly with the pastor to help him operate the parish in all of its dimensions and are involved in the resulting execution.

	Scope	Meeting Frequency	Nature of Duties
Synod Evangelization Team	Missionary discipleship and Synod Priorities	Weekly during formation (School of Discipleship) and then as determined by team	Consultative with bulk of execution
Parish Pastoral Council	All of parish life	At least quarterly	Consultative with limited execution
Leadership team	All of parish life	Weekly	Consultation and execution tied together

**7. Can these three groups coexist at a parish?**

- Yes, they can co-exist, even flourish together at a parish as the roles are quite distinct. There will be some overlap at times, and so consideration must be given on how to coordinate between the groups. Some coordination is built-in given the *ex officio* members on the parish Synod Evangelization Team: there will be at least one Parish Pastoral Council member on the parish Synod Evangelization Team, and we anticipate that in most cases the pastor would have already included on his leadership team at least one of the other *ex officio* members (parochial vicar, permanent deacon, school principal, DRE, Parish Pastoral Council delegate, and discipleship and evangelization director or youth director). On a practical level, there is a need to discern how each *ex officio* member may fruitfully and wisely participate in the various groups and even ministries. The Archbishop’s pastoral initiative to focus on Synod implementation may well engender prayerful reconsideration of how some time and energy is spent.

**8. Which, if any of these groups, am I being asked to have at my parish?**

- Under particular law of the Archdiocese, each parish is required to have a Parish Pastoral Council.
- Archbishop Hebda is requiring each pastor/parochial administrator to appoint a parish Synod Evangelization Team by November 1, 2022, for service commencing in January 2023.
- Some pastors have found leadership teams to be helpful in leading their parish. There is no current Archdiocesan requirement to have a leadership team. We would caution against forming one at the same time as forming a parish Synod Evangelization Team, because forming a leadership team requires upfront investment of time and energy on the part of the pastor.

- 9. I am already actively engaged in extensive missionary activity in my parish and have a team to do it. Must I follow this exact model?**
- There is strength in parishes adopting a unified method for implementing the Synod. We also recognize that some parishes have already accomplished great work in the field of evangelization. If you have questions about how the Synod method fits with what is already established, please reach out to Deacon Joe Michalak at [jtmichalak@stthomas.edu](mailto:jtmichalak@stthomas.edu) or 651-238-2752.
- 10. Our parish has already engaged with Evangelical Catholic for them to start helping us become more missionary, forming a six-person team to meet weekly through Easter. This sounds a lot of the same thing. What should we do?**
- Part of what we are seeking to do is specific to the Archdiocese. If you have not already adopted the Evangelical Catholic model it would be prudent to pause. Please contact Deacon Joe Michalak to discuss how best to move forward.
- 11. The Synod Evangelization Team is the method, but what is the Synod vision and what are the specific Synod Priorities you are asking us to implement in the context of our parishes?**
- The vision as well as the specific requests will come out in the Pastoral Letter and Year One Implementation Plan on the Feast of Christ the King weekend (November 20, 2022).
- 12. My parish is multi-lingual English-Spanish. Will there be one or two Synod Evangelization Teams?**
- Two. The pastor should discern asking 12 English-speaking parishioners and 12 Spanish speakers to serve on the respective Synod Evangelization Teams.
- 13. What is the first thing being asked of the parish Synod Evangelization Teams?**
- There will be a kick-off event held in January for parish Synod Evangelization Team members.
  - The team will then participate in the Catechetical Institute's 7-week School of Discipleship.
- 14. When and where will the School of Discipleship sessions take place?**
- Tuesday evenings February 7 - March 21, 7:00-8:30 p.m. for both instruction and prayer.
  - The sessions will be held live at Our Lady of Grace Church in Edina and livestreamed to other sites across the Archdiocese. We anticipate that in most cases, parish teams will participate at a parish site in their own deanery. These sites will be selected in the near future.
- 15. Are pastors/parochial administrators required to attend the School of Discipleship?**
- Archbishop Hebda encourages pastors to participate in the School of Discipleship for their own growth as well as for connecting with their team, but pastors are not required to participate. We anticipate having materials available for pastors unable to attend but who need to understand what is happening.
- 16. Are the ex officio members of the Synod Evangelization Team (parochial vicar, permanent deacon, school principal, DRE, Parish Pastoral Council delegate, and discipleship and evangelization director or youth director) required to participate in the School of Discipleship?**
- Yes, they should plan to attend the School of Discipleship. We recognize that this is a significant commitment in light of their other responsibilities, but it is important for their own ongoing formation as well as for the team-building aspects of participation.
- 17. If some members of my Synod Evangelization Team have already been through the School of Discipleship, must they do it again?**
- Everyone on the team is encouraged to go through the School of Discipleship together, for the formation is not just the intellectual content of the sessions but also the opportunity to connect as a team. Furthermore, a third of each session is prayer time, which should be fruitful for even the greatest expert on the topic.

**18. What if someone has to miss one session of the School of Discipleship? Does that disqualify them from serving on the Synod Evangelization Team?**

- The aim of the School of Discipleship is a renewed encounter with our Lord Jesus and becoming a more mature disciple alive in the Holy Spirit, ready then to be a catalyst for evangelistic implementation of the Synod through the Archbishop's direction. While missing a session should be the exception, we are working with the Catechetical Institute to make provisions for how best to "make up" any content missed.

**19. Will there be alternatives to Tuesday night if that is a bad night in the life of a particular parish?**

- We are working with the Catechetical Institute to develop alternative night for participation if that is truly necessary for a parish team.

**20. Will formation be happening in languages other than English?**

- Yes, there will also be formation for the parish Synod Evangelization Teams in Spanish.

**21. Is there a Synod plan in place for the 12 in each parish to collaborate with neighboring parishes, such as within deaneries, in various initiatives?**

- Yes, beginning with the School of Discipleship, which will be livestreamed to one location in each deanery. Participating and praying together within a deanery will start the bonds of connection. When it comes to implementing specific priorities, each parish team is welcome to collaborate with other parishes should such collaboration be deemed fruitful.

**22. As a pastor, my plate is already full. How can I add this on to my already full set of responsibilities?**

- Archbishop Hebda realizes the creation of a new team at your parish increases the workload in the short-term. He encourages you prudently to discern letting go of one or two optional commitments that need to take a back seat to Synod implementation at this time.