



SMALL GROUP – YEAR 1/ST. PASCAL BAYLON – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Small Group Leader Formation for Lent 2024 (content below new as of 08/29/23, 07/25/23, and 06/18/23)

- **Question:** You are currently referring to “potential” or “candidate” Small Group leaders. What does that mean? If someone agrees/volunteers to be a Small Group Leader, won’t that person be a Small Group Leader?

Answer: We are very grateful to those who are willing to be Small Group Leaders and go through formation. We are sure you can understand that how many Small Group Leaders we will ultimately need for Small Groups beginning in Lent 2024 will depend on, among other things, the number of parishioners who wish to join a Small Group, the types of Small Groups we will have, and further direction from the Archdiocese. All of that will be determined as we complete Small Group Leader formation and move forward with the process of implementing Small Groups at St. Pascal’s.

- **Question:** What can you tell me about the formation series to be offered to potential Small Group Leaders?

Answer: Every potential Small Group Leader is expected to participate in the Small Group Leader Formation Series. The formation series has been developed by the Archdiocese and will be provided in each parish, including St. Pascal’s. There will be seven weekly sessions beginning in late September. Each session will last less than two hours and be presented by video and virtually facilitated by Bishop Williams, similar in format to how the sessions in the Parish Consultation step of the Synod process were conducted at St. Pascal’s in fall 2021. The video will run continuously during each session and will include times of prayer, teaching, and small group sharing.

- **Question:** If I agree to participate in the Small Group Leader Formation Series, am I committing to lead a Small Group?

Answer: No. Participating in the formation series does not commit you to lead a Small Group.

- **Question:** What will be covered in the Small Group Leader Formation series?

Answer: In the Small Group Leader Formation series, participants will learn more about Small Group ministry, the background and objectives of the model of Small Group ministry (which you will hear referred to as the Parish Evangelization Cells System (PECS)) that the Archdiocese has selected as part of our Synod implementation for Small Groups, and the fundamentals of small group leadership, all of which is intended to allow participants the opportunity to hear the call of the Holy Spirit and allow them to discern whether they are called to be a Small Group Leader.

- **Question:** Do potential Small Group Leaders have to attend every session of the Small Group Leader Formation Series?

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Answer: Because this series is a formation toward leading Small Groups, and small group sharing during the sessions will be an important component of it, participants are expected to attend most, if not all, sessions in person. Recognizing that “life happens,” we will be exploring the possibility of making up missed sessions, but make-up sessions (if offered) are intended to be the exception and not the rule.

- **Question:** What is the schedule for the formation series sessions at St. Pascal’s?

Answer: The schedule for the formation series session is as follows:

- **Session 1** – Monday, September 18, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **OR**
Tuesday, September 19, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- **Session 2** – Monday, September 25, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **OR**
Tuesday, September 26, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- **Session 3** – Monday, October 2, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **OR**
Tuesday, October 3, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- **Session 4** – Monday, October 9, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **OR**
Tuesday, October 10, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- **Session 5** – Monday, October 16, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **OR**
Tuesday, October 17, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- **Session 6** – Monday, October 23, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **OR**
Tuesday, October 24, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- **Session 7** – Monday, October 30, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **OR**
Tuesday, November 7, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. (Note: No Tuesday session on October 31).

All sessions of the formation series will be in Brioschi Hall.

- **Question:** Am I “locked” into choosing either the Monday morning session or the Tuesday evening session? Or may I go to either session, depending on my schedule?

Answer: Participants in the formation series are welcome to join either the Monday morning session or the Tuesday evening session in a given week, whichever works best for your schedule that week. The content and materials for the Monday and Tuesday sessions each week will be the same. We would like, however, to have at least 6 people present for each session. So, if you are going to go to a session other than your “usual” session (i.e., the one you indicate a preference for) in a given week, please be sure to let Kim Roering in the parish office know so the number of attendees for each session can be confirmed.

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- **Question:** What happens when the formation series concludes?

Answer: When the formation series concludes, there will be a mutual discernment, which will include our pastor Fr. John Mitchell, about whether each participant will want to lead a Small Group during Lent 2024 and, if so, what type of Small Group he or she might feel comfortable leading. Not everyone who participates in the formation series will become a Small Group Leader. The discernment may also help participants determine whether they are called to serve a Small Group in a supporting leadership role other than “the leader,” such as hospitality, hosting, communications, etc. And some participants may determine that they would simply prefer to be a member of a Small Group next Lent.

Archdiocesan Synod (content below new as of 06/18/23)

- **Question:** What is the Synod?

Answer: In 2019, Archbishop Hebda initiated a Synod process grounded in parish life and intended to discern and establish clear pastoral priorities to promote greater unity and more vigorous proclamation of the Good News in the Archdiocese. The Synod process began with Prayer and Listening Events at parishes, including St. Pascal's, during 2019-2020 and Parish Consultation in fall 2021. An Archdiocesan Synod Assembly followed in June 2022 at which 40 Synod Propositions coming out of the Listening Events and Consultation were discussed and voted on by members of the Assembly.

- **Question:** What was the result of the Synod?

Answer: In November 2022, Archbishop Hebda published his Post-Synodal Pastoral Letter, *You Will Be My Witnesses*, to the Faithful of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. In his Pastoral Letter, the Archbishop shared his thoughts about the Synod process and how to begin the work now of Synod implementation. To that end, the Archbishop, among other things, asked pastors to form a Synod Evangelization Team (SET) for each parish to assist the pastors in the implementation of Synod Priorities for the parish going forward. The Archbishop established one Synod Priority at the parish level for each of the next three years. The Synod Priority for Year 1 (July 2023 – June 2024) is Small Groups. The purpose of this Synod Priority is to create and grow a small group ministry at every parish that fosters personal relationships, builds community, and provides formation to help parishioners grow as disciples of Christ. Archbishop Hebda has a stated goal of every parishioner in the Archdiocese participating in a Small Group. The result of the Synod is ongoing and continuing.

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- **Question:** What does this “Synod thing” have to do with St. Pascal’s?

Answer: St. Pascal’s is now undertaking the Year 1 Archdiocesan Synod Implementation Plan for Small Groups. Fr. John has formed the SET for the parish (Jaci Bush, Nicole Fisch, Julie Moore, Deacon Rich Moore, Kim Roering, John Scanlon, and Mary Weyandt) to assist him in developing and implementing Small Groups at St. Pascal’s beginning in Lent 2024. We will need a lot of help to make Small Groups a success, including Small Group Leaders and Small Group participants. We are now at the point (June – August 2023) of identifying parishioners who have the potential to be Small Group Leaders and inviting them to Small Group Leaders formation to be provided at St. Pascal’s in the fall 2023.

- **Question:** What will the Small Groups be like?

Answer: At this time, we do not have many details about the Small Groups. What we know at this time is that the Small Groups will be small, no more than 6-10 members in each group and will meet weekly during Lent 2024 and be facilitated by Small Group Leaders from the parish. The details about the Small Groups (e.g., formation of Small Group Leaders, what kinds of Small Groups we will have, how membership in a particular Small Group will be determined, how Small Group Leaders will be assigned to Small Groups, the subject matter focus of the Small Group meetings, location of the meetings, when the meetings will be held, how long the meetings will be, materials to be used in the meetings, etc.) are being developed in collaboration with the Archdiocese. We hope to have more detailed information about the Small Groups to share later in the fall.