

# *Facilitator's Guide*

## *Some principles to facilitate the animation of a synod dialogue group*

### **1- Clearly state the purpose of the meeting:**

- Take great care of the welcome
- If there are disclosures of sexual abuse (give Lise Duguay's contact information: 819. 776-5112; e-mail: duguayli@videotron.ca) see the Diocese of Gatineau website
- Explain the process
- The purpose of the meeting is to dialogue on questions (see dialogue booklets) in order to meet, pray together, listen and discern.
- We must insist on the time (90 minutes)
- Have one meeting per theme (there will be 5 meetings)
- There will be a short report at the end of the meeting. (See the dialogue booklet which gives some guidelines in this regard)
- Inform participants that the purpose of the meeting is not to empty one's heart
- If participants ask for a time to vent, listen to them and validate their emotions. Then ask the group to decide if they want to meet at another time to do the dialogue exercise.
- Remind them of the purpose of the synod process and the questions.

### **2- Tips for dealing with people who talk too much and those who do not talk enough**

- People who talk a lot (who don't let go of the spittoon): As facilitators, don't be afraid to be directive and remind people that time is limited in order to allow everyone to express themselves and to keep the focus on the topic. (Excuse me if I cut you off, I would ask you to summarize your thoughts in 2 or 3 words so that others have time to express themselves as well) For the really talkative: Validate the person's need to communicate (What you say is very important. Since time is limited, make a note to yourself and I will be available once the group is over to listen). Be understanding and firm. Remember that if you allow yourself to listen

without limits because this person needs to talk, you will frustrate the rest of the group, and it may get out of hand. You are the one responsible for making the group work.

- For people who do not speak, offer them the opportunity to express themselves. Example: After this first whole table... you (name the person), what would you like to say about the subject? Give the person the opportunity to express themselves.

### **3- Group rules (and check with each person that they all agree) to :**

- Respect the time.
- Respect the purpose of the meeting: agree that it is a dialogue meeting and not something else.
- Do not interrupt.
- Ask the speaker's permission to ask a question.
- Allow the speaker to speak until the end, asking if he or she has anything else to add before moving on.
- Do not use insulting, abusive or profane language (this language will not be tolerated)
- Ask permission if she wants feedback
- Respect her refusal to express herself

### **4- Some rules of group dynamics:**

- Speak in the "I" statement: when speaking, each person expresses what he or she thinks, feels or experiences in a personal and most authentic way possible while respecting his or her secret garden; it is not necessary to reveal everything, it is simply important to speak in truth (tell the truth).
- Welcoming with kindness and listening without judgment: each member of the group really tries to hear and respect the experience of the person who expresses himself.
- What is said in the group stays in the group: participants agree to treat what they hear with respect and discretion.

I am available if you need coaching in your facilitation, or if you need a debriefing after your group sessions you can contact me:

A session to guide group facilitation can be done by zooming in.

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