



# JOURNEYING TOGETHER

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A Handbook for  
Intercultural  
Encounter

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church

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# Contents

Welcome Letter .....	v
Introduction .....	vi
Journeying Together: Vision and Overview .....	vi
Journeying Together: Where We Have Been .....	vii
Contact Information .....	viii



## Journeying Together: A Handbook for Intercultural Encounter

Step 1. Preparing for the Journey .....	2
Rationale .....	2
Identify your cultural communities .....	2
Determine the scope and timeline of your encounter .....	3
Identify, invite, and engage diverse leaders, with a particular focus on young adults .....	3
Create a safe space for this work to happen .....	3
Work out the logistics .....	3
Form a Planning Team .....	3
Organize the Planning Team .....	4
Step 2. Intracultural Conversations .....	5
Rationale .....	5
Preparation .....	5
Intracultural Family Conversation, Round 1: Meeting Template .....	6
Intracultural Family Conversation, Round 2: Meeting Template .....	7
Adaptations .....	7
Step 3. Intercultural Dialogue .....	8
Rationale .....	8
Preparation .....	8
Intercultural Dialogue Template .....	10
Adaptations .....	10

Step 4. A Deeper Dive .....	11
<b>Rationale</b> .....	11
<b>Preparation</b> .....	11
<b>Adaptation</b> .....	11
Step 5. Action Planning and Community Celebration .....	12
<b>Rationale</b> .....	12
<b>Preparation</b> .....	12
<b>What Is Action Planning?</b> .....	13
<b>Session 1. Outcomes and Processes</b> .....	14
<b>Session 2. Consultation</b> .....	16
<b>Session 3. Recommendations and Implementation</b> .....	16
Step 6. Recommendations and Implementation .....	18
<b>Rationale</b> .....	18
<b>Possible Steps</b> .....	18
<b>National Event: Integrated POP Document and Recommendations</b> .....	18
	
<b>Glossary</b> .....	21
<b>Appendix 1. God of Our Journey: A Prayer for Journeying Together</b> .....	23
<b>Appendix 2. Modified Circle Dialogue for Virtual Settings</b> .....	24
<b>Appendix 3. Alive in Christ: Journeying Together National Gathering Schedule</b> .....	25
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	26
<b>Endnotes</b> .....	26

# Welcome Letter

*“Journeying Together is a process of dialogue and encounter focused on the Church’s ministry with youth and young adults that fosters understanding and trust within and across cultural families toward a more welcoming and just community of faith.”*

—Journeying Together Statement of Purpose<sup>1</sup>



**Dear friends in Christ,**

The Journeying Together process has opened new pathways for us to accompany young adults, learn from their experiences, and pray together for our Church and our world. This process is built upon collaboration among several secretariats of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), including Cultural Diversity in the Church; Catholic Education; Evangelization and Catechesis; Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations; and Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth; the process has also included ministry leaders and Catholic young adults representing cultural and ethnic groups from all over the United States.

Throughout this process of walking together across cultural families, participants have been privileged to receive stories of love, pain, hope, difficulties, and great joy. Sharing these stories has built up our Church and helped participants feel hopeful, especially through encounters with these young leaders within our Church. Young adults have found many ways to connect with their faith communities and offer their gifts and energies. While the stories that we have heard included some moments of pain, the overwhelming optimism and hope for our Church are clear. Young adults want to make a difference in their communities, to have their stories heard, and to experience a Church that embraces them and their unique cultural realities.

As chairmen of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, we have had the tremendous honor and joy of participating and presiding over this process during its national unfolding (2020-2022) and of witnessing the emergence of tremendous opportunities and many friendships in the Lord across cultural and generational boundaries. As this synodal process of listening, learning, and action continues in your own local community, we invite you to review these materials, build a team, and bring this life-giving experience to your church community. Let us take time to be with, and to learn from, the faith and cultural experiences of young adults and communities of many diverse backgrounds.

We sincerely hope that all those seeking to build bridges of friendship, unity, and understanding will find in *Journeying Together: A Handbook for Intercultural Encounter* a useful tool.

Sincerely,

✠ Most Rev. Nelson J. Pérez  
Archbishop of Philadelphia

✠ Most Rev. J. Arturo Cepeda  
Auxiliary Bishop of San Antonio

✠ Most Rev. Robert Brennan  
Bishop of Brooklyn

# Introduction



*If we journey together, young and old, we can be firmly rooted in the present, and from here, revisit the past and look to the future. To revisit the past in order to learn from history and heal old wounds that at times still trouble us. To look to the future in order to nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge, awaken prophecies and enable hope to blossom. Together, we can learn from one another, warm hearts, inspire minds with the light of the Gospel, and lend new strength to our hands.*

—Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, no. 199<sup>2</sup>

**W**hen the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles at Pentecost, their lips were opened to proclaim the Gospel in many languages (Acts 2:1-13). The gift of the Spirit enabled them to encounter the peoples of many nations and overcome the usual challenges that often keep different groups from coming to know one another.

Journeying Together invites young people across cultural families to grow in that same Spirit of the apostles. It offers both an invitation to pray and an invitation to walk together in prayer. This handbook reflects the goal of this journey, which is “to listen attentively to the voices of all the young and all who accompany them, and as a Church, work together towards a more responsive, diverse, and just society.”<sup>3</sup> It is also an opportunity to transform the way the Church engages in pastoral ministry with youth and young adults of all cultures.

In this process, we pray that as Catholics we might grow in the unity to which Jesus called his disciples: “that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you” (Jn 17:21).

Specifically, Journeying Together is an invitation to learn how people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds have come to faith in Jesus Christ through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It reflects faith in a God who calls all peoples to communion and who has invited all to gather in the name of God as one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. The letter to the Ephesians expresses this faith: From God “the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body’s growth and builds itself up in love” (Eph 4:16).

Journeying Together invites us to build up one another in love—both as individuals and as communities of faith. It involves committing several months to careful listening and honest sharing. Mindful of Jesus’ promise that “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt 18:20), participants enter this journey seeking a deeper understanding of Jesus’ ongoing ministry in the life of the universal Church.

## **JOURNEYING TOGETHER: VISION AND OVERVIEW**

Journeying Together invites participants to conversation, dialogue, storytelling, and encounter focusing on the Church’s ministry with youth and young adults. Together we seek to foster understanding and trust within and across cultural families toward the development of more welcoming and just communities of faith.

Journeying Together is the response by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to the global Synod (2018), which focused on engaging youth and young adults in faith and vocational discernment. Journeying Together nurtures synodality and aims to translate and implement Pope Francis’s post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Christus*

*Vivit (Christ Is Alive)* for the Catholic Church in the United States. Our goal is to engage young people and ministry leaders from each and every cultural family in this country: African Americans, Asian and Pacific Islanders, European Americans, Hispanics and Latinos, Native Americans and Indigenous peoples, and those who are migrants, refugees, and peoples on the move.

Journeying Together embodies subsidiarity and solidarity by creating space for all voices to be heard—especially local voices that are often marginalized or overlooked by society. The Church’s mission is to practice solidarity with every culture and community it encounters. At a time of upheaval and division in our country, the US bishops, young Catholics, and those who minister among them are all invited to come together to model encounter, dialogue, inclusion, and sacred listening and to chart a courageous path forward, together.

As we listen attentively to the voices of the young and all who accompany them, we as a Church work together to transform society into more responsive, diverse, and just communities. This process also means we must transform the way the Church engages in pastoral ministry with youth and young adults of all cultures.

The Journeying Together process follows a synodal model—centered on listening, discernment, co-responsibility, and participation—and applies it to the Catholic Church in the United States with and through young people. As thousands of youth and young adults of all cultural backgrounds and walks of life have taken to the streets to demand justice in recent years, they are also coming together for honest, respectful dialogue on faith, culture, and community building.

The Journeying Together gatherings seek to create safe spaces to reflect on the struggles and concerns that affect each cultural family, while also acknowledging and celebrating the gifts and talents that each brings to the community. The process models dialogue and action centered on respect, honesty, and love.

## JOURNEYING TOGETHER: WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

In 2020, the initial vision for Journeying Together was to create a national gathering for an intercultural encounter. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted that planning and its implementation cycle. With the support of the USCCB’s

Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, the young adult advisory group, and the ministry leader advisory group, the national Journeying Together planning team created a process to foster dialogue within and across cultural families that could be initiated and conducted both live and online until it became feasible to come together in person.

From the summer of 2020 through the spring of 2022, virtual conversations led to a national gathering held in Chicago, Illinois. Overall, about 1,500 individuals participated in the process. From June 23 to 26, 2022, more than three hundred people—most of them young adults, but also ministry leaders and bishops from all over the United States—gathered to explore ways to minister more effectively with young, diverse communities within the Catholic Church.

Under the overall theme of “Alive in Christ: Young Prophetic Voices Journeying Together,” the national gathering explored a threefold focus:

1. **To celebrate** the journey and to rekindle the joy of coming together across cultures, generations, and regions of the country
2. **To convene** a national dialogue around the major themes and to engage in prayerful, respectful, and relevant conversations, rooted in Jesus Christ
3. **To create** action plans for moving forward as a Catholic community and, urged on by the Holy Spirit, to seek ways to prophetically advance the Gospel in the world.

Preparation for the national gathering unfolded over time and included five distinct stages that built upon one another over a two-year period. As Journeying Together activates locally, you will follow these same steps, as outlined in this handbook.

### Step 1: Preparing for the Journey: Kickoff Event

The journey began with a kickoff event that introduced the Journeying Together process of listening, learning, and taking action, wherein the bishops and ministry leaders engaged directly with young adults and youth ministry leaders.

### Step 2: Intracultural Conversations

Each cultural family gathered independently to explore their faith stories, joys, sorrows, and concerns. Participants brainstormed topics that they wanted to bring to the intercultural table. These conversations allowed each cultural

community to gain the self-awareness, confidence, and humility to share their cultural stories with others.

### **Step 3: Intercultural Dialogues**

The intracultural conversations from step 2 prepared participants for cross-cultural gatherings that provided each cultural family with an opportunity to share their stories in their own words. These gatherings invited each community to share with the larger group its gifts and contributions, unique issues, and areas of concern. Participants discerned pastoral needs and potential responses.

### **Step 4: A Deeper Dive**

In this step, participants further explored topics that emerged from earlier steps. While the national process held single sessions on specific topics (e.g., immigration, race, climate change), your local implementation might find a more sustained conversation to be helpful. One approach could be to meet multiple times to discuss a single topic and develop an appropriate pastoral response.

### **Step 5: National Gathering: Action Planning and Community Celebration**

Young people from across the cultural families gathered with bishops and church leaders to formulate action steps, develop strategic collaborations, and chart a path forward for the local church's ministry with and for young people in this country. The gathering celebrated each cultural community's gifts and contributions as well as acknowledging the group's "journey together."

### **Step 6: Proceedings and Recommendations**

The proceedings and recommendations of the Journeying Together process were collated and presented to the USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, after which they were posted on the USCCB's Journeying Together website.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

As you use this resource, please contact the **Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church** with questions, comments, or suggestions. Your input is valued. Contact the secretariat by sending an email to [diversity@usccb.org](mailto:diversity@usccb.org) or by phoning 202-541-3350.

# Journeying Together: A Handbook for Intercultural Encounter



**T**his handbook serves as a resource for local intercultural encounters. These foundational principles will guide your work:

- This process is intended to empower young adult voices while intentionally engaging as many cultural communities as are represented in your community.
- This process is young adult–focused with intergenerational support. It is important for older generations to listen to the faith and cultural experiences of the young adults in the community and to seek to understand their lived experiences in the Church.

## STEP 1

# Preparing for the Journey



### RATIONALE

Journeying Together is an encounter with the other. This process creates a unique exchange by emphasizing the shared experiences of individuals across cultures and generations. By attending to the movement of the Holy Spirit through shared and collective experiences, participants learn, grow, and expand their love of neighbor. Building relationships among young adults and ministry leaders, while articulating a shared vision for the journey ahead, lays an important foundation. This initiative fosters understanding and trust within and across cultural families to foster a more welcoming and just community of faith.

Guiding principles for the journey should be identified early and remain steadfast:

- Inclusion, meaning that everyone is welcome, lays the foundation for the encounter.
- Each person and each community must have a voice and be invited to share their own story in their own words.
- As a community of faith, participants commit to sacred listening.

For the national Journeying Together process, the collaborating USCCB offices identified the following cultural families: African American/Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, European American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American/Indigenous, as well as Catholic migrants and refugees representing a variety of immigrant groups (African, Afro Caribbean, Brazilian, Polish, Ukrainian, etc.) and Middle Eastern refugees from various eparchies and Eastern Churches, and people on the move (such as migrant farmworkers, seafarers, folks from circuses and traveling shows, etc.).

This section describes the tasks and objectives for you to accomplish during step 1 of your Journeying Together process.

### IDENTIFY YOUR CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Put assumptions aside and take the time to research the cultures and ethnic groups that make up your community. It is important to understand the actual makeup of both your civic and your ecclesial communities to determine what type of outreach you will need to develop. Knowing the community will help you determine how best to connect with as many cultural communities as possible. It is particularly important to reach out to those who may have disaffiliated from the Church due to concerns surrounding religion and cultures.

[Census data](#) will help you identify the cultures within your community. Information can be found at the websites listed below for the United States Census Bureau. You might also reach out to your diocese or check your parish census, if available, to gather data. Keep in mind that parish registrations do not always accurately reflect all individuals and families who regularly worship, receive the sacraments and other services, or otherwise reside within canonical parish boundaries. We encourage you to become creative about ways to come to a more accurate estimate using a variety of sources, as well as about your personal observations and relationships with members of the various communities.

Journeying Together is a process of listening and collaboration under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The national planning team piloted and tested this method and now offers communities a guide to create a similar process in their own ministerial context. In designing a process, keep in mind the uniqueness of cultural communities amid the context and landscape of both the United States in general

and your diocese or region in particular, as well as those of individual participants. Take time to pray and listen to the movement of the Spirit so that each cultural community can create adaptations that will be beneficial to your local situation.

### DETERMINE THE SCOPE AND TIMELINE OF YOUR ENCOUNTER

- Know and understand your why. Why pursue a cross-cultural encounter? Why engage youth and young adults?
- Who will be the participants? Is this a parish, diocesan, regional, or organizational encounter?
- What will be the timeframe? For example, the encounter can take place over several weeks or several months.
- How will you gather? Will the gathering be in person, virtual, or hybrid?
- What outcomes do you hope to achieve?

### IDENTIFY, INVITE, AND ENGAGE DIVERSE LEADERS, WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON YOUNG ADULTS

- Who is involved in the planning?
- Who are the participants? Will they include youth, young adults, collegians, parishioners?
- How can you solicit support and foster engagement from the community?
- What steps will you take to ensure that participation is accessible to all?
- Are you giving all cultural families equitable time and space for planning and participation?
- Who else should or could be invited to your planning process? (The emphasis here is to plan *with* other groups, not plan *for* them.)
- How might your efforts reach those who are disaffiliated or unaffiliated?
- How might you heal past experiences when young people felt excluded, unseen, unheard, or discounted from processes like this?
- What other groups, offices, or ministries should be involved from the beginning? Consider these possibilities:
  - Campus ministry or young adult ministry diocesan offices
  - Young adult ministries in the diocese or local community
  - Active parishioners and/or parish leaders

### CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR THIS WORK TO HAPPEN

The importance of listening to one another—especially to young adults—and telling sacred stories in our own voices cannot be underestimated.

- How will your planned encounter and conversation lead to action?
- What can you do to ensure your community reflects the reality uncovered in the story sharing?
- What are your short-term goals? What goals need more time to be implemented?
- How can you achieve collective commitment to the action steps?
- What form of accountability can you establish?
- What support do you need?
- What adaptations are needed for your cultural and ministerial context?

### WORK OUT THE LOGISTICS

- What is your budget (e.g., for hospitality, marketing, other materials)?
- Where will the gatherings take place?
- What is the timeline?
- What do you need to do to make childcare available so that young families can participate?
- Is technology or language a barrier preventing some from participating? If so, what solutions could help?

### FORM A PLANNING TEAM

Gather a diverse team of 8 to 12 supporters who will meet regularly to plan and organize all the gatherings. The team should be assembled and ready to start with ample time to plan, perhaps 6 to 9 months before you launch Journeying Together.

When selecting team members, pay careful attention to young adult involvement. The authentic input that young adults bring to planning and decision-making is essential. Additionally, make every effort to include representatives from all cultural families present in your local community. You may find it helpful to organize at a multi-parish, deanery, regional, or diocesan level, as individual parishes can be homogeneous.

Those invited to the Planning Team should be attentive to the breadth of concerns within the local community. Engaging young adults as protagonists has substantial

implications for the success and impact on the Church, both today and going forward.

Possible team members include the following:

- Parish or diocesan staff, particularly those who minister with young people
- Leaders in young adult or campus ministry
- Stakeholders from ministries like baptismal preparation, the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults, marriage preparation, catechesis, liturgical ministries, social justice groups, etc.

Consider inviting the following organizations to participate, to share information about Journeying Together with their constituents, and perhaps to join the Planning Team:

- Regional young adult ministries
- Local parishes with young adult ministries

- Colleges with religious networks or Catholic campus ministries
- Local religious communities
- Diocesan young adult ministry contacts
- Diocesan cultural diversity contacts

This list is not exhaustive. Please take time to consider other possible connections and what unique contributors are available in your region.

### **ORGANIZE THE PLANNING TEAM**

- Establish a meeting schedule.
- Consider identifying subcommittees to focus on specific needs, such as these examples:
  - Logistics: schedules, gathering spaces, budget, food and drinks, etc.
  - Speakers
  - Facilitators
  - Prayer or liturgy planners
  - Action planning

## STEP 2

# Intracultural Conversations



### RATIONALE

This step helps participants prepare for intercultural encounters in step 3 by first gathering for intracultural conversations, that is, within their cultural families. Each cultural family is really a community of communities. For example, the Native American cultural family has 574 federally recognized tribal nations. The Asian and Pacific Islander cultural family includes Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Hmong, and more. The Hispanic/Latino cultural family includes people with roots in more than twenty Latin American countries and Spain, with 67 percent being US-born. It is valuable to come together, in person or virtually, to create space where people from the same or similar cultural community can share experiences with one another.

Intracultural conversations give each cultural community the space to meet, discuss shared questions, and identify issues it wants to bring forward for intercultural dialogue. These conversations provide an opportunity to gain greater self-awareness and confidence to share cultural stories with others.

Connecting young adults with ministry leaders allows all participants to cooperatively identify pastoral needs, recommendations, and concrete steps for the Church's engagement with young people. Creating safe spaces for encounter and for conversation that respects, values, and honors the gifts and struggles of each cultural family renews a spirit of solidarity and synodality.

### PREPARATION

#### Roles for Step 2

- **Facilitators** help to create a safe and positive space for conversation in the small groups, ensure that all

participants have opportunity to share, and help to keep time.

- **Notetakers** capture main ideas from small group sharing; they need not track or report who says what.
- **Cultural leaders** serve as points of contact to maintain communication with those in their respective cultural family.

#### Forming Intracultural Family Task Forces

Create an **Intracultural Task Force** for each cultural family that will organize the intracultural conversations for step 2. Creating an Intracultural Task Force for each cultural family helps each organize the intracultural conversations for its community. Participants are encouraged to self-identify the cultural family conversations they choose to join.

#### Suggested Timeline

MONTH 1	Convene the intracultural family task force for planning.
MONTH 2	Gather for round 1 of the cultural family conversations (see below for outline).
MONTH 3	Invite participants to engage in peer conversations.
MONTH 4	Gather for round 2 of the cultural family conversation (see below for outline).

#### Other Important Steps

Depending on the number of cultural families and sub-groups, as well as your desired number of meetings, you may need to allow more time for this preparation work.

- Schedule the cultural family conversations: when, where, and how often. We recommend holding at least two gatherings with each cultural family to foster relationships.

- Create an agenda with culture-specific questions for discussion (see samples below in the outline for round 1).
  - What would be useful questions for the cultural family to discuss?
  - What topics are important to the specific cultural family?
- Identify guiding principles and ways to ensure a safe space for conversation.
- Determine who should be invited among the young adults and ministry leaders.
- Identify and train facilitators and notetakers for the small group process.



## INTRACULTURAL FAMILY CONVERSATION, ROUND 1: MEETING TEMPLATE

1. Welcome all participants.
2. Introduce the leaders and participants.
3. Lead with a gathering prayer.
4. Share the Journeying Together process (vision and overview, as well as the roadmap of steps outlined in this handbook).
5. Introduce the theme from *Christus Vivit* by Pope Francis:

“If we journey together, young and old, we can be firmly rooted in the present, and from here, revisit the past and look to the future. To revisit the past in order to learn from history and heal old wounds that at times still trouble us. To look to the future in order to nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge, awaken prophecies and enable hope to blossom. Together, we can learn from one another, warm hearts, inspire minds with the light of the Gospel, and lend new strength to our hands” (no. 199).

Explain that understanding the realities of our cultural communities and their connections to this context and to synodality is essential for our foundation.

6. Ask the participants to break into small groups, and assign a notetaker for each one. Ensure that notetakers can capture highlights of the small group conversations in a shareable online form or document.
7. Within the small groups, discuss culture-specific questions. Sample questions include the following; be sure to include those you developed with your team:
  - About the reality facing young people today
    - As a young person, what brings you hope and joy?
    - What are unique traits and values that you can identify in your cultural or ethnic community? What are you most proud of?
    - What things are hurting you and your loved ones the most today?
    - What things get in the way of a prosperous and safe future for you and your community?
    - What things drive you and your friends away from living and celebrating your Catholic faith?
  - About faith in Jesus Christ
    - What are three things that you appreciate and admire the most about Jesus and his teachings?
    - What are three things you think Jesus Christ would say about who you are as an individual?
    - How might Jesus invite us to live out our faith in today’s society?
    - When should faith be personal? When should it be public?
  - About Catholic leaders
    - What should Catholic religious leaders do or say to lift up you and your cultural family? What support does your community need or desire?
    - What things will bring you closer to your parish community and the practice of your Catholic faith?
    - What should Catholic leaders denounce as oppressive regarding you, your race, or your culture?

- About young people as protagonists
  - What unique gifts do you and other young people from your cultural family, racial, or ethnic group contribute to the Church? To society?
  - How can you make a difference in your faith community and in your neighborhood?
  - What activities are you willing to lead in your faith community and in your neighborhood?
- 8. Reconvene the large group, and invite the note takers to summarize the topics and themes that each group discussed. (Explain that these notes will assist in planning the intercultural dialogues in step 3.)
- 9. Lead a question-and-answer period.
- 10. Deliver any closing remarks and discuss the next steps, including the upcoming peer conversations. Conclude with a closing prayer.

### Next Steps: Introduce Peer Conversations

At the end of round 1 of the culture-specific small group discussions, invite participants to engage others from their cultural family. These conversations—held either one-on-one or in small groups—will broaden the reach of the cultural family’s conversation by seeking other perspectives within the cultural family. This work affords an opportunity to expand the circle and invite others into conversation.

These conversations can explore topics that emerged in round 1. Participants are asked to capture highlights from the peer conversations that they can share during round 2 of the intracultural family conversations. We suggest using a platform like Google Forms where documents can be easily saved and shared.



### INTRACULTURAL FAMILY CONVERSATION, ROUND 2: MEETING TEMPLATE

Reconvene the previous participants, and welcome any new participants.

1. Make introductions and lead a gathering prayer.
2. Invite reports and informal sharing from the participants’ peer conversations after round 1.
3. Ask the participants to break into small groups, and assign a notetaker for each one. Ensure that notetakers

can capture highlights of the small group conversations in a shareable online form or document.

4. Ask the small groups to discuss these key questions:
  - What strengths surfaced from the first cultural family conversations?
  - What challenges emerged?
  - How did you benefit personally from the conversations? How did your cultural family benefit?
  - What creative ideas and responses did you hear?
  - Can you identify common threads across these conversations?
  - Do particular issues, distinctions, or points of view need to be addressed?
5. Convene the large group for a wrap-up discussion. (This discussion also serves as preparation for step 3, the intercultural dialogues.)
  - What strengths/challenges did you hear expressed? What common threads? What distinct issues?
  - From all our deep listening, what themes come through loud and clear?
  - How does our culture intersect with other cultures?
  - How do we maintain our cultural identities but also unite as Christians seeking justice and unity?
  - How can we model solidarity for the Church and society?
6. Gather the groups’ reports and summaries. Use the closing comments to set the stage for step 3, the intercultural dialogues.

### Next Steps: Cultural Leaders

Ask volunteers to serve as cultural leaders for the intercultural dialogues of step 3. Explain that in that step, each cultural family will lead a session with participants from all cultural families. These leaders will share their cultural family stories in their own words. They will share strengths, challenges, and what they value.

### ADAPTATIONS

As a national process, Journeying Together necessitated a series of virtual gatherings. In a local context, in-person gatherings may better suit the ministerial context and can provide a deeper communal experience. However, we encourage you to consider whether a virtual or hybrid framework would allow for greater access.

## STEP 3

# Intercultural Dialogue



### RATIONALE

The aim of step 3 is to create a series of large-group conversations that focus on one cultural family at a time. The number of sessions will vary from place to place depending on the number of different cultural families you have participating in Journeying Together.

Building on the intracultural family conversations, step 3 is when you create space so participants from different ethnic backgrounds can hear the stories and experiences from each cultural family. Regular sessions will gather participants for a brief presentation led by one cultural family. These sacred stories will include each community's contributions, highlight unique issues and areas of concern, and allow time for the participants to discern needed pastoral responses.

In the previous step, each cultural family had the opportunity to identify its strengths, challenges, common threads, and points of distinction. In step 3, they now share their stories in their own words with the wider church community.

### PREPARATION

#### Roles for Step 3

- The **Planning Team** will plan and implement the various steps, including establishing a timeline and coordinating recruitment, with representation from all the cultural families involved in your event. The team organizes the overall framework for step 3; it decides how many sessions are needed to represent the cultural families within its ministerial and geographical context and determines whether the sessions should take place in person or in a virtual setting. Once the number and frequency of sessions are determined, you can begin the preparation for each individual session.

- Each **Intracultural Task Force** (created in step 2) will assist in planning and hosting the intercultural dialogue assigned to its respective cultural family (one team per cultural family). Where step 2 entailed conversations within the cultural family, you now move to dialogue across cultural families. Each cultural family, led by an Intracultural Task Force, prepares for the dialogues in step 3 by identifying panelists who will share their stories in their own voices. The sacred stories will be followed by dialogue in small groups of participants across cultural families.
- One or two **emcees** should be identified who can maintain the flow of each event. They are knowledgeable about the program and key messaging. They set a tone of welcome with energetic engagement while keeping the event on schedule.
- The **panelists** are individuals identified by the Intracultural Task Forces who can give witness to their faith and share crucial information about their cultural family.
- **Facilitators** maintain the flow and the focus of the small group discussions; they establish a safe and sacred space for members to share.
- For virtual sessions, consider forming a **Behind-the-Scenes Team** to manage technical tasks such as hosting, spotlighting, assigning small groups or breakout rooms, and sharing screens.

#### Suggested Timeline

Each Intracultural Task Force will need 6 to 8 weeks to plan its intercultural dialogue. Because planning is led by separate Intracultural Task Forces, preparation for multiple sessions can happen simultaneously.

The Planning Team might consider a combined effort to recruit and train the facilitators who will be needed in every session. These volunteers will be asked to read the summary documents ahead of time.

Whether the dialogues are held in person or virtually, every session will need emcees and panelists. For virtual dialogues, consider having the facilitators, emcees, and panelists form the on-screen team, and organize a Behind-the-Scenes Team as a separate team for technology and other logistics considerations.

The national Journeying Together process held six monthly intercultural dialogues in 2021, each hosted by a different cultural family.

JANUARY	Native American/Indigenous
FEBRUARY	Black/African American
MARCH	Asian American and Pacific Islander
APRIL	Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers (PCMRT)
MAY	Hispanic/Latino American
JUNE	European American

### Work of the Planning Team

- Decide on your timeline. Factor in these questions:
  - How many intercultural dialogues are needed in your ministerial context?
  - How frequently can they occur? Weekly? Monthly?
- Identify and train facilitators to lead small group discussions.
  - A modified circle process worked well at the national level (see appendix 2).
  - “Conversation in the spirit” synodal method could be an alternative<sup>4</sup>
- Prepare a “pre-read” document to give participants valuable insights about a particular cultural family. If pre-read documents are used, create one for each intercultural dialogue session. This item may add to the team’s preparation time because writers from each cultural family need to be identified and be given time to write their material.

- Pre-read suggestion: Invite one or two members from a cultural family, perhaps a young adult and a ministry leader, to write a short reflection to be sent out a week or so before the intercultural dialogue. These documents should be short (one or two pages) and accessible.
- Writing prompts may help writers describe their experience of faith and culture:
  - Describe a reality of suffering or sorrow.
  - Describe a reality that brings joy.
  - Describe a transformative experience that has made a difference in your life.
  - Describe how you feel supported or unsupported by your cultural family and the wider faith community.

### Work of Each Intracultural Task Force

Each Intracultural Task Force prepares its intercultural dialogue session.

- Organize meetings to identify presentation content and panelists.
- Review what was discussed in the intra-cultural conversations (step 2) and identify common themes.
- Aim to have two or three panelists. Ensure young adult voices are represented, and consider including panelists from multiple generations.
- Identify emcees for the session. We recommend at least two emcees, ideally with some intracultural and gender diversity.
- Discern a flow for the session, including moments of prayer, panel discussion, guests, question-and-answer periods, and small group discussions.
- Invite the cultural family hosting the dialogue to create its own opening prayer experience rooted in its traditions—this could include music, song, or reflections on saints from that culture.
- If needed, prepare advance materials (e.g., pre-read documents like personal reflections). Do this with the Planning Team.
- Revisit *guiding principles for discussion*, and consider how to create a safe space for participation.

## INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE TEMPLATE

This template is designed for a session lasting 2 hours and 15 minutes.

### 10 min. Welcome and Greeting

Emcees welcome participants, virtually or in person, to the intercultural conversation.

### 10 min. Opening Prayer

Follow the plan for the opening prayer experience created by the cultural family hosting the dialogue.

### 5 min. Opening Blessing

One of the participating bishops, clergy, or another ministry leader gives an opening blessing.

### 10 min. Orientation and Housekeeping

Emcees introduce people to this stage of the process and invite participants to identify themselves and their cultural families.

### 30 min. Panel Conversation

Invite young adults and other panelists from each cultural family to share their own experiences of faith and culture.

### 5 min. Silent Reflection

Allow participants to reflect silently upon what they just heard.

### 30 min. Small Group Conversations

Ask the participants to move into small groups (or breakout rooms, if virtual) for dialogue. Each group should have a facilitator, who will help create a safe space for people to share their thoughts and experiences.

### 15 min. Large Group Conversations

After small group time, reconvene the large group and invite the participants to share what they encountered in the small group conversations. This activity could be done by using online crowdsourcing tools or by pre-designating a reporter from each small group to share insights and takeaways from each group.

### 10 min. Share What Was Heard

Invite three participants (e.g., a ministry leader, the local bishop, and a young adult) to share

what they heard and what impacted them most throughout this session. A bishop or other ministry leader might give a final short reflection on what they heard, as a way to emphasize that those in positions of authority are listening with open hearts to what the young adults are sharing. Alternatively, a cross section of intergenerational participants, including young adults, can offer this reflection.

### 5 min. Closing Prayer

Each session ends with the Journeying Together prayer (see appendix 1).

### 5 min. Wrap-Up

Remind participants of when the next dialogue will take place, and encourage them to complete the feedback instrument that will be sent in the coming days.

## ADAPTATIONS

While not all cultural families may be present in your community, we ask you to please strive to include as many representative groups as are appropriate for your ministerial context.

Journeying Together seeks to engage a wide variety of participants and to create a safe space for genuine dialogue. Participants should include young adults (ages 18 to 39), ministry leaders who accompany them, and parish and diocesan leaders such as clergy, parish life coordinators, and bishops. Ideal participants come with a listening heart and can be described as curious and respectful.

During the invitation and registration process, it is extremely important for participants to self-identify their cultural family affiliation. In some cases, you may find it helpful to provide options for those of multiethnic backgrounds, particularly for those who identify as biracial or as coming from blended families. This option establishes a strong foundation for inclusion.

The frequency of sessions plays an important role in the journey. For example, a parish-wide or diocese-wide intercultural encounter takes time to organize and to digest, so a monthly approach may make more sense. A parish effort also might use the weeks of Lent, Advent, or the Easter season to engage in conversations.

## STEP 4

# A Deeper Dive



### RATIONALE

From steps 2 and 3, several recurrent themes have likely emerged that your participants will want to discuss further. That was certainly true of the national Journeying Together dialogue.

Given that the national gathering needed to be postponed due to the ongoing pandemic, the national planning team seized the opportunity to organize three subsequent online dialogues as a way to continue the conversation. Three main topics had emerged from the work up to that point: immigration, racism, and climate change alongside the call to care for creation.

Within your local context, you might find it beneficial to create a similar pathway for deeper dives into urgent or persistent themes.

### PREPARATION

In this step, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, you will discern which topics to pursue in your parish, (arch)diocese, region, or ministry. Invite your community to look back at the earlier steps and see where the Spirit is moving you.

First the Planning Team should work with the participants to reflect on and discern key topics that emerged during steps 1 through 3 and to develop local strategies for addressing these topics in further dialogue. The Planning

Team can also identify leaders to facilitate the ongoing discussion of these topics.

Then the Planning Team can form working groups for each theme and allow several groups to meet concurrently as a way to address multiple topics. You can invite participants to self-select which group and topic interests them the most. These varied working groups would foster community, deepen the dialogue, and identify potential pastoral responses. Over time, these groups would not only continue the conversation but also cultivate understanding and promote action steps to address pastoral needs.

Local resources are likely available to help present Catholic involvement in areas you have identified as well as any other areas of interest. For example, the [\*Catholic Campaign for Human Development\*](#) often works on systemic change to the cycles of poverty and injustice. The [\*Laudato Si' Movement\*](#) and the [\*Catholic Climate Covenant\*](#) both further the work of caring for our common home. And the [\*USCCB Anti-Racism\*](#) initiatives can provide ideas for combating racism in our communities.

### ADAPTATION

Rather than containing this work within the Planning Team, consider identifying subject matter experts and ministry leaders to organize these conversations.

## STEP 5

# Action Planning and Community Celebration



### RATIONALE

Now it is time to come together to reflect and discern a way forward. Having listened to one another with open hearts, the community gathers to celebrate the relationships that have flourished through these encounters. Having learned from one another, the community discerns what pastoral responses it needs in this particular place and time.

Your culminating event should celebrate the community in both its diversity and its unity, while also creating space for mourning, reconciliation, and forgiveness for past or present hurts that may have surfaced during the process. The event should also provide clarity and include commitments to specific actions that will help the community move forward together.

During the national Journeying Together gathering, the action planning took place over the course of several sessions throughout the four-day event. Because the event served the additional purpose of recapping conversations held many months before and of bringing people together in person for the first time during the two-year process, the national program included other elements such as testimonials, panel presentations, and moments of prayer, reflection, and celebration. The following outline guided the action planning sessions at the national gathering by organizing the process into three steps.

1. Helped participants identify key themes, each with an articulated purpose, outcome and process
2. Provided consultation and explored varied perspectives on each theme
3. Created a plan to implement recommendations

Ideally, your local experience will not face such a drawn-out process as that imposed on the national Journeying Together process.

### PREPARATION

#### Roles for Step 5

- The **Planning Team** helps the participants identify the community themes, or key topics, from steps 3 and 4, and then groups participants into action planning cohorts by theme to discuss, discern, and recommend concrete responses.
- Each **Action Planning Cohort** will be assigned to one community theme. Depending on your community's size, more than one cohort can be assigned to the same theme or key topic. A cohort should include 8 to 12 people representing diverse cultural families, ages, and ministries. Each cohort will have a facilitator and a notetaker.
- **Facilitators** maintain the flow and the focus of the cohort discussions; they establish a safe and sacred space for members to share.
- **Notetakers** capture main ideas from cohort sharing; they need not track or report who says what.

#### Time and Place

Schedule your gathering for a time and place that best serves the community, balancing the need to maintain momentum with realistic planning timelines. Choose an approach that enables the community to develop a shared plan for moving forward together.

The event could take a variety of forms:

- A two-day parish or diocesan mission or gathering
- A retreat day or weekend
- A series of weekly or monthly gatherings

#### Mission-Critical Elements

- Prayer that reflects the diversity of the community and its participating cultural families

- Conversations in small groups, both within and between cultural families
- Time for personal reflection and an opportunity to digest the deep and profound sharing that has taken place during Journeying Together
- Identification and review of the lessons learned
- Action planning and recommendations
- Deliberation on community expectations
- Celebratory elements for the end of the action planning to celebrate having reached this stage and these commitments—these could include the celebration of a Mass; appropriate music, singing, dancing, and food; exchange of symbolic gifts among cultural families

## WHAT IS ACTION PLANNING?

During your Journeying Together process, the conversations and dialogues will have yielded several topics and significant themes for the local community. The action planning of step 5 encourages participants to develop concrete strategies to address the topics and issues that have surfaced. It gives them the opportunity to address and work toward resolving these issues.

Your goals for action planning are as follows:

- To foster conversation and build community among participants
- To equip participants with strategies and methods to flesh out their ideas
- To identify and define paths for individual and collective action.

In step 4, we suggested allowing the participants to self-identify which key topics most interest them. In step 5 you will group participants into cohorts by key topic, or theme, to discuss, discern, and recommend concrete responses.

In preparation for the action planning sessions, invite the participants to consider these questions as a way to determine your community's themes:

- What themes emerged in your intracultural conversations?
- What themes emerged in your intercultural dialogues?

- What pastoral needs emerged from your conversations and dialogues?
- What crucial societal issues are affecting your cultural family?
- How might the local faith community support the people affected by these issues?
- What efforts would help youth and young adults of the cultural families to grow in their faith?
- How might we work together to create a more just society?

The number of themes that emerge will determine the number of cohorts for step 5. Depending on the overall size of your group, you may have more than one cohort work with a particular theme. Each cohort will be assigned a facilitator and a notetaker.



## Action Planning Meeting Outlines

SESSION 1	Outcomes and Processes	Warm-Up Activity	10 min.
		Purpose, Outcome, Process (POP) Model	30 min.
		Vision Stand	40 min.
		POP Summary and Synthesis	10 min.
SESSION 2	Consultation	Wise Council	60 min.
		Break	10 min.
		Cohort Debrief and Affirmation of POP Summary	20 min.
SESSION 3	Recommendations and Implementation	Movement 1: Workroom Collaboration	20 min.
		Movement 2: Rotating Presentations	48+ min.
		Movement 3: Reconvening in Theme Groups	30 min.
		Movement 4: Action Plan Drafting	30 min.
		Presentations and Community Celebration	60+ min.



## SESSION 1. OUTCOMES AND PROCESSES

### 10 min. Warm-Up Activity

A warm-up activity will help get creative energy flowing, using the following question: *What will the Church look like when young adults fully engage with the local church?*

Ask each cohort to select a notetaker to capture its ideas. Allow the cohorts 10 minutes to discuss.

### 30 min. Purpose, Outcome, Process (POP) Model

The POP model invites participants to share responses to specific questions about purpose, outcome, and process.<sup>5</sup> The best way to start ensuring that you are focused and aligned in any planning or decision-making process is by taking the time to carefully articulate the fundamentals.

Introduce this process to the cohorts in these or similar terms.

We always begin by making sure we are clear on purpose. From this clarity, we create a vision of the outcomes we want. Only then can we create a process or a plan to begin the work of moving purposefully toward a desired future.

A common mistake people make is to decide or act before being really clear on the answers to these three questions. This mistake reveals our shared impatience with thought and our bias toward taking action. When it comes to people and performance, we often have to start slow in order to go fast. Once we have set a solid context for action, we will find it easier to make appropriate choices as well as to prepare for (and respond more quickly to) unexpected contingencies.

Each layer of the POP model is subordinate to the one above it. If confusion or uncertainty arises, the best response is to revisit the model and recheck the quality of the alignment.

Using this model, what you create is a shared map by which individuals can quickly and effectively make good decisions and by which the team, group, or organization can

coordinate efficiently—ultimately reaching the targeted destination together.

Each cohort will create a POP worksheet with one purpose statement, two or three outcomes, and multiple suggestions for process to achieve the outcomes.

**Purpose:** Why does your assigned theme matter? This question is crucial for authentic engagement in which people care and are committed to the entire process. This step answers the question “why?”

**Guiding Questions:** Why is this theme important? Why does it matter for our community right now? (Allow the cohorts 10 minutes to discuss.)

**Outcome:** You next define what the community hopes to achieve and change with regard to this theme. This crucial task helps align expectations and focus efforts. This step answers the question “What?”

**Guiding Questions:** What do we most need to accomplish with regard to this theme? What are we hoping to achieve? What do we hope to change in the Church or community? (Allow the cohorts 10 minutes to discuss.)

**Process:** You will then outline the steps the community will take to accomplish the vision and outcomes. This crucial task prepares people to engage in creating long-lasting, focused solutions. This step answers the question “How?”

**Guiding Questions:** How will we achieve our vision? How will we accomplish the outcomes? How will each of us contribute to creating change? (Allow the cohorts 10 minutes to discuss.)

### 40 min. Vision Stand

Give the participants 15 minutes for personal reflection on the issues they feel called to bring forward—considering their assigned cohort’s theme, what emerged in the POP discussion, their

work or ministry, and their personal sense of vocation.

To guide this individual reflection, the template below suggests questions.

*Reflecting on the Vision I Want to Bring Forward*

- P** Why is this theme important?
- O** What do I hope to change in the Church? In my local community?
- P** How will I personally work toward creating the change?

**Vision Stand**

Next, ask each participant to deliver to their cohort a 2-minute presentation on what they plan to carry out as a leader within a one-year time frame. They can share a vision for an organization, for a project, or for a personal task for their own life. Suggest that they follow this or a similar template:

**My Vision Stand** will tell myself and others:

- What I plan to create as a leader in the next year
- The vision of what can be achieved if I am successful in my work

**My Vision Stand** will answer the following questions:

- What will be achieved one year from now? What is my overall vision?
- What work do I feel personally called to do? What is at stake for me personally? For others? For the Church?
- What two or three key activities or critical points should people know about my vision?
- What difference will my vision will make for me, my community, and the world?

**Peace Circle**

Explain that each cohort will work together to share its reflections through a process called a

peace circle. (You may adapt this process to fit your community's needs.)

Following the reflection period, each participant will be invited to speak in their cohort for 2 minutes, sharing without interruption how they feel God is calling them or how they plan to act on what they have learned. Remind participants to engage in deep listening, refrain from interrupting, respect the choice to pass, and maintain confidentiality.

Share these instructions to get the cohorts started:

- The person with the birthday closest to today begins the sharing by inviting someone else by name to share with the group. A special object, called a talking piece—like a feather, a candle, or a small bowl—is held by the person sharing.
- Once that person finishes sharing, they invite someone else by name to share. This continues until everyone in the group has an opportunity both to invite and to be invited to share. Keep passing the talking piece to the next person.
- While someone is sharing, the other participants in the peace circle are to listen deeply without interrupting or asking questions.
- It is okay to pass, but the person who chooses to pass still needs to invite someone else to share.
- The sharing must be kept confidential among the participants in the circle.

**10 min. POP Summary and Synthesis**

In the final minutes of this session, ask the facilitators and notetakers from each cohort to work together to synthesize the information gathered from each cohort and develop it a single POP document. Explain that this document will be presented at the next planning session.



## SESSION 2. CONSULTATION

### 60 min. Wise Council

This session begins with a Wise Council activity that takes place in groups of four. Ask the facilitators and notetakers to enter the room and raise their hands. Invite the participants to go and stand with either a facilitator or a notetaker; explain that ideally, they will join others from a different topic group. Once a group has four people, the group should sit down together.

Explain that in Wise Council, each person has an opportunity to share one challenge they perceive related to their cohort's POP or their personal Vision Stand. Share that this activity has four 15-minute segments, with each participant leading one segment. Ask the groups to identify a timekeeper to help the activity keep to the schedule. This activity includes no notetaking, only deep listening.

Below are several questions participants might consider:

- Do any aspects of the theme POP feel challenging to you on an individual level?
- Is there a strategy or implementation idea that you would like feedback about?
- Do you have a personal challenge, where you would like a fresh perspective?

Each 15-minute interval includes the following:

- **Challenge:** The speaker has 5 minutes to articulate their concern.
- **Questioning:** Listeners have 3 minutes to ask the speaker clarifying or probing questions.
- **Consultation:** Listeners have 5 minutes to discuss the challenge being raised and to explore ideas, responses, and possible strategies. At this point, the speaker turns their chair around, so their back faces the group—this shift invites them to simply listen rather than react, verbally or non-verbally, to what is being said.
- **Learnings:** The speaker then turns to face the group and has 2 minutes to share what they learned or discovered, what stood out, etc.

At the end of each 15-minute interval, the process repeats with the next speaker in the group and continues until each participant has had a chance to share a concern, challenge, or story.

### 10 min. Break

### 20 min. Cohort Debrief and Affirmation of POP Summary

Following the break, everyone returns to their original cohort to debrief after the Wise Council experience and to use those insights to improve upon the POP document for their theme.

Invite the cohorts to discuss these or similar debriefing questions:

- What feelings came up for you in the session?
- What did you learn?
- In what way do you feel called to act?
- What adjustments are needed to improve your theme's POP?

Ask the facilitators and notetakers to meet to synthesize the new information gathered and modify the POP as needed to create a single POP for each theme.



## SESSION 3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Building on the themes identified in step 4, the described outcomes and processes, and the consultation input from the Wise Council activity, the participants will work to define a clear action plan and prioritize recommendations.

Thus far in the action planning process, participants have worked in one or more cohorts to address a particular theme that has surfaced from the community's journey together. In this final session of step 5, the goal is to share each cohort's work with the other theme cohorts. This segment has four movements.

From a logistical perspective, if your community is large enough to assign multiple cohorts to each theme, consider

placing all the cohorts working on the same theme in one room, with the other theme cohorts in other nearby rooms.

### 20 min. Movement 1: Workroom Collaboration

The theme cohort(s) come together to review and finalize a single POP document that they started creating at the end of session 2 of this step. Depending on feedback from session 2, they may want to adjust this POP document.

Each theme's large group must identify its presentation team: 2 people to share the theme's POP document and highlights, along with 1 person to capture comments from the other theme groups. What highlights or essential elements does this theme group want to share with the participants in the other theme groups?

Explain that in the next movement, the presentation team will rotate through each of the theme rooms, and the activity will follow this format:

1. The presenters will have 5 minutes to share their theme's POP document.
2. The listeners will have 5 minutes to offer comments, affirmations, or suggestions.
3. The presentation team will have 2 minutes to move to the next room.

If time allows during this movement, the presentation team can rehearse with its own theme group.

### 48+ min. Movement 2: Rotating Presentations

Each presentation team will move to a new room to share the highlights of its theme's POP document. The waiting participants will have an opportunity to offer feedback, comments, or suggestions to be captured by the presentation team's notetaker. Remind the groups of the format introduced in the previous movement.

This exercise gives all the participants a chance to hear about the creative ideas happening in the other theme groups. It also gives the community a chance to witness the Holy Spirit working across the theme groups. What synergies emerge?

**Note:** This movement requires 12 minutes for each rotation. Depending on the number of

themes, the time needed for this entire segment will vary. For example, if there are four themes, then you will need to allot 48 minutes; five themes would require 60 minutes. Having a time-keeper in each room will be helpful.

### 30 min. Movement 3: Reconvening in Theme Groups

Each presentation team returns to its theme group, which will refine the POP document based on the comments and feedback received during the rotating presentations.

Ask the notetaker first to share the feedback from the other groups. Then have the theme group's participants distill the feedback to discern what, if any, adjustments the POP document requires in light of that feedback.

### 30 min. Movement 4: Action Plan Drafting

This session concludes by having each theme group draft a clear purpose statement, prioritize the outcomes, and identify what actions are needed to achieve the stated outcomes. What support, guidance, and resources are needed to move forward?

Ask the participants to consider their theme's POP document and what they heard from the other presentations. Invite the group to consider these or similar questions:

- What priorities do we want to work toward?
- When will our theme group meet next?
- Who will facilitate and convene that gathering?
- What support and resources do we need to achieve the outcomes?
- Who else needs to be engaged to achieve the outcomes?

### 60+ min. Presentations and Community Celebration

Invite each theme group to make a brief presentation of its action plan to the assembly. Afterward, conduct the community celebration you developed to recognize having reached this stage and these commitments. This celebration could include a Mass as well as appropriate music, singing, dancing, food, and an exchange of symbolic gifts among cultural families.

## STEP 6

# Recommendations and Implementation



### RATIONALE

As the community discerns how to move forward together, a plan for implementation becomes crucial.

Now is an excellent time to pause, reflect on what you have learned, and develop plans to implement the recommendations that emerged throughout the *Journeying Together* process. Do not let the momentum wane.

### POSSIBLE STEPS

There are various ways to go about this work. Consider the following activities:

- Discuss who is best suited to carry out each recommendation. Consider whether the parish council, pastor, diocesan bishop, diocesan offices, university presidents, lay people, or other experts or stakeholders will be most effective at carrying out the implementation plan (in part or in whole). Ensure that the responsibilities are thoughtfully and appropriately assigned.
- Create a list of SMART goals for each recommendation. SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Goals often need to be broken down further into objectives and tasks.
- Set a timeline for implementation of each SMART goal.

At the national gathering, recommendations were divided up based on who had the authority to carry out each action item. For example, some actions would require the bishop, pastor, or ministry leader to act. Other recommendations required a cooperative effort from church leaders and the faithful; still other situations included activities and attitudes that all the participants could take on to help achieve

the goal of inclusion and engagement. What is needed in your context?



Congratulations! You have accomplished much on this amazing journey of fellowship, dialogue, and prayer with people you may have met for the first time.

The “Integrated POP Document and Recommendations” that emerged from the national Journeying Together event is included here as a model.

### NATIONAL EVENT: INTEGRATED POP DOCUMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*What follows is the final report of the action planning sessions at the national gathering. It combines the purpose, outcomes, and processes of the five action planning workrooms into one document. As it is helpful to you and your Planning Team, utilize this section as inspiration for the beautiful visions that can come from the Journeying Together process.*

#### Purpose

Led by Enduring Hope, we reflect on the shared and integrated purpose that the themes of Embracing Historical Memory, Active Inclusion, Diversity and Giftedness, Practicing Accompaniment, and Formation Possibilities illuminate for the Church to contemplate.

We are called to bring honesty and awareness of the rifts and broken relationships between cultural families within the Church’s history. In listening to the pain of our sisters and brothers, we can learn how to bring healing, liberation,

and reconciliation to groups and individuals, as well as to the Church as a whole.

We are reminded that this requires us to go to the margins of our Church and society; we need everyone at the table, for the Body of Christ is incomplete when any member is missing.

The clarion call to recenter the experiences of those who have been historically excluded is a prophetic and life-giving invitation and obligation. This recentering would allow Catholics who are not familiar with faith expressions originating outside of their own cultural family to participate in different and resplendent ways of being Catholic, being formed in the beauty of devotions and rituals that have sustained many Catholics for centuries.

We enrich one another individually and collectively as we grow in deeper faith, greater wonder, and tireless love. As Catholics, we are our brothers and sisters' keepers. We continue our intrepid walk with one another, giving and receiving love, challenge, and community as we move through this life, journeying together.

## Outcomes

The Catholic Church is recognized as a Church of inclusion, welcome, understanding, healing, and communion. Acceptance and fellowship are given to all. The Church clearly communicates that all are welcome, served, and loved by God.

The Church community fosters unity as it facilitates personal relationships and recenters cultural diversity. The tradition and wisdom of the Church lead to a deeper understanding where Jesus and the Good News are shared with others.

Leaders within the Catholic community model honesty, awareness, and acknowledgment of the suffering experienced by diverse cultures caused by dominance and oppression. Leaders encourage the Church community to recognize and dismantle systems of racism, violence, and marginalization wherever they occur.

Leaders actively work toward reconciliation, holistic education, and integral formation that embraces all cultural families through authentic storytelling.

The Church prioritizes our sacramental life, celebrating and centering our cultures and histories through faith formation that leads to communion with Christ and with one another.

## Processes

Engagement and communication are essential at all levels of the Church. Find creative ways to tell our stories and acknowledge cultural elements that shape our lived reality while honoring the faith we collectively share.

Personal relationships must be fostered. Safe space for conversation needs to be created. Bridges that close the gap between generations must be built.

As Church, we must: empower people to step forward and speak up, hold intercultural listening sessions and other events that are both personal and pastoral.

## Recommendations

### *For Bishops and Church Leaders*

1. Create a diocesan or parish-level accountability structure that is culturally and generationally diverse to continue the work of inclusion, embracing historical memory, and accompaniment across the cultural families.
2. Restructure parishes for greater inclusion. Discern obstacles to communion and address them. Draw on the breadth of experience, including the marginalized as well as the mainstream, for perspective, decision-making, and implementation.
3. Leadership and consultation should reflect the diverse experiences present in the universal and local church. Hire staff and appoint consultants accordingly. Share and amplify the witness and testimony of inclusion.
4. Mandate holistic and integral formation that moves from the current multicultural modality which emphasizes the universality of the Church as undifferentiated common humanity towards a particularity that centers on the historical memory and experience of the distinct cultural families within the United States of America. These distinctions allow for deeper exploration into particular experiences and invite a more relational encounter as stories are shared and better illuminate the wholeness of the Catholic experience. Require seminarians, diocesan staff, and ministry leaders to participate.

Eventually offer diocesan-wide programming, engagement of parishes/communities with oral histories.

- Designate a date/week/month to liturgically celebrate the breadth of cultural diversity within the Church. Empower more effective and relevant preaching to engage local communities. Create a cultural/linguistic competency training for diocesan liturgists and other interested ministers.

#### *For Young Adults and Ministry Leaders in Collaboration*

- Build relationships by sharing stories and welcoming the stranger, the newcomer, and those returning to the Church. Create safe spaces to hold courageous conversations and increase opportunities for integral formation and collaboration that embrace all cultural families. Learn to recognize and dismantle systems within the Church that perpetuate racism, violence, and marginalization.
- Help youth to grow in faith and to both recognize and celebrate their gifts. Develop a parish-to-parish (nationwide sister parish) network for young adults.
- Develop a formation curriculum that moves from the current multicultural modality which understands the universality of the Church as undifferentiated common humanity towards a particularity that centers historical memory of the distinct cultural families of the USA. Engage seminarians, diocesan staff, ministry leaders, and the faithful. Provide resources for eventual diocesan-wide programming, engagement of parishes/communities with oral histories.
- Continue intercultural encounters. Support regional gatherings for ongoing dialogue. Encourage pilgrimages that explore cultural realities and incorporate the lived experience of different cultural

families. Form supportive communities to sustain the work and strengthen networks.

- Move from multilingual to multicultural liturgy. Create a cultural/linguistic competency training for dioceses and those interested. Integrate stories from our different cultural communities within our sacramental understanding.
- Replicate the Journeying Together process in the local community utilizing the resource material created.

#### *For Individuals and Participants*

Recognizing the responsibility each of us shares for a more inclusive and culturally aware Church, this list of actions and attitudes offers a means for everyone to continue the hope-filled work of encounter.

- Seek greater understanding of different cultures and explore cultural rituals.
- Learn from the local community and accompany them through presence and engagement.
- Address personal bias.
- Value and embrace diversity.
- Foster curiosity.
- Listen with compassion before acting.
- Create and/or participate in cultural dialogues. Invite others to participate in talking circles.
- Demonstrate courage, risk taking, continual discernment, and problem solving.
- Break down barriers and prevent exclusion.
- Be a bridge. Build relationships. Get to know people one on one. Truly see people.

# Glossary



**Collegian** Individuals attending a postsecondary institution, including graduate studies, usually between the ages of 18 and 24.

**Concurrent meetings** Gatherings that occur simultaneously but focus on different topic areas. For example, one group might meet for six weeks to identify local climate change issues and brainstorm potential responses, while another group might meet for five weeks to explore the roles of women in the diocese or parish. These groups would likely have different participants and could meet during the same five- to six-week period.

**Cultural community** A grouping of individuals with common ideals and a shared cultural identity. This may or may not connect to one's self-identified ethnicity, and one can belong to multiple cultural communities.

**Cultural family** A broad grouping of individuals with shared ethnic or diasporic roots.

**Culturally specific questions** Questions that seek to gain awareness and understanding of an idea or the experience of a particular cultural family.

**Intercultural** Refers to interaction across cultural families and communities.

**Intracultural** Refers to interaction within a cultural family or a community of communities with similar or related heritage. For example, the Hispanic/Latino cultural family may include people with cultural roots in Spain and most Latin American countries—Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Argentina, etc.—as well as parts of the United States with strong Latino history and presence.

**Intracultural Task Force** Made up of members from within a cultural family, the Intracultural Task Force organizes the intercultural dialogue sessions. It collaborates with the Planning Team to select facilitators, prepare materials, and decide on the flow of the sessions.

**Ministry leaders** Individuals, both paid and volunteer, who work with a given population in a ministerial capacity to provide pastoral care and foster greater understanding of the Church's teachings.

**Outcomes** The measurable, tangible evidence that demonstrates what participants have learned. Begin with the question: *How is our community different because of our participation in this process?*

**Planning Team** Organizes the overall framework for each step, paying particular attention to scheduling, facilitator training, and preparation materials.

**Safe space** A meeting space that is open-minded, nonjudgmental, and respectful. Everyone, as a child of God, should have the opportunity to participate and feel seen, heard, and respected throughout the Journeying Together gatherings. A prayerful tone and commitment to mutual listening help foster this environment.

**SMART goal** Establishes clear, achievable, concrete objectives. The acronym SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

**Solidarity** A belief that we are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences; a persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. The core of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace as we stand united with our brothers and sisters.

**Subsidiarity** A principle that holds that larger social institutions should not interfere with smaller or local ones but rather support them and help them coordinate with the rest of society, all while prioritizing the common good.

**Synodality** Defined by the Vatican as the involvement and participation of the whole People of God in the life and mission of the Church—listening, praying, discerning, and walking together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**Young adult** In the United States, the term usually refers to those between 18 and 39 years of age.

**Youth** In the United States, the term usually refers to young people between the ages of 11 and 17.

# God of Our Journey: A Prayer for Journeying Together



*Consider adapting this prayer using the languages spoken in your region.*

**G**od of Our Journey,  
as we gather together  
we lift up our voices  
to give praise and thanksgiving to your name,  
the God of encounter  
who, by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
makes us one in Christ, our Savior.

God of Our Journey, *Dios de nuestra jornada* [Spanish],  
as we journey together with Christ, your Son,  
who walks alongside us day by day,  
may we embrace your presence within us  
and discover your presence in the people  
whom we encounter along the way.

God of Our Journey, *Diyos ng ating paglalakbay*  
[Filipino],  
as we journey together in the power of the Holy Spirit,  
enlighten our minds and our hearts in our  
intercultural encounters  
with one another and with all cultural families,  
so that we may become better listeners  
and bearers of your faithful Word.

God of Our Journey, *Wakȟáŋtȟáŋka oomani awáŋjuŋkičiyankapi kíj* [Lakota],  
as we journey together with all members of the  
Body of Christ,  
instill in us the presence of your love and compassion,  
so that we may persevere in faith,  
trust in your goodness,  
and place all our hope in you.

God of Our Journey, *Dieu de notre voyage* [French],  
as we journey together as disciples of Christ,  
set our missionary hearts ablaze  
and transform our lives by your grace,  
so that we may go forth into the world  
to proclaim the Good News  
and to build up the reign of your love  
through our acts of justice, compassion, and mercy.

We ask this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who, by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
brings forth a world of harmony and peace,  
one God, for ever and ever. **R/. Amen.**

## APPENDIX 2

# Modified Circle Dialogue for Virtual Settings



This modified circle process for online meetings gives each person an opportunity to share from their experience as the rest have the opportunity to listen deeply. Although the group will not be physically seated in a circle, the participants will share in an order set during introductions.

The facilitator will add names into the chat in the order they appear on their screen.

### THE PROCESS

#### Step 1. Introduction Round

Please share your name and something brief about yourself.

#### Step 2. Guidelines

To create a virtual yet sacred space for connection, we ask that we all observe the following guidelines.

- We will share in the order of names listed in the chat. Please remember to say the name of the person you are inviting to speak after you when you are done speaking.
- Listen fully to each other. Leave your microphone muted unless it is your turn to speak. When it is your turn to speak, unmute. Share to the level that you find comfortable. You always have the option to pass if you'd prefer not to share for a certain round.

- As we go through rounds of sharing, listen deeply to the wisdom of others. If something someone says resonates deeply or sits heavily with you, you're welcome to communicate its impact nonverbally.
- Let us limit use of phones to emergencies.
- Try to be as fully present as possible. Reduce distractions and leave your video on. That said, if you need to step away, please honor any need for self-care.
- Share responsibility for timekeeping. We have a precious time together and wish to hear from everyone. Please be considerate of how we each take space and make space for others.
- Respect the privacy of each person. Please do not share personal stories or identifying features once we close this circle. Treat the information sensitively and honor the trust has been built.

Briefly discuss whether your group would like to add any additional guidelines.

Ask everyone to give a thumbs-up to reach consensus on the guidelines.

You might find it helpful to retype participants' names into the chat in the order that they appear on your screen (this will be the order of the "circle") for visibility.

# Alive in Christ: Journeying Together National Gathering



## SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

"Alive in Christ"		Marriott Chicago O'Hare Conference Center			June 23-26, 2022
		Prophetic Voices	Rooted in Christ	Accompanied by Mary	Going Forth in the Spirit
TIME	all times central	St. John the Baptist	Sacred Heart	Immaculate Heart	Thirteenth Sunday
	Thur June 23	Fri June 24	Sat June 25	Sun June 26	
6:00 AM					Travelers Mass <i>Grand Ballroom</i>
6:30 AM					
7:00 AM			Breakfast <i>O'Hare Ballroom</i>	Breakfast <i>O'Hare Ballroom</i>	Breakfast <i>O'Hare Ballroom</i>
7:30 AM					
8:00 AM					
8:30 AM					
9:00 AM					
9:30 AM					
10:00 AM		Production Set-Up (begin at 7:00 a.m., through 3:00 p.m.)	General Session #2 <i>Grand Ballroom</i>	General Session #3 <i>Grand Ballroom</i>	General Session #4 <i>Grand Ballroom</i>
10:30 AM			Break / Exhibits	Break / Exhibits	Break / Exhibits
11:00 AM		Action Planning, Part 1 <i>Chicago Rooms</i>	Workshops, Round B <i>Chicago Rooms</i>		Closing Mass <i>Grand Ballroom</i>
11:30 AM					
12:00 PM		Exhibitor Tables (open at 12:00 p.m., through 3:30 p.m., and 5:00-6:30 p.m.)	Lunch Break <i>O'Hare Ballroom</i>	Lunch Break <i>O'Hare Ballroom</i>	Lunch Break (on your own)
12:30 PM					
1:00 PM					
1:30 PM					
2:00 PM					
2:30 PM					
3:00 PM					
3:30 PM		Opening Mass <i>Grand Ballroom</i>	Friday Mass <i>Grand Ballroom</i>	Saturday Mass <i>Grand Ballroom</i>	
4:00 PM					
4:30 PM					
5:00 PM		Welcome Dinner <i>O'Hare Ballroom</i>	Lunch Break <i>O'Hare Ballroom</i>	Free Evening (on your own)	
5:30 PM					
6:00 PM					
6:30 PM		General Session #1 <i>Grand Ballroom</i>	Action Planning, Part 2 <i>Chicago Rooms</i>		
7:00 PM			Break		
7:30 PM					
8:00 PM			Eucharistic Praise <i>Grand Ballroom</i>		
8:30 PM					
9:00 PM		Social/Networking			
9:30 PM					

### Color Key

Provided Meals <i>O'Hare Ballroom</i>	General Sessions <i>Grand Ballroom</i>	Prayer and Liturgies <i>Grand Ballroom</i>	Breakout Sessions <i>Chicago Rooms</i>	Social Options <i>On Your Own</i>
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### Managing Editors

Maria del Mar Muñoz-Visoso, MTS  
Executive Director  
Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Barbara H. McCrabb, MDiv  
Assistant Director for Higher Education  
Secretariat of Catholic Education  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

### Reviewers

Stefanie Miles  
Executive Assistant  
Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Julie Butson Mickler, MA, Pastoral Ministry  
Freelance Editor

### General Editing and Design

Jeanette Fast Redmond, MA  
Owner, FastEditing LLC

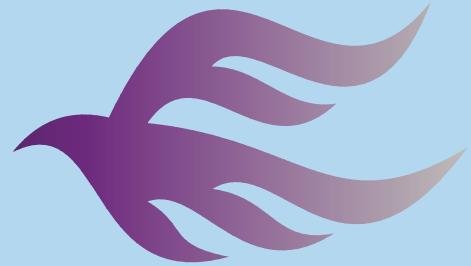
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## ENDNOTES

- 1 Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, "Journeying Together: A National Catholic Intercultural Encounter for Ministries with Youth and Young Adults," United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), accessed November 15, 2025, <https://www.usccb.org/committees/cultural-diversity-church/journeying-together>.
- 2 Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (*Christ Is Alive*), March 25, 2019, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20190325\\_christus-vivit.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html).
- 3 USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, "Journeying Together: A National Catholic Intercultural Encounter for Ministries with Youth and Young Adults."
- 4 For discussion of this methodology, see XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission (Instrumentum Laboris for the First Session)*, October 2023, <https://press.vatican.va/content/sal-stampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2023/06/20/0456/01015.html#en>.
- 5 The POP model was developed by Leslie Sholl Jaffe of the Rockwood Leadership Institute in collaboration with Randall J. Alford and is used with permission.

# Journeying Together: A Handbook for Intercultural Encounter



This handbook serves as a resource for local intercultural encounters. These foundational principles will guide your work:

- This process is intended to empower young adult voices while intentionally engaging as many cultural communities as are represented in your community.
- This process is young adult-focused with intergenerational support. It is important for older generations to listen to the faith and cultural experiences of the young adults in the community and to seek to understand their lived experiences in the Church.



United States  
Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

3211 Fourth St. NE  
Washington, DC 20017  
(202) 541-3000  
[www.usccb.org/committees/cultural-diversity-church](http://www.usccb.org/committees/cultural-diversity-church)

Secretariat of  
Cultural Diversity  
in the Church