

	Excerpts from SMM Synthesis	Excerpts from USCCB Synthesis	How we do this already	Where this can be improved
Evangelization	<p>“We are grateful to actively participate of the mission of the Church through retreats, family life, parish ministries, and faith sharing in our daily lives.”</p> <p>“Trying to bond Catholics with non-Catholics--sharing Catholicism. Trying to be more Christ-like in our lives. Inviting non-Catholics to activities. Letting non-Catholics experience our Catholic faith. Challenging ourselves to be more openly Catholic by sharing our faith. Make a friend, be a friend, lead a friend to Christ.”</p> <p>“Evangelize (share your story vs trying to convince or push) - learn more about our faith to be able to share; Share our faith, even in small ways - let people know who you are, even without words;”</p> <p>“The main points that attracted them was the authenticity and courageousness of how Christians live out their faith.”</p> <p>“More accessible times so those who work can attend in the evenings, ie; Women's Bible Study (do one in the evening)”</p> <p>“Getting more spiritual online resources to those who are not able to attend group ministries due to raising a family, introvert, etc. It is important for them to have their own personal journey. Group settings outside of Mass are not for everyone.”</p>	<p>“Another common hope that emerged from the synodal consultations was the desire for life-long spiritual, pastoral, and catechetical formation as disciples. Synodal consultations made clear the importance of evangelization as we continue to live out the Church’s mission, which requires stronger formation. “Participants of every age and demographic group spoke of the need for lifelong formation. They would like to see more opportunities for Bible study, in-person and online courses, lectures, small group discussions, and convocations among other offerings. Members of all dioceses also wish the church would do more to support their spiritual growth by exposing them to many aspects of the rich heritage of Catholic spirituality. They ask for retreats and other opportunities to pray and reflect together as well as for encouragement in their individual spiritual lives.”</p> <p>““Many want to see Church leadership take more seriously the talents and knowledge of the laity. Some expressed the need to use more effective Parish Councils and Diocesan Pastoral Councils. Others want their pastors and bishops to explore more deeply with the laity how best to participate in understanding the mission of the Church and its efforts to evangelize its members and the world.”</p>		

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Welcoming Inclusive Community	<p>“We are all journeying together, but we need to recognize everyone is on a different path. We need to welcome new people -- teach from the heart of charity. We see the Mass as the unifying component of the church”</p> <p>“Immediate opportunities after Mass is the perfect time for concurrent programs , such as adult bible study during CCD. Staff person to integrate programs. Focus on connections and fellowship. Hospitality coordinator.”</p> <p>“increase welcoming all people at Mass entering &amp; leaving. Increase reach out to new parishioners and visitors formally &amp; informally. Address needs of parishioners that are challenged by technology. Parish projects an image of perfection rather than realism.”</p> <p>“While we experience our parish as friendly, it seems that “people feel welcomed but not necessarily included.” We believe we are called as a parish to intentionally draw people into community through opportunities for conversation and exchange of information and ideas, and that this exercise on a periodic, regular basis would lead parishioners to feel truly integrated. Would an invitation for a short verbal exchange before the closing prayer encourage a sense of connection with people we don’t know well? This process would automatically include those who see themselves as outsiders as well as reach out to new parishioners thereby building a deeper sense of connection among parishioners.”</p> <p>“Welcoming Committee--&gt; Church Ministries --&gt; Involvement”</p>	<p>“The most common desire named in the synodal consultations was to be a more welcoming Church where all members of the People of God can find accompaniment on the journey. The synodal consultations mentioned several areas where there existed a tension between how to walk with people while remaining faithful to the teachings of the Church, “for many, the perception is that the blanket application of rules and policies is used as a means of wielding power or acting as a gatekeeper.”<sup>22</sup> As one synodal consultation described, “People noted that the Church seems to prioritize doctrine over people, rules, and regulations over lived reality. People want the Church to be a home for the wounded and broken, not an institution for the perfect. They want the Church to meet people where they are, wherever they are, and walk with them rather than judging them; to build real relationships through care and authenticity, not superiority.”</p>		

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Welcoming Inclusive Community	<p>“At both the parish and diocesan levels, many people have experienced good relationships with fellow parishioners and with people outside our faith community. Involvement in various ministries fosters and supports these relationships. At the same time, there is a top-down decision-making process in the Church which can hamper or interfere with these relationships. In a parish, much depends on the appointed pastor and his priorities.”</p> <p>“Welcoming: Greeter set tone can *connect with parishioner*”</p>			

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Formation of Youth and Young Adults	<p>“we need to listen to more young people and to people who have left the Church and what their experiences were that led to their leaving.”</p> <p>“Our Church particularly needs to listen to children and young people- especially in regards to sensitive issues like pornography and bullying. Parents need trustworthy resources from the authority of Jesus and the Church to know how to be good parents, to lead with love and not relay fear.”</p> <p>“The Young Adult group needs a stronger voice in the parish as this group is closest to the “Nones” (no religious affiliation) and the disenfranchised Catholics who have left the Church.”</p> <p>“The church needs to listen to: 1. Children/Younger Generation”</p> <p>“Struggle that church stays relevant (youth). Some groups do not get enough attention.”</p> <p>“It would be wise to continually reach out to those who are 25 and younger...and build engagement with young parishioners. Otherwise the parish risks becoming less relevant/ engaging if only senior parishioners are involved. (Since older parishioners will eventually pass away)”</p>	<p>“Young people themselves voiced a feeling of exclusion and desired to participate more fully as members of the parish community. The feeling of exclusion also manifested itself in some youth seeking a sense of belonging in the Church’s ancient tradition of faith, prayer, and devotion.</p> <p>“Youth who participated in synodal sessions, however, stressed that they should not be seen and spoken of mostly as the future of the Church, but should be recognized for their importance now and given a significant voice in the present. They want to be both seen and heard and included more in Church life, especially by participating meaningfully in parish and diocesan councils and ministries.”</p>		

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Communication / Listening	<p>“Free &amp; authentic communication promoted within SMM by: clergy, staff, printed material (bulletins, Advent/Lenten books, calendars,hymnals), parish website with digital resources, parish surveys. Overall the group feel that the parish is using a variety of technologies to reach out to the diverse parish population.”</p> <p>“In our own parish, we have so many wonderful ministries, however more communication in getting the word out was noted. Suggestions were to have someone from a ministry speak before Mass ends inviting people to come, ie; Young Adults, Women's Bible Study, Playgroup, etc. Another way would be to explain what the ministry is. Encouraging participation.”</p> <p>“To whom does our particular Church need to listen to? The people in the pews, and the people who have left the pews because of feeling judged or hurt by church authorities. (Divorce, sexual abuse, lack of inclusion/respect towards women and people of color.)”</p> <p>“The consensus is that SMM promotes free &amp; authentic communication with the variety of the parish ministries. They feel the ministries challenge them &amp; others to put their life in Christ into actions. Through these ministries their awareness &amp; involvement increases with the poor, the sick, the mentally ill, the elderly, and many other people in need. The group did not recognize duplicity or opportunism occurring in the parish communication in these ministries.”</p>	<p>“Several reflected on the importance of clear communication, especially in the digital space, for reaching out to and engaging young people.”</p> <p>“More poignantly, nearly all of the synodal consultations saw clear, concise, and consistent communication as key to the strong desire for appropriate transparency. “The general category of transparency was mentioned over and over again: Transparency in the sex abuse crisis, transparency in making difficult decisions, transparency in financial matters, transparency in admitting when something goes wrong, transparency in planning, transparency in leadership. Transparency brings accountability which many people feel is lacking in the Church. To be a trustworthy Church, transparency is going to need to be an essential component in every level and aspect.”<sup>55</sup> As the Church seeks to continue down the synodal path, a commitment to clear, transparent, and consistent communication will be crucial.</p> <p>“One key to improving collaboration among clergy and laity will be communication. Lay members in quite a few dioceses said they want greater transparency regarding decision making.”</p>		

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Communication / Listening	<p>“The group felt that there is much dialogue in our parish, both through a willingness to speak out and a willingness to listen. Group members felt that people were empowered as a result of listening to people where they are and not judging them by their circumstances; finding out who they are and what they need and seeing how we can help. It is so important to listen to people on many levels and invite them to speak up about their hurts and needs.”</p>			

### **Honorable Mentions:**

“Residents would like to see the church work together to offer youth activities for recreation, physical activity, and positive socialization. They’d like to see the church help organize and structure events to build community. This is what they see as an important aspect of church outreach events in addition to the material assistance: “People come out more when you are here and there’s something going on. Otherwise, everyone stays in their rooms. It would be nice to have community.” The group also indicated that they would like to be actively involved as well: “We want to give back when we can” and “We want to get our hands dirty and be part of it.” A teen said of our gathering for breakfast for this listening conversation, “Just this is enough. Bringing us out here to talk, to be a community, is good.”

“Promoting dialogue among Church members is essential. Walking together is hampered by many factors: misunderstanding about our own faith, selfishness, hatred, valuing appearances, mistrust, hypocrisy, & lack of desire to walk together. These invite us to examination of conscience to dialogue effectively. Walking together is facilitated by shared faith, positive sense of Catholic identity, and the universality of the church & the mass.”

“Group members began with the observation that procedural decisions within the parish are made at the level of the staff and pastor, and the people are then informed. The universal church follows suit, for example, in the appointment of bishops and pastors. A question was raised of whether this top-down process contributes to the declining attendance at parishes, and whether our culture itself is becoming a culture of observing rather than participating. Individual ministries, on the other hand, are ways that parishioners have a voice in the direction of activities. The group felt that the Holy Spirit is calling the church to engage people more intentionally in the activities of the church and giving people a bigger voice. This means forming community (first by knowing each other, perhaps with name tags at Mass) and extending personal invitations to people to participate in activities. Suggestions were also made to intentionally involve parishioners in addressing issues facing the parish or the church as a whole, for example by inviting parishioners to respond to them in short discussion periods following Sunday Mass. This involvement can lead to an ongoing experience of involvement in the church.”