



Parish and Community Conversation Guide

The following is a brief outline for conducting a two-meeting conversation guide for the pastoral letter, intended to assist in discussions for parishioners and community members. **Session One** introduces and reflects upon the letter, encouraging participants to consider the meaning of water in their own lives, and to discuss its importance to them personally and in their parishes and communities. **Session Two** encourages the group to determine ways to honor, support, and steward water in their region through concrete actions and outreach.

Please feel free to adapt this guide to your needs and your community.

Conversation Guide

For Each Session

Start early! Meet with your priest for his permission and blessing. Invite him. Invite relevant groups to your church, friends, family, high school groups. Contact them again a day or two before the meetings.

Work with your parish office to put a notice in the bulletin and reserve a meeting room.

Session One

Creating Our Own Understanding of the Pastoral Letter

Set up the meeting space. Be sure people have a copy of the letter (bring extra copies).

Begin the Meeting

- Welcome the group, thank them for coming.
- Talk about goals for the meeting: to reflect upon the letter, to consider the meaning of water in their own lives, and to discuss its importance to them personally and in their parishes and communities.
- Encourage everyone to share and to make space for all to participate.
- Brief introductions.
- Ask someone to read a prayer (check with this person before the meeting).

**Discussion: Water and the Water Crisis**

Ask about bodies of water in their lives and community that mean the most to them. Prepare by becoming familiar with the pastoral letter and deciding ahead of time which sections you'll use to invite discussion. Remember, the appendices include helpful information!

Conclude the Meeting

Ask them to commit to attending Session Two and to bringing a friend or fellow parishioner.

Ask for a closing prayer (check with this person before the meeting).

Session Two

Putting Our Faith into Action

Set up the meeting space, bring extra copies of the letter.

Begin the Meeting

- Welcome the group, thank them for coming.
- Talk about the meeting goals: to consider actions we can take individually and together to put our faith into action and protect our water.
- Encourage everyone to share and to make space for all to participate.
- Brief introductions
- Ask someone to read a prayer (check with this person before the meeting).

Discussion: Actions to Protect Our Sacred Waters

Remind them we are called to honor and protect our sacred waters through our Catholic teachings and the guidance of the bishops and popes, including Pope Leo XIV. The goal is for this group to leave with specific next steps about how personally and collectively they will work to defend our waters.

Discuss local water sources. Discuss examples of daily encounters with water (individual, households/families, communities/congregations, public/civic).

Ask how change happens at the level to protect water.



Possible Questions

What are some threats to our water? What are the issues impacting our waters that most concern or impact you? (e.g., oil, uranium, mining, pesticides, data centers, development). Is there a particular issue impacting water that this group would like to commit to addressing? Are their individuals in the group already connected to movements protecting water?

Who makes decisions about our water? Which departments can we contact for water issues (local, state, and national)?

What are your water issues? Who could you contact for help? Could you invite one of these leaders to a meeting in your parish to discuss these issues? Collaborate with other parishes and community groups? How could you / this group make change / address a threat to water?

Suggest they plan for sharing the pastoral letter with civic leaders, legislators, city council members, county commissioners, water boards.

Together, determine what comes next. Be prepared with a few do-able concrete ideas. Get commitments. Agree to follow up with each other.

Conclude the Meeting

Distribute a water prayer. Ask them to integrate the prayer into their days as a reminder of the daily life of water, the holiness of water, and our responsibility to it. Ask someone to read it aloud.

Read the pastoral letter and find other resources archdiosf.org/water.