



DIOCESE of PROVIDENCE

ASSEMBLY SMALL GROUP TIPS

Here are some practical tips for facilitating healthy and balanced conversation during Parish Assembly small groups.

The ideal size of a parish assembly small group is 5 participants, with one facilitator for a total of 6 people. If the group is too large, some people may have the experience of not being seen or heard. Similarly, if the group is too small, the conversation dynamic may become challenging and present too much pressure to talk.

The small group facilitator's responsibilities include: welcoming everyone to the small group and ensuring appropriate introductions are made; they guide discussion, according to the Parish Assembly Emcee's prompting; bring clarity and direction to the conversation when needed; and invite participation, paying particular attention to dominating personalities and those who are quieter and more reserved.

The "rules for conversation" at the assembly are:

- Each person is given the opportunity to briefly answer the given question.
- Everyone listens to each other without interruption.
- If there is time leftover, then people will be invited to share more. This is not time to comment on what was already said by others.

These are some simple reminders to help guide your small group:

- Create space for each person to speak, allowing equal time to each person.
- Facilitate and guide the discussion, refrain from teaching.
- Affirm every person and their contribution to the small group, even if you may not agree with their position. A simple response could be "Thank you for sharing."
- Make eye-contact with others, showing interest in what they are saying.
- Be comfortable with silence.
- Try to not speak more than those in your small group.
- Avoid interrupting others. When needed, gently remind the person speaking that we need to allow others to share.
- Do not allow tangents. The discussion should be focused on the content and the questions and not drift towards personal problems.
- Try to not allow one or two people to dominate the small group, even if unintentionally.
 - Redirect the question to others in your group by asking, "Let's hear from some of you who haven't had a chance to share yet" or "Thank you! I'd love to hear what others think?"
- Only one person should talk at a time. In other words, discourage side discussions and talking over each other.
 - If you see others having a side conversation, invite them into the larger conversation.
- Avoid engaging in or allowing arguments.
- Summarize the group's discussion at the end.