

Celebrating a Season of Hope: Church Reform and the New Pope

Listening Assemblies for Change

Session One: Looking at our Church in a new Spirit (2.5 hours)

Group can be as small as 6 people (friends, relatives, neighbors or community companions) to 150 (calling together small Christian communities, larger groups or public meeting)

TIMEFRAME Based on group size	TOPIC	PRESENTER'S Role Host/Hostess	NOTES
15-30 minutes	Opening Prayer and Introductions. <i>Lamentation Prayer for the Church of "used to be".</i> Short overview of the plan of this Listening Assembly and the group of three, encouraging the group to attend all three. A moment of hope: introduce the plans to date for the IMWAC October, 2015 event.	5 min. for prayer 2 min. each for intros 5 min on IMWAC	See Appendix A for prayer suggestions IMWAC info sheet
30 minutes	Discussion Question: Pope Francis has been called "a game changer"—a Pope going his own way, breaking new ground. He has already begun to prepare for changes in the Curia. What dreams do you have for the Church?	Document	Discuss in groups no larger than 6-8
15 minutes	Reporting: Reflecting on the responses of your group alone, what responses are most representative of this group?	Document reporting	
45 minutes	Commitment: The media has hinted that some of the Pope's priorities are beginning to show. One man, age 76, cannot do this alone. In discussing what we would like in the Church of the future, what priorities do WE see as essential? Imagine that Francis might call a Third Vatican Council. Discuss in groups and make a "Wish list" for the agenda of such a Third Vatican Council. (Facilitator will explain that the top 5 priorities for Vatican III issues will be reported via a Survey Response. ACC will collate all the responses, report back to participants, and deliver the results to the Pope and the global church at the IMWAC gathering in Rome, October, 2015.	Document File survey response.	Some examples of decisions Francis has made (handout). Handout example of COR's "requests" to new pope; Facilitator responsible for survey response
15 minutes	Closing: In June 2011, the American Catholic Council took a stand in that governance (leadership and management issues) were the most important reform priority. Analyze the developed wish list in terms of this principle. Close with prayer.		Discuss in groups.

Session Two: Rebuilding the Local Church (2.5 hours)

Optimally the session will be a continuation with the same population but it is not totally necessary. New participants could be invited...

TIMEFRAME Based on group size	TOPIC	PRESENTER'S Role Host/Hostess	NOTES
15 minutes	Introductions of new members. Review the prior meeting, especially discussing the WISH LIST for Vatican III . Short opening prayer on change.	Summarize prior meeting. Lead prayer.	See Appendix A for prayer suggestions.
40 minutes	Discussion Question/Dyad Dialogue: Tonight we hope to look at our local situation. Remember ACC's focus on issues of governance and the need for structural reform of the Church, cite examples gleaned from your experience of your local parish and/or diocese that illustrate how governance is the issue Then report to larger group.	Have dyads report the issues & document	When reporting, use check marks for repeat issues.
30 minutes	Obedience: Have a short presentation on the obedience triad (using handout), promoting dialogue about how we avoid issues that we complain about. How does thinking about our own obedience change our relationship to the Church? To tackling issues like the ones we have identified? Group discussion.	Document. Create discussion groups.	Handout on obedience (Sharp model)
30 minutes	Common Purpose: During the first of these sessions, we talked about the hopes for change in the Church and how we could support this. Group Discussion Question: What recent change have you witnessed that gives you hope for our Church? Looking at the handout of possible reform actions do you see something that could be planned now for your local community?	Document	Handout on Sharp's list of reform actions
20 minutes	Closing: As specifically as you can, share with us in what ways we are empowered to participate in rebuilding the Church. What actions are we willing to commit to in order to bring about change? Closing Dialogue Concluded by the Group Reciting the Prophet's Prayer		Prayer Handout

Session Three: A Covenant of Commitment (2.5 hours)

Optimally the session will be a continuation with the same population but it is not totally necessary. New participants could be invited...

TIMEFRAME Based on group size	TOPIC	PRESENTER'S Role Host/Hostess	NOTES
15 minutes	Introductions of new members. Review prior meeting offering a summary of last meeting with attendees with documented results. (Could be a handout or verbal) So far we have discussed challenges in the Church at large & our “wish list” for issues at VIII & have discerned some local issues that could be addressed. Today we will look at some tools for bringing about change: a developed conscience, collaboration skills, proven nonviolent resistance tactics, & needed follow ups to plans. Short Opening Prayer		See Appendix A for prayer suggestions
30 minutes	Presentation and Discussion: Review the handout on conscience and discuss how our discernment of conscience & baptismal responsibilities can uphold the determination to work for reform.	Have dyads report the issues & document	Handout on conscience
30 minutes	Controversy with Civility: When people are engaged in effective social change, controversy will ensue. The need for mutual respect must engage those differences with civility. Civility requires a willingness to hear the other's views coupled with a restraint in criticism. With that foundation, effective groups can embrace controversy and move to new and creative solutions. Discussion Question: How do you personally respond to controversy? What role do you see for conscience as a “compass” in resolving problems in the future?	Document	Handout on role of civility/ collaboration
30 minutes	Commitment: Review the list of local actions from Session Two. How does the group <i>feel</i> about these actions? Divide into groups and make an action plan for one of the local issues identified previously. Use the list of reform actions and your knowledge of the local community. Are you willing to “sign on”. Why or why not? How will the exploration of conscience help you?	Document	Handout on Sharp's list of reform actions
30 minutes	Closing: During these Listening Assemblies we've explored reactions to the Pope as symbol. We developed a concrete “wish list” of issues focused on VIII. We looked at our local community creating strategies for change. What tools are needed to stay committed to these propositions? (internal communication, prayer, more community meetings, etc. – brainstorm a list) Ask for volunteers to take on the tasks that have been identified. See Appendix C for more details.	Closing Prayer Ensuring further Follow-up and communication	Prayer Handout and Appendix C with follow-up suggestions