



CONVERSATION AND CONSULTATION, FALL 2022

Spiritual Conversation Convener Guide Jesuit Communities

The Convener is responsible for organizing and overseeing the apostolic planning spiritual conversations within your Jesuit community.

Background

In his letter of July 28, 2022, initiating an apostolic planning process for the Jesuits West Province, Fr. Sean Carroll, S.J., provincial, invited Jesuits and Partners in Mission to stop, look around and notice the ways that God is present and at work in our ministries, and to consider the ways God continues to call us and guide us in our work. By doing so, he suggested, we are looking into God's heart to discern where we are being invited to go. It is this invitation that is at the very heart of our apostolic planning.

This fall the province is inviting Jesuits and colleagues to engage in this kind of reflection and discernment in conversation with one another. Throughout the province - in Jesuit communities, in apostolic works sponsored by or affiliated with the province, and among women and men who share a commitment to the mission of the Society of Jesus – conversation groups are being convened to reflect on God's presence and call in ways that will inform and shape the apostolic planning process.

The Spiritual Conversation

The model presented here is an adaptation of a method for spiritual conversation that is part of the process for Communal Apostolic Discernment developed by teams of spiritual directors in the Province of Canada over the past several decades. It is a method that is increasingly being used throughout the Society of Jesus worldwide, and was employed at a pivotal moment by the delegates at General Congregation XXXVI.

You may recognize this as the methodology employed for the spiritual conversations that took place in Jesuit communities last year as part of the Examen on the Vow of Poverty.

For further background, you may download the Toolkit for Communal Apostolic Discernment, published by the Jesuits of Canada, at <https://www.christianlifecommunity.ca/wordpress/> and clicking on the Communal Discernment Toolkit link.

An overview of this method of spiritual conversation, excerpted from the Toolkit, is appended here.

Practicalities

It is desirable that all members of your community, whether members of the Province or not, participate in a conversation.

Many Jesuits will also be invited to participate in a similar conversation with colleagues at their apostolic work; because there are important ways these conversations will differ from the conversations in Jesuit communities, Jesuits are encouraged to participate in both.

The optimal number of participants in a conversation is six or eight; conversations of six will require 60 minutes; conversations of eight will require 75 minutes. In the end, your local circumstances will determine the number of participants and number of conversation groups in your community, but, in all cases, please be sure that enough time is given for completion of the process. You may wish to consult the time allocation chart below for guidance.

Conversations among fewer than six people, even dialogues between two people, will also work well using this model.

Each conversation group needs a facilitator and a reporter; these are appointed from among the participants.

Since no two Jesuit communities are alike, convenors are encouraged to adapt the structure and process to best fit your local needs and circumstances. However, in doing so it is important to maintain fidelity to:

- the questions for reflection and sharing
- conversation grounded in *active listening* and *intentional speaking* (see appended excerpt from the Toolkit).

Please provide the following to community members in advance of the meeting:

- 1) The Participant Guide and July 28th letter from Sean Carroll to all.
- 2) The Facilitator Guide to the facilitator only.
- 3) The Reporter Guide to the reporter only.

Conversations may take place any time before December 10, 2022. and reports should be submitted no later than December 16, 2022

Guidelines for Time Distribution (approximate)

	6 Participants	8 Participants
Opening Reflection and Prayer	3 minutes	3 minutes
Check-in	5 minutes	5 minutes
Sharing I	22 minutes	28 minutes
Sharing II	18 minutes	22 minutes
Review	12 minutes	12 minutes