



# Spiritual Conversation

Archdiocese of Montreal



Service for Discernment in Common  
Service pour le Discernement en Commun





# The Service for Discernment in Common

- Established in March 2019
- A service of the Jesuit Province of Canada
- Assisting religious communities and apostolates with communal discernment processes
- Trainings, workshops, facilitation of communal discernment processes...



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## *Examples of missions*

Jesuit Province  
Congregation de Notre-Dame  
Ignatian Spirituality Project  
Christian Life Community  
Conference Religieuse Canadienne  
Ignatian Spirituality Centre of Montreal



# Agenda

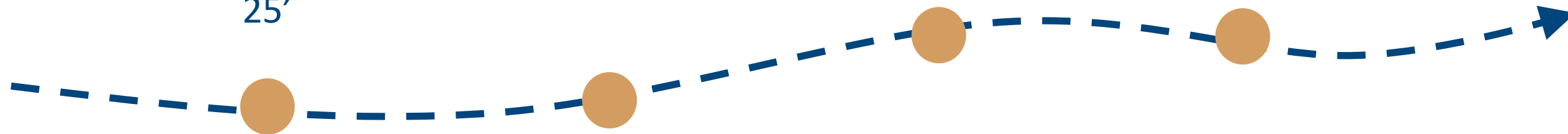


Presentation  
25'

Personal prayer  
10'

Small groups  
40'

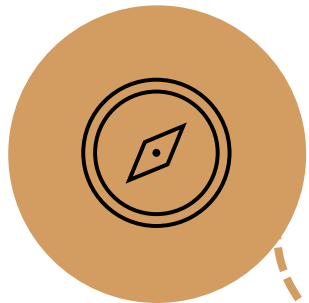
Assembly  
15'





# In this presentation you will learn

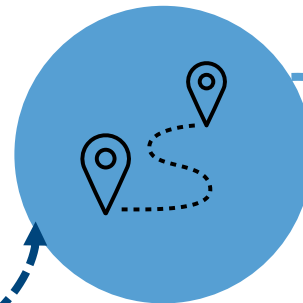
1. Foundations of spiritual conversation



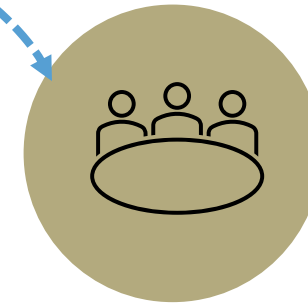
2. How to prepare a meeting



3. How to begin the conversation



4. How to facilitate the rounds of sharing



5. What to pay attention to





# 1. Spiritual Conversation

- The Holy Spirit works in the heart of every person, in every group, in every circumstance
- Spiritual conversation aims to create the conditions to be open to the Spirit's action and to make decisions according to the Spirit's inspiration
- Spiritual conversation is a structured way of talking and listening to each other in a group so that we can listen to the Spirit together
- It requires being attentive to one's own emotional and affective feelings and those of the group. This is how the action of the Spirit manifests itself.



Paying attention to the process is important because the quality of the result depends on it

Take the time to pray and prepare your contribution in writing for the first round of the spiritual conversation. During the conversation, maintain an inner attitude of listening, respect, generosity and trust in God.

# Foundations and fruits



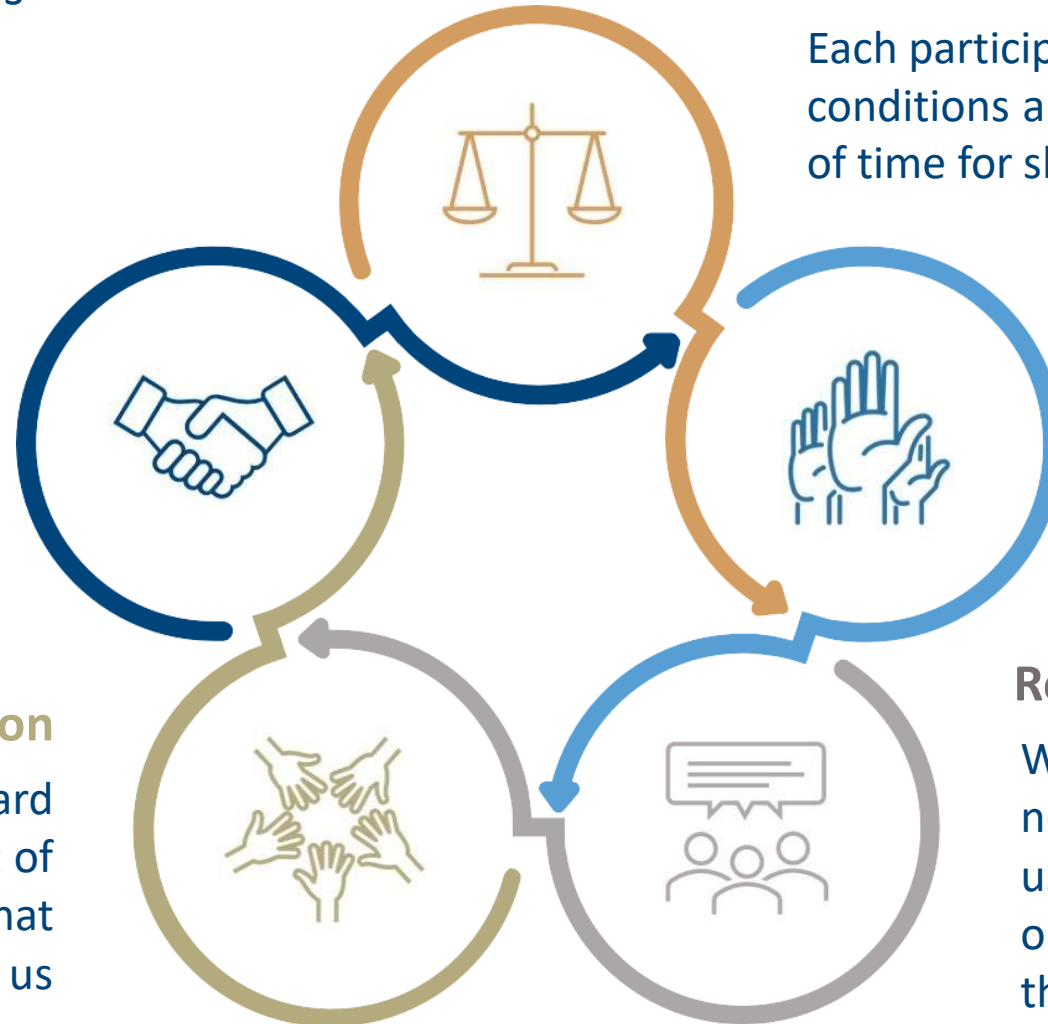
Spiritual conversation promotes the values on which it is based

## Trust

Trust in the presence and action of God in our hearts, in our lives, in the life of the group and trust among the members of the group

## Communion

The challenge is not to put forward my point of view to the detriment of others, but to listen together to what the Spirit is saying to us



## Fairness

Each participant has the same conditions and the same amount of time for sharing

## Inclusion

Each person's voice is important and taken into account.

## Reconciliation

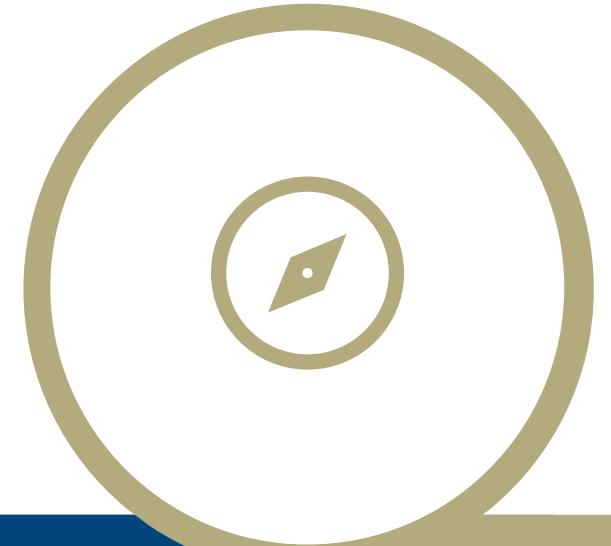
We speak from experience and not from ideas, which allows us to go beyond personal opinions and currents of thought

# Moving from “me” to “we”



From my prayer....

...to what emerges from what we shared



## 1<sup>st</sup> round

### Fruits of my prayer

During the first round, participants share the fruit of their personal prayer (what I perceived during my prayer time)

## 2<sup>nd</sup> round

### What touches me the most

During the second round, the sharing is about what touched me the most in what I heard during the first round

## 3<sup>rd</sup> round

### What converges

During the third round, the sharing is about what converges in what we heard in the 2nd round



## 2. Preparation of the meetings

- Plan ahead and schedule the spiritual conversation
- Plan to meet for an hour and a half (90 minutes) to allow enough time to get started and to conclude
- If online, prepare a zoom invitation (or other system) with a clickable link and send the invitation to your group participants
- Remind participants to prepare in writing before the meeting their contribution for the first round of the spiritual conversation!



If you are planning a multiple-meeting program, it may be helpful to agree on a series of dates for your small group meetings





### 3. When the meeting starts 1/2

- Start with a quick round of check-in, asking participants to describe the emotional state they are in at that moment (peaceful, angry, calm...)
  - This allows us to welcome everyone in the state he or she is in
  - This also prevents strong emotions from taking over and then disrupt the flow of the conversation
- Designate a timekeeper
- He or she will wave his or her hand visibly 30 seconds before the end of the time limit
  - If participants have 3 minutes to share, the timekeeper will raise his or her hand at 2:30 to let the person know that his or her time will soon be up





### 3. When the meeting starts 2/2

- Introduce the flow of the conversation
  - There will be 3 times of sharing, led by the facilitator
  - The facilitator will invite participants to take turns sharing, for example clockwise or in a predetermined order if online
  - Only the person who is invited to speak can speak  
if it's online, the others listen with their microphone on mute
  - Each person has a maximum of 3 minutes to share
- Recall the specifics of the conversation
  - Participants share at the level of their personal experience and not about general considerations, beginning their sentences with "I felt...", "What came to me was...", "I experienced.... "
  - Participants do not talk back to each other and do not add to what has already been said, when they are not talking, they listen carefully to what another person is saying
  - It is possible to remain silent and refrain from sharing
  - Maintain an attitude of respect, listening to what is going on in yourself and in others, and listening to the Spirit





## 4. Facilitating the spiritual conversation 1/2

- Round 1: Invite participants to read what they have prepared in writing about the fruits of their personal prayer. After each person has spoken, invite participants to take a moment of silence, to reflect on what touched them most about what they heard in the first round.
- Round 2: Invite participants to take turns sharing what touched them most in Round 1<sup>er</sup>. When the round is over, pause again to reflect on what seems to converge or emerge in common at this point in the conversation
- Round 3: Invite participants to share what seems to be converging or emerging at this point (direction, theme, insight, invitation from the Lord...).





## 4. Facilitating the spiritual conversation 2/2

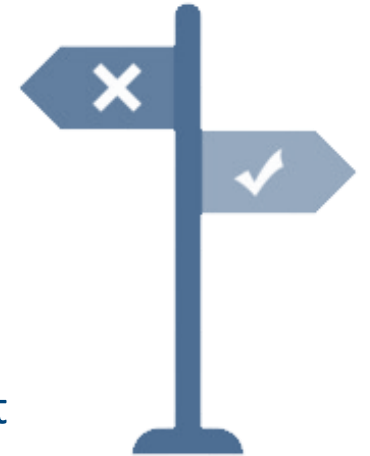
- Agree on what emerged in the third round of conversation that you want to share with the other groups
- Ask someone to report back on what you want to share
- End the conversation with a short time of prayer of thanksgiving
- Confirm the date of your next small group meeting





## 5. What to pay attention to during the meeting

- Especially during and after the second round of spiritual conversation
  - Presence or absence of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-26)
  
  - Signs that the group is in consolation
    - Group is truly committed to active listening and participation
    - A common awareness, a consensus, a shared truth give energy and joy to the participants
    - We feel a greater communion, benevolence, appreciation between the participants
- All this shows that the group is getting closer to God and following the movement of the Spirit
- 
- Signs that the group is going through desolation
    - We perceive a decrease in energy, a disengagement of the participants, a lack of listening and participation
    - Feelings of fear, avoidance, decreased confidence and openness, feeling blocked
    - Imposition of personal ideas, competition...
- This indicates that the group is moving away from God at this time and that participants need to refocus on what they are trying to accomplish together



# Training for the synod process in Montreal



## ■ Session 2

- In French: February 8 at 2pm and February 10 at 7pm
- In English: February 8 at 7pm and February 10 at 2pm
- How to facilitate a synodical meeting using spiritual conversation ?



# Personal prayer time






- Ask the Lord to show me a consoling event in my Church-related life in the last few months: something that gave me an increased sense of hope, energy, trust in God and why this was so
- Prepare something in writing to share in the small group





# Timing of the small group conversation

- 5 minutes for checking-in (1' per person)
- 10 minutes for the 1st round – (2' per person x 5 = 10') 
- 2 minutes to reflect on what touched me the most in the first round
- 10 minutes for the 2nd round – (2' per person x 5 = 10') 
- 2 minutes to reflect on what seems to be converging, emerging from our conversation
- 5 minutes for the 3rd tour - (1' per person) 





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