PATHWAYS IN ADVENT

Leader's Guide

INTRODUCTION

This Advent parishes, schools and groups are invited to use this reflective resource in small group settings as part of their journey through this season of preparation.

Each week offers a simple structure for prayer, gospel reflection and a Spirit-led conversation. The sharing arises from both the Sunday gospel and excerpts from one of the pathways for the Irish Church identifed in the working document for the National Synodal Assembly, held in October 2026.

The pathways, in turn, offer a vision for the Church in Ireland:

- **The Church that Proclaims the Gospel**
- **The Church as a Community of Belonging**
- **The Church as a Place of Healing**
- **The Church that Accompanies**

The act of leading and taking part in this series can be seen as one step among many in bringing to realisation the fifth pathway, 'The Church that Empowers for Ministry and Co- responsibility'.

It is our hope that these sessions will both provide spiritual nourishment along the Advent path, as well as providing a prayerful space to begin to explore together how we can bring about this vision of Church in our lives and in our local faith community

An invitation to hear back from groups

While any personal sharing within these sessions is confidential, ideas can be for sharing. If there are particular ideas, suggestions, initiatives around any of the pathways please share them with the diocese.
Bishop Denis, the Commission for Liturgical Formation and the Diocesan Pastoral Council welcome your feedback.

Email: julie.kavanagh@kandle.ie



Kildare and Leighlin
Diocesan Commission for Liturgical Formation

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THE FORMAT FOR EACH SESSION

- Each session follows the same steps, clearly outlined in the headings
- It begins with an ***OPENING PRAYER*** said together
- One person ***PROCLAIMS THE GOSPEL*** text, followed by a pause
- The leader invites people to listen to the Gospel being read aloud again, and to notice what is striking them as they listen
- This is followed by a time to ***REFLECT*** in silence and to ***SHARE***,
- Each person is given the opportunity to share without interruption
- A one line prayer ***RESPONSE*** is said after each person
- ***QUOTES*** from the particular pathway are then read aloud with time given for people to consider them in light of a ***REFLECTION QUESTION***
- Again, time is given for people to ***SHARE*** and listen to one another in an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding
- An open question is then offered to the group that invites them to think about and share on how they might ***RESPOND IN ACTION***
- Finally, everything is brought together with an ***INTERCESSION*** and saying the ***CONCLUDING PRAYER TOGETHER***

THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR ORGANISING & LEADING A SESSION

- How will you invite people to this session? Where will it take place? Think HOSPITALITY in terms of invitation, venue and experience
- Consider preparing a sacred space to give people a visual focus for this time of prayer and conversation. It might have a white or purple cloth, a bible and a candle. You may even have an advent wreath that you can use
- The readings and prayers can be done a large group. If your group has more than 6-8 people, you will you need more than one leader/facilitator for those parts of the session that involve small group sharing
- This session should take no more than an hour. It should start on time and end no later than advertised
- People may not be used to sharing. For some it may be more than enough to share just one word. Don't be afraid of silence - it is something that many people are craving!
- This is an opportunity for prayerful sharing and listening to what God is saying to us through one another. It is not a space to convince or change people to our way of thinking!



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