

Guidance for those preparing group work at General Synod

The Business Committee appreciates the valuable role that group work can play within the life of Synod and is willing to schedule time where it deems it appropriate for group work within a group of sessions, subject to the following guidelines:

Purpose

Good group work

- is clearly related to a major item of business on the Synod agenda
- enables members to listen to and understand each other's deeply held convictions
- enables members to reflect together on what God might be saying to his church, through prayer, silence and engagement with Scripture
- prepares the ground sensitively for when the subject is handled within the more formal rules of debate and procedure.

Content

Good group work

- is prepared by those handling the item of business, or with recognised expertise in, and experience of, the subject under discussion
- is prepared with reference to previous group work exercises, to ensure a variety of approaches is employed over time, catering for different personalities/learning styles
- includes a means of biblical reflection (such as bible study questions, lectio divina, Ignatian spiritual journey etc.) prepared in consultation with biblical scholars
- is cautious about the use of experiential material (photos, food, role play) unless the group leader clearly understands and is convinced of its essential value and purpose.

Preparation and feedback

Good group work

- is supported by well-prepared, accessible materials that are clear in their intention
- is supported by excellent briefing materials for those leading the group work, both well in advance of the group of sessions and, during the group of sessions, before the group work is scheduled to take place
- provides those participating in and leading group work with an opportunity to provide feedback (simple forms will be supplied for this purpose)

Process

Good group work

- includes members drawn from across all groups and dioceses
- uses chairs drawn from all three houses, with specific skills and/or training in leading groups
- involves everyone, including, where appropriate, to lead worship/prayer and offer pastoral support for any member for whom the discussion appears to have been emotionally difficult
- where group feedback is required, utilises a reporter for each group, separate from the chair, identified and invited in advance

To ensure that proposed group work falls within these guidelines, those preparing business are invited to consult the Business Committee at an early stage via the Chair or the Clerk to the Synod. Committees and Councils who are preparing reports for discussion are also invited to consider whether there is some good and helpful group work that might fit with their subject, and to bring any such suggestions to the Business Committee at an early stage.

On behalf of the Business Committee
The Revd Canon Sue Booy
Chair of the Business Committee

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