

Saturday Sessions ‘How To’ Guide

You are invited to create community online as we gather to share and grow faith.

An initiative of the Pastoral Planning Office

What are Saturday Sessions?

Saturday Sessions invites participants to watch a pre-recorded presentation in their own time or at a set time prior to discussion. A designated hour is set for a period of discussion about the presentation in small groups via an online video conferencing platform.

Saturday Sessions are a way of connection with communities to foster engagement and community building. Parishes and communities are encouraged to take the Saturday Sessions model and offer it in their own communities. The name “Saturday Sessions” can be renamed to a day of the week you choose to have your sessions, e.g., Wednesday Wisdom or Tuesday Thinktank - be as creative as you would like!

How do Saturday Sessions fit into a Parish Plan?

Saturday Sessions is a tool that can form part of a comprehensive approach to Parish Evangelisation and Renewal. It is a program to be offered as part of a bigger plan of the Parish.

Saturday Sessions does not assume a prior knowledge of church or church speak. The format of watching a presentation and discussion around it is open to everyone who has an interest in that particular topic. Some topics are more general in nature and others will have more of a church focus.

Because of its nature, Saturday Sessions can be a tool to welcome people who are curious about the Catholic Church. It is not a catechesis tool but rather a way to encounter each other through our lived experiences in a life of faith. Each person, through the sharing of themselves, is a living bridge to connect others to the person of Jesus.

Saturday Sessions can also be a formation component for any ministry. Ministers can engage in the Saturday Sessions format and specifically reflect on the presentation in light of their ministry.

Even in an online environment, Saturday Sessions must fit into the broader plans of the parish and not run as a stand-alone program. The opportunity to reach people to



whom we may not have reached through before an online platform is greater than ever.

What Platform is used for Saturday Sessions?

Zoom is the online platform that is being recommended to use for Saturday Sessions. Participants do not have to have an account but will need to download the application prior. Participants will be invited to register and they will get a link, and possibly a meeting ID and Password. Zoom can be used from any device.

The host will at least need a Zoom Pro Plan (\$20.99/month) for an hour session. This is a paid account which does not have time limits. Zoom Pro has a limit of 100 guests. For up to 300 guests, opt for the Zoom Business Plan (\$27.99/month).

If the host is using a free Zoom account, there is a 40-minute time limit for meetings. If you choose to use a free account, you will need to be aware of this time limit as not to abruptly end mid-conversation due to Zoom ending the meeting.

The Pastoral Planning Office can assist you with training and information about Zoom or you can watch a Zoom tutorial at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362033-Getting-Started-on-Windows-and-Mac>. The Pastoral Planning Office has available:

- A Zoom How To manual from the Diocese of Parramatta (for hosts).
- How to Zoom guide for Participants
- Online Hospitality
- Zoom Etiquette for participants

How often can I run the Saturday Sessions model?

You can run a Saturday Sessions format as many times as you are able. The great thing about the online platform is that there is no physical setting up or cleaning up and there is no cost besides a zoom account.

The Presentation

The Presentation is an audio or video file. When participants register for Saturday Sessions, they will receive a link to the file. Participants are asked to watch the presentation before the discussion.

Alternatively, for small groups, the audio/video file could be listened to/watched together.

The Presentation Outlines and links are available via a pdf file through the Pastoral Planning Office or via The Well.

Questions to Ponder:

Each presentation will come with questions to ponder. These can be given to participants in advance or can be posed to a group at the time of discussion. It is not necessary to share all the suggested questions. Communities can also prepare their own questions in response to a presentation.

Before the Saturday Session.

1. Schedule your Saturday Session on Zoom. (refer to Zoom training).
2. You can customise your registration confirmation email in Zoom to include the audio/video link of the presentation with the reminder to listen/watch the presentation before the online discussion (if that is the mode you choose).
3. Promote your event in your community and invite people to register for a session via the Zoom registration link.
4. Upon registration, participants will receive the link to the presentation and the link to access the Zoom discussion.

How long does a session run for?

A session would usually run for an hour. It is wise not to extend it much beyond this as online conferencing can often cause fatigue faster than meeting face-to-face.

The format for an hour session could be:

0.00	Begin the session on time. Welcome participants to the session.
0.02	Open breakout rooms for participants for a one-to-one conversation, introducing themselves and sharing one significant thing that happened to them during the week. This will go for two minutes. Breakout rooms can be created manually or Zoom can automatically divide people into breakout rooms (refer to Zoom training).
0.05	Thank people for their sharing and move into prayer. Depending on the size of the group, you can invite people to speak aloud any intentions. If the group is large, you can invite participants to write their prayer intentions into the chat function. Participants can read these intentions and include them in their quiet prayer.
0.10	Participants will be divided into breakout rooms to discuss questions about the presentation. Within the small group, participants will need to select one person to feedback sharing from the group. Allow 15 minutes for group sharing. The breakout rooms can be set to close after 15 minutes. During the breakout sessions, the host can broadcast messages reminding participants of questions, informing participants of how much time is left and choosing a speaker to feedback to the larger group.
0.25	When everyone has returned to the group, ask the speakers for each group to indicate who they are by raising a hand, selecting a reaction or physically putting their hand up for the host to see. Invite the feedback from each group, reminding the speaker that they have 1-2 minutes to share.

0.35	<p>Participants will again be divided into breakout rooms with different people to discuss new questions about the presentation. Within the small group, participants will need to select one person to feedback sharing from the group. Allow 15 minutes for group sharing. The breakout rooms can be set to close after 15 minutes.</p> <p>During the breakout sessions, the host can broadcast messages reminding participants of questions, informing participants of how much time is left and choosing a speaker to feedback to the larger group.</p>
0.50	<p>When everyone has returned to the group, ask the speakers for each group to indicate who they are by raising a hand, selecting a reaction or physically putting their hand up for the host to see.</p> <p>Invite the feedback from each group, reminding the speaker that they have 1-2 minutes to share.</p>
1.00	<p>Thank everyone for their feedback and sharing. Offer some final comments from the host. Thank people for their participation and invite them back next week.</p>

If you are limited to a 40-minute session you can remove a sharing session and ensure that the gathering begins on time.

Further Support:

If you would like further support to bring to life a Saturday Session, or Wednesday Wisdom or Tuesday Thinktank (the name can be changed), please contact Lisa at the Pastoral Planning Office at lisa.bright@parracatholic.org

The Pastoral Planning Office thanks you for your enduring faith, hope, love and commitment as we venture into the deep. We pray that you experience the peace and grace that our God offers and can be an ambassador of Christ's hope and peace to those you encounter and accompany.

Please contact the Pastoral Planning Office for support in all areas of pastoral ministry.

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