

Holy Family Church All Are Welcome Task Force

Mission Statement

The Holy Family All Are Welcome Task Force seeks to help Holy Family Church live out its mission of being "a welcoming Eucharistic community of disciples of Jesus Christ" and its ecclesiology of "All Are Welcome" in three main ways:

1. by leading efforts to evaluate the current parish climate regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion,
2. by establishing a permanent entity at Holy Family to encourage and implement the mission of "All Are Welcome"
3. by providing support and educational programming grounded in faith for parishioners, school community members, and staff while structures are developed.

Background

Following the example of our Lord and teacher Jesus Christ, the Holy Family community is called to embrace and bring healing to those in our midst who have been or feel as if they have been excluded, ridiculed, oppressed, imprisoned, or unloved. The task force specifically seeks to assess potential populations who may have felt excluded. Areas of exclusion may include but are not limited to: race, socio-economic status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, culture, country of origin, primary language, ability, school status (Holy Family school and non-Holy Family school), housing status, family make-up, and other categories of exclusion. We are invited to help carry on the work of Christ to build the reign of God that is unfolding among us (Lk 17:20-21). We are called to be a community of love that brings all people together and leaves no one aside.

In the Fall of 2020 and Spring of 2021, we—the authors and editors listed below—participated in racial justice programming from ["JustFaith Ministries"](#) as a way to better understand and respond as people of faith to the cries for racial justice during the summer of 2020. We were deeply moved and transformed by the program sessions that required us to sit with the history and current realities of racism in the United States and in our own lives through readings, videos, discussions, and prayer. As a result, we recognized the need to share what we have learned with Holy Family leadership and the wider Holy Family community.

In doing so, we desire to help all Holy Family parish and school members become even more dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ. As the United States bishops have stated, "When we begin to separate people in our thoughts for unjust reasons, when we start to see some people as 'them' and others as 'us,' we fail to love. Yet love is at the heart of the Christian life." Following the invitation of Christ and the bishops then, we must "endeavor to be missionary disciples carrying forth the message of fraternal (sic) charity and human dignity...by educating [ourselves], reflecting on [our] personal thoughts and actions, listening to the experience of those who have

been affected by racism, and by developing and supporting programs that help repair the damages caused by racial discrimination" and other forms of prejudice, oppression, and exclusion. Holy Family is continually called to assess how it is being faithful to its call and how it might still need to grow as a community of beloved disciples who help heal divisions and hurt, foster dialogue, and spread the Gospel message of God's love for all.

We prayed for discernment and we believe the Holy Spirit has been guiding this work. We pray that the Holy Family All Are Welcome Task Force will be an avenue for the Spirit to heal those who have been harmed in our parish and local community, as well as bring others into the community. We hope that young people, those who have left the Catholic Church, and those curious about the faith will more clearly see that we answer our call to discipleship in authentic, concrete ways and that they might desire to join us in growing in their relationships with Christ as a result. Forming the Task Force and working towards its goals is a way to live out Catholic Social Teaching, as well as broadcast the loving and welcoming teachings of Christ to those who are not already involved in the Church. Parishes who embrace diversity and actively work on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion are widely known and loved in the archdiocese and bring in parishioners from all over to experience Christ's teachings in a refreshing and just way. In this way, we see the DEI Task Force as an essential piece of the evangelizing and catechizing mission of Holy Family.

Recommended Personnel

Task Force Members: These individuals are committed to regular meetings and the intentional work required of the Task Force, based on related knowledge and training. We recommend a group of eight to ten people, including the Pastor, the Director of Faith Formation, a few committed JustFaith alumni, and a few Holy Family community members with the expertise and skills for this work and/or the identities affected.

Key Stakeholders: These individuals are not members of the Task Force but would be important to consult and collaborate with in order to achieve the Task Force's goals. They include but are not limited to: Associate Pastor and other clergy, Pastoral Council, the parish Commissions (Administration, Community Life, Education Formation, Outreach, and Worship), Principal, Vice Principal, key school staff, the school board, etc.

Community Consultants/Board: This group comprises any Holy Family parish and school members who feel they are affected by DEI efforts and can offer suggestions or areas to look into for the Task Force.

Scope & Timeframe

The Holy Family DEI Task Force is a temporary body that will form in order to determine and conduct assessments, analyze and share assessment results, oversee the establishment of more permanent structures and entities, and advise Holy Family community members in offering educational programming and other opportunities for the parish and school. Ideally, the assessment process will be completed within one year of the Task Force launch (i.e. September

of 2022), at which point the Task Force will transition to being a more permanent entity or choose to continue in its original form based on the needs of the community. Below is a suggested timeline for the beginning of the Task Force's work.

Aug 2021	Task Force is approved by the Pastor. Pastor determines Task Force communication preferences (who he would like to have convene Task Force members if not himself, etc.).
Oct 2021	Members are contacted and commit to participating. Task Force meets to establish itself, decide on assessment approach, and earliest possible timeline of the assessment.
Jan - May 2022	Task force launches spring/Lent assessment and gathers data.
Jun - Aug 2022	Spring/Lent data compilation and analysis.
Sept - Nov 2022	Task force launches fall assessment and gathers data.
Nov '22 - early Feb '23	Data compilation, analysis, report writing and recommendations.

Assessing the Needs of Our Parish Community

To focus on our goal to “lead efforts to evaluate the current parish climate regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion” we have enumerated the primary means by which we plan to evaluate the current climate at the parish below.

- A. *Historical Study*: The task force will gather data from the last 20 years of the types of efforts, topics, events, speakers, and resources that have been offered or made available to the community. This will be a quantitative assessment. [Historical Study Appendix](#)
- B. *Parishioner Small Group Conversation*: The task force will engage with the community through small group sharing/conversation to gain the community’s perspective on what has been offered by the church, what they feel is missing, what their desires are, and what their fears or hesitations are. [Parishioner Small Group Conversation Appendix](#)
- C. *Leader Small Group Conversations*: The task force will engage with our leaders through small group sharing/conversation to gain their perspective on the items listed above under “Parishioners” as well as insight into how prepared, educated, and trained they feel with respect to DEI. This will be a qualitative and quantitative assessment. [Leaders Appendix](#)
- D. *Listening Sessions or “Town Hall”*: These larger sessions will be focused on open sharing of stories from the entire community. In particular, sharing stories of struggle, personal growth, disappointment or encouragement, and how the church has or has not been a part of someone’s journey with respect to DEI will be encouraged. These sessions will be focused on listening and not debating. They may be accompanied by other offerings such as a movie, a

reading, or a prayer to center the sharing (TBD). This will be a qualitative and quantitative assessment. [Town Hall Appendix](#)

E. *Pulse of the Community Survey*: The task force will work to generate and deploy a survey made available to all in the community to gather input on how the Parish is meeting the needs of the community and incorporating DEI as part of its DNA. This will be a quantitative assessment. [Survey Appendix](#)

We believe that the approaches listed above will enable the task force to do the following:

- Listen to the spirit of the community similar to the recent synod approaches.
- Assess what programming is already offered by Holy Family and what gaps exist if any.
- Assess what kind of support is offered on an individual and group basis for those struggling with being excluded or those struggling to be inclusive.
- Assess where Holy Family can evangelize and welcome members to the community.
- Assess if Holy Family is meeting the needs and desires of the community with regards to addressing current issues, offering education on the historical role of our nation and church, offering tools and approaches for personal growth, and other community desires not articulated here.
- Assess how Holy Family is acknowledging and incorporating DEI as a motivator in our service to the community, how we worship, the formation of our ministries, and the formation of our leaders and ministers.

Authors and editors (in alphabetical order):

Erin Conley - ministry leader & member (Social Concerns, Trinity Young Adults)
Joan Ervin - Pastoral Council & ministry member (Trinity Young Adults)
Jaime Garza - ministry leader (Environmental, Ignatian Spirituality),
Master Plan Committee member
Kim Grant-Rollert - catechist (Faith Formation for Children)
Diana Hanger - ministry leader (Trinity Young Adults)
Marisa Moonilal - staff (Associate Director of Faith Formation—Young Adults)
Dawn Ponnet - staff (Director of Faith Formation)
Vianney Truong - ministry leader (Trinity Young Adults)
Jessica Vozella - ministry member (Trinity Young Adults)
Suzette Mason
Elli Haffey

Appendix A - Historical Study

The Historical Study aims to gather data from the last 20 years of the types of efforts, topics, events, speakers, and resources on diversity, equity, and inclusion that have been offered or made available to the community. The data will be compiled and organized in a way to help the community assess where DEI has fallen short and where DEI has been promoted. The study will use bulletin records, the website, Mass announcements, and interviews with event coordinators and those involved with the event.

Procedure: Beginning with January of 2001, review the calendar of events that have been offered and compile a spreadsheet based on time, type of event, topic, how it qualifies, etc. The event topic and speaker will be considered and evaluated. Possible events can include social, spiritual, faith formation, school programming, religious education, worship, service, and fundraising events. Events would be characterized under specific categories of DEI. The number of events offered over the past 20 years that qualify will be compared with the number of events that do not. (Note: This study will not reflect events that have not been offered but that were proposed or requested. This data may arise during other assessment approaches, such as the listening session and small group conversations.)

Timeline: Complete the study by June of 2022 at the latest. Work can easily begin on this piece as soon as possible, should Task Force members be available.

Appendix B - Parishioner Small Group Conversations

The Small Group Parishioner Conversations will provide parishioners an opportunity to share their own thoughts and experiences related to diversity, equity, and inclusion at Holy Family. Invitations will also be sent out to specific ministries and groups. The meetings will seek to gain the parishioners' perspectives on what DEI initiatives have been offered by the church, what they feel is missing, what their desires are, and what their fears or hesitations are.

Procedure: The conversations will be facilitated by a prepared leader (a Task Force member or other trained leader) who will set conversation norms and administer a standardized sequence of questions. One member of the small group will serve as a recorder to synthesize the main points of the conversations. The facilitator will also collect written responses from participants. A working outline of the meetings is included below.

Length of Meeting - 1 hour 30 min (max)

Prayer - Short verbal prayer or song like "Open My Eyes" (3 min)

Meeting Norms - Leader reads "Ground Rules" (5-10 min)

Group Conversation(s) (70 min or less)

-See potential questions below.

-Questions may be sent out to participants in advance.

-Group could either be gathered for meetings only in groups of 5-6 people to start or a larger group can gather and then divide into groups of 5-6 people. There will need to be a conversation facilitator for every group of 5-6 people.

-Listening to those whom may have been excluded

Closing Prayer and Wrap Up (5 min)

Timeline:

Potential Small Group Questions:

1. Because Holy Family desires to be a welcoming community, on a scale of 1-10 (10 being extremely favorable), how well do you think the parish does in its outreach to its own parish community to instill a sense of welcome and love to all?
2. What has the parish offered YOU in terms of diversity, speakers, programs, etc.
3. What has the parish offered others in your family/community in terms of diversity, speakers, programs, etc.
4. When was the last time one was offered that spoke specifically to YOU?
5. What impact has it had on YOU?

6. Are you involved in ministry at the parish?
7. Have you been hesitant to join a ministry or volunteer at the parish? If yes, why?
8. Do you think/know/or sense that there are those in the parish community who don't feel truly welcomed? If so, why? In what ways could the parish be more welcoming to them?
9. What additions would you like to see at the parish in terms of **diversity, equity, and inclusion**?
10. Do you think the parish should do more to welcome those who are
 - divorced/
 - single parenting/
 - pregnant & unwed/
 - racially &/or ethnically diverse
 - LGBTQIA+ community/
 - those who suffer from addiction/
 - low income/
 - those turning their lives around after incarceration or addiction/
 - non-Catholic
11. Are there ways you would like to participate in our parish's mission to be a welcoming community?

Intercultural Communication: The Mutual Invitation Process

(taken from [*Building Intercultural Competencies for Ministers \(BICM\)*](#) from the USCCB)

Respectful Communication Guideline

R: take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel, and speak with words others can hear and understand

E: use EMPATHETIC listening, not just words but also feelings being expressed, non verbal language including silence

S: be SENSITIVE to differences in communication styles

P: PONDER on what you hear and feel before you speak

E: EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions

C: keep CONFIDENTIALITY

T: TRUST the process because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong but to experience true dialogue

The Invitation Method is a way to include all people in the conversation in a very respectful atmosphere. While each person is speaking, the others listen. No one may interrupt the speaker or jump in to speak without being invited by name. In this method, no one has more authority than anyone else each person is invited to share, and after sharing that person has the privilege to invite who will share next.

PURPOSE: To ensure that each person in the group is invited by name to share in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

METHOD:

1. The leader clarifies what the group members are being invited to share.
2. The leader gives guidelines about the use of time.
3. The leader may share first or may invite another person by name to share.
4. Who you invite does not need to be the person next to you.
5. After the person has spoken, that person is given the privilege to invite another to share.
6. If the person invited chooses not to share, the person may simply say “pass” and proceed to invite another to share. No explanation is needed or given for passing.
7. The process will continue until everyone has been invited to speak.
8. At that time, any person who passed will be invited again to share. Persons are still free to pass.
9. The main activity of the group is to listen.

—Eric H. F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*

Conversation Norms / Ground Rules

THIS IS A SAFE GROUP

We will do our part to create an environment where everyone can be real, open, and honest.

CONFIDENTIALITY IS KEY

What is said in the group stays in the group.

NO CROSSTALK

Crosstalk is conversation that leaves others out.

ALLOW everyone a chance to speak

LISTEN respectfully and actively.

COMMIT to learning, not debating.

Avoid blame, speculation, inflammatory language.

Avoid assumptions about others, especially based on their perceived social group(s).

Don't take disagreements personally.

NO ADVICE GIVING

We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part through the Spirit.

WE WANT EVERYONE TO HAVE A CHANCE TO SHARE

Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

Give and receive welcome. People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this community, we support each other's learning by giving and receiving welcome.

Be as fully present as possible. Be here with your doubts, fears, and failings, as well as your convictions, joys, and successes, your listening as well as your speaking. Listen intently in order to fully understand different points of view. Honor the space between "no longer" and "not yet."

What is offered in our community is by invitation, not demand. Share what your soul calls for, and know that you do it with our support. Commit to ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to speak. Invite others to speak before speaking again.

Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth. Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one's truth in our community does not mean interpreting, correcting, or debating what others say. Knowing that we are each created uniquely, and have different backgrounds, experiences, and views, we commit to honoring differences, knowing they add to the richness of the community's experience.

No fixing, saving, advising, or correcting. This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to "help." But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.

Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions.... Instead of counsel or corrections. With such questions, we help "hear each other into deeper speech." Commit to respectfully seeking clarification of others' perspectives to add to our understanding.

When the going gets tough, turn to wonder. If you feel judgemental or defensive, ask yourself:

- "I wonder what brought her to this belief?"
- "I wonder what he's feeling right now?"
- "I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?"

Set aside judgment to listen to others — and to yourself — more deeply.

Attend to your own inner teacher. We learn from others, of course. But as we explore prayer, readings, questions, and silence, as well as engage with people both inside and outside our community, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, which are your most important teacher.

Trust and learn from the silence. Silence is a gift in our noisy world, and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.

Observe deep confidentiality. Our community of trust depends on knowing that whatever we say will remain with the people to whom we choose to say it — whether in small groups or in the large circle — and will never be passed on to others without our explicit permission.

Know that it's possible.... To leave a meeting of our community with whatever it was you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.

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Adapted by Anne and Tom Johnson from:

- *Circle of Trust® Touchstones developed by Parker J. Palmer and the Center for Courage & Renewal www.couragerenewal.org (primary source)*
- *JustFaith Group Guidelines www.JustFaith.org*

Appendix C - Leader Small Group Conversations

The Leader Small Group Conversations will provide leaders an opportunity to share their own thoughts and experiences related to how those of differing backgrounds and identities are welcome at Holy Family. These meetings will seek to gain insight into the perspectives of Holy Family's ministry leaders about what initiatives have been offered by the church, what they feel is missing, what their desires are, and what their fears or hesitations are. Leaders will also be asked about the quality and quantity of any training dedicated towards welcoming all community members.

Procedure:

Length of Meeting - 1 hour 30 min

Prayer - Short verbal prayer and reflection for the "why are we doing this" (10min)

Meeting Norms - Leader reads Ground Rules below (5 min)

Group Conversation(s)

-See potential questions below.

-Groups will be divided into 5-6 people. There will be a conversation facilitator and note taker for each group.

-There will be two rounds of sharing. The first will last for 12-15 minutes, allowing each member to share for 2 minutes. The second round will last for 40 minutes, allowing each member to share for 5-6 minutes.

Recorder will verbally share their notes with the group (10 min)

Closing Prayer and Wrap Up (5 min)

Ground Rules

Give and receive welcome. People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this community, we support each other's learning by giving and receiving welcome.

Be as fully present as possible. Be here with your doubts, fears, and failings, as well as your convictions, joys, and successes, your listening as well as your speaking. Listen intently in order to fully understand different points of view. Honor the space between "no longer" and "not yet."

What is offered in our community is by invitation, not demand. Share what your soul calls for, and know that you do it with our support. Commit to ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to speak. Invite others to speak before speaking again.

Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth. Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one's truth in our community does not mean interpreting, correcting, or debating what others say. Knowing that we are each created uniquely, and have different backgrounds, experiences, and views, we commit to honoring differences, knowing they add to the richness of the community's experience.

No fixing, saving, advising, or correcting. This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to "help." But it is vital to welcome the soul, to make space for the inner teacher.

Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions.... Instead of counsel or corrections. With such questions, we help “hear each other into deeper speech.” Commit to respectfully seeking clarification of others’ perspectives to add to our understanding.

When the going gets tough, turn to wonder. If you feel judgemental or defensive, ask yourself:

- “I wonder what brought her to this belief?”
- "I wonder what he’s feeling right now?”
- “I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?”

Set aside judgment to listen to others — and to yourself — more deeply.

Attend to your own inner teacher. We learn from others, of course. But as we explore prayer, readings, questions, and silence, as well as engage with people both inside and outside our community, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, which are your most important teacher.

Small Group Questions:

Members will answer one or two questions that speak to them per round. Members should share specific examples.

1. Because Holy Family Parish is a “Welcoming Parish” on a scale of 1-10 (10 being extremely favorable), how well do you think the parish does in its outreach to its own parish community to instill a sense of welcome and love to all?
2. What speakers, programs, etc. are you aware of that demonstrate our parish’s commitment to welcoming all?
3. Do you think/know/or sense that there are those in the parish community who don’t feel truly welcomed? If so, why? In what ways could the parish be more welcoming to them? Would you be prepared to participate in these activities/events? Do you have any hesitations about being involved in such activities/events?
4. Have you had training/education specifically directed towards welcoming those with differing backgrounds and identities? If so, how long and how well did the training go?
5. How well do you think your ministry creates an environment where all are welcome? What are some examples?
6. Do you think the parish and/or your ministry should do more to welcome those who are
 - a. divorced/
 - b. single parenting/
 - c. pregnant & unwed/
 - d. Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)
 - e. LGBTQ community/
 - f. those who suffer from addiction/
 - g. low income/
 - h. those turning their lives around after incarceration or addiction.
7. Please share the most positive experience of welcoming you have had at Holy Family.

Appendix D - Listening Sessions ("Town Hall")

The Listening Session ("Town Hall") is intended to gather parishioners to share stories of struggle, personal growth, disappointment, or encouragement, and how the church has or has not been a part of someone's journey with respect to our mission of "All Are Welcome." How do we encourage diversity of people, equity in participation, and a sense of inclusion in our parish community? These sessions will focus on listening rather than debating.

Two separate gatherings are proposed for consideration for the Town Hall: one in-person Parish Hall gatherings and one Zoom virtual gatherings. A suggested outline of the gatherings is below. Note that the only foreseen difference in the virtual session is an agenda topic to walk through zoom etiquette.

Procedure: Facilitator(s) lead the event by welcoming everyone and establishing the spirit of the conversation, the intent, and the boundaries. Facilitator(s) set up round tables and a recorder at each table to synthesize the main points of the conversation. Facilitator(s) also collect written responses from participants. Facilitator(s) encourage discussion of the topics at each table, then each table picks a reporter who shares the feedback from the table to the wider group. There will be 2-4 rounds of this type of sharing, 10-15 minutes for table discussions and 5 minutes for the reporter. At the end of the evening, the session concludes with a 15-20 minute recap of the different views shared by the facilitator(s) and a closing prayer.

The procedure for the zoom gatherings are similar to the in-person gatherings, but will utilize the breakout rooms to facilitate the 2-4 rounds of discussion. A recorder is assigned to each room, and a reporter nominated by the group to share with the wider group.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Agenda:

- Welcome all to the gathering
 1. Facilitator Introduction and Opening Prayer/Meditation (5 min)
 2. Introduce the purpose of the listening session (10 min):
 - When everyone has an opportunity to listen and examine different perspectives, then we all are given the opportunity for reflection, improvement, and growth. The end goal is to foster a better Parish community by using each other's lived experiences and stories as the basis for change at a systemic level.
 - Information from the Town Hall will be used to generate a recommendation to the Parish.
 - Share guidelines for sharing, see section below
- Ask the following discussion questions (at in-person tables or during zoom breakout groups), one question each round:
 1. Please introduce yourself to the table. How long have you been at Holy Family and how are you involved? What brought you to this Town Hall?
 2. How does Holy Family intentionally enact "All are Welcome"? Where has Holy Family fallen short in enacting "All are Welcome"?

3. What are we looking for, and what are our hopes for the parish, with respect to the diversity of our congregation?
 4. What are we looking for, and what are our hopes for the parish, with respect to the equity of roles within the parish, programs offered by the parish, and ministries?
 5. What are we looking for, and what are our hopes for the parish, with respect to inclusion of different members of our wider community that may be seeking a spiritual home, but may not fit certain expectations?
- Large Group share-out. Reporter shares the themes found in the table discussion to the larger group.

Guidelines/Boundaries for Participants

- Keep your camera on when possible so that we can all see each other (during virtual Zoom sessions only)
- Mute mic, silence phones, and turn off notifications (during virtual Zoom sessions only).
- Recorder invites everyone to share for 2-4 minutes depending on the table/breakout session size. Recorder to call on each person to ensure everyone has an opportunity to share. The following guidelines will be on each table, or shared in the chat during the Zoom sessions:
 1. Let each other speak fully and avoid any interruptions - recognize the Holy Spirit speaking through each person.
 2. Listen with the intent to learn and understand, not to respond.
 3. Be an active and attentive listener.
 4. To encourage active participation in listening, use nonverbal communication, i.e., ASL (American Sign Language), when appropriate, to indicate understanding or to express agreement. (Important for virtual only)
 5. Refrain from debates, disagreements, arguments, etc.,
 6. Only speak to your own personal or lived experience. Share using “I” statements. Avoid generalizing.
 7. Keep an open mind.
 8. Your contribution is important and valuable! Please do not minimize it.
 9. Participate enthusiastically!

Guidelines for Facilitators & Recorders

- Prepare opening and closing prayer. Recommend social justice orientation to the prayers and perhaps a meditation for the opening prayer to center everyone prior to starting. Remind the participants that Jesus is present in our discussions and to view this gathering as a community prayer.
- Be concise and brief in the opening remarks.
- Take notes to capture all that was shared. The recorder at the table/break out room sharing use the last 2-3 minutes to recap what was shared. The facilitators will do this at the end of the session for what was shared by the reporters to the whole group.
- For in-person Town Hall, use large post-it note pads on tripods to take full group notes. Paste notes on the wall around the hall. For zoom, take notes on a PowerPoint slide that is then screen-shared with the participants.

- Remain in the hall for 30 minutes after the event to capture additional comments from participants.

“Diversity is inviting new people to the party. Inclusion is asking them to dance.” - Verna Myers

