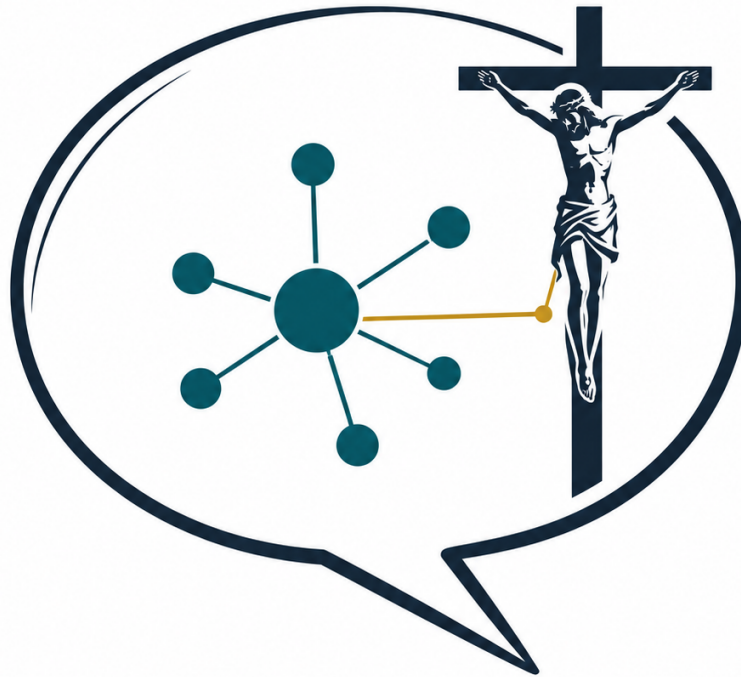




FOUNDATIONS
OF
COMMUNICATION
BUILDING COMMUNION IN THE DIGITAL AGE
+
UT COMMUNIONEM AEDIFICEMUS

STUDENT WORKBOOK

Foundations of Communication

Forms of Communication

A 90-minute introductory primer

From human encounter to divine, ecclesial, pastoral, media, and AI communication

LISTEN • UNDERSTAND • WITNESS • DISCERN • COMMUNICATE

Ut Communionem Aedificemus

Welcome

This workbook helps you participate actively in the introductory session. It combines essential information with spaces for observation, discussion, classification, and personal reflection.

CENTRAL LINE

Communication is the sharing of meaning, relationship, and life in the service of communion.

The six questions

1. Why do human beings communicate?
2. How does God communicate?
3. How has the Church communicated?
4. How should a pastoral minister communicate today?
5. What are the principal forms of communication?
6. How does artificial intelligence change communication?

My expectation

What do I hope to understand or improve during this session?

Opening Scenario: Was It Really Communicated?

SCENARIO

A parish announces an important programme. The priest believes the message was clear. Young people say they did not know it was meant for them. Elderly parishioners could not read the poster. Migrant families did not understand the language. The organising team says, "But we communicated it everywhere."

My first response

Was the information sent?

Was the meaning received?

Who was excluded or overlooked?

What forms or channels were used?

What feedback was missing?

Can we say communication truly happened?

Transmission is not yet communication. Communication creates shared meaning, relationship, and response.

1. Why Do Human Beings Communicate?

Human beings communicate because they are relational. Communication enables persons to express themselves, understand others, share knowledge, coordinate action, transmit culture, seek truth, and build community.

We communicate to

- express thought, feeling, identity, and intention;
- understand and be understood;
- form and sustain relationships;
- share knowledge and memory;
- coordinate action and resolve conflict;
- transmit faith, culture, and values;
- create participation, belonging, and communion.

Basic elements of communication

Element	What it means	Example from my experience
Communicator	The person or group initiating communication	
Recipient	The person or group receiving and interpreting	
Message	The meaning being expressed	
Form / channel	The way the message is carried	
Context	The situation, culture, relationship, and setting	
Feedback	The response showing how the message was received	
Noise / barrier	Anything that interferes with meaning	

Mini-observation

The sentence “You came” can communicate different meanings. Write two possible meanings and what changes them.

2. How Does God Communicate?

Christian communication begins with the God who communicates. Revelation is not merely information about God; it is God's self-gift and invitation into relationship.

God communicates through

Form of divine communication	Meaning
Creation	The world reveals order, beauty, dependence, and gift.
History	God acts within real human events.
Covenant	God forms relationship, belonging, and responsibility.
Prophets and Scripture	God speaks through human words and witnesses.
Words and deeds	Speech and action interpret one another.
Jesus Christ	The Word becomes flesh.
Holy Spirit and community	God continues to guide and form the Church.

John 1:14 — My reflection

“The Word became flesh and lived among us.” What does this reveal about Christian communication?

Jesus communicates through

- parables and questions;
- personal encounters;
- meals and gestures;
- healing and compassion;
- silence and confrontation;
- suffering and self-gift.

KEY INSIGHT

Christian communication is incarnational: word, life, presence, relationship, and action belong together.

3. How Has the Church Communicated?

The Church communicates through proclamation, liturgy, sacraments, Scripture, symbols, art, music, education, service, institutions, and media.

Communication era	Examples	Opportunity or challenge
Oral proclamation	Preaching, testimony, memory, community	
Manuscript and visual culture	Scripture, iconography, architecture, symbol	
Printing	Books, catechisms, newspapers	
Mass media	Radio, cinema, television	
Digital networks	Websites, social media, livestreams, messaging	
Artificial intelligence	Generated text, image, voice, video	

My experience

Which form has most shaped my faith: family conversation, liturgy, print, television, social media, or another form? Why?

KEY INSIGHT

The Church does not merely use communication tools. She must discern the cultures those tools create.

4. How Should a Pastoral Minister Communicate?

A pastoral communicator is not merely a skilled speaker or frequent publisher. The minister listens, interprets, witnesses, teaches, accompanies, moderates, leads teams, and safeguards dignity.

A pastoral communicator is

- ☐ an attentive listener;
- ☐ a credible witness;
- ☐ an interpreter of faith and culture;
- ☐ a bridge-builder;
- ☐ a teacher who adapts language;
- ☐ a leader who coordinates gifts;
- ☐ a guardian of truth, dignity, and privacy;
- ☐ a presence who leads toward accompaniment.

Important distinctions

What it is	What it is not	My note
Presence	Constant availability	
Authenticity	Sharing everything	
Visibility	Credibility	
Popularity	Pastoral fruit	
Leadership	Doing every technical task personally	

Personal reflection

Which quality of pastoral communication do I most need to develop?

KEY INSIGHT

The pastoral communicator seeks not simply to reach people, but to accompany them.

5. Forms of Communication

Communication can be classified in several complementary ways. One communication event may belong to several categories at the same time.

A. By human expression

Form	Meaning	Example
Verbal	Spoken or written language	Conversation, preaching, letters, captions
Non-verbal	Communication without relying mainly on words	Gesture, posture, eye contact, silence
Visual	Meaning through images and visual arrangement	Photographs, symbols, colours, posters
Aural	Meaning through sound	Voice, music, tone, rhythm, bells

Observation activity

Before a priest says the first word at the ambo, what is already being communicated?

Posture: _____

Pace: _____

Facial expression: _____

Silence: _____

Dress / appearance: _____

Use of space: _____

Forms of Communication — Continued

B. By number and relationship

Form	Meaning	My example
Intrapersonal	Communication within oneself: thought, conscience, prayer	
Interpersonal	Communication between persons	
Group	Communication within a small community or team	
Public	One person or group addressing a larger gathering	
Mass	Communication to large dispersed audiences through media	
Networked / digital	Interactive communication across connected platforms	

C. By direction

7. **One-way:** The message moves mainly from sender to receiver.
8. **Two-way:** Participants respond and influence each other.
9. **Many-to-many:** Many people create, share, interpret, and respond.

D. By time

Synchronous: communication happens at the same time.

Asynchronous: communication is received or answered later.

E. By mediation

Direct: immediate human presence.

Mediated: communication through a technological or symbolic medium.

Multimodal: communication combining several forms.

LITURGY AS MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION

The liturgy communicates through word, gesture, symbol, silence, music, space, movement, assembly, and sacrament.

Classification Activity

Classify each example in more than one way.

Example	Expression	Relationship	Direction / time	Mediation
A homily delivered at Sunday Mass				
A parish WhatsApp announcement				
Spiritual direction				
A televised papal Mass				
Silent personal prayer				

Discussion

How does the form shape the experience and meaning? What is gained, and what may be lost?

The form is not merely a container. It shapes how the message is experienced and understood.

6. How Does Artificial Intelligence Change Communication?

AI can assist or generate text, images, music, voices, video, translation, transcription, and summaries. It expands capacity but does not possess moral or pastoral agency.

AI may assist with

- ☐ drafting and outlining;
- ☐ translation and simplification;
- ☐ transcription and subtitles;
- ☐ summarisation and organisation;
- ☐ image, audio, and video generation;
- ☐ format adaptation and accessibility support.

AI does not possess

- ☐ faith or conscience;
- ☐ pastoral experience;
- ☐ personal relationship;
- ☐ spiritual discernment;
- ☐ moral responsibility;
- ☐ ecclesial authority.

Six questions before using AI

Is the output true and verifiable?

My note: _____

Who created, reviewed, and approved it?

My note: _____

Is anyone's identity, face, or voice being imitated?

My note: _____

Is disclosure needed?

My note: _____

Is private or confidential information protected?

My note: _____

Does it strengthen or replace human encounter?

My note: _____

The Six Questions — My Integrated Map

Question	Core insight	My own words
Why do we communicate?	To share meaning, relationship, identity, action, and life.	
How does God communicate?	Through self-gift, covenant, word, deed, presence, and Incarnation.	
How does the Church communicate?	Through proclamation, witness, liturgy, symbol, service, community, and media.	
How should ministers communicate?	Through listening, credibility, leadership, responsibility, and accompaniment.	
What forms do we use?	Verbal, non-verbal, visual, aural, interpersonal, public, mass, digital, and multimodal.	
How does AI affect communication?	It expands assistance and generation, but not human responsibility.	

Complete the sentences

I need to listen more carefully when...

I communicate most naturally through...

One form of communication I need to develop is...

One danger I must guard against is...

My communication should help people move toward...

My Communication Commitment

Complete the statement in 5-7 lines.

The kind of communicator I want to become is...

One practice I will begin

One habit I will stop or reduce

One form of communication I will practise

My Scripture or motto

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, Word made flesh,
teach us to listen before speaking,
to seek truth before visibility,
to protect dignity before impact,
and to use every form and every tool in the service of communion.

Make our words clear,
our presence compassionate,
our witness credible,
our silence attentive,
and our communication responsible and human.

Amen.



LISTEN • UNDERSTAND • WITNESS • DISCERN • COMMUNICATE