Accompaniment, or the intentional ministry of walking with others in their Christian journey, involves special attention to the formation of particular skills.

**ACTIVE LISTENING** Accompaniment involves walking with others in all experiences of their lives, drawing near to another in both joys and challenges. Small group leaders are called to listen to the joys and challenges of participants non-judgmentally, offering prayer, support, and encouragement when appropriate.

**HOSPITALITY** Walking with others requires a welcoming attitude and an openness to connection. Small group leaders cultivate hospitality by intentionally investing in the participants of the group, knowing their names and stories, and fostering a space in which the group can share conversation, mission, and encouragement.

**TRUST** Accompanying others in the midst of their Christian journey requires the building of trust. Small group leaders establish trust within their group by establishing healthy boundaries, maintaining confidentiality when appropriate, and fostering an environment where everyone feels known.

**SELF-AWARENESS** Those who accompany others influence others in their path to holiness. Small group leaders must be active participants in the growth of their own spiritual, mental, and emotional lives so that they may use their gifts and strengths to cultivate holiness within their group.

**GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** The Spirit directs all of our steps in walking the path of the Christian life. Small group leaders take care to allow the Spirit to guide the group in prayer, preparation, and discussion according to the needs of the participants.
HELPFUL PASTORAL TIPS FOR PRACTICING THE ART OF ACCOMPANIMENT

**ACTIVE LISTENING**
- Get to know the participants in your group, and ask them about their stories.
- Encourage everyone to feel free to jump into conversation, but ensure that there is also space for everyone to listen to one another.

**HOSPITALITY**
- Make an effort to know each participant's name, and encourage the entire group to know one another.
- Depending on where and when you host your group, consider offering drinks, snacks, and a comfortable environment.
- Make new members feel welcome by inviting their input into conversation.

**TRUST**
- Discuss as a group, if appropriate, a standard of confidentiality.
- Model non-judgmental listening of others’ experiences.

**SELF-AWARENESS**
- Maintain your own prayer life, attend confession and mass, and pay attention to your own spiritual life and growth.
- Discern your gifts and be aware of your weak points with the help of a trusted friend, counselor, or strength identifying tool.

**GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**
- Pray for your group, the participants, and the intentions of the participants.
- If a need surfaces in a group session that needs attention or extra conversation, pay attention to that.
- Frequently assess the direction of the group to make sure it stays faithful to its mission.