

INCLUSION IN WORSHIP

A Ministry to Welcome Worshippers of All Abilities as Active Participants

INVOLVING CHILDREN, TEENS, AND FAMILIES ON INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY

Renew your congregation's commitment to welcoming members of all abilities with the following educational activities on Inclusion Awareness Day.

STUDENT DISPLAY AND JUNIOR OPEN HEARTS AWARD NOMINATION



Invite students 5 to 18 years old to prepare and display videos, artwork or essays with photos about how the congregation welcomes worshippers of all abilities. Use the *Pathways.org Different Gifts, But the Same Spirit* lesson plans with the students before they create their projects.

Display the student's work in the vestibule or at a reception in the social hall after services on Inclusion Awareness Day. You may choose to submit the best work, with a completed nomination form, to *Pathways.org* for a Junior Open Hearts Award grant of up to \$1,000 to help fund an access or inclusion project at your house of faith.



TEEN GREETERS ON INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY

Invite teens in your youth group to greet and distribute prayer cards or special bulletins on Inclusion Awareness Day. Download a bulletin cover and articles or Prayer Cards for printing from www.InclusionInWorship.org.

Train the teens to be sensitive to and respectful of worshippers of all abilities. Read the *Guidelines for Ushers and Lay Leaders* and *How You Can Make a Difference*, available on www.InclusionInWorship.org, with the teens. Have teens practice, smiling, making eye contact and saying “Welcome, today is Inclusion Awareness Day!” as they hand out cards or bulletins.

Make greeter badges and have teens pick up their badges and prayer cards or bulletins at a greeters table on Inclusion Awareness Day. Supervise the teens and thank them for their service.

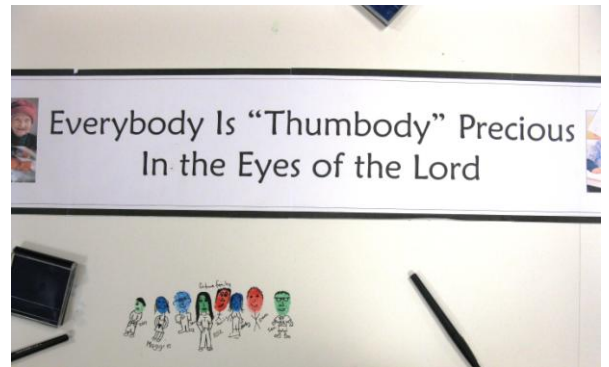
EVERYONE IS “THUMBODY” PRECIOUS IN THE EYES OF THE LORD



Materials:

- Large sheets of banner paper
- Stamp pads in various colors
(or create your own using small sponges and food colors)
- Black thin tipped felt markers
- Disposable wipes to clean thumbs

Spread the large sheets of banner paper on tables at a reception after services or in the vestibule on Inclusion Awareness Day. Write “Everyone is ‘Thumbody’ Precious in the Eyes of the Lord” in the center of each banner in large letters. Invite families to coat their thumbs lightly on the stamp pads and press their prints onto the large banner paper to make a head and a body. Use the markers to draw eyes, nose, mouth, hair, arms, legs, clothes etc. on your thumbprint portrait. Sign your name below your portrait. Clean off thumbs with wipes. When each paper is covered with thumbprint people, display the banner in the vestibule the weekend following Inclusion Awareness Day for all to see.



FAMILY COUNCIL MEETING

Gather your family and discuss the following points to see how accessible and inclusive your faith community is:

- 1) Identify each family member's gifts and abilities.
- 2) Talk about the different gifts that we have been given. What are our gifts? How well do you use them for the good of all? How well do we recognize the gifts of others, especially the gifts of people with disabilities?
- 3) Discuss "people first" language to use when talking about or writing about individuals who have disabilities. Name the person first – a boy who is deaf, a girl who is blind – and emphasize what a person can do as opposed to can't do – a person uses a wheelchair or walks with crutches. Practice using the correct words as you are reinforcing the lesson of inclusion.
- 4) Talk with your children about how they would play with a person who is blind or deaf. For instance, a person who is blind may have a dog that helps them. To communicate with a person who has a hearing loss, you will have to speak clearly and directly to the person so that he can read your lips.
- 5) Talk about how your congregation is equipped (or not equipped) to meet the needs of ALL its members.

Use this checklist to get your discussion started:

- Do you have a ramp into church or onto the altar for the people who use a wheelchair or walk with crutches?
 - Do you have signs to show where the accessible ramps are?
 - Are those with disabilities invited to be ministers at worship services?
 - Can people who use wheelchairs or walkers sit with their families throughout the church?
- 6) Write your pastor or leadership council and suggest forming an inclusion committee.



Adapted from Different Gifts, But the Same Spirit Family Guide by Mary Sue Wielgus