

BELONGING

Some good ideas used by congregations and religious schools to welcome all abilities in the area of belonging:

- Start a TEAM Belong Ministry to survey, train and transform your parish and school into places of belonging for individuals of all abilities. Use the *That Every Ability May Belong Ministry Handbook* to get started.
- Know the stages of belonging and decide what your community can do differently so that people with disabilities are not just present but truly belong. See the *Stages of Belonging* and *Reflection on Belonging* handouts.
- Examine attitudes towards disabilities and teach the 4D Approach (see *Interacting with People with Disabilities* handout) to remove stigma so that everyone feels comfortable ministering alongside individuals of all abilities as co-laborers and fellow missionary disciples.
- Use the ministry of Jesus and the healing stories in Scripture as a model for interacting with people with disabilities. See *The Ministry of Jesus as a Model* handout.
- Do not assume that you know what people with disabilities need. Ask parishioners and students with disabilities, “What can we do to welcome you and your family into our faith community?”
- Train clergy, staff, ministry leaders, school personnel, parishioners and students in disability etiquette so that everyone feels comfortable interacting with people of all abilities. See *Know Your Disability Etiquette* handout.
- Audit all ministries to make sure accessibility and belonging for people with disabilities is their priority. See the *Accessibility Audit for Ministries* handout.
- Take concrete steps to achieve belonging for every ability by completing the *Accessibility Plan* worksheet for your church and school campuses.
- Plan and celebrate *That Every Ability May Belong Month* to educate and transform your parish and school into places of belonging for all abilities.
- Distribute and use the *Making Meetings Accessible* handout so that all meetings and events create belonging for individuals of all abilities.