

TEN WAYS TO WELCOME ALL ABILITIES IN THE AREA OF BELONGING

What makes individuals with disabilities and their families feel they truly belong? So often we think we have done our job if individuals with disabilities are present. But that is only the first step. So much more work follows to ensure that individuals of all abilities experience true belonging. Below are some good ideas for each of the stages of belonging used by parishes and schools to welcome individuals of all abilities as fellow missionary disciples

People of all abilities and their families are:	When we:
1. PRESENT	Provide an accessible campus.
2. INVITED	Extend personal invitations as a first step in getting to know someone and the accommodations they may need.
3. WELCOMED	Train everyone to play a role in hospitality.
4. KNOWN	Introduce people of all abilities to one another.
5. ACCEPTED	Facilitate small groups <u>over time</u> to encourage personal interactions.
6. SUPPORTED	Ask, "What can we do for you?"
7. CARED FOR	Show kindness and concern.
8. BEFRIENDED	Design ministries to facilitate friendships.
9. NEEDED	Provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to minister to others.
10. LOVED	Recognize the contributions of individuals with disabilities as fellow missionary disciples.

Adapted with permission from Erik Carter, Vanderbilt University, www.erikwcarter.com.