

Different Gifts, Same Spirit

Creating a Learning Community Where Everyone Belongs

FOR THE FAMILY

Dear Parent(s),

This week your children are learning about faith communities where every ability belongs.

We are basing our lessons for the children and young people on the following scripture passage:

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as He wishes.”

In this passage we are shown that through the Spirit all persons are given gifts for the good of the entire community. Each person is expected to use his/her gifts for the common good.



It would be a waste if that gift were not acknowledged by the community and put to good use.

The children and young people learned about belonging for persons with disabilities in their adventures and their worship. You can help us to reinforce these ideas by participating in one or more of the suggested activities for the family.

Enjoy this time with your family. It is certainly a time of learning, but more importantly it is a time for the family to grow in its faith. A good mealtime discussion would be to talk about the gifts each family member (from the littlest to the biggest) has, and how those gifts are used for the common good.

You and your family could also brainstorm ideas for the parish and school to create belonging for all.

FAMILY COUNCIL MEETING

To reinforce what was learned in class, we ask you to do the following:

1. Pray the family prayer as follows:

Dear God,

Help us to be open to all the gifts that we have received.

Help us to use those gifts wisely and for all persons at home, at school and in the parish.

Help me to see each person and his or her gift rather than the person and his or her disability or difference.

Help me to remember that we all have difficulties of one sort or another. We have all been given gifts to share with one another.

We pray this in the name of Christ Jesus who has gifted us.

2. Identify each family members' gifts and abilities. Talk about the differences in each family member and how our differences compliment each other.
3. Read the scripture passage on the front page or look it up in the family Bible - 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.
4. Read and discuss *Know Your Disability Etiquette* (pages 5-7) together.
5. Talk about how your family, your parish and your school can create belonging for people of all abilities.



Here is a partial checklist:

- Do you have a ramp into church and school 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 the restrooms accessible in the church and school?
- Are persons with disabilities invited to be ministers at the Liturgy?
- Can people who use wheelchairs or walkers sit with their families in various areas throughout the church?
- What could be done at our parish and school so That Every Ability May Belong?

6. After you have discussed these things, consider undertaking one or more of the following projects:
- Write a letter to your pastor or parish council to suggest forming a *That Every Ability May Belong Ministry*. Many pastors and parish councils have found a permanent ministry can bring about long lasting change that creates belonging for all abilities in the parish and school.
 - As a family, volunteer with Special Olympics, Buddy Baseball, Best Buddies or other organizations that serve people with disabilities.
 - Practice using People First Language with your children. Name the person first – a boy who is deaf, a girl who is blind. Emphasize what a person can do as opposed to what they cannot do – a person uses a wheelchair or walks with crutches.
 - Talk with your children about hidden or invisible disabilities. One may be a learning disability. Your children probably know someone in their school with such a disability. Use this as a starting point when talking about disabilities with your children.
 - Explore the website www.TEAMBelong.org and look for Video Training, videos and handouts about belonging for all abilities in our parishes, schools and religious education programs.
- 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. You may also want to take a sign language class at your community college to learn some basic sign language skills.
 - Volunteer to coordinate a That Every Ability May Belong Month at your parish and school. Visit www.TEAMBelong.org for the TEAM Belong Month workbook of ideas and planning materials.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- **That Every Ability May Belong Video Training** free at www.TEAMBelong.org.
- **Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors** video featuring Joseph Cardinal Bernardin and Fr. Henri Nouwen, free at www.TEAMBelong.org.
- **The Vulnerable Journey**, video featuring Father Henri Nouwen speaking about the importance of belonging for people of all abilities in church life, free at www.TEAMBelong.org.
- **National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities (NCPD)**, www.ncpd.org
- **Loyola Press Adaptive Finding God**, www.loyolapress.com
- **The 5 Stages of Disability Attitudes**. Vinnie Adams, Jan. 23, 2019, Disability Concerns, www.youtube.com
- **Incomplete Without You: The Church and People with Disabilities**, Eric W. Carter, Feb. 6 2019, www.youtube.com

RESOURCES FOR THAT EVERY ABILITY MAY BELONG MONTH

Your school and parish are invited to celebrate an annual That Every Ability May Belong Month to reflect on how well we create belonging for parishioners and students with disabilities and their families. Your school and parish can join this effort with these and other resources at www.TEAMBelong.org.

- **TEAM Belong Month Workbook**
- **Prayer Cards**
- **TEAM Belong Month Checklist**
- **Blessing for an Accessible Feature**
- **TEAM Belong Month Family Guide**
- **Bulletin Items**

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1-800-364-1337 www.TEAMBelong.org

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KNOW YOUR DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

Use the tips below so that you know how to comfortably interact with classmates and parishioners of all abilities.

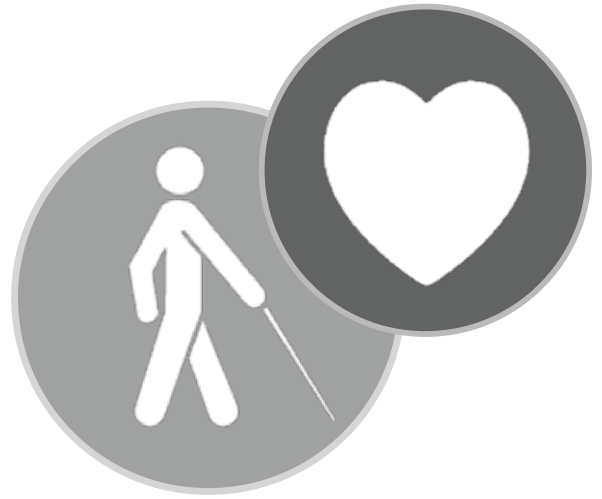
GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What do you say when you meet a person with a disability? How about, “Hello?”
2. A warm smile and friendly conversation are very welcoming.
3. Speak directly to the person with a disability, not only to the family member, companion, interpreter or canine companion.
4. Use people-first language such as “people with disabilities” NOT “the disabled” and “a parishioner who is blind” NOT “a blind parishioner.”
5. Ask the person with the disability HOW you can help. Respect any refusal.
6. Offer accessible seating, large-print bulletins, missalettes, or assistive listening devices. Know where accessible washrooms are.
7. Recognize that each person has gifts and abilities. Ask parishioners with disabilities if they would like to usher, bring up the gifts, proclaim the word, etc. and provide any accommodations needed.
8. Be sensitive to where a person wishes to receive communion – at their seat or at the altar – and make sure they are accommodated.
9. Feel comfortable using words like see, walk, and listen with persons with disabilities.
10. Use accessibility logos in print materials and on signage.



WELCOMING PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR HAVE VISION LOSS

1. Identify yourself when you greet the person. Tell the person when you are about to leave.
2. Talk normally, using your customary voice and typical expressions like “See you later.”
3. Offer your arm when assisting, the same way an usher does at a wedding.
4. Give verbal cues such as “We are going through a doorway.” Explain the traffic pattern with clear, calm instructions such as “Go up the center aisle.”



WELCOMING PEOPLE WITH MOBILITY DIFFERENCES

1. Speak directly to the person.
2. Offer assistance, but accept a “No, thank you.”
3. Sit down so that you are at eye-level if the conversation will last more than a few minutes.
4. Shake hands or lightly touch a shoulder in the same way you would with others.
5. Keep a person’s wheelchair or walker near the person.

WELCOMING PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

1. Face the person. He/she will appreciate seeing your facial expression and may read your lips. Your face, gestures, and body movements help in understanding.
2. Move closer rather than shout.
3. Speak clearly and slowly. Writing may be necessary. →

WELCOMING PEOPLE WITH SPEECH DIFFERENCES

1. Be patient. Let a person talk at his/her own pace.
2. Remember a person may have communication means other than speech, such as writing.
3. Ask questions that require short answers or a shake of the head. If you cannot understand, rephrase the question.
4. Repeat or paraphrase what was said in order to confirm that you understand.



WELCOMING PEOPLE WITH COGNITIVE DIFFERENCES

1. Greet the person and interact normally.
2. Keep things simple and uncomplicated.
3. Treat people equally regardless of participation level; give prayer books or hymnals to all; allow everyone a chance to speak.