

Different Gifts, Same Spirit

Creating a Learning Community Where Everyone Belongs

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever observed an “outsider,” a young person standing alone near a group of teens involved in some activity? At a time in life when peer acceptance is so important, and individuals can be so self-conscious, the reasons for a teen’s isolation may be the “wrong” clothes or a disability. No matter the reason, isolation is always painful.

This lesson addresses the challenge of belonging for young teens today. Using a passage from St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, you and your students will reflect together and explore the nature of “giftedness” and “disability.”

OBJECTIVES OF THIS LESSON

Students will:

- gain insights into their own giftedness and limitations and the giftedness and limitation of others;
- come to appreciate the gifts of each person, including those with disabilities;
- discover some of the limitations experienced and adaptations used by people with disabilities; and
- join with others to pray for belonging for all abilities.



PREPARE YOURSELF

Begin by reading through the student lesson. Then, prayerfully think about your own experiences with disabilities. If you haven’t already done so, gather with other teachers to view the *That Every Ability May Belong Video Training* at www.TEAMBelong.org. Discuss and share your own ideas and feelings.

Since you are teaching high school students, consider whether viewing the video training would be valuable for your class to view after they have studied this lesson with you.

PREPARE MATERIALS

Make copies of the two lists of commands on the next page for the simulation activity described in the lesson. Provide cotton earplugs for each student. Have at least one Bible, or a copy of 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 for each student.

TEACHING HINTS

- 1. Before you distribute the student lesson papers:** Write the letters “MVP” on the board or on newsprint. Tell students the letters will stand for “Most Valuable Person” today, and ask them to help you make a list of valuable people and some of their gifts. For instance, students might list “mom” because she helps her kids with homework, or friend “Joe” because he’s great at math.
- 2. Read from the Bible:** If you like, have Bibles for each student, but read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 aloud yourself, with appropriate emphasis and feeling. Ask students if they know anyone who has any of the gifts Paul listed in this passage (wisdom in discourse, power to express knowledge, faith, healing, and prophecy). Remark that Paul only wrote a partial list of gifts here.
- 3. Distribute the student lesson papers:** Read *The Most Valuable Player* story aloud. (student lesson page one). Then direct students to read *Different Gifts, All Needed* (student lesson page one) silently and fill in the blanks naming their own and others’ gifts (Examples of



gifts could include athletic, artistic or academic abilities, etc.). Spend some time discussing this section when all have finished.

Read the first two paragraphs of *We All Have Gifts* aloud (student lesson page two). Get the whole class involved answering the question about some disabilities they know (for example: people who cannot see, hear or walk; people who have difficulty speaking; people with depressed spirits; people addicted to drugs or alcohol).

Read the rest of the section aloud, stopping to encourage students to answer the questions together.

- 4. Written Activities:** Guide students in doing the activity in *More Able than We Think* (student lesson page three). Have them work together in pairs or threes. Discuss the ways to welcome people who have disabilities listed in this section.

5. Simulation Activity: Ask students to divide into pairs. Distribute the following lists of commands, giving half of the students list “A” and their partners list “B.”

List A:

- Sit down.
- Clap three times.
- Bunny, pink.
- Jump up.
- Wave your right hand.
- Go to the door.
- Mom and Dad.

List B:

- Shut your eyes.
- Smile.
- Book, paper,
- Shake my hand.
- Run in place.
- Bend your knees.
- Red white and blue.

Give each student cotton or earplugs (or ask them to plug their ears with their fingers).

Ask Students with list “A” to read each command softly and wait for their partner to respond by doing that command. Then ask students with list “B” to do the same.

Note: Two commands per list are nonsense commands meant to make the exercise more challenging.

Use the questions in the student paper under “Questions to Consider” to lead a discussion of the experience (student lesson page four).

6. Prayer: Give Students time to write a petition that can be prayed aloud during the prayer service. You might want to have students work in pairs to write a petition. When all petitions are written, gather students in a prayer circle and lead them in the simple Prayer That All People May Belong (student lesson page four).

Produced and distributed by

Pathways .org TEAM Belong: That Every Ability May Belong

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

Contributing writers: Peg Bowman, Lois De Felice, Marilyn Krawczyk and Sue Weilgus
With Ecclesiastical Approbation – Archdiocese of Chicago – September 8, 1999

NOTES

KNOW YOUR DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

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

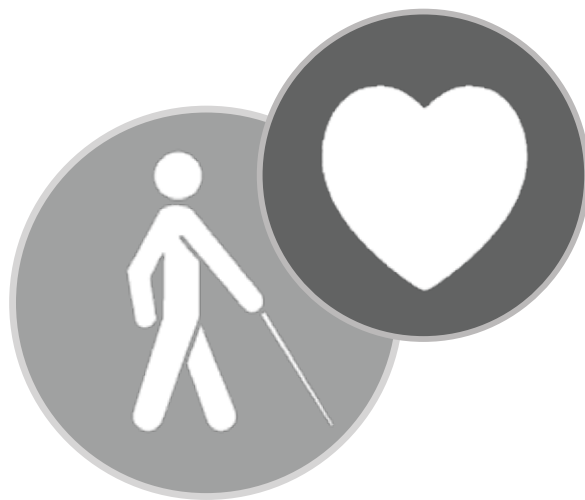
GENERAL INFORMATION

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.