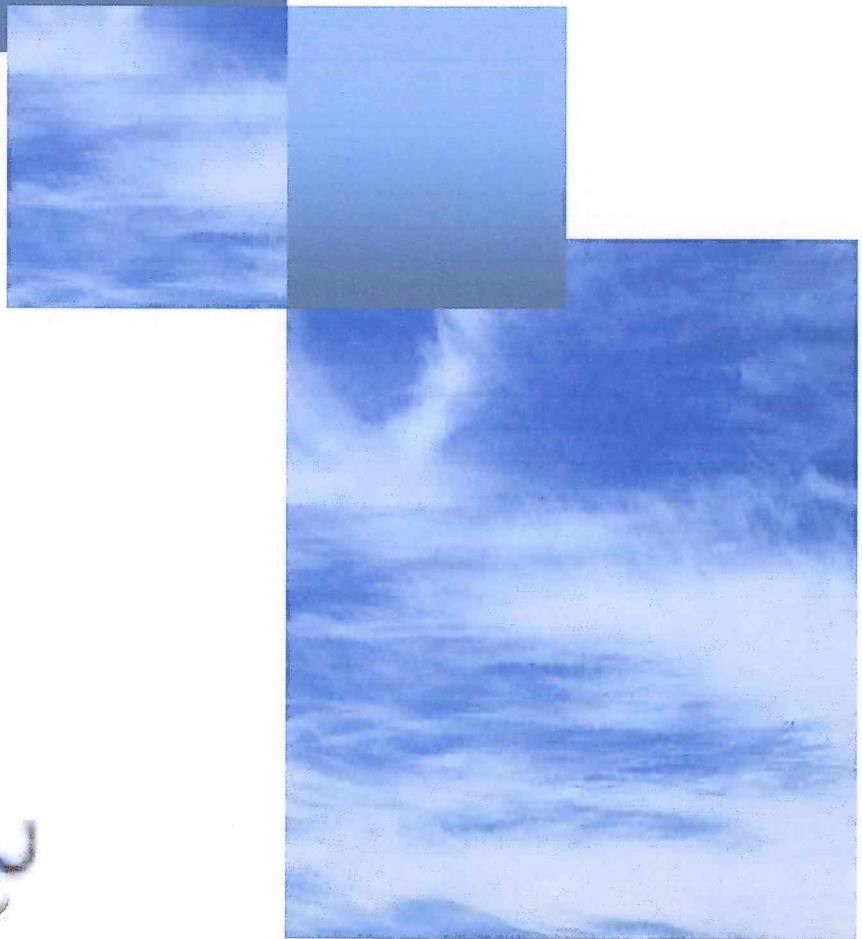


Activities for Raising Disability Awareness



Activities for Raising Disability Awareness

Christian Horizons is pleased to partner with CCFH to bring you the Canadian version of this great resource. Christian Horizons seeks to work with churches and families as they seek to support and minister to those with exceptional needs. For further information on disability ministry, please contact us at our office:

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*But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and
not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

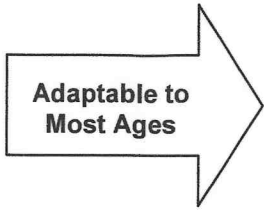
—Isaiah 40:31 KJV

CCFH Ministries seeks to share the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ with people with disabilities. One of the steps toward that goal is to help everyone realize how restrictive a disability can be. By experiencing the traits of some disabilities, you can get an idea of what limitations may be present. Our hope is that once your awareness is raised, you will have a new understanding of and appreciation for the obstacles present for those who live with a disability—and for their families.

For those reasons, we have put together the suggestions in this booklet. Adapt them to fit the age of your group and your environment but do not attempt to make the activities easy. The whole point is to experience the barriers.

Our hope is in the Lord. We must strive to break down the walls that may prohibit people who have mental and physical disabilities from realizing salvation. They will then be able to rejoice with us in the knowledge that one day God's saving grace will free us of the bodies and minds we now possess.

Use the suggestions in this booklet to become more aware of potential limiting circumstances in our church buildings and programs. We must make the church a place where those of all abilities may come to know the blessings of faith in Jesus and to worship and participate actively in church life.



Activity: "If I were disabled . . ."

Purpose: To get students to think about how limiting a disability is and is not.

Materials needed:

- wall board and markers or chalk
- or a large poster board and markers, and some way to affix the poster to the wall
- or an easel

At the top of your writing area, write in large letters "If I were disabled . . ." Invite the students to complete the sentence by thinking of some type of disability and how it would affect their lives. The answers you get will depend on the age you are working with. Prime the pump with statements such as:

- "If I was deaf or hard of hearing, I would not be able to enjoy . . ."
- "If my eyesight was severely limited, I would not be able to . . ."
- "If I used a wheelchair, I would not be able to . . ."
- "If I could not speak, my friends would . . ."

A variation on this idea is to walk around your church building or wherever you are, look at various structures, and complete the sentences:

- "If I used a walker, I would not be able to get through this door alone."
- "If I had poor eyesight, I would not be able to read this bulletin board."
- "If I was deaf, I would not be able to use that telephone."

After your students have made a good list, turn the questions around. Finish sentences such as:

- If I was deaf or hard of hearing, I could still . . .
- If I was blind, I could still . . .
- If I used a wheelchair, I could still . . .
- If I could not speak, I could still . . .

In your discussion, point out that while disabilities do limit some activities, they do not limit everything. Turn the discussion to how we can provide assistance or accommodations in some of the areas that were mentioned. Discuss how we must realize the worth of each individual just as Jesus does.

After class, cut the poster board apart into strips and tape the messages around the room (or around the church building). The message, "If I used a wheelchair, I would not be able to use this restroom" taped near a restroom door will be an eye-opener for church leaders!



Suitable for
Young Children

Activity: The "Good Time" Music Band

Purpose: to understand that each person is important

Materials Needed:

- Rhythm instruments; one for each child
- Small placards to hang around the neck
- Stick-on nametags

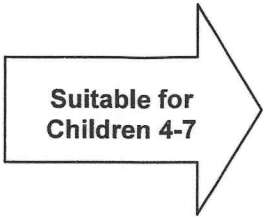
Write the name of a disability on each placard or nametag. You can use each disability more than once so that there will be enough tags for every student to have one. Use titles like "Loss of Hearing," "Loss of Sight," "Learning Disability," "Loss of Leg," "Loss of Arm," "Loss of Speech," "Mental Illness," "Autism," "Physical Illness," etc. Try to use words the children will understand.

Give each child a rhythm instrument. These can be jingle bells, rice inside paper cups taped together, spoons (to bang together) oatmeal box drums, toy instruments, kazoos, etc. Party stores sell all kinds of noisemakers. Chopsticks make good drumsticks on an empty metal can—smooth the edges first.

Have the group sing and play a simple song, such as "Jesus Loves the Little Children," or "Jesus Loves Me." Encourage everyone to sing and play loudly. Then ask everyone who has loss of sight and loss of hearing to put their instruments down and go sit down (away from the group). Play and sing the song again (or pick another song). Have more children leave the group. When you are down to just a few children singing by themselves, ask everyone to come back into the group.

Ask, "What happened to our music when people left the group? Why didn't it sound as good as before? We needed everyone in the group, didn't we?"

"Life is like that, too. Sometimes we may see someone who cannot walk and we might think that we do not need him in our group. Or we might see a girl who has autism and think that she can't add anything to our song. But she can. We need everyone. God made us the way we are and He likes the kind of music that everyone makes. He wants everyone He made to be in the band and be able to make music. Let's play our song again, with *everyone* playing, and see how good it can sound!"



Activity: Relay Races

Purpose: to experience the limitation of disabilities; let the children get an idea of what it feels like to have something impeding their activities.

Materials Needed:

- Plastic shape ball or similar shape toy where there is only one hole that a shaped piece will fit into
- Work gloves or thick socks for each child or each team
- Plastic T-Ball batting stations
- Eye patches (on elastic bands)
- Wrap-around weights
- Blindfolds

A Divide your group into as many teams as you have shape ball toys. All participants must wear large work gloves or thick socks on their hands. (Trading off the gloves or socks can be part of the race.) Put the shaped ball toys at one end of the room and the teams at the others. Each child must put on a pair of work gloves or put thick socks on his or her hands, run to the other end and place all the shaped pieces into the ball, run back and give the gloves/socks to the next person. (Someone at the other end will be emptying out the shape pieces to get ready for the next participant.)

B Divide your group into as many teams as you have T-ball sets. Have a T-ball batting contest, but each participant must bat with his dominant eye covered, or, must bat using only his non-dominant arm. Try it both ways. Decide in advance how many times each child may swing. Give points according to how far the ball goes. You might want to set masking tape distances on your floor.

C Run a short race or obstacle course with weights added to the children's arms and legs. It will surprise your students how just a little added weight can make running a real challenge. Once again, if there is a shortage of weights, this can be done as a relay.

D Divide your groups into as many teams as you have "dressing stations." At each dressing station, have a man's shirt with buttons, or a pair of lace up boots or tennis shoes (big enough to fit everyone. Blindfold the first child in each team and have them go to the dressing station, find the shirt or shoes, put them on, take them back off and walk back to his or her team.



Suitable for
Children 8-12

Walk a While In My Shoes

Purpose: to experience the challenge of disabilities; let the young people get an idea of what it feels like to have something impeding their activities.

Materials Needed:

- Kneepads
- Softballs
- Wheelchairs—not electric
- Old tires and ropes
- Thick socks, men's shirts or zipper jackets

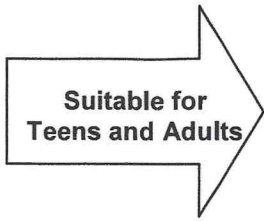
A Have your young people play a game of volleyball on their knees. A lawn would be a good place for this activity, and/or have them wear knee pads. Anyone who uses a foot will immediately be eliminated from the game. If you have more students than needed for nine players one each side, then rotate new players in (perhaps after a person has served).

B Have a softball-throwing contest with each person using his non-dominant arm. You can set up a target and/or judge by distance.

C Have a wheelchair race. Do not use electric wheelchairs. Have marked lanes so that each person stays within his area. This can be done as a relay.

D Run a race with an old tire tied to each person's waist. Or run a relay race using as many tires as you have.

E Have a "Dressing Self" relay race. Participants must put on and take off a buttoned shirt or a zippered jacket while wearing work gloves or thick socks on their hands.



Researchers On Wheels

Purpose: to raise awareness of the challenges faced by those who use wheelchairs and to present ideas to the church board on how the church building could be more welcoming.

Materials Needed:

- Borrowed or rented wheelchairs
- Notepads
- Pencils
- Assignments

Send out the researches in groups of two or three with one wheelchair. Each member of the group should take a turn using the wheelchair. Assign a different part of the building and the parking area to each group. Ask them to make note of places that they found to be too narrow and hard to maneuver, tables that are too low to accommodate the wheelchair, classrooms and restrooms that are too crowded or not negotiable, doorways that are too narrow, etc.

When all groups return to the starting place, have each report their findings. Together, compose a letter to the church board making them aware of the limitations that the church building presents to those using wheelchairs.

Unopened Mike Night



Adaptable for
All Ages

Purpose: to raise awareness of the challenges faced by people who have hearing loss and think of ways to help them

Materials needed:

Earplugs

Conduct one service (or lesson or event) without using microphones. Invite a few people to whisper through parts of the service, giving announcements or page numbers of songs to be sung, etc. Ask a good portion of your group to wear earplugs throughout the event. Provide a taste of what it is like to have a hearing impairment while attending a service planned for an able-bodied congregation.

After the lesson or service, conduct a discussion. Ask those who were wearing earplugs how it felt to hear little if anything. Ask those who struggled to hear the announcements how they felt. How did it feel to have someone shout in your ear to tell you what you missed? After a while, did you just sit back and quit trying to participate?

Together, make a list of ways that a worship service or Sunday school class could be adapted so that students with hearing impairment would still be able to participate.



Adaptable for
All Ages

Activity: In Search of Sight

Purpose: to raise awareness of the challenges faced by people who have visual impairment and to think of ways to empower them.

Materials needed:

- Light dimmer switches
- Blindfolds made from semi-transparent fabrics
- Reading (magnifying) glasses
- Partially obscured sunglasses
- Reduced print bulletins or handouts

Not too many people have perfect vision, so perhaps the best way to increase awareness of those with uncorrectable vision problems is merely to ask everyone to remove their contact lenses and take off their glasses. Those with perfect vision can slip on a pair of reading glasses which will distort their vision. Or, you can ask people to put on semi-transparent blindfolds. If you have the time and the resources, you can also affix semi-transparent, patterned paper to sunglasses (such as the paper used to cover windows). This will both dim and distort the wearer's vision.

Bring down the light in your auditorium or room or turn it off all together. Then ask people to participate in normal activities, singing from a hymnbook or from the projection screen, reading from the bulletin or their Bibles, or filling out a questionnaire that you hand out. When preparing this bulletin or questionnaire, set your font color in gray and use a small font size.

Tell your participants that they are not allowed to remove the distortion glasses, turn on the lights, or do anything else to improve their vision. When everyone is thoroughly frustrated, lead a discussion on these obstacles. Remind your audience that for people with cataracts, tunnel vision, or macular degeneration, fixing the problem is not as easy getting a new pair of glasses. Invite your audience to suggest things that can be done to accommodate those who have vision problems. For example: Projecting the lyrics to be sung over photos or moving film makes them very difficult for some to read. If you want to have a photographic background, at least prepare a blank area in the middle of the screen where the lyrics can be projected.

Close with a prayer that we will all be more sensitive to those who have limited vision and will do what we can to be sure that they have the resources available to participate in worship and church life.



Adaptable for
All Ages

Activities: Appreciating the Skill

Purpose: to increase awareness of the skill involved in using sign language, finger spelling, and reading Braille

Materials needed:

- Braille Alphabet Cards (three cents apiece) and/or
- “Braille Is Beautiful” kit (\$40 for material for 100) available from the National Federation of the Blind; <http://www.nfb.org>
- Or, photocopies of page 12 (will not give users the “feel”)
- Photocopies of page 13
- Someone who can finger-spell fluently
- Someone who can read Braille fluently (and ask them to bring their Braille Bible)
- Someone who can use American Sign Language fluently

If you do not have anyone in your congregation who can do any of the things listed above—you need to begin a disabilities ministry! Seriously, this is a good opportunity to showcase the skills of blind and deaf members of your congregation—or community. If you do not know of anyone, contact the nearest home or school for the blind and for the deaf and ask them if they can send someone to enlighten your group.

Make plans well in advance and let them know who is going to be present and what format will be used. For ease of communication, you should have an interpreter present for a deaf person. This will make responses to questions from the audience easier.

A Braille Learning Activity

Ask the organization for the blind if they will prepare lists of names of Bible people and/or simple phrases in Braille for your audience to “read.” If you need 50 copies (for example) of these lists, this will take some time to prepare. Or, you can set the names in Braille by cutting and pasting the Braille alphabet (page 12) and photocopying it for each member of your audience. Or, you can purchase a Braille slate and stylus to make the samples yourself. This is also going to take some time.

Hand out copies of the Braille Alphabet to each person and a copy of words and phrases written in Braille. Allow each person to interpret the list. Or, to make things more active, print one Bible name or phrase on each of 25 cards. On the backside of each card, print the corresponding number from 1-25. Tell your students to number their

pages from 1 to 25, and then pass the cards around the room. Students will "read" card number 1, and write the answer in space number 1, etc.

When the cards have been around the room, go through the answers to see who got the most right. Here are some sample names:

- | | | | | |
|------------|------------|-----------|------------|---------------|
| 1. Jehovah | 6. Eve | 11. Luke | 16. Luke | 21. Titus |
| 2. Jesus | 7. Ruth | 12. David | 17. Paul | 22. Herod |
| 3. Adam | 8. Esther | 13. Job | 18. Lydia | 23. Martha |
| 4. Noah | 9. Jacob | 14. Mark | 19. Dorcas | 24. Philip |
| 5. Moses | 10. Joseph | 15. Peter | 20. Mary | 25. Priscilla |

B Braille Appreciation

Ask your blind guest to read a passage from his or her Braille Bible. Let your class members follow along in the same translation. The point of this activity is to allow class members to see that a blind person can read just as fast and just as well as a sighted person (sometimes better)!

If your guest is willing, have a question and answer time so that the sighted people can learn what aids the blind person uses in his or her daily activities.

C Finger-Spelling Appreciation

Ask a deaf person to finger-spell a short paragraph as he (or someone else) reads it aloud. Have the deaf person or the interpreter explain that finger-spelling is normally used just for names and obscure words, since sign language is used for everything else. However, since sign language takes much longer to learn than the 26 letters of the alphabet, a hearing person who wants to ease communication with a friend who is deaf should try finger-spelling first.

D Finger-Spelling Activity

Print cards with Bible names or short phrases illustrated in finger-spelling. Pass out these cards, along with copies of the finger-spelling alphabet and allow your group to translate the words.

Divide your group into partners. Let them take turns communicating with each other. Suggest that they finger-spell pets' names, favorite colours, favorite sports, etc. Encourage the participants to use finger-spelling only, not their voices. After the activity, let the students talk about the challenge of making their fingers talk for them, the difficulty of knowing what their partner said, the importance of facial expression, and how to correct anything that would prevent a deaf or hearing impaired person from being incorporated into the life of your church.

The Braille Alphabet

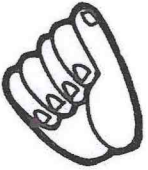




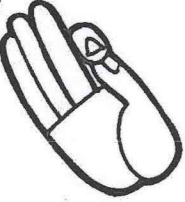
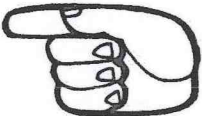
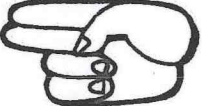

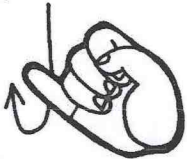


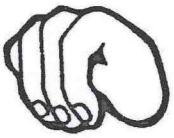
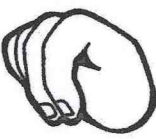

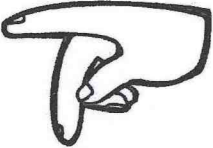
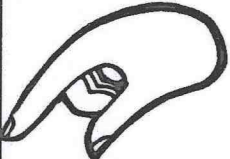
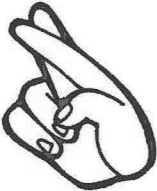


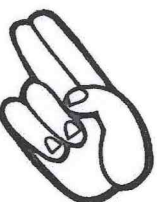
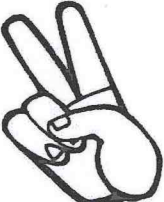
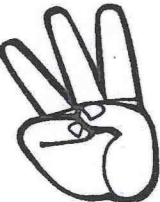

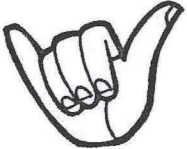

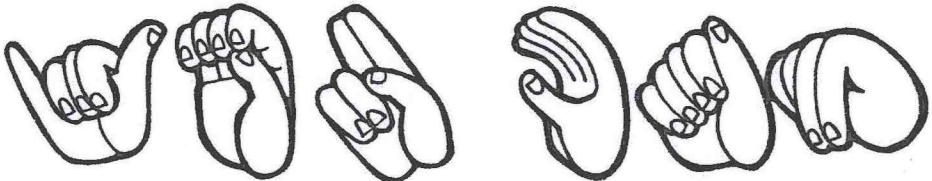
Louis Braille, a French organist and teacher of the blind, created a system of raised – dot writing for literature and music. Before his invention, blind people tried to use a raised-letter system which was difficult to read and even more difficult to create.

Using different combinations of dots in six positions, Braille represents all twenty-six letters of the alphabet, numbers, and punctuation marks and indicates when a letter should be capitalized. The capital sign—dot 6 placed before a letter—makes that letter a capital.

The number sign, dots 3, 4, 5, 6 placed before the characters "a" through "j" makes the numbers 1 through 0. For example, "a" preceded by the number sign is "1," "b" is "2," etc.

positions	A	B	C	D	E	F
1 4 2 5 3 6	●	● ●	● ●	● ● ●	● ●	● ● ●
G	H	I	J	K	L	M
● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●
U	V	W	X	Y	Z	period
● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●

The Finger-Spelling Alphabet

A		B		C		D		E	
F		G		H		I		J	
K		L		M		N		O	
P		Q		R		S		T	
U		V		W		X		Y	
Z									

E Sign Language Appreciation

Have your guest who is deaf demonstrate sign language as he (or another person) speaks the words aloud. Many people have seen interpreters in action at a distance but will appreciate seeing and learning the signs for common words. Invite your guests to teach some signs to your group. (It would be nice to learn the sign for "thank you," so you can thank your guests.) Perhaps your guest could teach the signs to a short song.

Point out that Sign Language is, in fact, another language. Deaf people use it to communicate fluently. Again, with your guest's permission, have a question and answer time. Ask your guest to talk about how he or she handles TV, movies, concerts, and live performances.

Ask your guest to demonstrate a passage of the Bible, using both sign language and finger spelling. Ask the interpreter to read the signs that the deaf person is demonstrating.



Suitable for
Readers

Activity: "Please Follow Directions"

Purpose: To introduce people to the limitations of having a learning disability such as dyslexia.

Materials needed:

- A copy of "Can You Follow These Directions?" for each participant (next page)
- A blank sheet of paper for each participant

Distribute a copy of the directions and a blank piece of paper to each person. Tell them to keep the directions face down until given permission to begin. Set a loud timer for three minutes. (You might allow more time for younger students.)

When the allotted time is up, allow each person to check his or her own answers. Ask why it took so long to read the sentences and make sense of the directions. Point out that people who have dyslexia see letters backwards much of the time. Talk about how frustrating that would be. Ask, "How would you feel if you had trouble reading the simplest of words?"

Discuss what the church can do to make things easier for people who have learning disabilities.

Can You Follow These Directions?

The letters in the directions below are all mixed up. Your brain will have to straighten them out. Read each sentence carefully and do what it says.

On a plank piece of paper
print your name in capital
letters.

Draw a circle that is three
times as long as it is
wide.

Draw a square that has four
sides of equal length.

When you are finished, look
at your work.

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Suitable for
All Ages

Activity: Disabilities Grab Bag

Purpose: To experience the limitations of having a physical disability

Materials needed:

- Thick, clean socks
- Eye patches
- Blindfolds
- Masking tape or duct tape
- Tongue depressors
- Ear plugs
- Crutches
- Wheelchair

Write the disabilities listed below on slips of paper and place them in a bowl or box—something that can be passed around. Ask participants to draw a slip of paper and then disable themselves in the way described. If you want to have a slip of paper for every person in the group, just duplicate the disabilities. (And make sure that you have enough “disabling” supplies on hand.)

Some group members may find some humour in the activities. If so, remind the group that disabilities are no laughing matter. Emphasize that although they are going to remove the disabling devices, people who have disabilities do not have that option.

Arm amputee: the loss of one arm. Tape one arm and hand to the participant’s body so that he or she cannot use it.

Articulation disorder: An impairment that interferes with the ability to speak clearly. Place a clean tongue depressor across the person’s tongue. Allow both sides of the tongue depressor to stick out of the mouth. Tape a piece of tape around one end of the depressor, under the chin, and around the other end, to hold the depressor firmly in place.

Blindness: cover the participant’s eyes with a blindfold. Note: The National Federation of the Blind does not recommend this activity for children. According to them, “It is not a good idea to pretend to be blind. You could get just the opposite impression about what it is like to be blind. You might have a hard time finding things, you might bump into things, you might knock something over, or you might hurt

yourself. You might feel frightened, frustrated or confused; then you might think this is what it is like for blind people. But it is not like that for us. Blind people (depending on how long they've been blind) have training and experience that you do not have, and we know how to do things (sometimes differently) that you do not. It is easier for us than it would be for you. If you want to learn more about blindness, instead of pretending to be blind, you might want to ask a blind person to talk with you. Perhaps you will want to contact a local chapter of the National Federation of the Blind."

Cerebral Palsy: muscular weakness that hampers voluntary movement. Put thick socks on both hands.

Cerebral Palsy: muscular weakness that hampers voluntary movement. Tape the dominant arm to the student's side, forcing him or her to use the non-dominant arm.

Hearing impairment: use earplugs to partially block hearing.

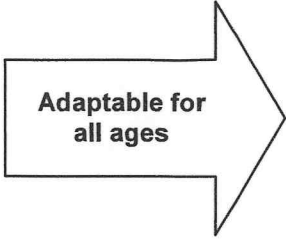
Leg amputee: tape or tie the person's two legs together. Give him or her a pair of crutches.

Paralysis in arms: tape both arms to the participant's sides so that use of arms is eliminated.

Paralysis in legs: tape both legs to the participant's chair, so that use of legs is eliminated. If you can borrow a wheelchair, place the participant in the chair, but tape his or her legs anyway. The participant will be surprised by how often he tries to use his legs.

Visual impairment: cover the dominant eye with an eye patch. Determine the dominant eye by asking the person to imagine he is looking into a telescope or a peephole. The patch should go over the eye that is kept open.

Encourage everyone to remain "disabled" long past the point of discomfort. When you remove the disabling devices, conduct a discussion among the participants. Discuss the frustration they felt, the desire to be able to move and speak freely, and how this exercise affected their self-confidence. Ask if they have a new appreciation for the challenges faced by those with disabilities. Ask what insights they have gained about how to assist people who have permanent disabilities.



Disability Awareness Stations

Set up stations around the biggest room in your church building where children and adults can experience what it is like to have a disability.

Purpose: To have a multi-sensory example of what it is like to live with a disability. Most of the activities in this booklet could be used in a station. More are listed below.

Materials needed are listed with each station

**Station 1
Articulation Disorder**

Provide tongue depressors (in sterile wrapping, if possible), a tape recorder, and a Bible from which to read. Have each participant record his or her voice while holding the tongue down with a tongue depressor. Then have them listen to their recordings.

**Station 2
Visual Impairment**

Provide copies of the Braille alphabet and cards on which Bible names or short verses are written. With the help of the Braille alphabet, allow each person to interpret a card or two.

**Station 3
Learning Disabilities**

Attach a mirror (at least 12" x 24") to a board or wall behind a desk or table. Provide chairs. Mount a piece of stiff cardboard to the front edge of the table, so that the participant has to reach around it to get to the table surface, and so that the participant cannot see his or her hands. The cardboard will have to be fairly tall. Give each person a piece of paper with a few lines at the bottom and a writing instrument. Instruct them to look into the mirror and not at their hands. Ask them to write their name in the top right-hand corner of the paper. Ask them to draw a simple object such as a tree or a house, in the center of the paper. Ask them to write a short verse from the Bible on the lines at the bottom of the page.

**Station 4
Cerebral Palsy**

Provide large work gloves or thick athletic socks for each person to put on their hands. If you can obtain some of those super-large rubber bands (3-4' long) place one around a person's right arm, around their back, and over their left arm to further inhibit mobility. Provide a variety of small motor tasks at this station; a shoe to tie, a shirt to button, a jigsaw puzzle to work, coins to pick up and put in a change purse, etc.

**Station 5
Wheelchair
Maneuverability**

If any members of your congregation use a wheelchair, ask if they have an old one to loan for this activity. See if you can rent a wheelchair or two from a local medical supply store. Ask if you can borrow a couple from a hospital or a store.

Provide a list of places around the church building that a wheelchair user must go. For example:

Go to the rest room and wash your hands.

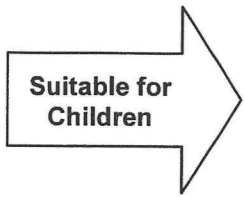
Go to your car to get something.

Go to the kitchen and check the contents of the refrigerator.

If any place on your list is wheelchair inaccessible, so much the better. This will alert your participants to the need for revision within your church building.

**Station 6
Quadriplegic**

Attach a long sheet of roll paper to your wall. Provide a new box of clean crayons. Allow each person to take a crayon and hold it in his or her mouth. Ask them to draw on the piece of paper something that they most enjoy about life. (Use a new crayon for each person.) Instruct your participants to keep their hands behind their backs as they draw. To simulate a true quadriplegic, they should also be seated.



Creating a Library/Conducting a Class

Purpose: To have a resource of material that teachers and parents can use to teach children about disabilities.

Special Olympics provides a good list of available books each year on their web site: www.specialolympics.org. They also have a free, downloadable curriculum called Special Olympics Get Into It (SO Get Into It™). This is a service-learning curriculum that celebrates the diverse gifts of every student whatever his or her ability.

The program was designed as a relatively simple way to achieve several closely related student-learning goals:

- To understand, accept, and celebrate individual differences;
- To learn about and become involved in Special Olympics; and
- To become involved in a service-learning project or activity related to Special Olympics, including participation in Special Olympics sports and events.

SO Get Into It offers teachers tailored curriculums for all grade levels:

- K-2
- Elementary School (grades 3-5)
- Middle School (6-8)
- High School (9-12).

Visit the Special Olympics site for the current list of books and begin to build your library.