



Disability Sunday Resource Pack

Planning Disability Sunday

Please note this is a general overview only, and is not intended to go into all the detailed considerations of different disabilities. [Additional resources](#) with recommendations for specific disabilities are listed at the end of this resource pack.

Step by Step

Step 1 Form a team

Find other people in your church who would be interested in helping your church participate in Disability Sunday. Ask disabled people in the church and others with experience of disability or a heart for disabled people. In addition to disabled people themselves, this may include parents of disabled children or medical or social service professionals.

Key points:

- Get the team members to share their visions and think about the aims of the day. These could include: that people with disabilities of any kind feel welcomed and valued; hear clearly about God's love for them; are able to respond to Him; and go home having had a positive and enjoyable experience of church.
- Carry out a [Survey of Disability Related Needs](#) in your community (see later section in this resource pack)
- Pray together for God's equipping for a Disability Sunday as well as future ministry.
- Develop a proposal as to how your church would hold the Disability Sunday on 6 June 2010 (or another suitable date).

Step 2 Involve your Church's Leadership

If you are not part of the leadership of your church, you and your team should meet with your church's vicar, priest or pastor. (If your church does not have an individual leader, approach your church's leadership team). Present your team's vision for participating in Disability Sunday.

Key points:

- Present why this reflects God's heart.
- Express your team's willingness to take the lead in organising this.
- Explain that the leaders' support and involvement are vital.



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Step 3 Publicity

Disability Sunday is a wonderful opportunity to invite people who are disabled and their families from the community. [Sample Invitation Letter](#) and posters are included in this document.

Publicity can be arranged through [press releases](#) (sample included later) to local newspapers and radio stations, letters to local residential, educational and day care facilities for disabled people, disability organisations, and local schools.

You should also publicise the event in your church starting as early as possible. (Sample [announcements](#) included later). Encourage the congregation to include family, friends or neighbours who are disabled.

Step 4 Develop your plan

Your team should choose which parts of the Disability Sunday programme you want to use. You must do the worship service portion in order for it to be successful. The other parts are strongly recommended because they reinforce the worship service and get people talking about the subject of disability.

The Worship Service - There is no one order of service that suits all churches, so it will be up to you and your church leaders to put together the service. Be sensitive to whatever liturgy may be customary in your particular denomination. It is, however, important that particular care is taken to ensure that the welcome at the beginning draws attention to the facilities available for disabled people, e.g. that there is a loop system, where to sit to benefit from the loop, the provision of large print or Braille song sheets etc.

Remember that people with learning disabilities will not be able to grasp complex language and concepts, so write down what you want to say in your introduction to the meeting, during worship or in the talk, and decide beforehand what songs and prayers to use. Then you will be able to check that the language is appropriate.

The following items may form part of your order of service:

- Someone with a disability to lead the service through
- A personal story (4-5 minutes) by a disabled person or family member
- Music by a disabled person or group.
- Scripture reading and prayer by someone with a disability or a family member.
- A sermon focusing on God's view of people with disabilities. [Outline sermons](#) are included in this document.
- A [drama](#) on the subject of disability

Involve disabled people at every level – taking up the offering, welcoming, giving out song sheets etc.



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Be as creative as possible. Remember that when it comes to worship songs and hymns, many of them contain complex ideas that may be difficult for people with learning disabilities to grasp. However, a programme that is either not Christ-centred or that is completely different from a normal service will detract from future ministry.

Celebration event – you might also decide to have a celebration event or feast, with a talk, drama, witnessing, entertainment etc. around the meal or refreshments.

Small groups you can also hold discussions or Bible studies on the subject of disability in the weeks leading up to Disability Sunday, or afterwards. Involve any existing groups or start new ones, including House groups, youth groups, mother's groups etc. There are [discussion resources](#) later in this pack.

Children's/Youth programme - Talk with the people responsible for your church's children or youth activities and review the programme with them. Make sure they make it their responsibility to carry out the programme. You will have other things to do and they will do a better job of it. Make sure you follow up with them on a regular basis to ensure that the leaders have what they need and are on schedule. You will need to make sure that there are extra helpers available to assist any disabled children or young people who join the special activities. There are suggested resources for [children's](#) and [youth](#) activities later in this pack.

Step 5 Welcomers and Stewards

Preparations for the day must include some training for the stewards or welcome team. A [guidance sheet](#) for stewards/welcomers is included in this document and can be copied and given out to the team. The training should take place before the day, but you should be in touch with the stewarding or welcome team leader well in advance.

It is a good idea to have more welcomers and stewards than usual so that some can show visitors, both disabled and non-disabled people to their seats and introduce the guests to the person who will be sitting next to them. Don't forget to invite disabled members of your existing congregation to be on the welcoming and stewarding team

Step 6 Your Church Building

Your church doesn't have to have perfect access for people with limited mobility, but it should not be an impossible challenge either. A [basic checklist](#) is enclosed for your church. Desirable for the Disability Sunday are:

- Parking for people with disabilities (blue badge holders), which is monitored to make sure that they can park in a suitable place to access the service.
- A way to get into the front of the building without steps.



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- Seating area for wheelchair users that is not only at the back. In other words you should be able to give people who use a wheelchair a choice of whether or not they want to sit in the back, middle or front.
- Child care (crèche, Sunday School) which can meet the needs of a disabled child.
- Large print programmes /orders of service, notice sheets and songs used on the overhead or powerpoint projector (if your church uses such items during a service). Perhaps make all printed material for that day in large print: 16 point type sizes will meet most needs. Or obtain Braille versions.
- An induction loop for hearing aid users.
- A British Sign Language interpreter for Deaf people.
- Wheelchair accessible toilet facilities.
- If you are following the Children's Programme, you should try and make sure those rooms are wheelchair-accessible as well.

Step 7 Church feedback questionnaire

To plan for future disability ministry, collect feedback from the congregation on the service and ideas for meeting needs more effectively. A [Feedback Questionnaire](#) is provided for your use. It can be copied and inserted in an order of service or notice sheet and collected after the worship service.

It is also useful for long term planning if you do a survey of the needs perceived by members of the congregation. This survey will let your team know what needs exist within your church and community. Again, a sample survey is provided for distribution widely within the church.

Step 8 Transport

You may need to consider how disabled people who do not have their own transport may be able to travel to your Disability Sunday service. Advice should be available from local disability charities or social services as to forms of transport which may be made available.

Finally

How about donating your offering for 6 June to a national disability charity or a local ministry that you already work with? Partners in the Churches for All Consortium are listed at the end of this booklet, and they rely on donations for their work of making the Christian message accessible to all.



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Survey of Disability-Related Needs

This survey is being carried out by [Name of Church] to find out how well they meet the needs of people with disabilities. We would be very grateful if you could complete it and return to [Name and address of contact]

1. How does your disability affect you?

2. Do you attend church? Regularly Sometimes No

3. If not, would you like to? Yes No

4. If you would like to attend this church, would we have to meet your needs in any of the following ways? *(please tick as many as appropriate)*

- Parking
- Accessibility
- Induction loop
- BSL interpreter
- Large print or Braille material: songsheets, notice sheets, Bibles etc.
- Better lighting
- Wheelchair space which does not obstruct aisles
- Special provision for an adult or child with learning disabilities
- One to one support for a child in Sunday School

Please provide as much additional detail as possible to describe how we can meet your needs in relation to the above, or any other matters:

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Name _____ Telephone number _____

Address _____

_____ Post code _____