



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 _____



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Sample letter of invitation

(to be printed on church notepaper)

[date]

Dear

It's a real pleasure to invite you and your friends, relations and colleagues, to attend a Disability Sunday event on 6th June 2010 at *[11.00 am]* at our church, which is in *[Lupin Gardens, Ambridge]*

The main talk will focus on what the Bible really says about disability and on God's positive attitude towards disabled people. We have also asked a few members of our congregation to speak about their own experience of disability. We plan a drama and musical contributions by disabled people.

We would like to welcome anyone in our community who is affected by disability – you yourself or a member of your family may have a disability, or you may work with disabled people. We want the service to be a first step towards fully including disabled people in the life of our church. Our church building is accessible to wheelchair users and has a loop system and an accessible toilet. A British Sign Language interpreter for Deaf people will be provided at the service. Braille service sheets will be provided.

If you have no transport and you need a lift, or if you have any questions, please call us on *[phone number]* as soon as possible and we will try to help.

With warmest good wishes



Draft news release

News Release

St Mark's Church in Ambridge is holding a Disability Sunday service on 6 June 2010 at 11.00 am. There will be an exciting meeting of teaching and worship, led by disabled people, focusing on the world of disability.

Members of the congregation will be sharing their own experience of disability, there will be a drama and musical contributions by disabled people and there will be a brief talk on disability from a Biblical perspective.

The church is accessible to wheelchair users and has a loop system. A British Sign Language interpreter for Deaf people will be provided at the service. Braille service sheets will be provided.

Child care is also available.

In addition to the worship service, disability awareness will be the special focus of the children's programme with groups for all ages.

For more information contact: Name:

Telephone:

Print the news release with a church letterhead, and post it, email it or fax it to local radio stations and newspapers in early September.

Give details of any other special contributions to be made by disabled people. Avoid using Christian jargon words or phrases.

If your church is not manned continuously during office hours, make sure you give a mobile phone number as an alternative to the Church office. Nothing irritates media more than to be unable to get an immediate response to a question. Why not cultivate a relationship with your local reporter and invite them to come along?



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Church Newsletter Items

Recruiting team members:

Many of you know the importance we attach to being fully inclusive of disabled people. We are planning to hold a Disability Sunday on 6th June 2010 with the following objectives:

- To show disabled people that God cares about them and their needs
- To raise awareness of disability and the needs of disabled people
- To give people affected by disability a voice
- To show that God responds to and uses disability in many different ways
- To show that including disabled people isn't a burden, but is a blessing.
- If you would like to serve on the planning team, please contact *[name]*.

Announcing the event:

The Disability Sunday is just *[number]* weeks away. Just to remind you, what we want to achieve on the day is:

- To show disabled people that God cares about them and their needs
- To raise awareness of disability and the needs of disabled people
- To give people affected by disability a voice
- To show that God responds to and uses disability in many different ways
- To show that including disabled people isn't necessarily a burden, but is a blessing.

Please invite friends, family and neighbours who are disabled or who are affected by disability on Sunday 6th June 2010

Recruiting volunteers:

Volunteers are needed to help with Disability Sunday. If you can help with *[list needs here]* then please contact *[name]*



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Disability Sunday - Accessibility Checklist

Note: This is a very basic checklist to alert you to possible difficulties in the accessibility of your church building. It should be noted that a positive answer to all the points does not mean that your church complies with a generally accepted accessibility standard. For more information, see [Further Specialist Resources](#) later in this pack, or seek advice from [Churches for All](#).

Basic Accessibility		Yes	No
1.	Is it possible to get from a parked car to the area used for worship without going up or down a step or stairs?		
2.	Is the slope of paths not greater than 5% (roughly 1:20)		
Ramps			
3.	Do ramps have a slope no greater than 1:12 and a width of no less than 1.2m?		
4.	Do ramps have handrails on both sides?		
Entrances and Exits			
5.	Is at least one major entrance to the building usable by wheelchair users?		
Doors and Doorways			
6.	Do doors have a clear opening of 800mm or more?		
7.	Can doors be opened easily by a wheelchair user or other disabled person?		
Floors			
8.	Is the floor level each side of doors?		
9.	Are the door thresholds a maximum 13mm high?		
Worship Space			
10.	Can the service be heard clearly throughout?		
11.	Is there an induction loop for hearing aid users?		
12.	Is there good lighting, avoiding shadows on those speaking or interpreting?		
13.	If an overhead or Powerpoint projector is used, are there large print paper copies available for people who cannot see the screen?		
14.	Is there space for wheelchair users where they can sit with a friend?		
15.	Are there seats with arms and seats with extra legroom for people with mobility impairment?		
16.	Can people take communion without climbing steps?		
Toilets			
17.	Is there an accessible toilet for use by wheelchair users?		
Other areas			
18.	Can disabled people access refreshments?		



Guidelines for stewards and welcomers

DO	DON'T
<p><u>General</u> Treat disabled people as you would anyone else. Always speak directly to the person who has a disability. Always ask the person who has a disability if you can help him or her in any way. Whenever possible, seat disabled people with their friends or family. Try to be aware of people's hidden disabilities such as epilepsy or Alzheimer's disease, which may require assistance. Assume nothing - always ask!</p>	<p>Don't use negative terms such as "crippled" or "victim". Do not consider a companion or carer to be a conversational go-between.</p>
<p><u>Visual Impairment</u> Identify yourself by name and as a steward. Show a blind person to his or her seat. Ensure they know Braille or large print song sheets are available. Explain to a visually impaired person where things are located. Provide space for a guide-dog to lie down by removing a chair.</p>	<p>Don't push a visually impaired person - always allow them to take your arm.</p>
<p><u>Deafness and hearing loss</u> Ensure your face and mouth can be seen clearly. Look directly at the person and speak at normal speed with clear (not exaggerated) lip patterns.</p>	<p>Don't exaggerate or shout. Don't speak directly into the person's ear. Don't obscure your face</p>
<p><u>Speech Impairment</u> Give your whole, unhurried attention with good eye contact. Remember the person with a speech impairment may use another method of communication, such as writing.</p>	<p>Don't finish a sentence or word for the person. Don't get agitated or impatient Don't be afraid to ask them to repeat a sentence if you don't understand; or feed back what you think they said, and ask them to confirm.</p>
<p><u>Mobility Impairment</u> Always ask a wheelchair user if she or he would like assistance before you help. Try to sit or crouch down to talk to wheelchair users so that eye contact is easier. Provide seats near the entrance for people with mobility difficulties to minimise walking.</p>	<p>Don't push a wheelchair user unless they ask you to. Don't hold on to or lean on a person's wheelchair.</p>
<p><u>Learning Disabilities</u> Be patient, give someone with learning disabilities plenty of time.</p>	<p>Don't assume the person cannot understand you.</p>



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Suitable Language

Many people are reluctant to approach disabled people because they are afraid of saying the “wrong thing”. The following table shows some of the current acceptable and unacceptable expressions. But remember, disabled people would like you to speak to them (even if you get things “wrong”), rather than hold back out of fear.

[Quote from disabled churchgoer....]

DO SAY	DON'T SAY
<p><u>General</u> Disability Disabled Person who has/experiences... Non-disabled</p>	<p>Handicapped Crippled Invalid Victim of... Suffers from... Able-bodied, normal</p>
<p><u>Visual Impairment</u> Blind and partially sighted/Visually impaired people</p>	<p>The Blind</p>
<p><u>Deafness and hearing loss</u> Deaf people Hard of hearing people Deaf sign language user</p>	<p>The Deaf Deaf and dumb Deaf mute</p>
<p><u>Speech Impairment</u> Deaf sign language user</p>	<p>Dumb</p>
<p><u>Mobility Impairment</u> Wheelchair user</p>	<p>Wheel-chair bound Confined to a wheelchair (the wheelchair is not the source of the disability)</p>
<p><u>Learning Disabilities</u> Has learning difficulties Learning disabled Has mental health problems</p>	<p>Mentally handicapped, Retarded Mentally ill, insane, mad, crazy, nutter, psycho, psychopathic, schizo, split personality</p>



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Follow-up survey

Feedback Questionnaire

We value your feedback to help us to better meet your needs. Please complete the following questions and return to one of the stewards/welcomers.

How did you find your overall experience of today?	
What did you find particularly helpful?	
What aspects could be improved?	
What overall message will you take from today?	
Are there any other comments you would like to make?	

Please leave your name and contact details if you would like to receive further invitations to our activities.

Thank you. We look forward to welcoming you again.