

***What steps can you take to make your church a caring and inclusive place for people with disabilities?***

- Pray about it.
- Talk with church leadership. The pastor and church leadership must be on board, or the ministry will not get off the ground.
- Put together a committee of interested people, including key church leadership.
- Take a survey of your church buildings to see how accessible they are.
- Survey the church membership, the community, and local agencies to see what the needs are. What is needed most? It could be a special needs Sunday School class; respite care; a parent or sibling support group; transportation; a special needs Vacation Bible School or summer camp; or a special needs choir.

Since 1981, Developmental Disabilities Ministries has been providing Christian homes and training for adults with developmental disabilities.

***Because of the need for churches that are open and accessible to all people, regardless of ability, DDM has developed a Church Services Department. The purpose of this department is to assist churches in beginning and maintaining special needs ministries for people of all ages.***

Many resources are available for churches that want to include people with disabilities and their families in their community of faith. The church can be a tremendous blessing to those who so desperately need spiritual and other support, and the congregation will be blessed in return by the presence and contributions of people with disabilities.

*Church Services sponsors an annual educational Opening New Worlds Conference and staff are also available to provide free workshops to churches.*

For information and assistance, please contact the Church Services Department at the email, telephone or address below.

***Developmental Disabilities Ministries***

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***Developmental  
Disabilities Ministries***

***Welcoming  
People  
With Disabilities  
Into Your Church***



## *Regardless of ability, people need the Lord...*

Is your church missing the opportunity to minister to a population in your community that is growing at three times the rate of the “normal” population? 10 to 20 percent of your community includes people who have:

- Physical disabilities
- Intellectual disabilities
- Visual impairment
- Learning disabilities
- Hearing impairment
- Behavior disorders
- Emotional disturbance

Fifty-four million men, women and children in the United States have disabilities. When you add their family members, you are talking about one-half of the nation’s population. Regardless of ability, people need the Lord.



The latest statistics indicate that:

- Eighty percent of marriages that either produce a child with a disability or include a spouse or child who become disabled will end in divorce.
- Autism is more common than previously thought in the United States, affecting one in 110 children.
- About three to seven percent of children in the United States have Attention Deficit Disorder, and about one child in five has a Learning Disability.
- Less than 14 percent of the disabled population claim to be Christians, and over one-half of all families experiencing disability are outside of any organized religion.

***About 20 percent of your church should be people with disabilities. If not, what is keeping them from coming? Remember that often their family members are not coming because there is nothing provided for their children, siblings, or parents.***

Families of people with special needs are under a tremendous strain – usually financially, socially, often physically and emotionally exhausted. Some have tried to find a church home but have been turned away because of barriers. These barriers can be physical but are often attitudinal.

Jesus spent much of His time ministering to those who were shunned by society. In Luke 14:12-14, Jesus said to his host: “When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed...”

Everyone should be included at Jesus’ table!



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