

Session # 408

Widening the Welcome

Embracing All of God's Children:

**Faith Formation of Youth
with Autism &
Developmental Disabilities**

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Loyola Press

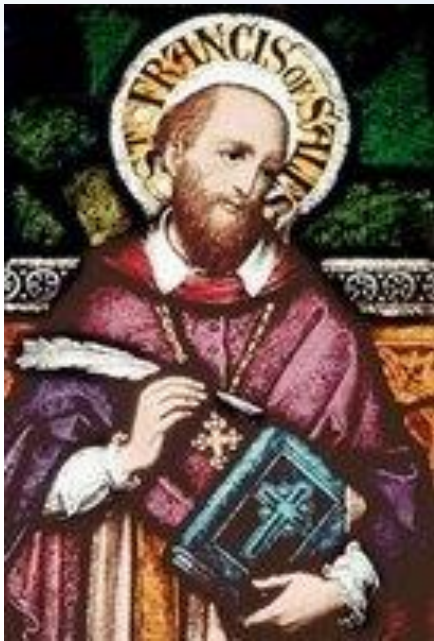
Sr. Kathleen Schipani, IHM

Archdiocese of Philadelphia



Care of God's Creation...

Today's Theme



It is to those who have
the most need of us
that we ought to show
our love more
especially.

St. Francis De Sales

Overview

- The Call of the Church
- What is a Welcoming Parish?
- Models of Inclusion
- It All Begins With The Child
- Positive, Effective Teaching Methods
- Resources
- Q & A www.opdarchphilly.org

The Call of the Church – the mission of Jesus



...when you give a banquet, make it your habit to invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

Luke 14:13

He is born blind...so that the works of God might be made visible through him. *John 9:3*



By reason of their Baptism, all Catholics are equal in dignity in the sight of God and have the same divine calling.

(Guidelines for Celebrating the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities 1995 / Canon 213)



The parish is the door to participation for individuals with disabilities, and it is the responsibility of the pastor and lay leaders to make sure that this door is **always open**. (1978 USCCB Pastoral Statement #18)

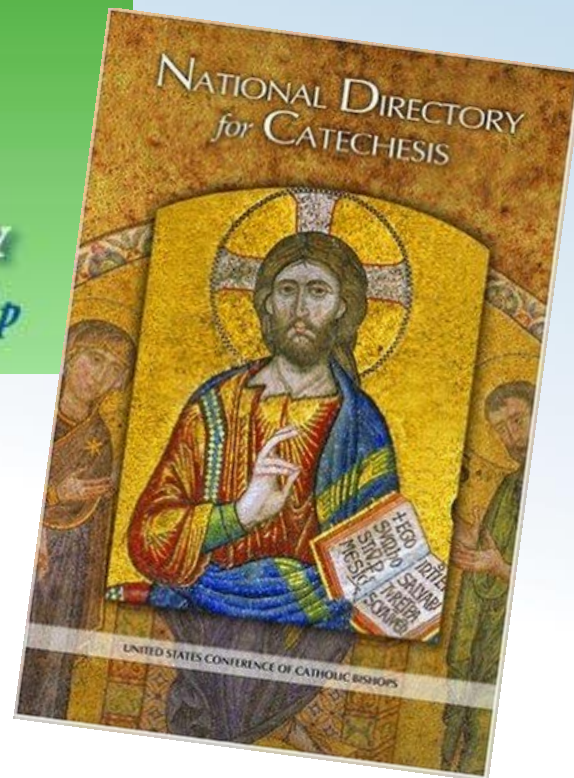
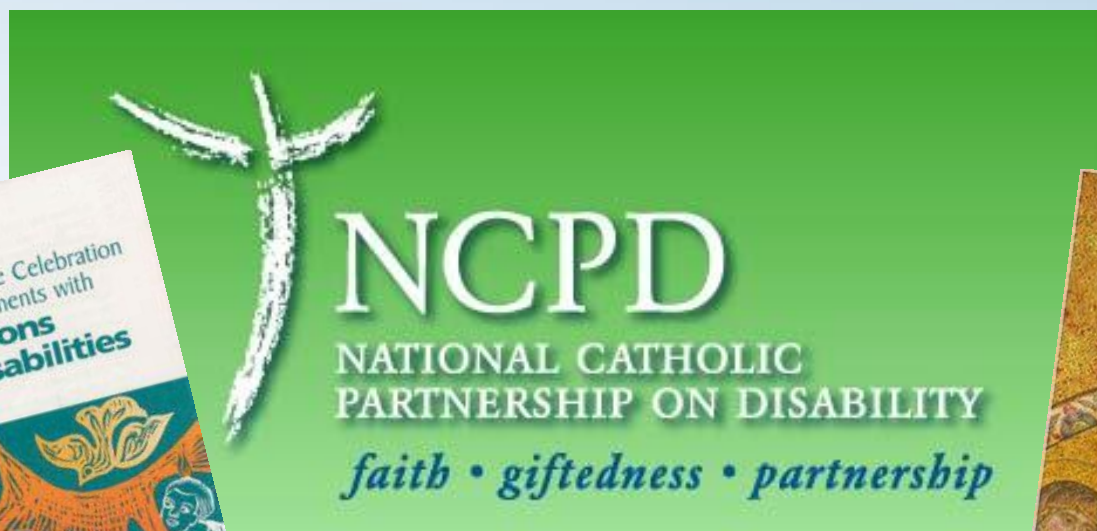
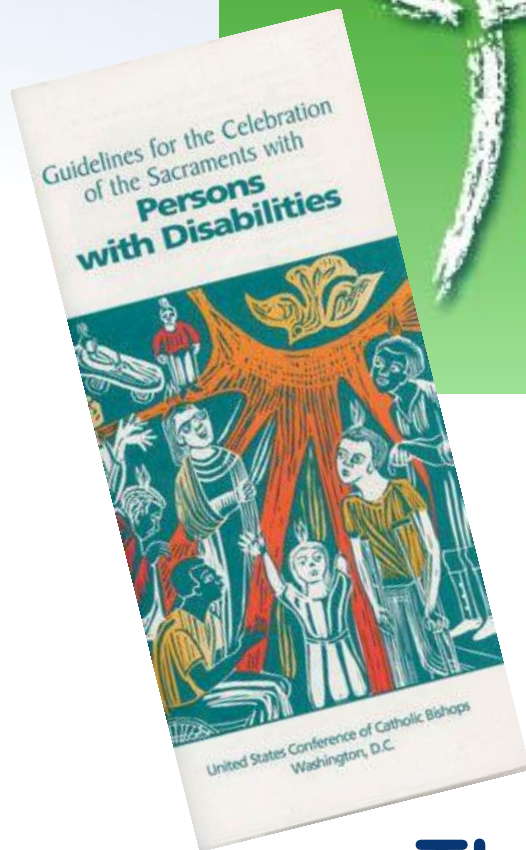
All baptized person with disabilities have a **right to adequate catechesis** and deserve the means to develop a relationship with God. (2005 NDC 9:3rd paragraph)

The Call of the Church

“....all life has inestimable value; even the weakest and most vulnerable...are masterpieces of God’s creation, made in his image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect.”

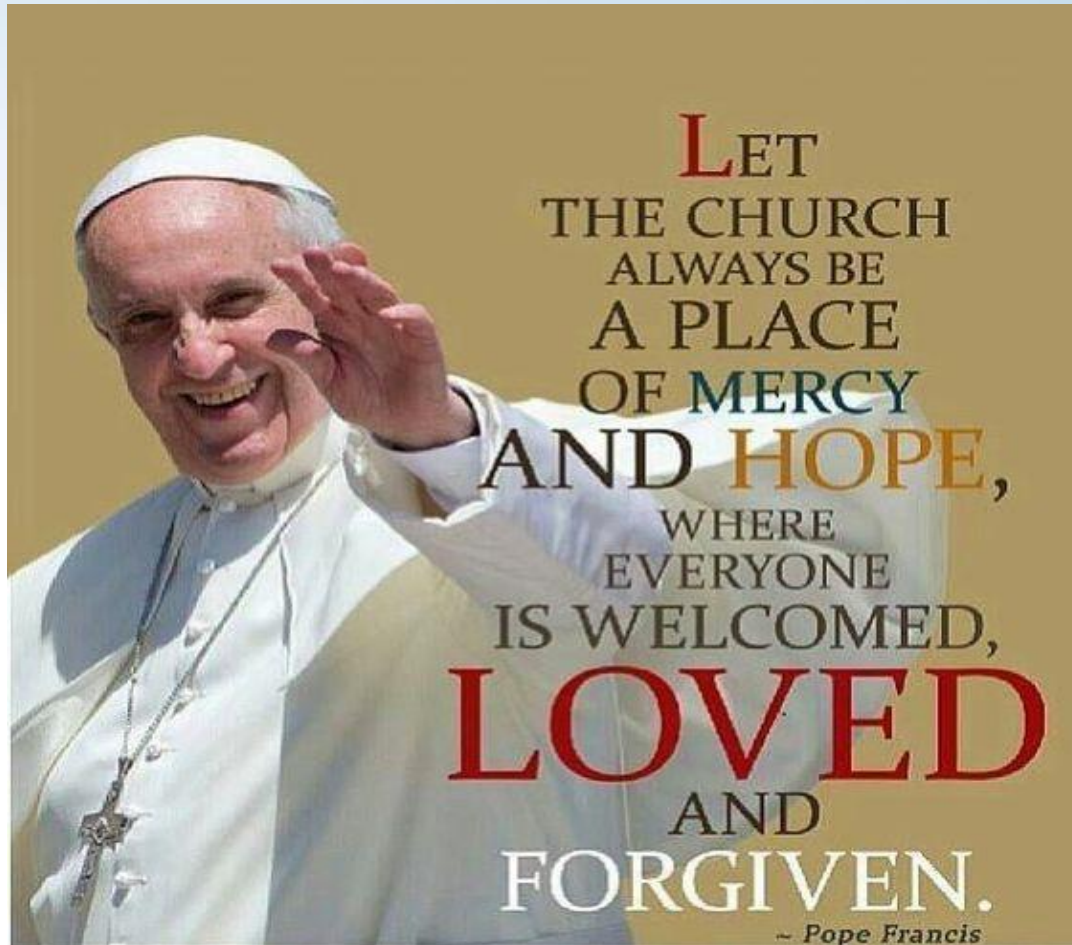


“....we need to break down the isolation and stigma that burden” people living with autism.



The Call of the Church

What is a Welcoming Parish?



All Are Welcome Pew Cards



All Are Welcome

How to Be a Church of Open Doors

What do I do to make the Church a community where everyone feels welcomed and understood? I feel the mercy and love of God who renews life in us.

—Pope Francis, General Audience, July 12, 2013

Each of us can make our parish a more welcoming place for newcomers, persons with disabilities, and special needs. Here are a few ideas:

- ▶ If you see a parent struggling with a child, offer a friendly smile, a sympathetic nod, or a word of encouragement.
- ▶ If you see a person physically struggling to get in or out of a door, scoot down in the pew, or offer assistance.
- ▶ If you see a person exhibiting unusual behavior, that it might be a sign of a disability, offer a word of welcome and understanding.
- ▶ If you see someone who is disheveled, offer a word of welcome and understanding.
- ▶ A warm smile, a nod, or a small kindness can make a difference.

"Amen, I say to you, whoever welcomes one of these least brothers or sisters of mine, I will welcome in heaven."

For resources and information on welcoming newcomers, visit www.loyolapress.com/special-needs.

www.findinggod.com/adaptive

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Todos son bienvenidos

Cómo ser una Iglesia de brazos abiertos

¿Qué hago para que [la Iglesia] sea una comunidad donde cada uno se sienta acogido y comprendido, donde se sienta la misericordia y el amor de Dios que renueva la vida?

—Papa Francisco, Audiencia General, 29 de mayo de 2013

Cada uno de nosotros puede hacer que nuestra parroquia sea más acogedora con los recién llegados, las personas con discapacidades y aquellos que tienen necesidades especiales. Las siguientes son algunas ideas de cómo lograrlo:

- ▶ Si observas que a un padre o madre le está costando controlar el comportamiento de un hijo, dirígelo a una sonrisa amable, un gesto solidario u ofrécele tu ayuda.
- ▶ Si ves que una persona tiene dificultad para entrar, sujétale la puerta, hazle sitio en el banco de la iglesia o ayúdalo a cargar con algo.
- ▶ Si observas a una persona mostrando un comportamiento extraño, piensa que puede ser señal de una discapacidad. Acoge a la persona como hijo de Dios y entiende que cada uno de nosotros tiene maneras diferentes de recibir y comunicar el amor de Dios.
- ▶ Si notas que alguien va desarreglado o está de mal humor, piensa que quizá se encuentre en una situación difícil. Actúa con compasión.
- ▶ A algunas personas les puede resultar difícil llegar a la parroquia para la misa o permanecer sentados a lo largo de toda la celebración. Ofréceles llevarlos en tu carro, abríles la puerta o simplemente muéstrales aceptación y comprensión.
- ▶ Una sonrisa amable, un gesto o un pequeño acto de bondad pueden tener un gran impacto positivo.

"Les aseguro que lo que hayan hecho a uno solo de estos, mis hermanos menores, me lo hicieron a mí."

—Mateo 25:40

Encontrarás más recursos e información sobre cómo ser acogedor en www.loyolapress.com/special-needs.

www.findinggod.com/adaptive

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Adaptive Finding God Program

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Sources for Help

- Welcoming People with Disabilities so All May Encounter Christ. on ncpd.org
- Open Hearts Award –provides funding so Church members can fully participate in worship
www.pathways.org
- Loyola Press Opening Doors Award www.ncpd.org
- Local chapters of Knights of Columbus

What is a Welcoming Parish?

- One with a commitment to not only welcome, but include all parishioners.
- One that provides access for full participation in all aspects of parish life: sacramental, catechetical, social, ministerial, and community service.
- Regularly-scheduled Mass that is adapted for worshippers who may need accommodations.



Models of Inclusion

in Faith Formation



Every parish should seek out its parishioners with cognitive, emotional, and physical disabilities, support them with love and concern, and ensure that they have ready access to a catechetical program suited to their needs and abilities. (NDC 61:B,1, 2nd paragraph)

If the participation of persons with disabilities and their families is to be real and meaningful, the parish must prepare itself to receive them (1978 Pastoral Statement #19)

- Seek and prepare volunteers.
- Include in Registration Announcements

Our Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) provides classes for children of all abilities. Children with developmental, intellectual, sensory, physical or behavioral disabilities are welcome and encouraged to attend weekly (PREP) classes.

- Gather Information - CIF

PLANNING



At Home

The child works at home with parents and family.

One-on-One

The child works one-on-one with a catechist, a teen faith mentor, or a parent.

Group Program for Children with Special Needs

A group of children, all with special needs, works with a catechist or group of catechists.

Part-Time Adapted Group Catechesis in Typical Classroom

The child spends part of the time in a typical classroom (often with a teen faith mentor, parent, or assistant catechist) and the rest of the time in a one-on-one setting or a group program for children with special needs.

Full-Time Adapted Group Catechesis in Typical Classroom

The child receives catechesis in a typical classroom with a level of support that works best for him or her, such as

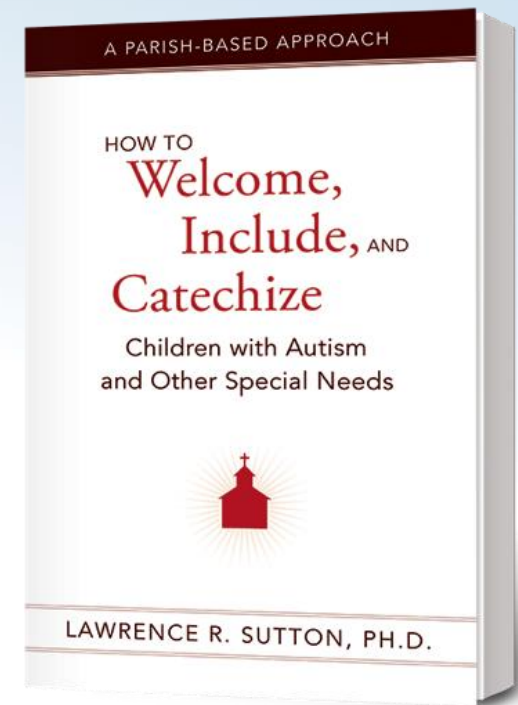
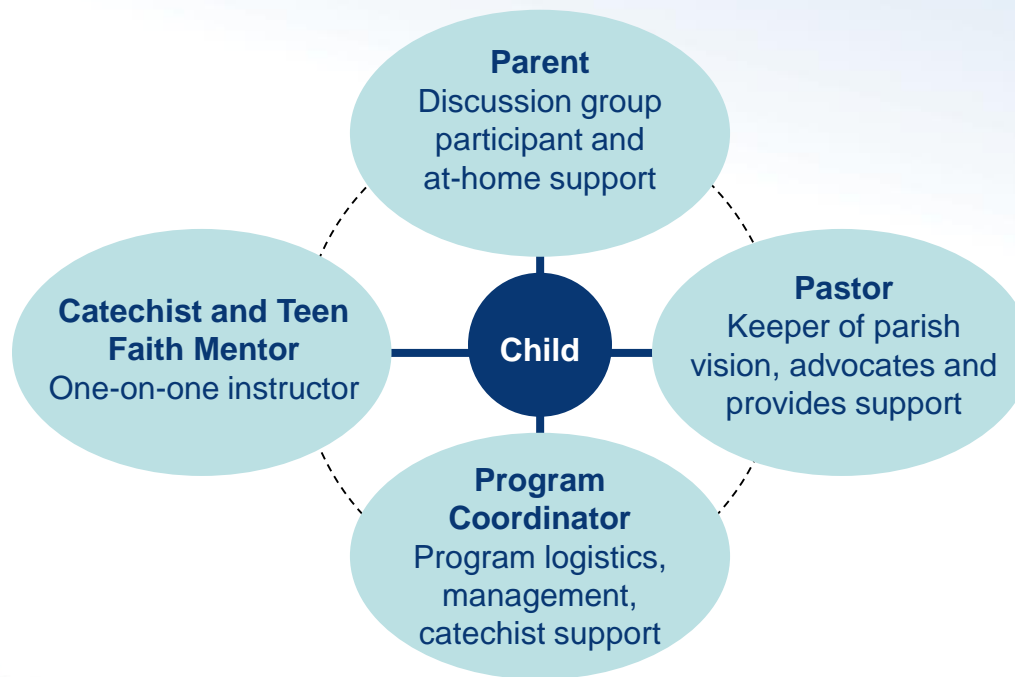
- lesson adaptations for the child or the whole class
- teen faith mentor, parent, or assistant catechist working with the class or child



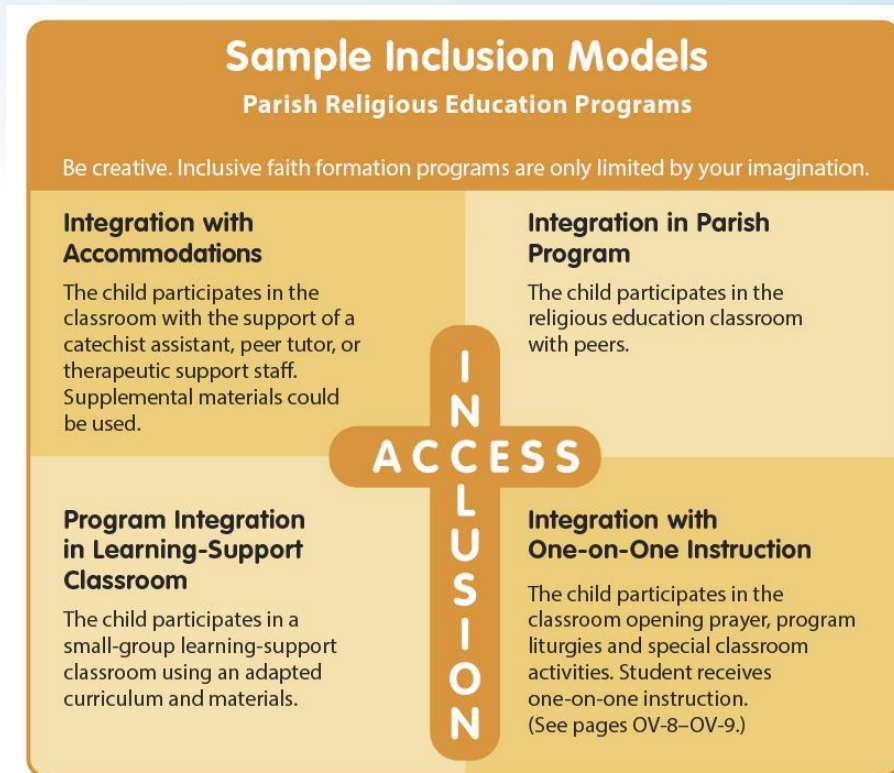
All Settings Are Honored

How We Explain a One-on-One Setting

A One-on-One Setting might look like this:



How We Explain the Adapted Group Setting



Adapted from the Office for Persons with Disabilities, Archdiocese of Philadelphia

It All Begins with the Child –

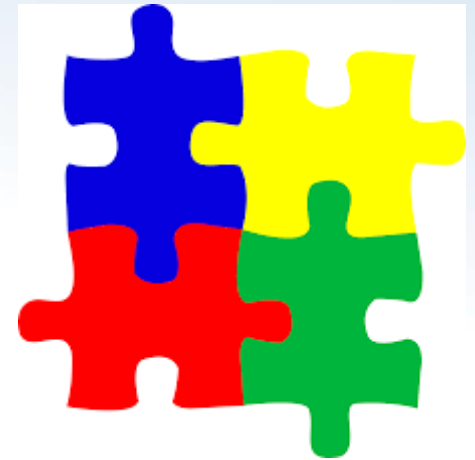
Characteristics & Learning Styles



Characteristics of Young People with Autism

Autism is characterized, in varying degrees, by challenges related to:

- Communication
- Social Interaction
- Restrictive or repetitive behaviors or interests



People with Autism May Display Some or All of These Characteristics

- Difficulty understanding language, gestures and/or social cues
- Limited or no speech
- When there is speech, it can be repetitive or relate primarily to one particular topic
- Limited or no eye contact
- Social awkwardness
- Repetitive behaviors, such as pacing or lining things up, spinning, hand flapping, or rocking



People with IDD May Display Some or All of These Characteristics

There is no single set of shared traits or features.

- By definition, people with ID have limited intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.
- Limited ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly, and learn from experience.
- This impacts:
 - impulse control
 - short term memory
 - frustration tolerance
 - ability to generalize



Intellectual Developmental Disabilities

Try to Remember

- It is not our job as parish staff or leadership to diagnose a person.
- Partner with parents.
- Disabilities vary considerably with each and every person.
- Always assume intelligence, promote independence and be respectful.



Learning Styles



Teaching to Strengths

- Art Projects, Out-of-Your Seat Games, Hands-on Demonstrations, **(Bodily/Kinesthetic Learners)**
- Recorded Scripture Stories, Guided Meditations, Choral Readings **(Auditory Learners)**
- Art Prints, Content Posters, Inspiring Photographs **(Visual/Spatial)**
- Time Lines, Graphic Organizers **(Logical/Mathematical)**
- Music Recordings, Music-based Activities **(Musical)**
- Role Plays, Small Group Work, Sharing with Partners, Service **(Interpersonal)**
- Personal Reflections through Writing and Drawing, Quiet Contemplation and Prayer **(Intrapersonal)**



Let's Explore the Loyola Learning Tools™



How would you use these tools to connect with children in your classroom?

What Is the Adaptive Finding God Program?

Adaptive Finding God is a comprehensive faith formation program that

- can be adapted, or customized, to serve children with a variety of special needs.
- has multi-sensory tools and creative approaches so children with special needs can learn according to their unique learning style.



Leader and Catechist Components



Adaptive Finding God Music CD



Jesus the Teacher
Plush Figure



Order of the Mass Floor Puzzle



Family Stick Puppets and Panoramas



Biblical Stick Puppets and Panoramas

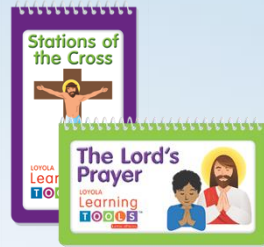


Concept Stories





Picture Cards



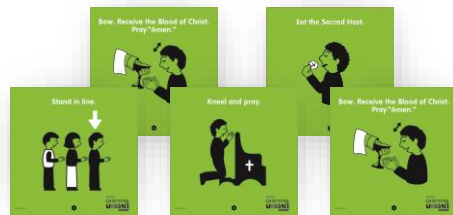
Flip Books



Foam Puzzles



Instructional Cards



Steps to the Eucharist
Movement Mats

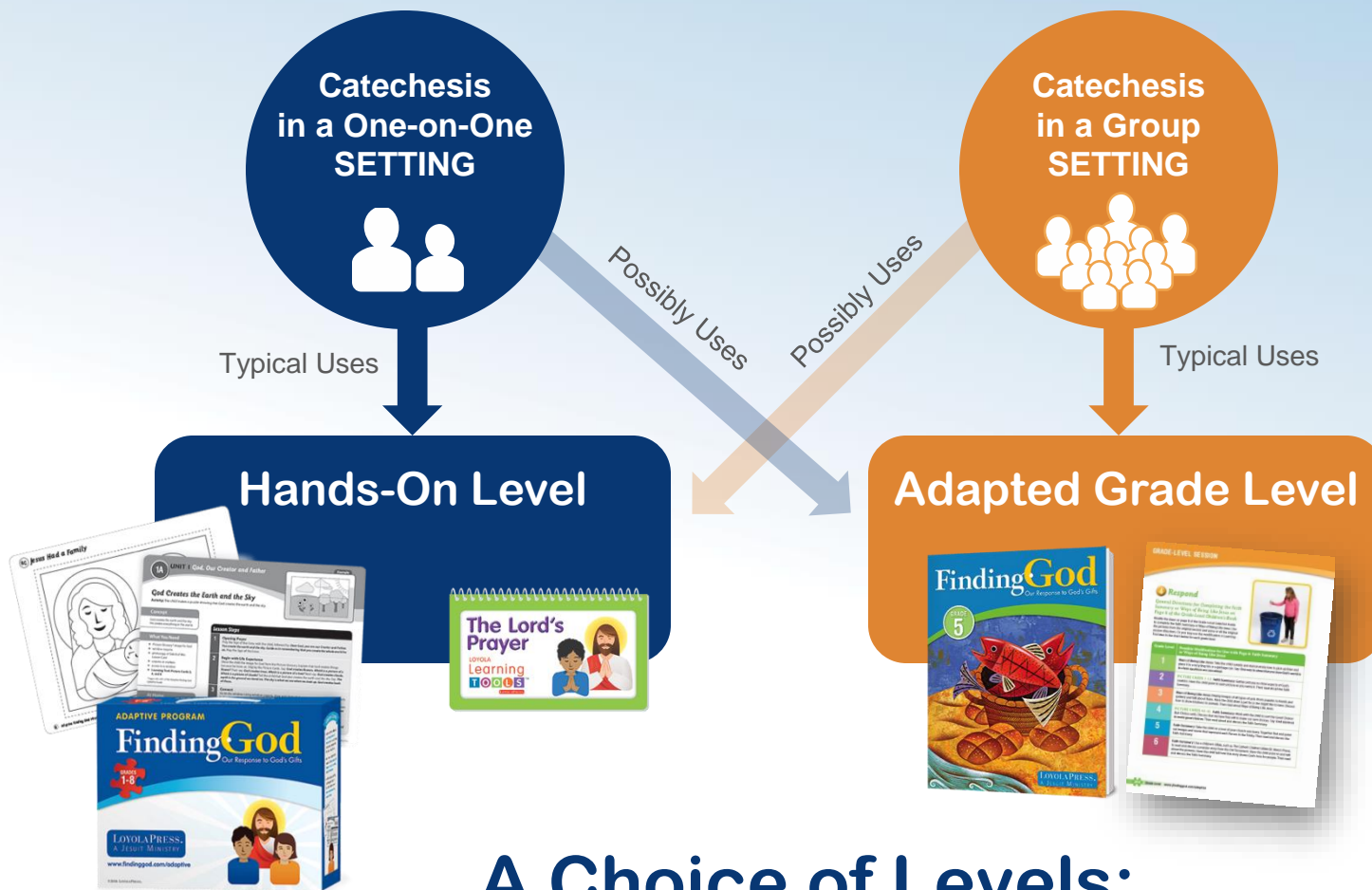


Hail Mary
Accordion Book



Praying the Rosary
Concept Kit

LOYOLA
Learning
TOOLS™
LOYOLAPRESS.



A Choice of Levels: Hands-On Level and Adapted Grade Level

Positive, Effective Teaching Methods & Strategies



Practical Strategies



Catechists Can Apply

- Provide clear structure & a set routine (Visual schedules)
- Help develop systematic habits & work routines
- Utilize task analysis – very specific, tasks in sequential order
- Always keep language simple & concrete
- Break learning into chunks
- Administer probes
- Supply regular, positive feedback
- Provides scaffolds - use diagrams, graphics and pictures to augment what you say in words
- Provide ample practice

More on Scaffolding

1. Show & Tell
2. Tap into Prior Knowledge
3. Give Time to Talk
4. Pre-Teach Vocabulary
5. Use Visual Aids
6. Pause, Ask Questions, Pause, Review

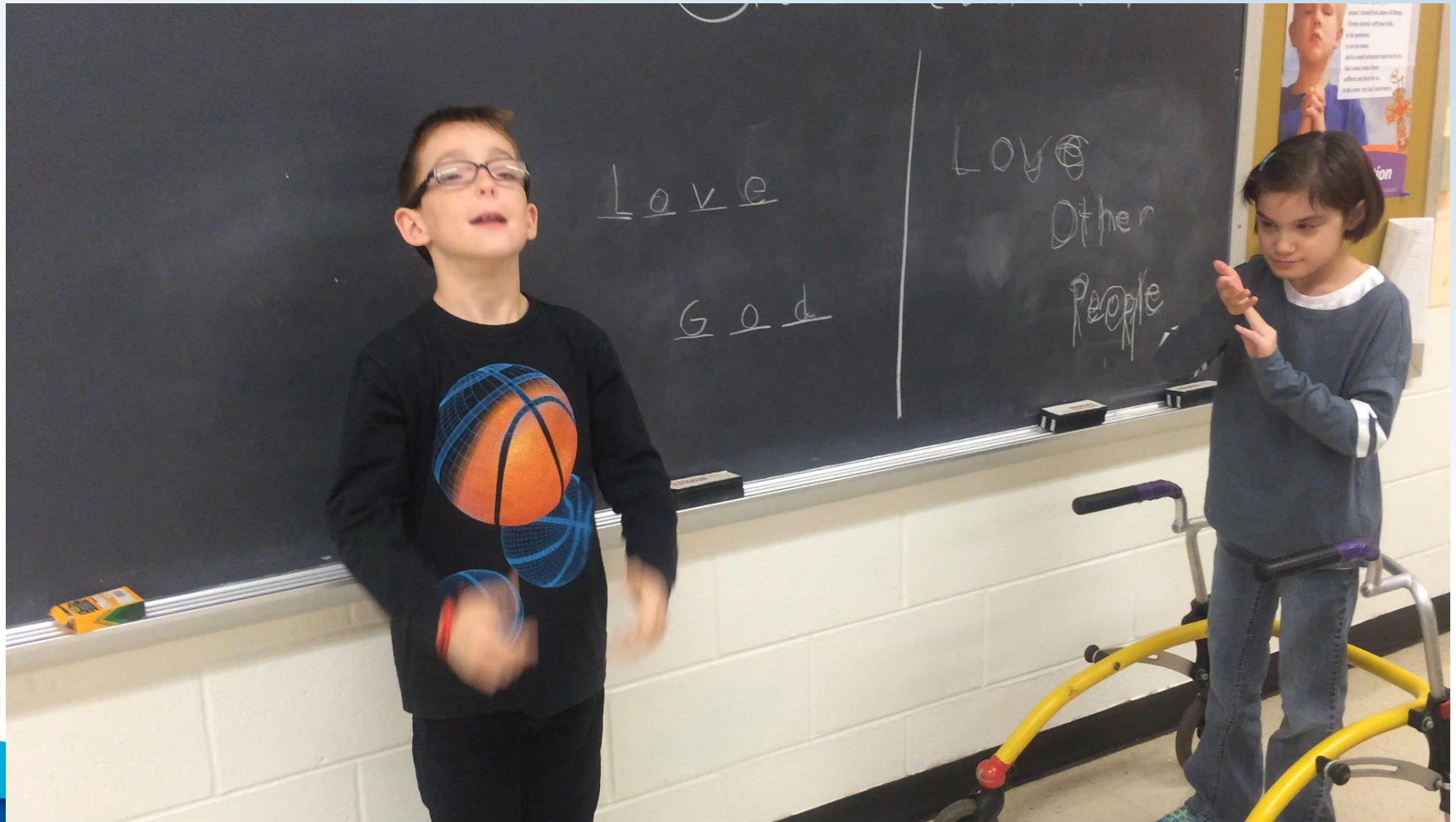
More Practical Strategies

- Reinforce social rules/skills, such as turn-taking and social distance
- Give fewer choices to pick from
- Do not use sarcasm or idioms – you could be taken literally
- Provide clear choices, do not leave choices open ended
- Repeat instructions & use short sentences
- **Make recording of readings or prayers**
- Having a picture of end product or model it
- Not taking rude behavior personally
- Avoid certain activities
- Keep records of wins & pitfalls to avoid

<http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/evidence-based-practices>

<http://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/afirm-modules>

Using New Technologies



Connect with the Child



ADAPTIVE PROGRAM

Finding God

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Learn How the Child Communicates

Children may communicate through

- gestures and facial expressions
- writing
- spoken words and sentences
- brief utterances or sounds
- sign language
- pictures, icons, or images
- music
- special communication devices



ADAPTIVE PROGRAM

Finding God
Our Response to God's Gifts

LOYOLA PRESS.
A JESUIT MINISTRY

Learning About the Child

- Personality
- Relationship Formation
- Physical Needs
- Sensory Needs
- Learning Styles
- Be Yourself



ADAPTIVE PROGRAM

Finding God
Our Response to God's Gift

LOYOLA PRESS.
A JESUIT MINISTRY

Adapting Lessons

- Lesson Presentation
(MODIFICATIONS ORGANIZER)
- Instructional Strategies
- Responding Format
- Timing
- Environment
- Equipment
- Outcome Structure
- Content/Curriculum



Essential Resources

Curriculum, Books and Resources

- **Loyola:** Adaptive Finding God & Sacrament Kits
www.FindingGod.com/adaptive
- **University of Dayton Materials:** Institute for Pastoral Initiates
www.udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/ipi/index.php
- **OSV:** Sacrament Videos for Deaf /Visual Learners
www.osvparish.com/CatechistHelp/PeoplewithSpecialNeeds.aspx
- **RCL- Bensinger:** Rose Kennedy Materials & Picture Books from Pittsburgh Archdiocese
www.rclbenzinger.com



National Organizations

Catholic

- **NCPD** National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities www.ncpd.org
- **NCOD** National Catholic Office for the Deaf www.ncod.org

Interfaith

- **Collaborative on Faith and Disability**
www.faithanddisability.org
www.faithability.org

Local Resources



- **Diocesan Disabilities Resources**
- **State and Local Assoc. and Agencies**
- **Parents/Guardians**
- **Professionals in your parish and area**

Questions & Conversation

www.FindingGod.com/adaptive

www.opdarchphilly.org
Inclusive Faith Formation