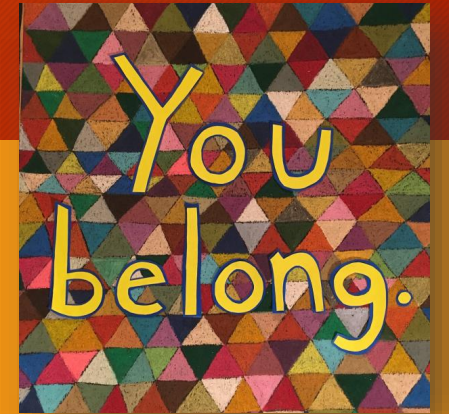


Active Participation

~~Inclusive~~ Worship: *a journey*



Geralyn Anderson Arango, Ed.D.
Nic and Courtney's mom
Professor, Holy Family University



Welcome!

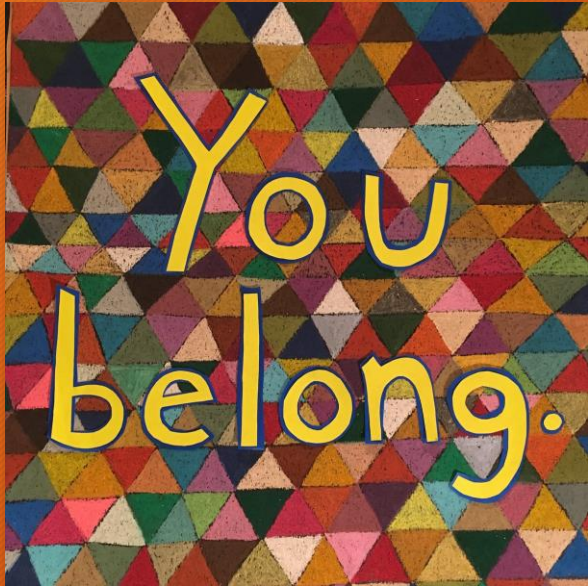
- Questions:
 - Why does inclusive worship matter?
 - What are the encouragers and barriers to inclusion in worship for people with disabilities and their families?
 - What's your story?
 - What are some ideas for fuller participation in worship?
 - What can I/we do in the next weeks?

My Own Faith Formation Story:

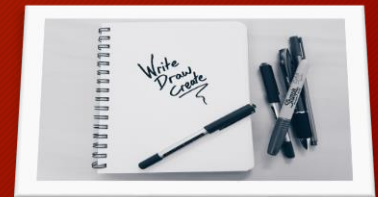


- First Communion & Reconciliation: “Publics”
- Volunteer work with JVC & Mercy Corps
- Keeping the Faith: Lector, choir
- Parenthood: faith as part of life
 - all the sacraments for the kids...

What do we want for *our* children?



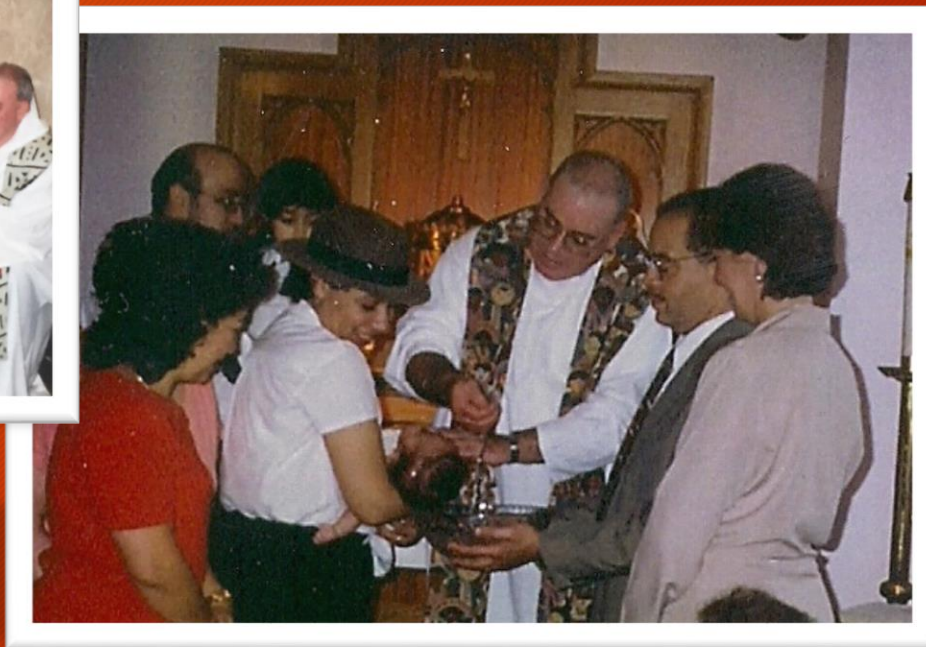
- To be part of a family
- To belong to a worship family:
 - *We are Catholic- attending services is part of who we are.*
- All children deserve this
- What does an inclusive worship community look like to you?



What are people with disabilities telling us?

- 84% of people with disabilities say their faith is important to them
- 45% of people with severe disabilities attend worship at least monthly
- 10% of faith communities do congregation-wide disability awareness
- 32% of parents changed their place of worship because their children with disabilities were not included or welcome
- www.faithanddisability.org

My Inspiration: Our Family's Story



My Inspiration: Our Family's Story

- Our daughter



Barriers to Participation



- Architectural
- Attitudinal
- Communication
- Programmatic
- Liturgical

Carter, 2007

My Inspiration: Our Family's Story



- Our son
 - Our new parish, part 1: “we don’t do that”
 - Just being there was hard, so, eventually, we weren’t
 - Our new-new parish, part 2: made it happen, but separately
 - Our new-new-new parish: gospel choir!

Homecoming: When Daddy got sick.



- Gone for a while...
- Cancer.
- While we were gone...

Welcoming and Accessible Faith Communities: (Carter, 2007)

Active Participation:

- begins with Presence
- requires Physical Accessibility
- needs authentic, nurturing Hospitality
- becomes a sense of Shared Lives and weaving into one community
- recognizes its Motivation is from a higher calling
- recognizes and seeks to unlock the Contributions of ALL members of the community

Welcoming and Accessible Faith Communities: (Carter, 2007)

Active Participation:

- makes Proactive Efforts to welcome and include all members
- demonstrates a Willingness to Learn, even from mistakes!
- continuously seeks ways to be more inviting, intentional and hospitable: it's a “Journey”
- experiences a Movement of Responses: apart...to...with...by...we...

Watch: Believing, Belonging, Becoming...

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=692&v=-9GBNa_5p_k
- Was there anything or anyone you found memorable in this video?
- If you could ask someone in the video a question, what would it be?

In My Faith Community (aka our first “new” parish)



- An outgrowth of the Mission statement
- <http://www.sjcparish.org/about-us##mission>
- Mass of Welcoming and Inclusion
- Disabilities Ministry
 - Dinner with Friends
 - Low Sensory Santa
 - Easter Egg Hunt
- “Adaptive Prep”



Belonging & Active Participation Looks Like:

- Knowing the needs
 - Sign language interpreter
 - Sensitive to lighting, length of service, music as needed
 - Asking what is needed
 - People with disabilities involved in planning worship
- Natural proportions
- Seeing disability in committees and offices
- Anyone can be involved if you share what is needed
- Knowing this benefits ALL
- An outcome of a faith community's mission
- Knowing PEOPLE, not just their disabilities
- Speaking to, not about
- Humility and mistakes

For My House Shall Be a House of Prayer for All People...Isaiah 56:5

Think-pair-share



- Why active participation/belonging matters for my family
- Strengths of my faith community
- Challenges to participation/inclusion/belonging in my faith community
- Participation/Inclusion/belonging successes in my faith community

Some Ideas for the Journey for Families & Faith Communities



- Assessing efforts on a regular basis
- Social Stories and Video modeling
- Using behavior support personnel to observe in service and make recommendations
- Teaching the needed skills
- Consistency and repetition
- Add information to existing faith community materials
- Invite people with disabilities to work and volunteer outside the disabilities ministries
- Inviting typical folks in



More ideas, parent to parent

(Archdiocese of Newark)

- Tell your pastor how important participation and welcome is to you and your family (and other families, too)
- Offer what help you can offer - be ready to get your hands dirtier!
- Keep looking for the welcoming community, if you must. Don't give up your faith
- Visuals, timers, distractors and bribes (like everyone else does)
- Use your camera to make videos or picture stories to learn names and actions

“Faith at Home-work”: Some Tips for Parents You May Already be Doing. (Archdiocese of Newark)

- Say basic prayers every night with your child.
- Listen to religious songs with your child.
- Take photographs of important elements and places in your house of worship. Make flash cards out of them or a “Tour.”
 - Have the child match the picture to the actual object in your church.
- Visit your house of worship with your child when no one is around.
- Tell/show the child how long the service will be.
- Incorporate ritual and expressions of faith into your home and family life as much as possible

A Few Resources

- Dr. Erik Carter on new pathways for congregations:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXQGLxKEKfg>
- Copy of this PowerPoint available on the website!
- Follow my pinning journey on Pinterest: Gerry Arango Inclusive Worship
- www.faithanddisability.org
- <https://pathways.org/tools-resources/inclusion-worship/awards/> : Open Hearts Award
- https://opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_community_connections/faith_based_initiatives/all_are_welcome

And you...



- Have you thought of an action step on the journey for yourself/your child/your congregation?
 - (mine: continue to question)

• *Thank you!*