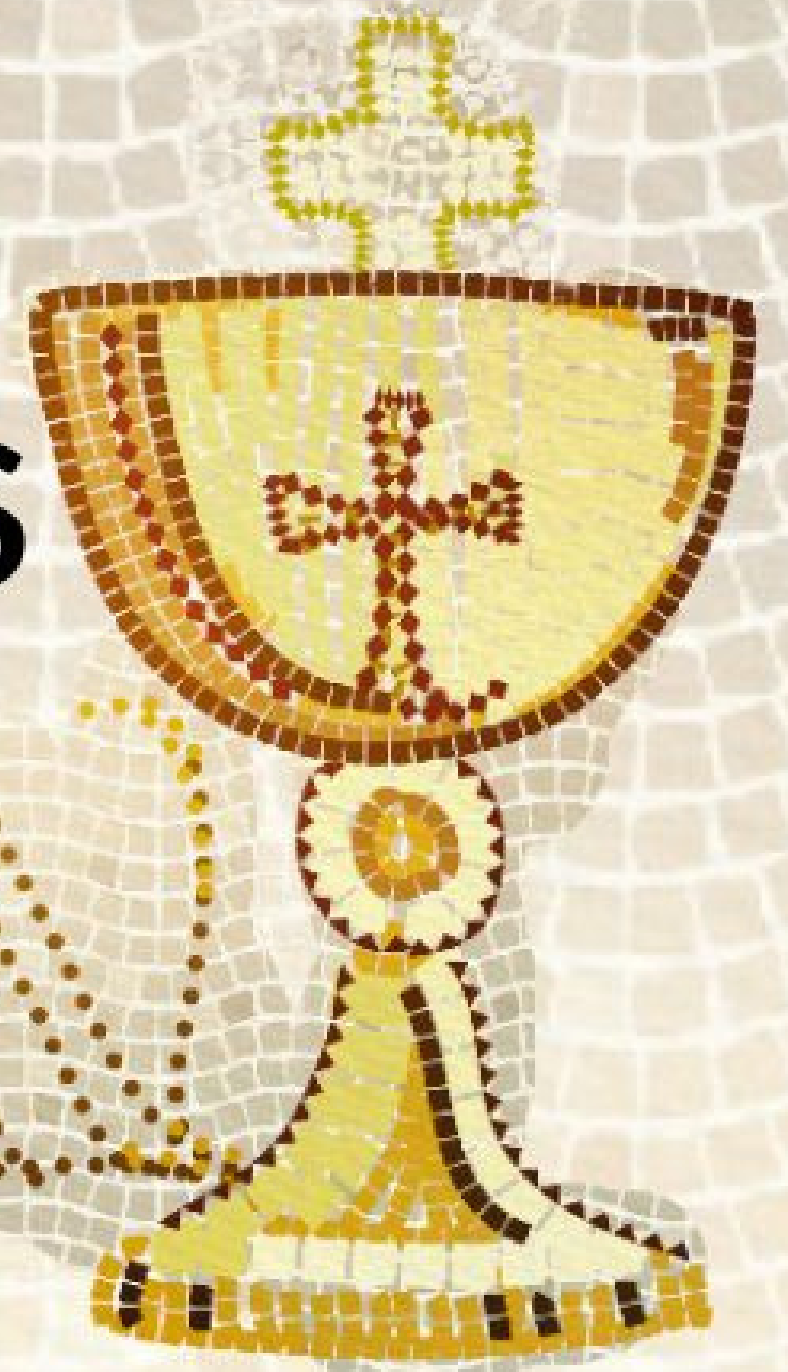


SENSORY FRIENDLY MASS

All are welcome. All belong.

Archdiocese of Philadelphia



Creating a Welcoming Environment

Presented by: Noelle Collis-DeVito

Inclusion vs. Belonging

What is the difference?

DIVERSITY is having a seat at the table,

INCLUSION is having a voice,

BELONGING is having that voice be heard.



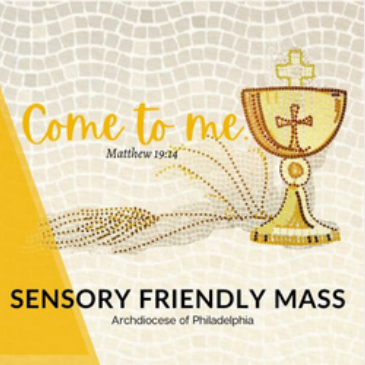


Inclusion vs. Belonging

It is essential to make accessibility a priority rather than an afterthought.

Reactive Inclusion- Allowing persons with disabilities to participate in an already formatted activity without making accommodations in advance.



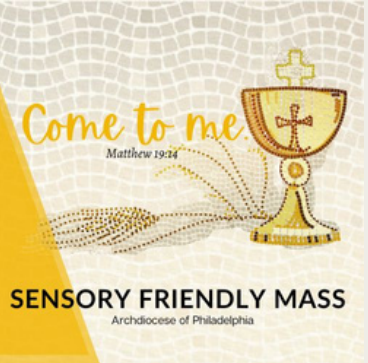


Inclusion vs. Belonging

Why is this important right now?

- 26% of adults in the United States have some form of disability.
- 1 in 40 children are diagnosed with autism.
- 15% of children are diagnosed with developmental disabilities.





Inclusion vs. Belonging

Why is this important right now?

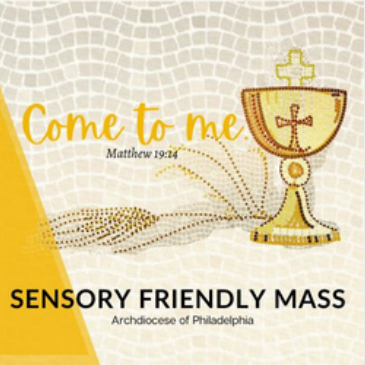
Absence
due to
Institutions



Acceptance
of Status Quo



Parent as
Advocate



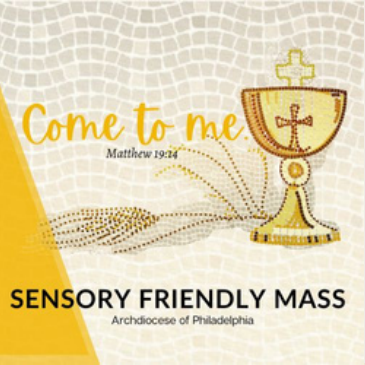
A Welcoming Environment

3 Key Considerations

- Etiquette & Hospitality
- Accommodations
- Visual Aids & Fidgets

Keep in mind that not every parish will be able to make every accommodation. These are just suggestions to consider.

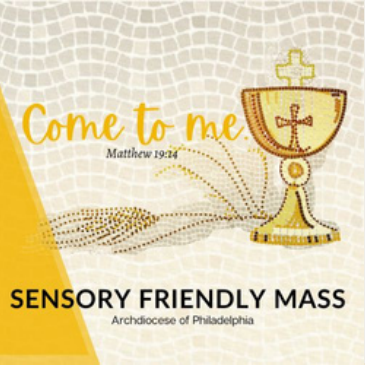




Etiquette & Hospitality

Physical/Mobility:

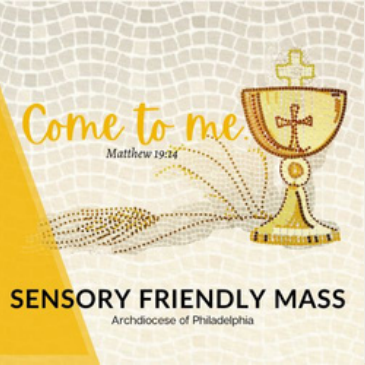
- Ask about preferred location for seating.
- Speak to the person in the wheelchair and not to the person that may be accompanying them.
- Be eye level with person in wheel chair when talking to them.
- Always ask before offering help. Don't be offended if the person says no.
- Shake hands and use other usual ways of greeting - never pet anyone on the head.



Etiquette & Hospitality

Physical/Mobility:

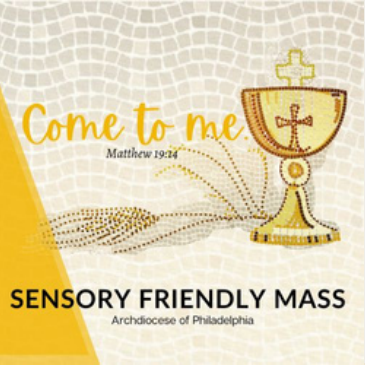
- Ask before assisting to push or touch a person's wheelchair.
- People with canes or crutches do not always prefer to use a ramp over stairs.
- Don't touch/grab the arms of those who use canes/crutches as it can cause them to lose balance.
- A person with respiratory or heart condition may have difficulty walking long distances. Offer a place to rest before ushering to seat.



Etiquette & Hospitality

Blindness/Low Vision:

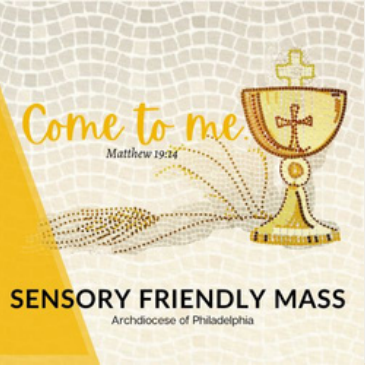
- Prearrange tour of church with audio description.
- Identify yourself and your role (I am the greeter/usher).
- Ask person "Would you like assistance?" Offer your arm. Describe the scene.
- Walk on the opposite side of a guide dog.



Etiquette & Hospitality

Blindness/Low Vision:

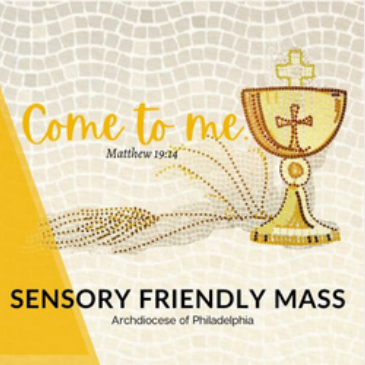
- Don't touch person's cane or guide dog.
- Give verbal cues - "there is a step coming up..."
- Give verbal cues that are specific (e.g. Don't say "watch out", say "there is a trash can in front of you...")
- Guide an individual's hand to a banister or the back of a chair to help direct him to a stairway or seat.



Etiquette & Hospitality

Blindness/Low Vision:

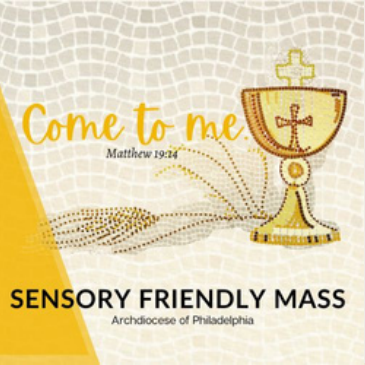
- Inform person who is blind and attends church regularly of any physical changes.
- Offer large-print or brailled bulletins and large-print prayer books and hymnals.
- Establish before Mass if person would like accommodations for Communion (e.g. Eucharistic Minister to come to them, sighted guide).



Etiquette & Hospitality

Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing:

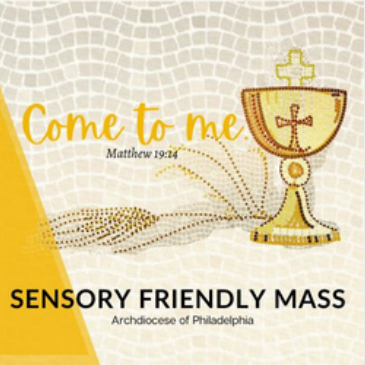
- Using someone who knows sign-language is not an adequate replacement for an interpreter.
- Does the individual prefer to use sign language, writing, gesturing, speaking or a combination of all to communicate.
- To get the attention of a person who is deaf/HOH you can tap them on their shoulder, wave you hand or flicker the lights.



Etiquette & Hospitality

Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing:

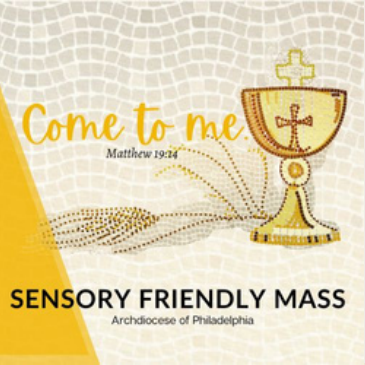
- Do not shout to a person who is wearing a hearing aid. Your shouting will be more distorted. Move closer to the individual.
- Face person directly when speaking and do not obscure your mouth when communicating.
- When using a sign-language interpreter, look directly at the person who is Deaf, and maintain eye contact. Talk directly to the person who is Deaf.



Etiquette & Hospitality

Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing:

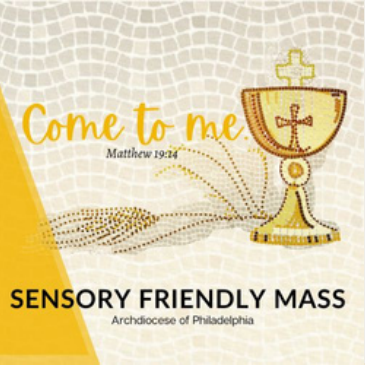
- Background noises are a problem for people who are HOH. Finding a quiet place is helpful.
- Don't be afraid of interaction. There is nothing worse than being left out and ignored.
- Offer assisted listening devices if available; have a note pad and pen available.



Etiquette & Hospitality

Speech Disabilities:

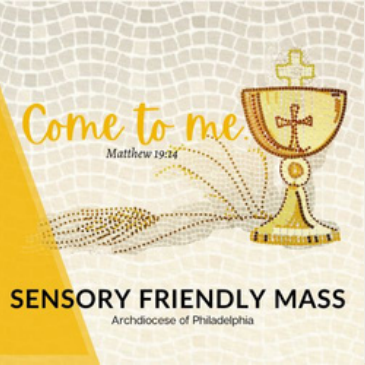
- Ask person to repeat themselves if you can't understand.
- Wait for the person to finish then restate to be sure you understand.
- Suggest another way of facilitating communication.
- Don't nod to a person you can't understand.
- Don't interrupt or finish a person's sentence.



Etiquette & Hospitality

Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities:

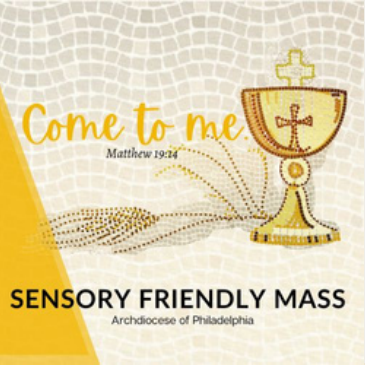
- Greet person normally with age-appropriate language. Don't baby talk.
- Repeat information about yourself if necessary.
- Rephrase, rather than repeat, sentences that the person doesn't understand.
- Treat people equally.
- Even if you suspect a person doesn't read, offer reading materials.



Etiquette & Hospitality

Behavioral Needs:

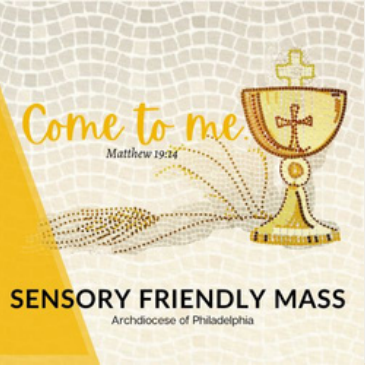
- Create a space for parishioners to go in order to de-escalate challenging behaviors.
- Don't force conversation.
- Don't argue. Wait for rational moments.
- Ask how you can help, find out if there is a support person who can be sent for.



Etiquette & Hospitality

Behavioral Needs:

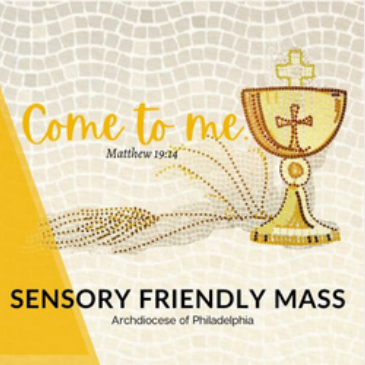
- Ask what will make him/her most comfortable and respect his/her needs to the maximum extent possible.
- Remember that these behaviors are just as stressful for parents and family members. Engage family in conversations related to best strategies and natural supports at a time and manor that conveys empathy and understanding.



Etiquette & Hospitality

Mental Health:

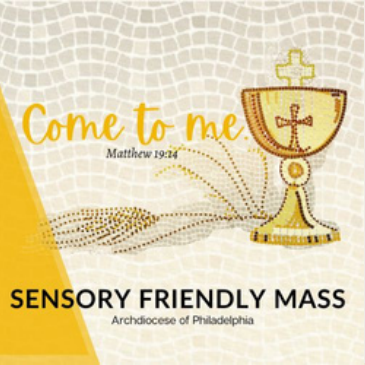
- Be sure to greet.
- Give your name and ask theirs but respect boundaries.
- Offer to sit with or near but respect wishes to be alone.



Etiquette & Hospitality

Other Tips:

- Gestures often convey acceptance. Sit next to person with disability but respect boundaries.
- As an usher or greeter, please respect person's needs and request whenever possible.
- Don't make decisions for people with disabilities regarding what they can or can't do.
- A person who may appear drunk or sick may have a disability or medical emergency.



Accommodations

Thinking Ahead:

- Noise Cancelling Headphones
- Access to Outlets
- Large-Print Missals

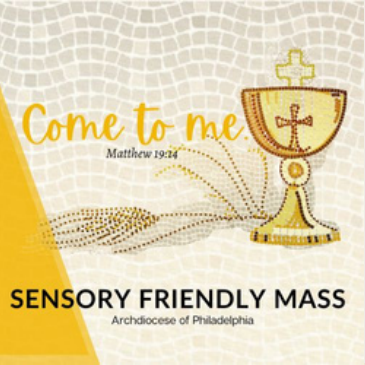


Accommodations

Alternative Seating:

- Wiggle Seats
- Rocking Chairs
- Seat Cushions
- Wheelchair Accessibility





Accommodations

Sensory Room:

- Dark Space
- Small Christmas Lights/Lava Lamp
- Fidgets/Manipulatives
- Alternative Seating
- Mats or Rugs
- White Noise





Accommodations

Alternative Worship Space:

- Separate Room for Live Stream
- Meets the needs of individuals who are overstimulated by crowds
- May be more comfortable for caregivers of persons who have behavioral needs





Accommodations

Alternative Worship Space:

- Does not replace Sensory-Friendly Mass Accommodations
- Allows for volume control
- Communion is brought to the room





Visual Aids & Fidgets

Resource List



Questions & Answers

Q & A