



# FAITH FORMATION & SACRAMENTAL PREP:

Youth with Autism and Developmental Disabilities



*Sr. Kathleen Schipani, IHM  
Office for Persons With Disabilities  
Archdiocese Of Philadelphia  
[Sr.KSchipani@archphila.org](mailto:Sr.KSchipani@archphila.org)*

# A LITTLE ABOUT ME...

*what shapes my understanding of disability*

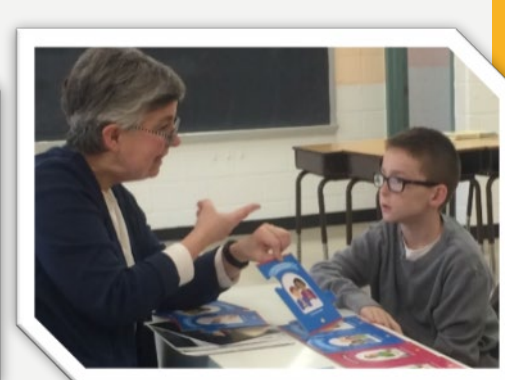


National Catholic  
Partnership on Disability  
Allianza Nacional Católico  
Sobre la Discapacidad



- Early work at Don Guanella Village
- Sister, Servant of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
- Special Education / Catechetical Ministry
- Learned ASL and work with Deaf Catholic Community
- Director of Office for Persons with Disabilities & Deaf Apostolate
- National and International Partnerships

**LOYOLA PRESS.**  
A JESUIT MINISTRY



# From inclusion to Belonging & Participation



**Mission:** The active engagement of youth with disabilities in faith formation and the Sacraments.

- *To the extent that we are welcomed and loved, included in community and accompanied to look to the future with trust, the true path of life is developed and we experience lasting happiness.*



“...There can be no lack in communities of the words and, above all, the gestures to encounter and welcome people with disabilities” Pope Francis 10.21.17

# From inclusion to Belonging & Participation



*Catechesis, in a special way, is called to discover and experiment with coherent forms so that every person, with his or her gifts, limits and disabilities, even serious, may encounter Jesus on the way and abandon himself to Him with faith.*

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR EVERYONE!**

No physical or psychic limit may ever be an obstacle to this encounter, because the face of Christ shines in the intimacy of every person.



# CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES - IDEA

13 categories are:

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/>

[www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org)

Booklet p.6-10

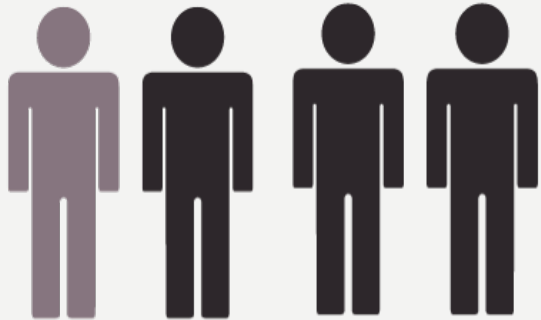
- Intellectual Disability (ID formally MR)
- Hearing impairment
- Speech/language impairment,
- Visual impairment / Blind
- Emotional disturbance
- Orthopedic impairment
- Autism
- Traumatic brain injury
- Other health impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Deafness
- Deaf-blindness
- Multiple disabilities

...at birth or acquired  
...mild to severe  
...impacts communication or not  
... part of the life process

## DISABILITIES

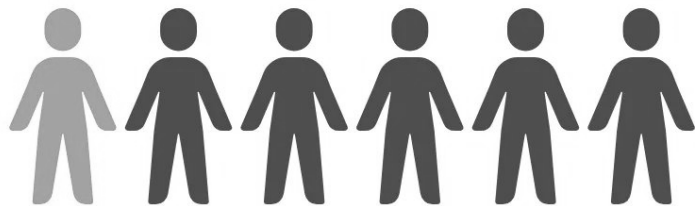
Physical , Sensory  
Mental Illness, Intellectual  
Neurological

# WHO ARE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?



One in four American adults has a disability.\*

**1 IN 6 AMERICAN CHILDREN  
(AGES 3-17) HAVE ONE OR MORE  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**



- Sons/Daughters
- Siblings
- Family members
- Neighbors
- Our Parents
- Ourselves



# Individuals with Disabilities

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) & IDEA

**# Receiving Special Ed Services --  
Nationally 15-17 % / IN 15 % / PA 18 %**

## AUTISM

1 in 36 or 2.7 % of the children  
Autism Spectrum Disorder  
(Boys 4x more )

## Intellectual Disability

Formally called MR / 1.5 %-2.5%  
Roughly 1 in 50

## Traumatic Brain Injury

Ages 0-4 and 15-19 most at risk  
Average of 62,000 children a year –TBI

## Psychiatric Disability Mental Illness / Behavioral

1 in 5 Children ages 9 to 17  
1 in 4 adults (26%)  
1 in 17 (6%) Serious Disorder

# Theological and Anthropological Perspective

MADE  
IN THE  
IMAGE  
OF  
GOD..

Creatures made in God's image





# Theological and Anthropological Perspective



"A person with disabilities, in order to build himself or herself up, needs not only to exist but also to belong to a community," he said. "I pray that each person may feel the paternal gaze of God, who affirms their full dignity and the unconditional value of their life."

(Pope Francis, Dec. 3, 2019)

"...when disabled persons are mentally impaired or when their sensory or intellectual capacity is damaged, they are **fully human beings and possess the sacred and inalienable rights that belong to every creature**. Indeed human beings, independently of the conditions in which they live or of what they are able to express, have a unique dignity and special value from the very beginning of their life until the moment of natural death."

(Pope John Paul II, January 5, 2004)



# NCPD

NATIONAL CATHOLIC  
PARTNERSHIP ON DISABILITY

*faith • giftedness • partnership*

[www.ncpd.org](http://www.ncpd.org)

GUIDELINES FOR THE  
Celebration of the  
Sacraments with  
Persons with  
Disabilities

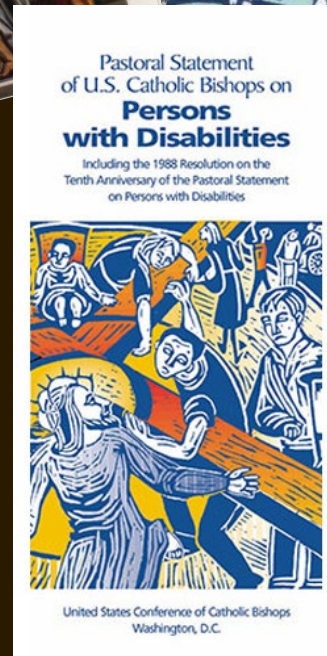
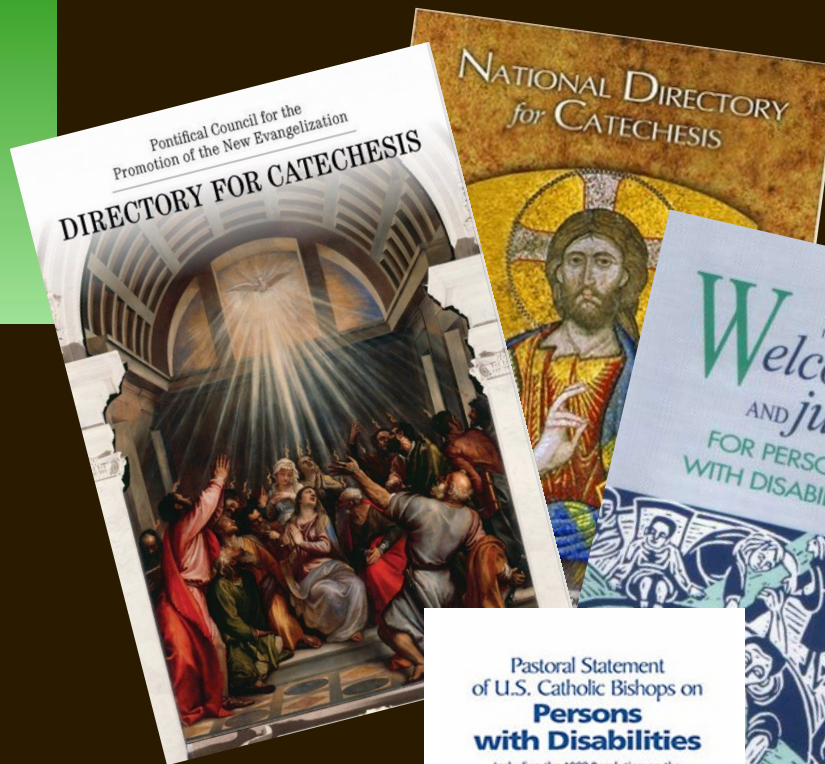
Revised Edition



# THE CALL OF THE CHURCH

GUIDELINES FOR THE CELEBRATION  
OF THE SACRAMENTS  
WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES,  
REVISED EDITION 2017

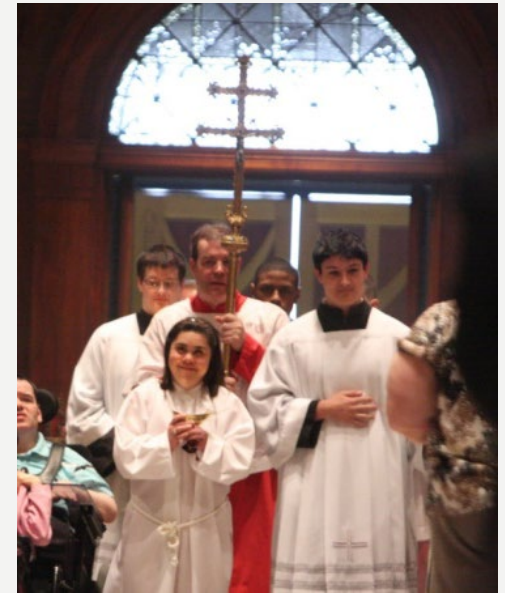
**BOOKLET P. 2-5**



# **INFORMED BY** *the Gospel*

p.2-5

- ***Pastoral Statement of the United States Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities, 1978, 1989***
- ***National Directory for Catechesis 2005***
- ***New Directory for Catechesis 2020***
- ***Revised Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities, 2017***



**All believers have a right to catechesis; all pastors have the duty to provide it.**

*Catechesi Tradendae*

[www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/upload/Pastoral-Statement-of-U-S-Catholic-Bishops-on-Persons-with-Disabilities.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/upload/Pastoral-Statement-of-U-S-Catholic-Bishops-on-Persons-with-Disabilities.pdf)



**THE CHURCHES SOLICITUDE FOR  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES SPRINGS FROM**

*God's way of acting.* 269

GUIDELINES FOR THE  
Celebration of the  
Sacraments with  
Persons with  
Disabilities  
Revised Edition

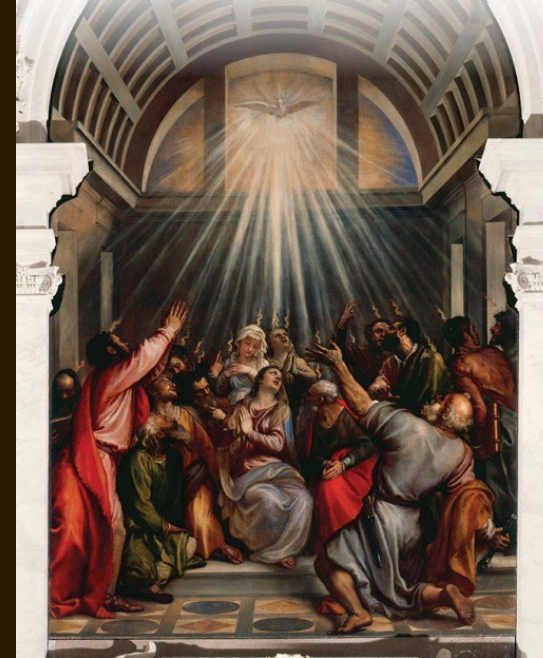


It is the task of the local Church to be open to the ordinary presence of persons with disabilities within the programs of catechesis, working for a culture of inclusion...

271

Pontifical Council for the  
Promotion of the New Evangelization

**DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS**

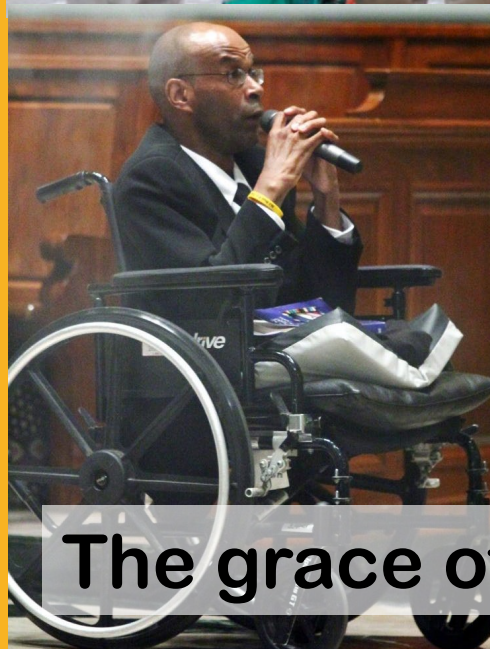


**THE CALL OF THE CHURCH**





**Universal call to holiness**



**The grace of the Sacraments**

## REVISED GUIDELINES

The Church continues to affirm the dignity of every human being, and to grow in knowledge and understanding of the gifts and needs of her member who live with disabilities.





It is essential that all forms of the liturgy be completely accessible to persons with disabilities, since these forms are the essence of the spiritual tie that binds the Christian community together.

To exclude members of a the parish from these celebrations of the life of the Church, **even by passive omission**, is to deny the reality of the community.

PS #23



## Preface: Why the need for the Guidelines?

- Pastoral inconsistencies
  - Misunderstand nature of disability
  - Application of Church law
  - Fear, misunderstanding and unfamiliarity
  - Real or perceived limitations of available resources
- People denied (no access to) the sacraments
- Uncertainty on how to respond pastorally



# **Guidelines For The Celebration of The Sacraments**

## **with Persons With Disabilities,**

Revised Edition 2017

**Full accessibility should be the goal for every parish, and these adaptations are to be an ordinary part of the liturgical life of the parish.**

<http://www.usccb.org/about/divine-worship/policies/guidelines-sacraments-persons-with-disabilities.cfm>



**....the goal for every parish.... an ordinary part**



# General Principals

1. The equal dignity and the universal call to holiness
2. Catholics with disabilities have the right to participate in the sacraments
3. Full access should be the goal of each parish and an **ordinary** part of liturgical life.
4. **The local parish is the center of the Christian experience for most Catholics.**



# General Principals

5. Pastors are responsible to provide evangelization, catechetical formation for parishioners with disabilities.
6. Participation in all levels of pastoral ministry – use their gift
7. Attitudes and a parish culture of inclusion of all God's people
8. Difficult situations may be encountered; and establishment of appropriate policies which respect the rights of individuals to have recourse.



# Guidelines For The Celebration of The Sacraments with Persons With Disabilities,

Revised Edition 2017

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES



- 1995 original version, #5

- ...Parish catechetical and sacramental preparation programs may need to be adapted for some parishioners with disabilities.



- 2017 Revision, #5 – **Formation in the Faith**

- ...adapted for some parishioners with disabilities, though, as much as possible, persons with disabilities should be **integrated** into the **ordinary programs**. They should **not** be **segregated for specialized catechesis** unless their disabilities make it impossible for them to participate in the basic catechetical program. **Even in those cases, participation in parish life is encouraged in all ways possible.**

# General Principles

1995 ORIGINAL VERSION, #6



- The creation of a fully accessible parish reaches beyond mere physical accommodation to encompass the attitudes of all parishioners toward persons with disabilities. **Pastoral ministers** are encouraged to **develop specific programs** aimed at forming a community of believers known for its joyful inclusion of all of God's people around the table of the Lord.

[www.opdarchphilly.org](http://www.opdarchphilly.org)

2017 REVISION, #7

The creation of fully accessible...persons with disabilities. **All members of the faith community** have a role to play in the invitation, welcome, and inclusion of people with disabilities. **Pastoral ministers are encouraged to foster attitudes and a parish culture**, and to develop informational materials, aimed at forming a community of believers known for its joyful inclusion of all of God's people around the table of the Lord.



**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) **p. 12 – Examine the barriers and solutions**

- **Seek and prepare catechists & volunteers**
- **Include in Registration Announcements**

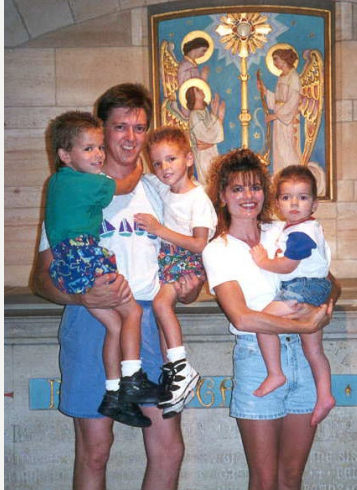
**p.12-13**

**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.**

## **PLAN & Budget**



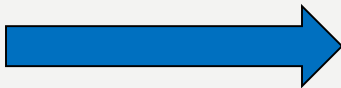
# The Parents as a Resource



- Engage the family in dialogue
  - What is it you want for your child?
- Use the Child Information Form
  - Using language that is positive inquire about disabilities, learning needs and accommodations used at home and in school setting.

p. 14-21

- What natural supports or professional supports does the family have in place?



- [www.opdarchphilly.org](http://www.opdarchphilly.org) Faith Formation

# IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK

## MEDICAL/LEARNING DATA

If any of the following apply to your child, please list his/her name and give details in the appropriate spaces.

Child's Name	Medical Conditions/Allergies	Prescribed Medications	Disability* / Learning Support Services	Individualized Education Program IEP
				<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
				<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
				<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Is there other information about your child that should be communicated?

---



---

\* As defined by *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, the term "child with a disability" means a child: "with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

**If there is indication of a disability. Gather further information. p13**

**Interview ques.** - Describe your child's special education programming or community based services.

**Child Information Form could be used. P,13-21**

# SOLVING ORGANIZATIONAL **BARRIERS** TO INCLUSION

## Attitudinal Barriers

- Labels & Stereotypes
- Fear of the Unknown
- Segregated Programs of the Past

## Attitudinal Solutions

- Modeling
- Language **p.11**
- Beginning at an early age  
\* (see parish announcement)



## Administrative Barriers

- Outreach Network
- Inexperienced staff & volunteers
- Inadequate support

## Administrative Solutions

- Teaming with Parents
- Creating Instructional Support Teams
- Utilizing available Resources/Persons



# **SOLVING** ORGANIZATIONAL **BARRIERS TO INCLUSION**

## **Architectural/Physical Barriers**

- Inaccessible building
- Lack of equipment or resources

## **Programmatic Barriers**

- Content/Materials
- Lack of Staff Support
- Inflexible Program

## **Architectural/Physical Solutions**

- Plan in advance for Persons of mixed abilities
- Identify barrier free, safe environments

## **Programmatic Solutions**

- Inclusion Facilitator/Advocate
- Training Staff
- Accommodations /Flexible Grouping

p. 12 booklet





**BEGIN with  
the PERSON  
before YOU.**

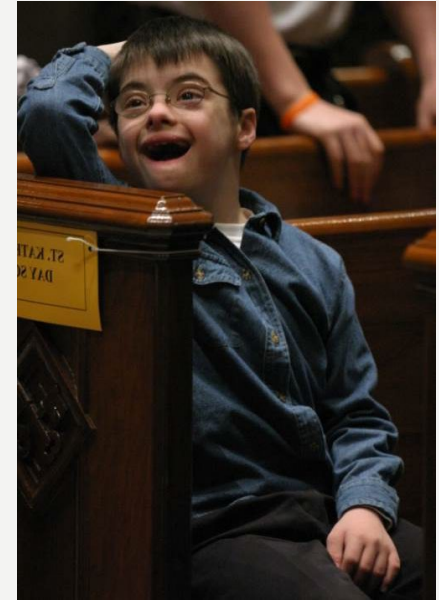
Relationships are  
essential  
to the catechetical  
process.

*But not one and done!*



# A CULTURE 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)

# PLACEMENT IN PREP?



- **Persons with disabilities should be integrated into the *ordinary* catechetical programs as much as possible...they should not be segregated for specialized catechesis unless their disability make it impossible to participate in the basic catechetical program.**

(2005 NDC 49:B, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph)





# MODELS OF ENGAGEMENT IN CATECHESIS

**In classroom with supports...**  
catechist aide or peer tutor/adapted materials



**Within the typical classroom**  
with peers



**In Learning Support Classroom**  
with small group learning and adapted curriculum



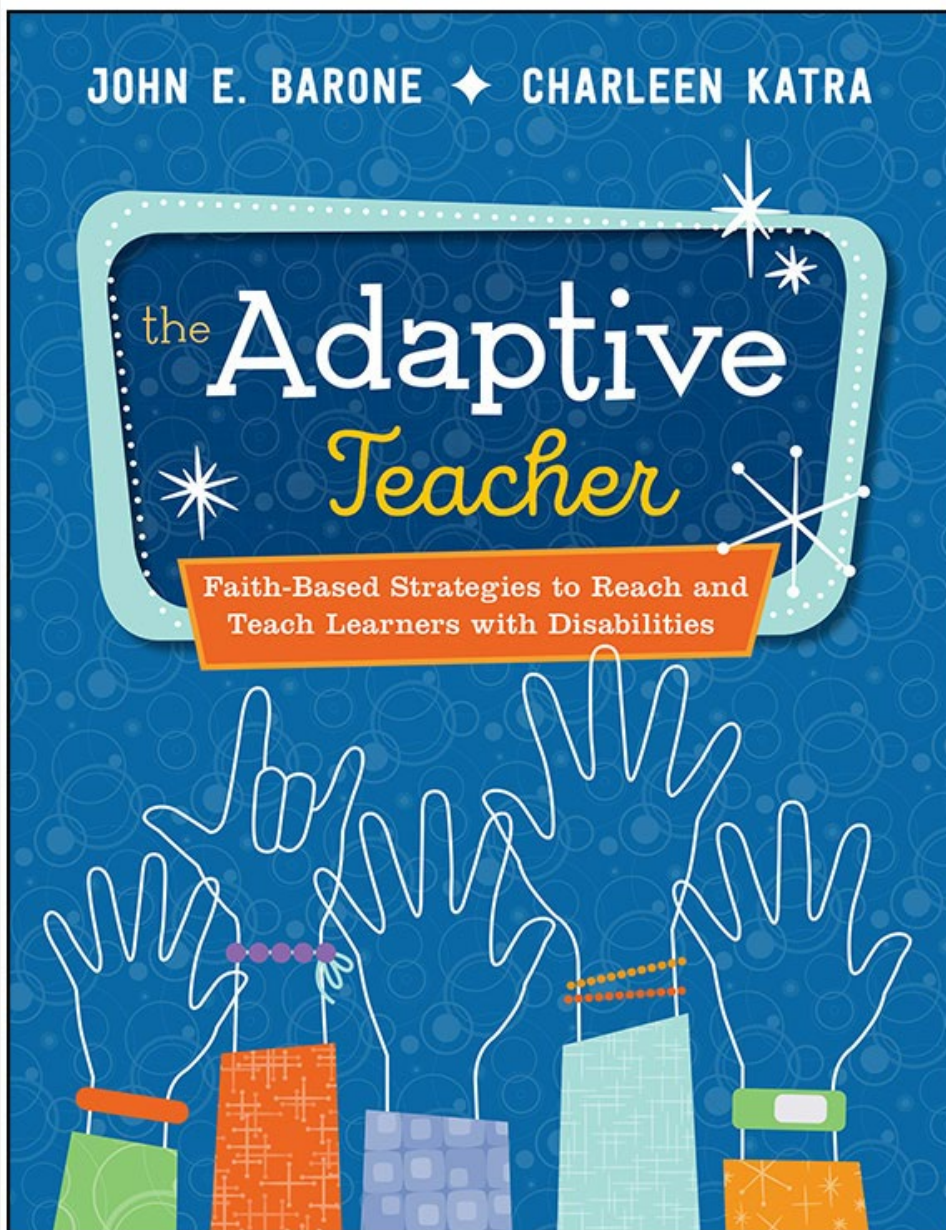
**With Individualized Instruction;**  
joins with peers for prayer, liturgies & special activities



# HOW TO: SUPPORTS FOR PREP



- Inclusion facilitator, prepared catechist and volunteer assistants
- Appropriate placement
- Using natural family, program and peer supports
- Therapeutic support staff (TSS) or wrap around
- Purchase and create adaptive materials – learn new approaches.



“As educators, we must follow in the footsteps of Jesus, welcoming all of God’s children by **providing accommodations and modifications** where needed. Our responsibility as teachers, catechists, or parents is to present the Good News in a **variety of styles and levels of complexity and to be open to modifying the curriculum** to match the different levels of our learners’ functioning.”

-John E. Barone and Charleen Katra (*The Adaptive Teacher*)

**LOYOLA PRESS.**  
A JESUIT MINISTRY



# PREPARING THE LESSON

## Multi - Model

- 10% of what they READ
- 20% of what they HEAR
- 30% of what they SEE
- 50% of what they SEE & HEAR
- 70% of what they SAY
- 90% of what they SAY & DO

- Cues and Signals
- Connecting to Emotions
- Establishing Purpose for Learning
- Organizing for Learning
- Active Learning

## EXAMPLE - [Confirmation](#) DVD

- What strategies facilitate gaining students' **attention**?
- **What strategies facilitate activating students' prior knowledge and experiences?**
- What strategies facilitate actively **involving students** in the learning process?
- What strategies facilitate students' ability to **construct meaning**?      P 24-25. UDL / EBS



# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

Catechists Can Apply. P 22-23

- Provide clear structure & a set routine eg: (Call response)
- Use visual schedules
- Help develop systematic habits & work routines
- Utilize task analysis – very specific, tasks in sequential order
- Always keep language simple & concrete p 82. think/pair/share
- Break learning into chunks
- Supply regular, positive feedback
- Provides scaffolds - use diagrams, graphics and pictures to augment what you say in words
- Provide ample practice
- <http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/evidence-based-practices>
- <http://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/afirm-modules> Evidenced Based Practices



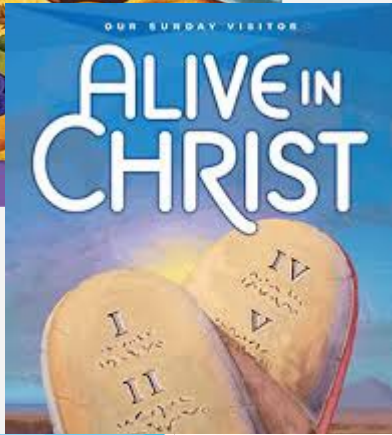
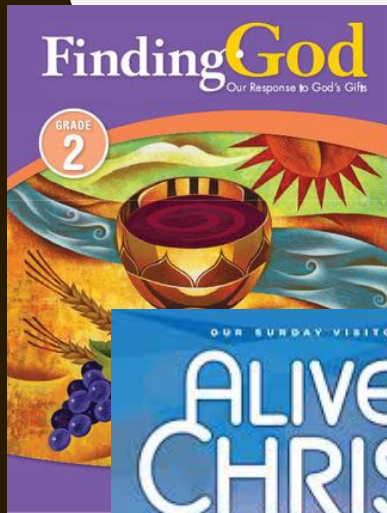
# ADAPTING LESSONS

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



**LOYOLA PRESS.**  
A JESUIT MINISTRY

Adaptive Finding God Program



# RESOURCES

*Are you using Traditional text and/or adaptive materials?*

**LOYOLA ADAPTIVE  
FINDING GOD KIT &  
SACRAMENTAL BOXES.**

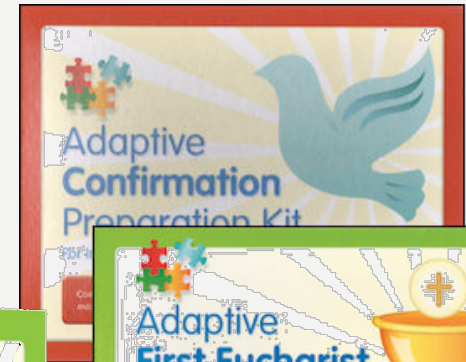
**UNIVERSITY OF  
DAYTON INCLUSIVE  
RELIGIOUS ED  
MATERIALS.**





# ADAPTIVE MATERIALS

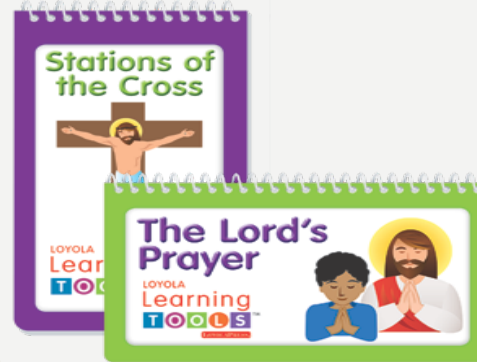
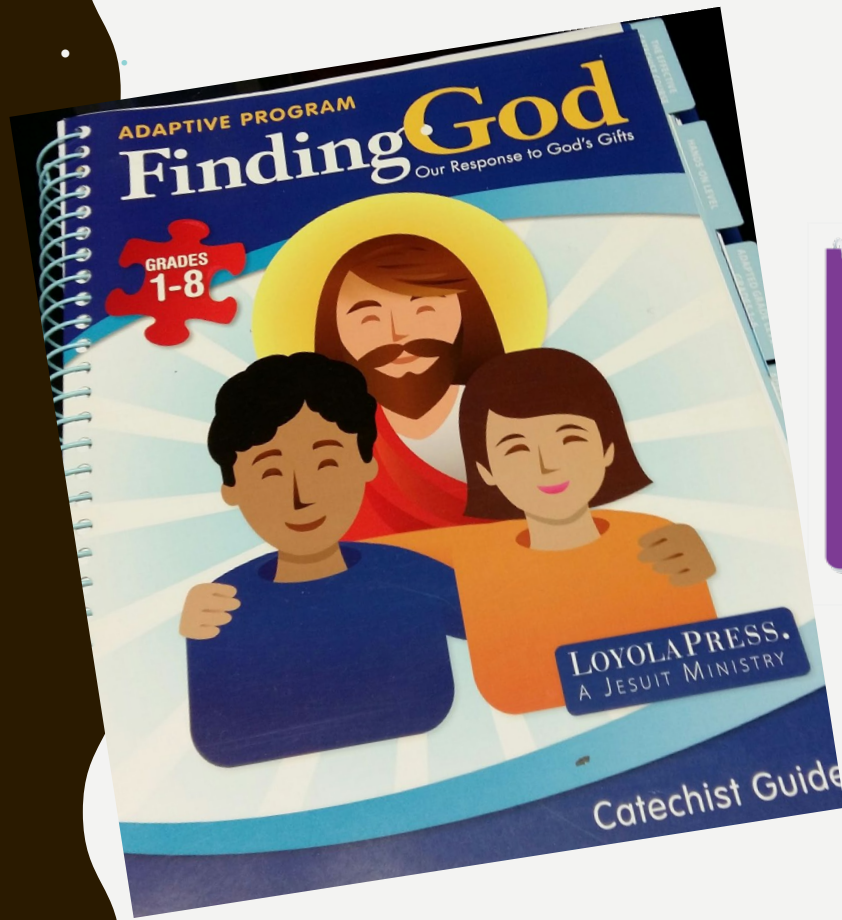
LOYOLA ADAPTIVE FINDING GOD KIT & SACRAMENTAL BOXES.



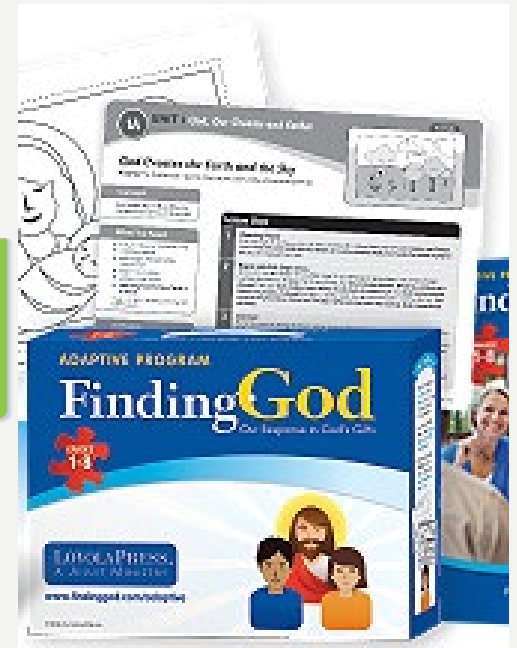
UPDATED LISTING OF ADAPTIVE MATERIALS – P32-36

# ADAPTIVE MATERIALS

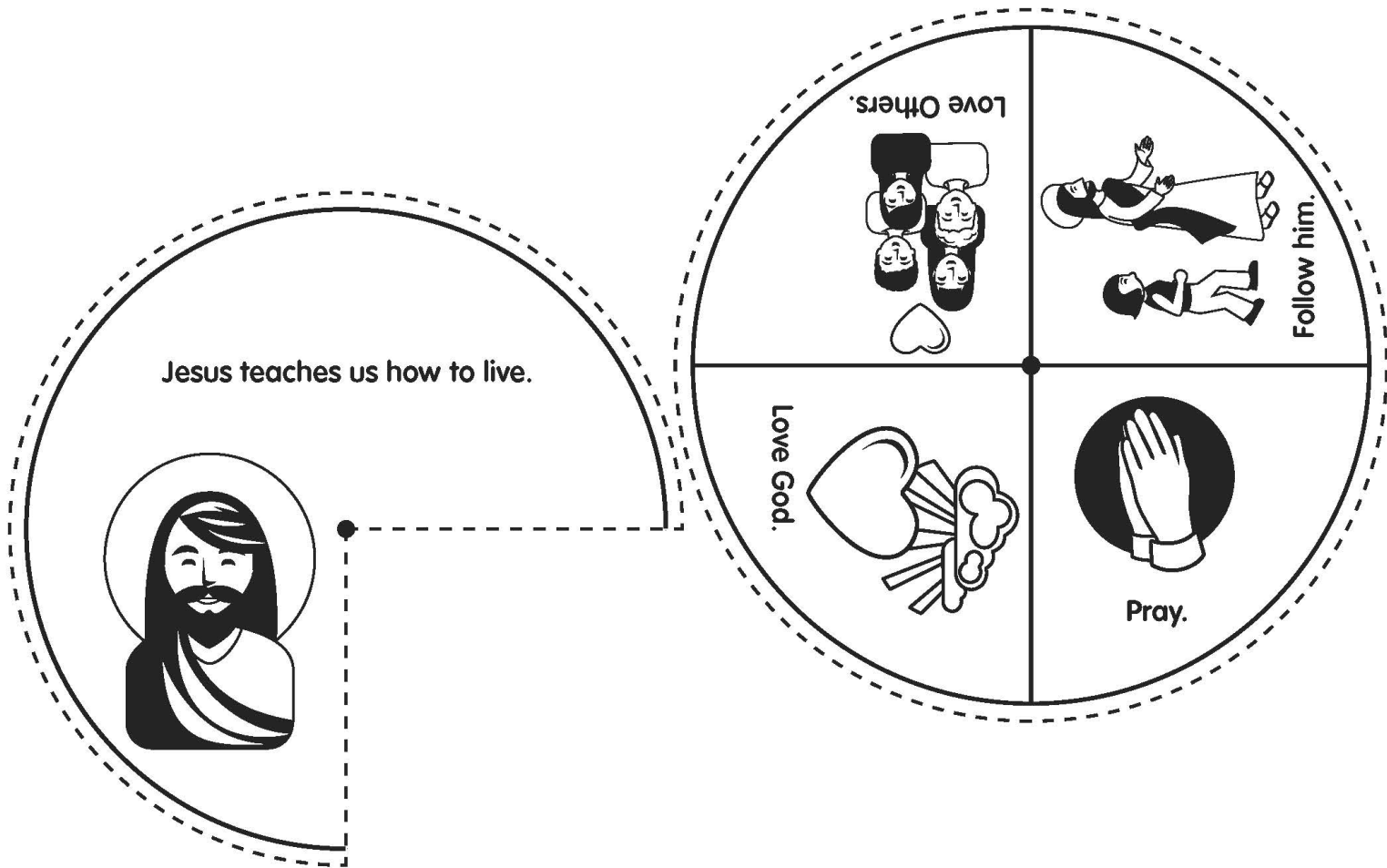
- LOYOLA ADAPTIVE FINDING GOD KIT & SACRAMENTAL BOXES.



Flip Books



# 21A Jesus Teaches Us How to Live





# VISUAL SCHEDULES

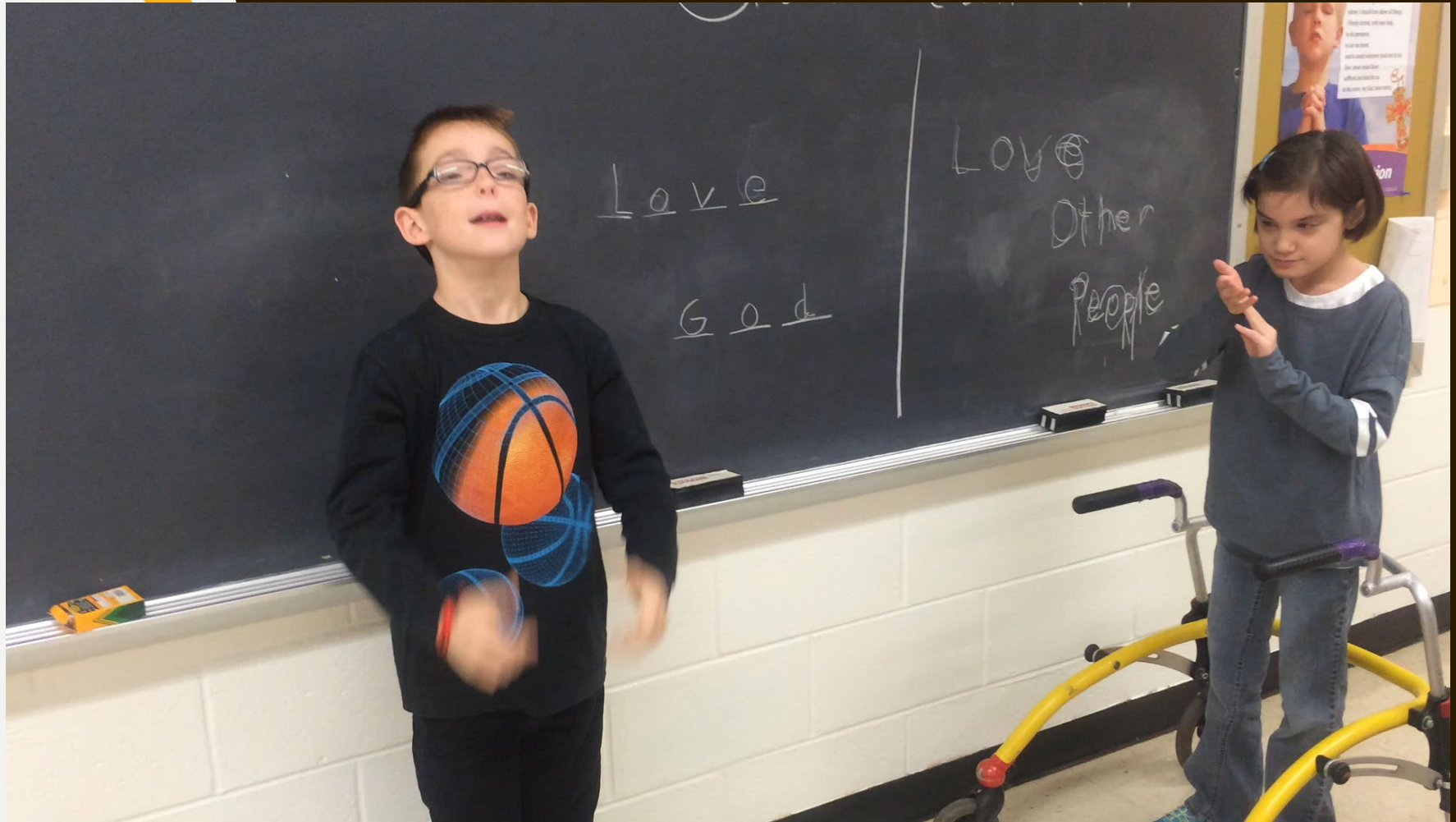
<b>Breakfast</b> 	<b>Calendar</b> 	<b>Specials</b> 	<b>Math</b> 	<b>Recess</b> 	<b>Language Arts</b> 	<b>Lunch</b> 
<b>Reading</b> 	<b>Resource Reading</b> 	<b>Speech</b> 	<b>Spelling</b> 	<b>Science</b> 	<b>Small Group</b> 	<b>Circle Time</b> 
<b>Library</b> 	<b>Resource Math</b> 	<b>OT</b> 	<b>Writing</b> 	<b>Social Studies</b> 	<b>Independent Work</b> 	<b>Check-In</b> 
<b>Study</b> 	<b>Resource Lang. Arts</b> 	<b>Independent Work</b> 	<b>Independent Work</b> 	<b>Independent Work</b> 	<b>Small Group</b> 	<b>Check-In</b> 
<b>Clean Up</b> 	<b>Computer Lab</b> 	<b>Subject on Computer</b> 	<b>Journal Writing</b> 	<b>Music Class</b> 	<b>Small Group</b> 	<b>Arrival To</b> 
<b>Assembly</b> 	<b>Art Class</b> 	<b>Social Skills</b> 	<b>Workbook</b> 	<b>P.E. Class</b> 	<b>Small Group</b> 	<b>Departure Tasks</b> 

victoriesautism.com



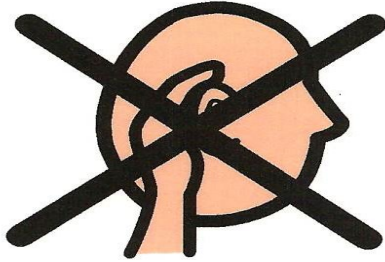
**STRATEGY**

# USING NEW TECHNOLOGIES

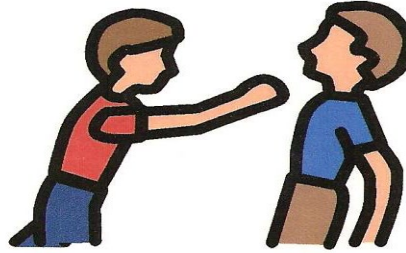


# Communication Systems: AAC

not listening



fighting with brothers/sisters



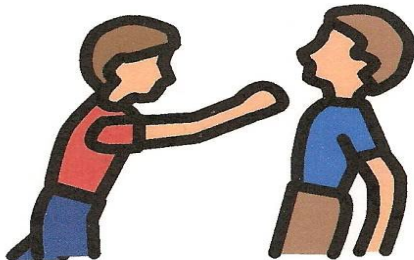
grab toys away



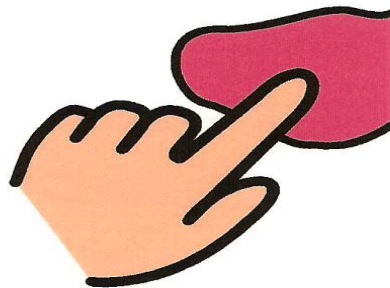
not sharing



hit others



touching/bothering others





# Garrett's Story

My son Garrett is 12 years old and he just made Confirmation this past February -by the way, he has been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD and Anxiety. He has been a part of PREP at SS Simon and Jude Parish since he was 3 years old.



- *Second grade was First Communion. He was assigned the strongest teacher among all of the 2nd grade teachers. She kept me informed of everything he did. They pulled him out at least every other week to work one on one with a volunteer grandmotherly type who taught him in a quiet room. He also has many oral issues so they gave me an envelope of unblessed hosts and I gradually introduced him to the taste and feel by giving it to him a little bit each day so he would be ready for First Communion day.*

# JASON'S STORY

- **What are your expectations from your parish community in relation to your son with autism?**



“The parish has been very supportive by inviting him to participate in Little Church School. In kindergarten Jacob has a one on one aide and the Little Church School has made the same provision for him on Sundays. When he is older we would like him to receive the sacraments. I know they will support him in the Prep program as well.”

# TRANSFORMING THE HEART OF OUR PARISH

- Inclusion Video



- The impact on families
- The impact on the parish
- People with disabilities are not only the recipients of evangelizations they are the agents.

*What is the impact inclusion can have/or has had on a family and on your parish community?*



# BAPTISM



- The Church, made present in the local community, has an important role to play in the Baptism of all of its members. **Before and after the celebration of the sacrament, the baptized have the right to the love and help of the community. (10)**
- **Disability, of itself, is never a reason for deferring Baptism. Persons who lack the use of reason are to be baptized provided at least one parent or guardian consents to it. (11)**

# BAPTISM

2017 REVISION, #11



- Parents who receive a prenatal diagnosis of a life-threatening condition should receive the support they need to assure that their child will be baptized “without delay.” Indeed, priests, deacons, and other pastoral ministers should provide spiritual and emotional support to families who have received any difficult prenatal diagnosis and **offer on-going support before and after the birth of a child**, with special concern in the event of the death of a child.

## **SUPPORT MINISTRIES:**

- **BE NOT AFRAID (NATIONAL)**
- **LILY’S GIFT (ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA)**

# BAPTISM

## 1995 VERSION, #12

- If the person to be baptized is of catechetical age, the Rite of Christian Initiation may be adapted according to need.



## 2017 REVISION, #13

- ...**Adults and children of catechetical age with disabilities should be welcomed into all stages and rites of the initiation process.**
- If the catechumen is of catechetical age, the rites may be adapted according to need. In these cases, catechesis for persons with disabilities must be **adapted in content and method to their particular situations.**
- **Like others, adults and children of catechetical age with disabilities should normally receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist in a single celebration.**



# RECONCILIATION

Only those who have the use of reason are capable of committing mortal sin. Nevertheless, even young children and persons with **intellectual disabilities** often are conscious of committing acts that are sinful to some degree and may experience a sense of guilt and sorrow.



# RECONCILIATION

- As long as the individual is capable of **having a sense of contrition** for having committed sin, even if he or she cannot describe the sin precisely in words, the person may receive sacramental absolution. (28)
- Those with profound intellectual disabilities, who **cannot experience even minimal contrition**, may be invited to participate in penitential services with the rest of the community to the extent of their ability. (28)

# RECONCILIATION – THOSE WHO HAVE MINIMAL VERBAL COMMUNICATION (29)



- In the case of individuals who are nonverbal or have minimal verbal communication ability, sorrow for sin is to be accepted even if this repentance is expressed through some gesture rather than verbally.
- Catholics with significant communication disorders may be permitted to make their confessions using the communication system with which they are most fluent.

*Previously #24/25*



# Reconciliation

Those who have minimal verbal communication (29)



- Individuals preparing for the sacrament are to be **taught to be as independent as possible** in the use of their communication system to allow for the norm of **private reception of the sacrament.**
- **Confessors** are encouraged to work with families and individuals to **familiarize themselves with various alternative communication options to ensure that all who desire to celebrate** this sacrament may do so, provided that the seal of confession is properly safeguarded.

# RECONCILIATION

## Catholics who are deaf (30)

- Catholics who are deaf should have the opportunity to confess to a priest able to communicate with them in sign language, if sign language is their primary means of communication. **They may also confess through an approved sign language interpreter of their choice.\***
- When neither a priest with signing skills nor a sign language interpreter is available, Catholics who are deaf should be permitted to make their confession in writing **or through the use of an appropriate portable electronic communication device** that can be passed back and forth between the penitent and confessor.
- The written **or digital** materials are to be returned to the penitent and properly destroyed or deleted.



# RECONCILIATION

• NEW

...every effort should be made to ensure that penitents who are wheelchair users **have access to both face-to-face and private confessionals**, with due regard for the right of the priest to insist on confession behind a fixed screen. (31)



# PREPARING FOR THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

## Children with Learning Disabilities / moderate IDD

- Simplify, break down the steps, partner with parents to assist in overlearning. Use cues and/or fade cues.

## Children with ASD, profound IDD, possibly non-verbal

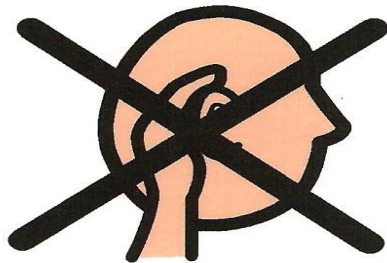
- Collaborate with parents to notice & develop a sense of contrition.
- Key concepts – Great Commandment, Choices, Sin, Forgiveness
- Steps in the Rite of Sacrament of Forgiveness



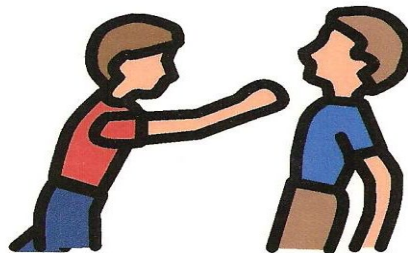


# RIITE OF RECONCILIATION

not listening



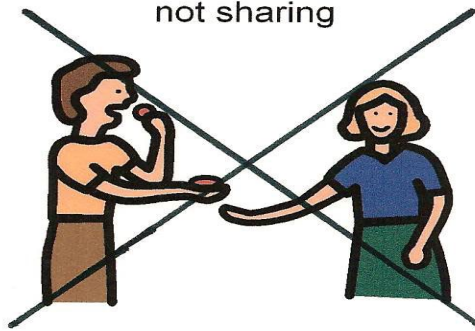
fighting with brothers/sisters



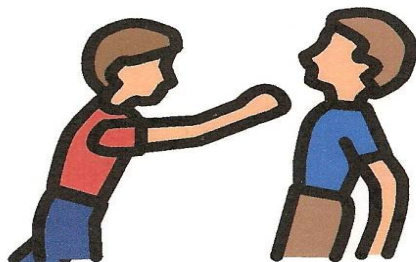
grab toys away



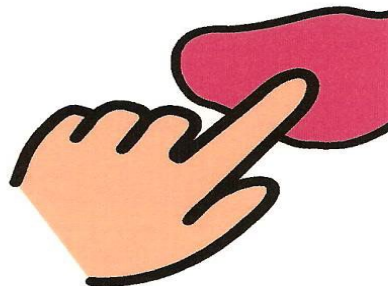
not sharing



hit others



touching/bothering others



Augmentative and  
Alternative  
Communication  
(AAC)

# EUCHARIST

- The criterion for reception of Holy Communion is the same for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities as for all persons, namely, that the person be able to “distinguish the body of Christ from ordinary food,” even if this recognition is evidenced through **manner, gesture, or reverential silence rather than verbally.** (22)





# EUCHARIST

- Manner
- Gesture
- Reverential silence
- Even if no or little language



## MCGUIRE MEMORIAL AWAKENING SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS

A Model of Catechesis and Prayer Services  
for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities



William Gillum, OFM Cap., M.Div, M. Ed.



# PREPARING FOR MASS ATTENDANCE

- Recognize the challenges
- Encourage parents to seek support from professionals, IEP team and look for natural supports.
- What accommodations would help – appropriate fidgets, noise canceling head phones, attending a shorter quieter Mass, using a visual schedule.

**SENSORY FRIENDLY MASS**

**Mass Tool Kit for Parishes & Families**

*Come to me.*

*Matthew 19:14*

*All are welcome. All belong.*



<https://opdarchphilly.org/sfm/> and other Sensory Friendly Mass Resources



# EUCCHARIST

95/2017



- Pastors are encouraged to consult with parents, those who take the place of parents, diocesan personnel involved with disability issues, psychologists, religious educators, and other experts in making their judgment. **(22)**
- If it is determined that a parishioner who is disabled is not ready to receive the sacrament, great care is to be taken in explaining the reasons for this decision. **Cases of doubt should be resolved in favor of the right of the Catholic to receive the sacrament.** The existence of a disability is not considered in and of itself as disqualifying a person from receiving Holy Communion. **(22)**

# ERRONEOUS RESPONSES



They are angels and do not need the Sacraments.



No preparation is needed for them to receive.



They will never understand and will get nothing out of it.



The use of reason is required for the reception of Confirmation.



***Enter into the  
Sacred Mystery***

# EUCCHARIST (NEW ISSUES IN THE REVISION)

- Given the paramount significance of the Eucharist in the lives of the faithful, and in light of medical and technological advancements that affect Catholics with disabilities, new questions have arisen regarding the reception of Holy Communion, and circumstances that were once rare have even become relatively common. **Clergy and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are encouraged to become familiar with the needs of their parishioners. In many instances, simple accommodations can be very helpful, and should be embraced by all at the parish level. (23)**



- **New issues addressed:**
  - **Feeding tubes (24)**
  - **Gluten intolerance (25)**
  - **Advanced Alzheimers or other age-related dementias (26)**

# FIRST COMMUNION

## SENSORY PROCESSING, SWALLOWING, FOOD AVERSION, ARFID (AVOIDANT/RESTRICTIVE FOOD INTAKE DISORDER)

- Begin the discussion way in advance of First Communion Day
- Build a trusting relationship / we will do our best to figure this out together.
- Ask the parent to involve other professionals – therapist, OT, doctor or nutritionist, speech therapist (swallowing)
- Involve the child in working on the solution.
- Provide unconsecrated host. Begin with small piece. Practice regularly.
- Be sure priests, deacons, EM's are aware of any accommodation needed.



# EUCHARIST

- **Feeding Tubes (24)**

The norm of receiving through the mouth remains the same for those who otherwise use a feeding tube for sustenance, and Holy Communion is not to be administered through a feeding tube. **For these communicants it will commonly be possible to place one or a few drops of the Precious Blood on the tongue.** *...consult with docs, family, experts...*

- ..the full presence of Christ and his sanctifying grace are found in even the smallest piece of the consecrated host or in a mere drop of the consecrated wine. (24)



# **EUCCHARIST** **GLUTEN INTOLERANCE (25)**

- The following accommodations can be made for those who with Celiac Sprue Disease and other gluten intolerances:
- **The opportunity to receive a small fragment of a regular host.**
- **Options to receive a low-gluten host or to receive under the form of wine alone.**
- **In the event of intolerance to gluten and wine, mustum may also be an option, with the approval of the local ordinary.**
- Clergy and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion must be aware of the possibility of cross contamination in these circumstances

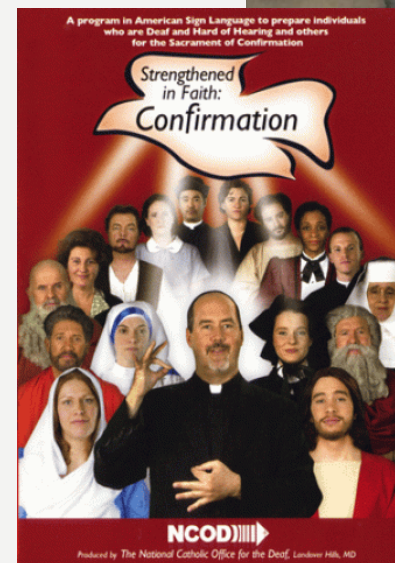
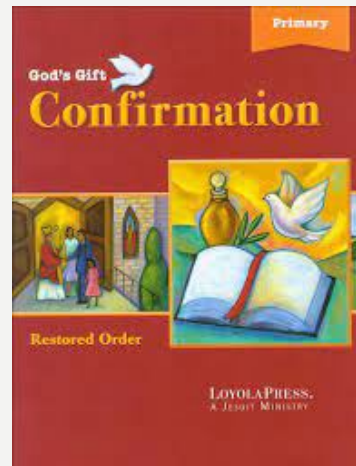
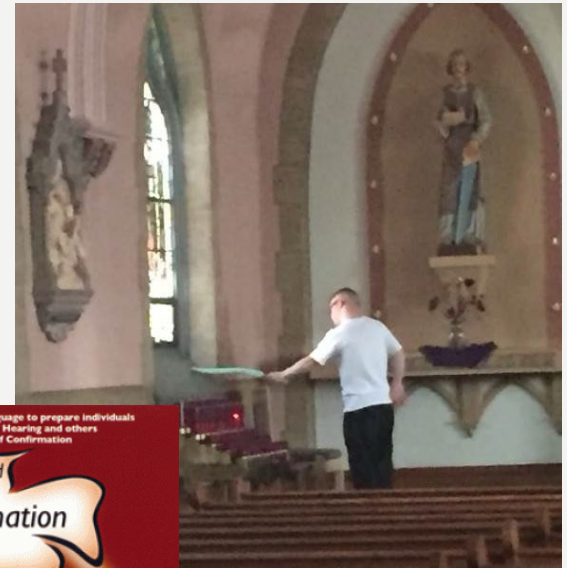
# CONFIRMATION

- Parents, those who care for persons with disabilities, and shepherds of souls—especially pastors—are to see to it that the faithful who have been baptized receive the formation needed for the Sacrament of Confirmation and approach it at the appropriate time. (16)
- Persons who because of intellectual or developmental disabilities **may never attain the use of reason can receive** the Sacrament of Confirmation and **should be encouraged either directly or, if necessary, through their parents.** It is important that they receive the pastoral guidance needed, along with the welcome and embrace of the whole community of faith. (18)



# FORMATION FOR CONFIRMATION

- With the Confirmation class with modifications/ accommodations supports, peer mentor or extra help from a sponsor or parent.
- Use adaptive materials if needed
- If one on one or parent prepares, consider ways to engage with class or parish.







# CONFIRMATION

Revision 2017

- To the degree possible, those with disabilities should be included along with others during the preparation and celebration of the sacrament. **At times, pastoral need may necessitate an accommodated setting and a simpler manner. (18)**

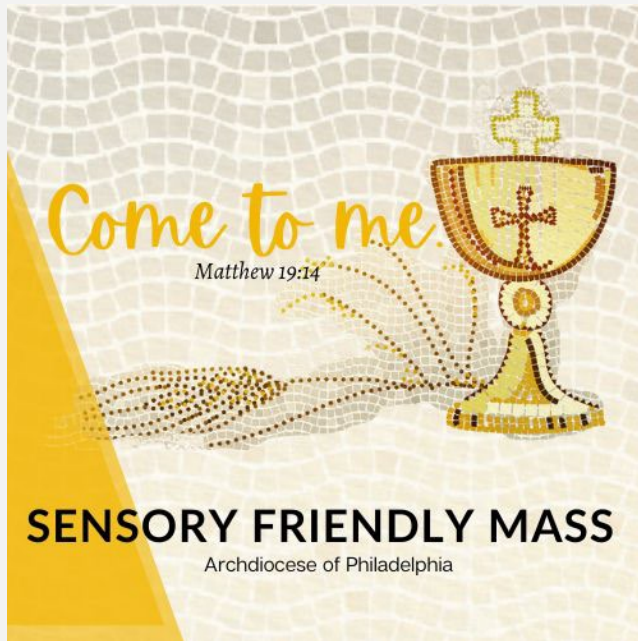
• “When those with disabilities who are already baptized Christians desire to become Catholic, they should participate in the Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church, **which normally includes the reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.**”(20)

# Essential Resources

## Curriculum, Books and Resources

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





**Manipulatives to assist in Mass preparation and attendance:**

***Manipulatives are tactile items that can be used as a tangible focus. Below is a list of some Catholic learning manipulatives that are interactive yet still focus on the faith.***

**Mass Tool Kit Materials:**

***Visual aids for families and individuals to assist in attending or preparing to attend Mass. These are free printable materials to make available to families in your parish.***

- **Guide to Prepare to Go to Mass** – Parents/guardians can use this guide to assist in the transition to attending Mass and/or each week to prepare for leaving the home to go to Mass.
- **My Parish Mass Template** – Use pictures of your Church, parish priests and Liturgy for this Mass booklet.
- **Going to Mass Visual Story** – A social story about Mass created by the Diocese of Newark.
- **Going to Mass Sensory Book** – A social story about Mass created by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.
- <https://opdarchphilly.org/sfm/>

# NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

## Catholic

- **NCPD** National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities [www.ncpd.org](http://www.ncpd.org)
- **NCOD** National Catholic Office for the Deaf  
[www.ncod.org](http://www.ncod.org)
- **Xavier Society for the Blind**  
[www.xaviersocietyfortheblind.org](http://www.xaviersocietyfortheblind.org)

## Interfaith

- **Collaborative on Faith and Disability**  
[www.faithanddisability.org](http://www.faithanddisability.org) / [www.faithability.org](http://www.faithability.org)



# LOCAL RESOURCES

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



# More Essential Resources

## USCCB

### Documents:

- [USCCB 1978 Pastoral Statement on Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [1998 Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [2017 Revised Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities](#)

[www.opdarchphilly.org](http://www.opdarchphilly.org)

**THIS PP  
& MORE**

[www.opdarchphilly.org](http://www.opdarchphilly.org)

**Faith Formation**

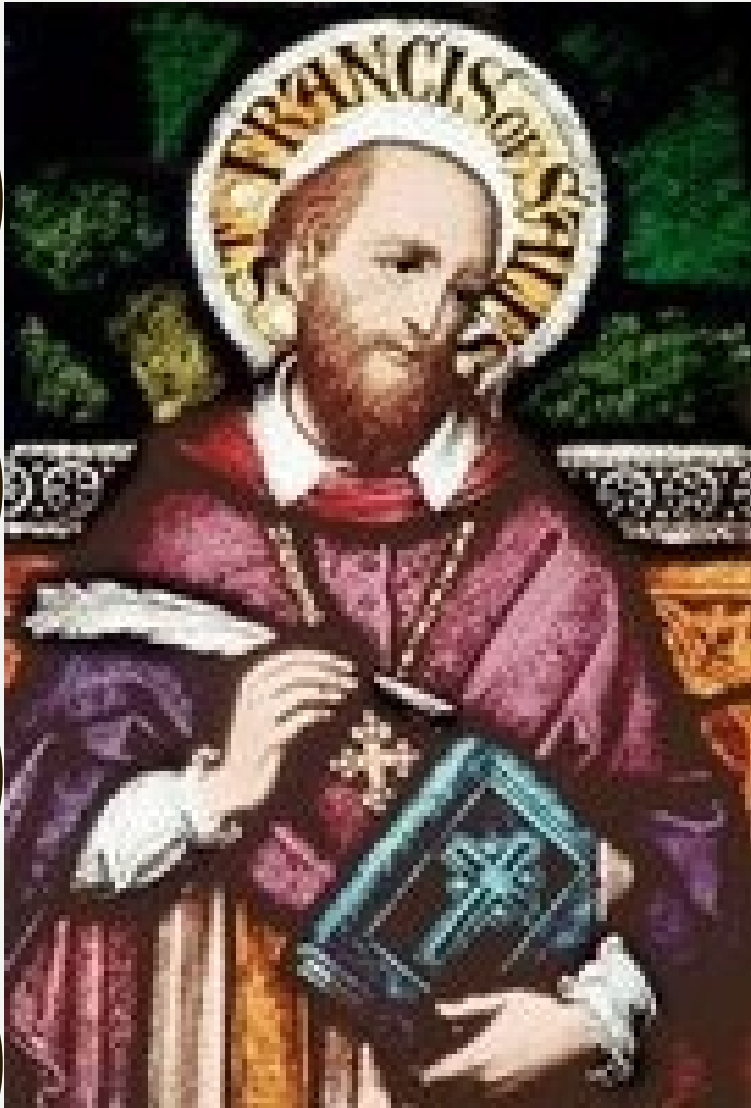
**Power Point**

**Child Information  
Form**

**Template for  
Announcements**

**Lesson Helps**

**HOW DO WE BEGIN...** *how do we continue...*



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

*St. Francis De Sales*