

Disability Awareness Masses



What is a Disability Awareness Mass?

- ✝ An opportunity to celebrate the gifts Persons with disabilities bring to the Parish
- ✝ Welcomes Persons with disabilities and encourages full participation in the life of the church
- ✝ Highlights the efforts of groups working with Persons with disabilities.

Parish Considerations

Is our Parish accessible for Persons with disabilities?

- Bathrooms/stalls have room for Persons using wheel chairs
- Church Hall/gathering space has easy access for all
- Entrance is level, or ramped according to Code for Persons using walkers/wheel chairs/motorized chairs
- All entrance widths accommodating to those requiring mobility assistance (including bathroom entrances)
- Parking is ADA appropriate, marked and close to entrance with curb cuts or level entrance
- Pews and aisles wide enough for access with mobility aids
- Sanctuary has ramp or is floor level for all to participate
- Seating in Church offers pew cuts for People using mobility aids to sit comfortable with family members

Is our Parish accessible for persons with sensory disabilities?

- Offer assistive listening devices; opportunities for lip reading; loop sound systems; real time captioning (CART)
- Mass booklets, hymnals, or readings of the day in Braille or large print materials, lighting for clear vision
- Signed Masses for those who use ASL for communication

Is our Parish accessible to and understanding of Persons with intellectual, emotional, and learning needs?

- Acceptance of persons who may display unique patterns of behavior (i.e. sounds, physical motions, etc.)
- Liturgical materials are presented in easy to understand formats

Planning

1. Establish Disability Awareness Mass Committee.
2. Examine Parish facilities regarding accessibility for persons with disabilities. What accommodations need to be made?
3. Schedule the Disability Awareness Mass to take place during a regular Sunday Mass. Consider Respect Life Month when scheduling.
4. Contact Diocesan Department for Persons with Disabilities; make arrangements:
 - to have an Interpreter for Persons who are Deaf
 - if the Diocesan Deaf Choir is to be invited
 - if program, songs, etc. are to be copied in Braille or large print
 - to borrow temporary ramps to make sanctuary or other areas accessible
5. **Publicize** the Disability Awareness Mass and invite entire parish
6. Prepare **Bulletin Announcement** and flyer to include all
7. Extend invitation to Persons with disabilities individually
8. Solicit help and cooperation from Parish Organizations

Other Considerations

- Will there be a social, brunch, or luncheon following the Mass?
- Will a program be distributed?
- Are there individuals who may be available to serve as escorts for people who use a wheelchair or have a visual impairment?
- Considering individual parish circumstances, do you need a person qualified in first aid to be available?
- Consider having an invitation with a return form to be completed by persons with disabilities asking for name, address, phone number, and an indication of their special needs such as an escort, material in large print or Braille, sign language interpreter, dietary needs.
- Contact persons who will serve in the following capacities. The goal is to extend an invitation to parishioners with disabilities for their participation as:
 - Altar Servers
 - Lectors
 - Ushers
 - Greeters
 - Eucharistic Ministers
 - Choir, Cantor, and Musicians
 - Communion Marshals
 - Entrance Procession Participants
 - Liturgical Movement Leaders
 - Offertory Procession Participants
 - Response Leaders/Readers

For more information or questions,
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