

Moving Forward

Creating Communities of Belonging Together

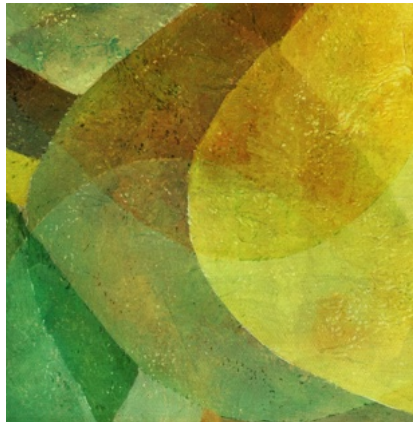
Erik Carter
Baylor University
erik_carter@baylor.edu

“...to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for *further education, employment, and independent living...*”

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

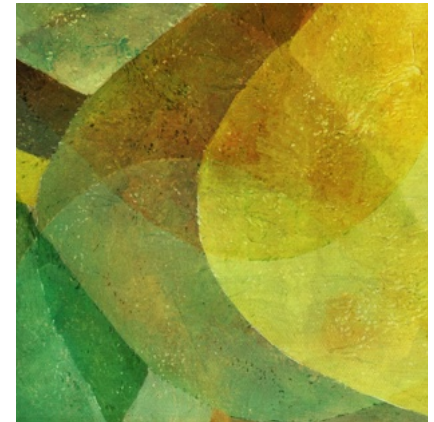
The Outcomes We Pursue

- Employment
- Independent living
- Educational opportunities
- Community involvement



The Experiences We Desire

- Friendships
- Intimacy
- Character and virtue
- Sense of purpose
- Being valued and needed
- Self-direction and freedom
- Good health
- Faith
- Belonging



Good Outcomes

- Employment
- Independent living
- Educational opportunities
- Community involvement



Good Lives

- Friendships
- Intimacy
- Character and virtue
- Sense of purpose
- Self-direction and freedom
- Good health
- Faith
- Belonging

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Career Aspirations

94%
Expect to Have a Paid Job

Source: <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/projects/national-longitudinal-transition-study>

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50%
Expect to Obtain a Degree

College Aspirations

Source: <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/projects/national-longitudinal-transition-study>

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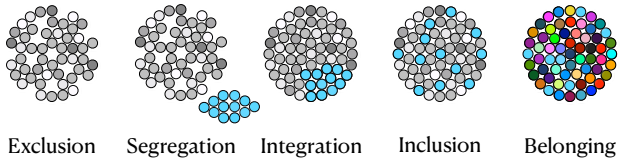


72%
Expect to Live Independently

Community Aspirations

Source: <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/projects/national-longitudinal-transition-study>

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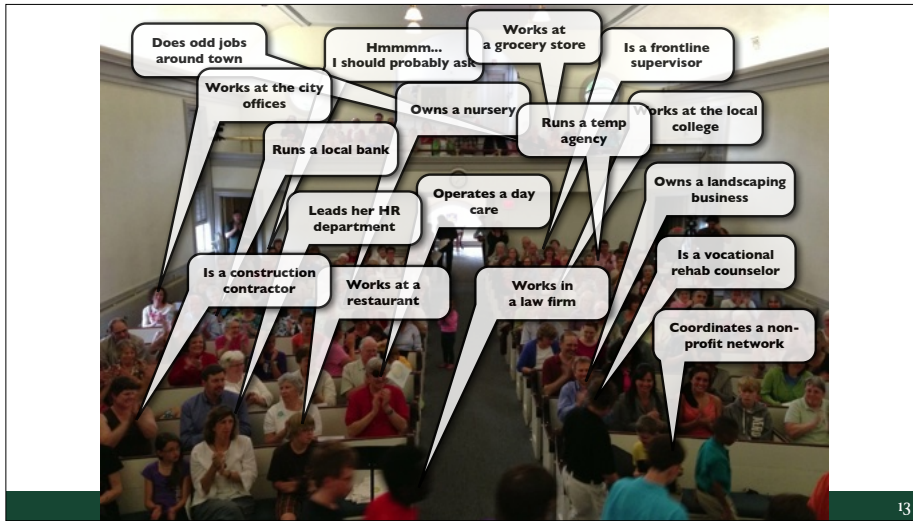


Engaging New Partners

- Congregations
- Communities
- Schools



Putting Faith to Work



Questions to Explore Together

- Which strengths, gifts, passions, and calling should we consider when thinking about a meaningful job?
- Which prior experiences should we remember when considering possible jobs?
- What types of job responsibilities might be a really great fit?
- What are possible businesses and organizations in our community where these types of jobs exist?
- Who should we talk to in our congregation (or beyond) who may have connections to such employers?
- What support do we think will be needed to promote success?
- What are our next steps as a group?

FFTW Planning Worksheet
A Conversation About Work

*Use this worksheet to record ideas, questions, and other thoughts emerging from your discussion.

Who was the focus of this planning? _____

When was the planning meeting held? _____

Who was present? _____

Strengths, Gifts, and Passions

Which strengths, gifts, and passions should we find a place for and consider when thinking about possible jobs?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Work-Related Experiences

Which prior experiences should we remember when considering possible jobs?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Job Interests

What types of job responsibilities might be a really great fit?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Possible Places and Connections

What are possible businesses and organizations in our community where these types of jobs exist?

1. _____	6. _____
2. _____	7. _____
3. _____	8. _____
4. _____	9. _____
5. _____	10. _____

Who should we talk to in our congregation (or beyond) who may have connections to such employers?

Names	Who will make this contact?
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

Supports for Success

What supports do we think will be needed to promote success?

Support	Who should we approach?	Who will make this contact?
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____


Next Steps

What are our next steps as a group?	Who will take responsibility?	By when?
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____

Kate [redacted]

Skills I bring to a job:

- Sweeps and vacuums floors and rugs
- Cleans windows, tables, chairs, and surfaces
- Sorts, washes, folds, and puts away laundry
- Loads and unloads dishwasher
- Bags, sorts, organizes, and straightens
- Packs and unpacks boxes
- Breaks down and sorts boxes for recycling
- Assembles traffic light fixtures
- Plants, weeds, waters, and harvests a garden
- Feeds and collects eggs from chickens
- Reads recipes and prepares food
- Packs lunches, serves meals, pours drinks
- Decorates and designs greeting cards



What words best describe me:
Determined, caring, hard worker, enjoys working with people, friendly, curious, organized, likes consistency, attentive, team player.

Supports that aid my success at work:

- If I have trouble understanding your verbal instructions, try restating the information using different words.
- Demonstrate new tasks.
- Allow me time to complete the tasks I begin.
- Be willing to listen and ask me to repeat myself if you do not understand what I've said.
- Provide opportunities for me to work with other people, as I am friendly and enjoy being with others.
- I will do best when not overheated. Understand that activities that raise my heart rate too much are not good for my health.

Seeking Part-Time Employment

My name is Katie [redacted] and I'm a member of Christ Presbyterian Church. You may recognize me as I have volunteered in the church nursery and have helped out during Vacation Bible School.

I am looking for a job.

I'm 24 years old, have completed high school, and have a variety of work experiences that will help me to do a good job. I am eager to work. My previous job experience includes working in a nursing home and in a hotel kitchen. I have worked with children in the nursery, and at Goodwill Industries organizing and sorting clothing. I also have designed and sold jewelry and bookmarks, and have organized (from start to finish) the collection and delivery of toys to Vanderbilt Children's Hospital. I am at my best when I am working with people one-on-one or in a very small group setting. I am friendly, compassionate, dependable, motivated, able to focus on the task at hand, and very happy to follow a routine.

I am interested in finding part-time work, preferably in the mornings and on weekends. I am open to learning new skills, and I look forward to hearing from you.

If you are a business owner or are in a position to hire, I would appreciate an opportunity to demonstrate my skills and my willingness to work. God bless.



Katie [redacted]
Phone: (615) [redacted]
Residence: Nashville, TN
Email address: [redacted]

How people describe me:
Compassionate, caring, task oriented, enjoys working with people, friendly, curious, organized, peacemaker, independent, creative

Putting Faith To Work

Latest News



Meet Clayton [redacted] Candidate for Employment

Aug 31, 2015 | **Tags:** adults with special needs | faith and work | putting faith to work | special needs

Meet Clayton...

"I am 22 years old and have completed high school. I have a variety of job experiences that will allow me to do a good job and to work hard. I am positive, personable, well-mannered and reliable. I have had experience in retail, cleaning, food service and office and clerical. I would like to work several or more days a week. I am willing to learn new skills. I look forward to hearing from you."

View Clayton's Resume

Why Work Matters

- Work instills pride
 - Work furthers independence
 - Work provides purpose
 - Work contributes to fiscal independence
 - Work introduces valued roles
 - Work sparks joy
 - Work reflects something they love to do
 - Work gets them out of the house
- Work contributes to a sense of identity
 - Work makes them feel like anyone else
 - Work provides a place of belonging
 - Work engages and challenges them
 - Work improves overall well-being
 - Work instills a sense of responsibility
 - Work promotes community involvement
 - Work provides learning opportunities

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- What does she love to do for fun?
- What shows does enjoy watching?
- What music does she listen to?
- What hobbies does she pursue?
- What sports does she follow?
- What places does she love to spend time?

Now ask yourself:

- Who else in the church loves some of these very same things?
- Who can help me find these individuals in our church?



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Putting Faith To Work:

A Guide for Congregations and Communities

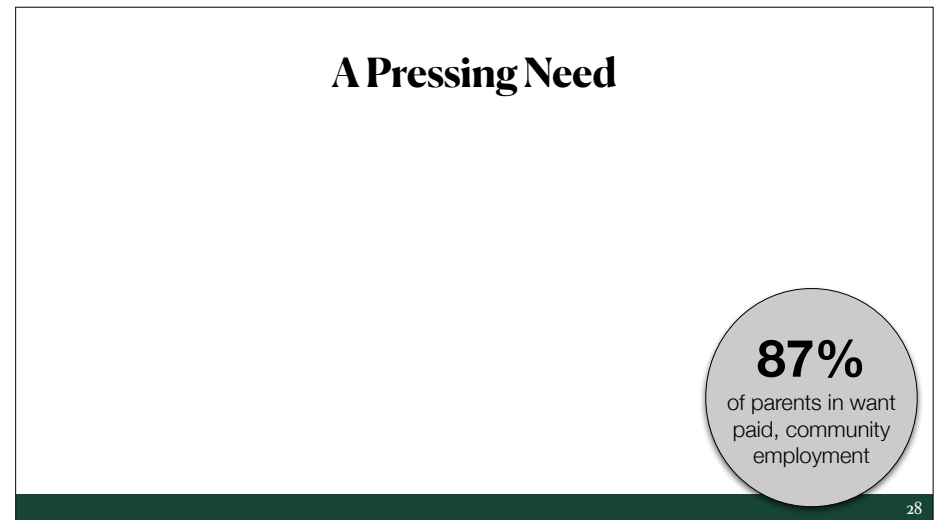
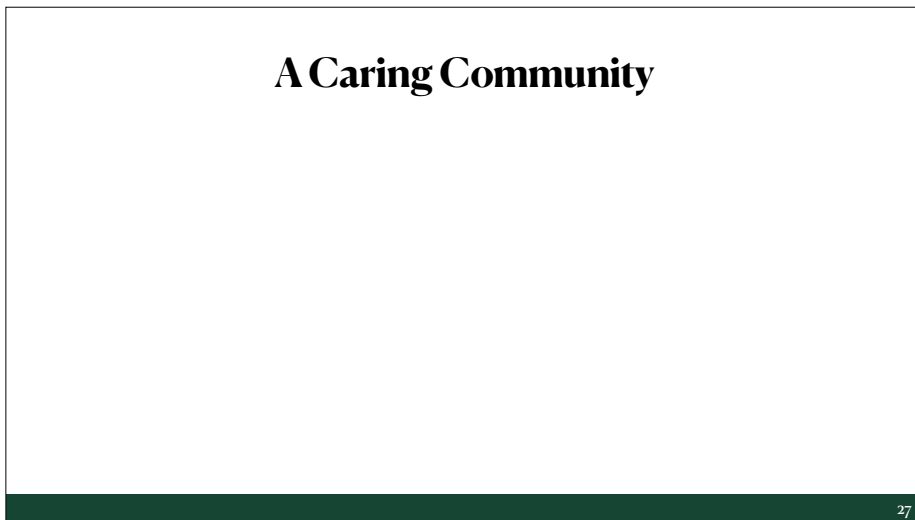
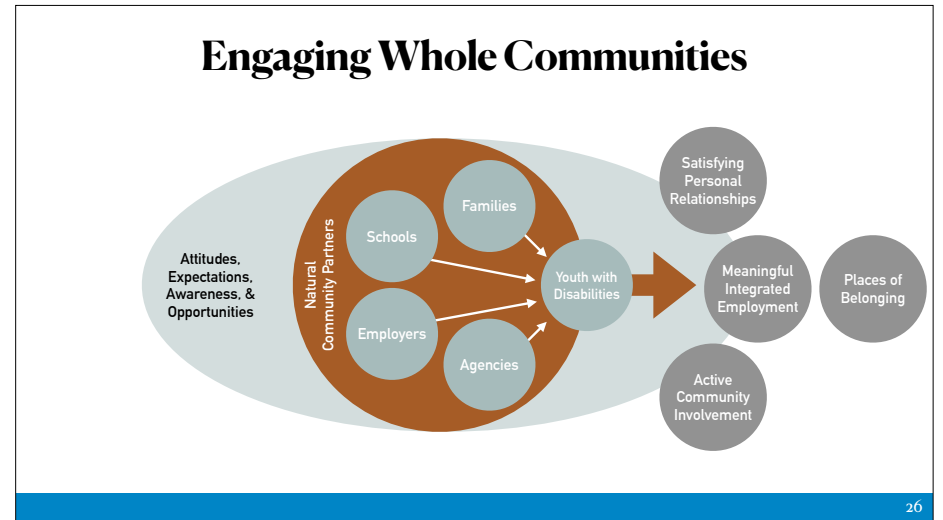
www.puttingfaithtowork.org

Connecting Job Seekers with Disabilities to Meaningful Employment

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A Community Connector

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A Committed Community

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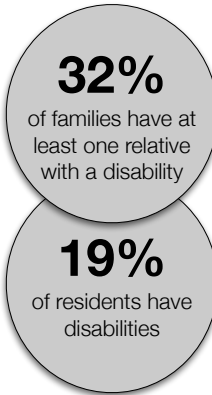
A Comfortable Atmosphere

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A Warm Welcome

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A Compelling Call



An Asset-Focused Conversation

AGENDA

- 6:10-6:15 Greeting
- 6:15-6:25 Opening Remarks
- 6:25-6:30 World Café Process
- 6:30-6:50 Round 1 Discussion
- 6:50-7:10 Round 2 Discussion
- 7:10-7:30 Round 3 Discussion
- 7:30-7:50 Harvesting of Best Ideas
- 7:50-8:00 Closing Remarks

What can we do to as a community to increase meaningful employment opportunities for young people with disabilities?

Round 1

What can we do to as a community to increase meaningful employment opportunities for young people with disabilities?

Round 2

How might we work together in compelling ways to make this happen here in Lawrenceburg?

Round 3

What are the best ideas you heard this evening?

Harvest

What are the best ideas you heard this evening?



Welcome to the
Lawrence County Community Conversation!

Hosted by:
The Lawrence County Planning Committee
& Tennessee Works

273
ideas
generated together

Developing employment opportunities

- Recruit and train new employers
- Expand availability of community jobs
- Create formal collaborations
- Create accessible employment portals
- Mentor new employers

Undertaking community-wide efforts

- Share resources in the community
- Showcase possibilities and successes
- Improve public awareness and attitudes
- Provide transportation
- Inform community leaders of needed resources
- Advocate for policy change

Strengthening school and transition services

- Provide career development and experiences
- Strengthen collaboration with others
- Improve transition assessment and planning
- Strengthen transition program quality
- Offer diverse diploma options

Equipping competitive applicants

- Build social and professional networks
- Develop relevant skills and attitudes
- Access formal and natural community supports
- Communicate strengths and experiences

Enhancing inclusive workplaces

- Educate and empower current employers
- Provide workplace supports, training, and accommodations
- Strengthen partnerships among employers

Supporting families in transition

- Prepare families for transition
- Increase parent participation and support
- Educate families on disability services and availability
- Educate families about impact of working on benefits
- Equip families to advocate

Your Voice is Needed!
Join us for an engaging "community conversation" focused on strengthening career development and transition preparation for middle and high school students with disabilities in Bedford County Schools!
TIME: 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
DATE: April 30, 2019
Heines County High School Gym
2105 Johnsonville Road
Jessen, TN
RSVP NOW AT
<https://tinyurl.com/Haines>

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION
Come join us for an informal & engaging "Community Conversation" to explore how we can strengthen our community by supporting the employment of people with disabilities.
Tuesday, September 27, 6:50pm—8:50pm
Goodell 957 Herman Street Nashville, TN 37208
You have been personally selected as a representative of one or more of the following sectors of our community: Business, Government, Educators, Disability Service Providers, Non-Profits, Faith Communities, and/or individuals with disabilities and their families.
Don't forget to register!
<http://redhillscommunityconversation.eventbrite.com>

Arrowhead HS and the Hartland Area Chamber of Commerce
Invite You To A Community Conversation
on increasing employment for youth with disabilities
Why Hold a Community Conversation?
• Businesses need good employees
• Youth with disabilities are seeking for meaningful work experiences
• Our community is stronger when everyone has a chance to contribute and participate
We invite you to an evening of conversation about how our community can increase employment and other opportunities for young adults with disabilities. Join us as we explore together ways to create new opportunities in our community. We'll have an informal and engaging discussion over coffee and desserts.
Who Should Attend?
Employers, community leaders, teachers and other school staff, organizations and agencies serving youth, family members, high school students and youth adults, or anyone else invested in Hartland and the surrounding area.
We want to hear from you! Come and join us...
WHEN: January 24 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm
WHERE: Ironwood Golf Course Clubhouse 9270rd156 Marquette Dr., Sussex, WI 53089 (phone 262-258-0774)
Please RSVP to January 21 to Beth Swanson (608-263-6745) or rsvp@hacwi.com or www.parcusummer.org
Aaffle featuring great food, drinks, and games held in a beautiful setting. Seating is available for individuals with disabilities.
Tasty Desserts, Great Coffee, Good Conversation

Example Questions

1. What are we already doing to prepare students with disabilities well for college, career, and community?
2. What could we do better or differently to prepare students and their families?
3. How might we strengthen partnerships beyond our school to improve outcomes for our students with disabilities?

Questions

1. Round 1: What are we already doing to prepare students with disabilities well for college, career, and community?
- Round 2: What could we do better or differently to prepare students and their families?
2. Round 3: How might we strengthen partnerships beyond our school to improve outcomes for our students with disabilities?

Example Questions

1. What can we do to create more job opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community?
2. [Repeat] What can we do to create more job opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community?
3. What resources can we/you put in place in the next six months to work toward this?

POP CORN

Question for Rounds 1 & 2:
What can we do to create more job opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community?

Round 3 Question:
What resources can we/you put in place in the next six months to work toward this?

Example Questions

1. What would it take for every student with a disability to have paid, meaningful job experience prior to leaving high school?
2. [Repeat] What would it take for every student with a disability to have paid, meaningful job experience prior to leaving high school?
3. What can each of us contribute to help students reach this goal?

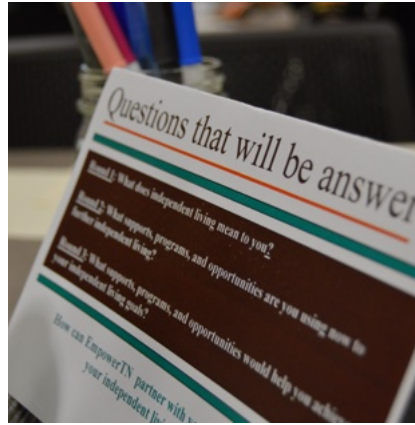
CAFE ETIQUETTE
KNOW ON WHAT YOU'RE DOING
CONTRIBUTE YOUR IDEAS
SPEAK YOUR MIND AND HEART
LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND
LEARN AND CONNECT IDEAS
LISTEN TOGETHER FOR INSIGHTS AND DEEPER QUESTIONS
PLAY, DOODLE, DRAW! IT TAKES US PLACEMENTS IS ENCOURAGED
HAVE FUN!

QUESTIONS THAT WILL BE ANSWERED,

ROUND 1: WHAT WOULD IT TAKE FOR EVERY STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY TO HAVE PAID MEANINGFUL JOB EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL?
ROUND 2: WHAT WOULD IT TAKE FOR EVERY STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY TO HAVE PAID MEANINGFUL JOB EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL?
ROUND 3: WHAT CAN EACH OF US CONTRIBUTE TO HELP STUDENTS REACH THIS GOAL?

Example Questions

1. What does independent living mean to you?
2. What supports, programs, and opportunities would help you achieve your independent living goals?
- 3-[Repeat] What supports, programs, and opportunities would help you achieve your independent living goals?



Example Questions

1. What could we do to include people with disabilities and their families well in the life of their faith community?
2. What could we do to come alongside people with disabilities and their families in other areas of their lives?
3. Round 3: How might we support one another—and new congregations—in these areas?



MARYVILLE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Transition

A Memphis Community Conversation

Background

A SAMPLING OF IDEAS TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT SHARED DURING THE EVENT

Ideas for families

Ideas for Disability Service Providers

Ideas for Community Inclusion

Ideas for Employers and Business Networks

Belonging

A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ON DISABILITY AND THE CHURCH

"But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." - 1 Corinthians 12:24-27

In May 2024, more than 120 ministry leaders from across the country gathered in Orlando, Florida at the Disability and the Church Conference for a community conversation on disability and the church. Participants included pastors, worship leaders, youth and children's ministry leaders, disability ministry leaders, and others who are passionate about accessible and inclusive ministry. The leaders discussed their successes and challenges in local church ministry and suggested creative solutions to improve the sense of belonging of people with disabilities.

This report includes hundreds of creative responses to the question: "What could we do to foster belonging for every member of the body?" These insights broaden our collective capacity for embracing those "corner-stoned" belonging in the church.

BAYLOR CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Invited

People tend to be more likely to come to church when personally invited. However, people with disabilities and their families are often overlooked for church invitations. To connect with these individuals, we encourage you to consider the following ideas and activities we encourage to warmly and genuinely invite.

IDEAS INCLUDE:

- Personally invite people to come to church.
- Invite people to your home.
- Reach out to church members who miss events and worship services.
- Provide clear communication regarding ways to get involved in the church.
- Facilitate accessible church activities throughout the week and ensure that all church members are invited.
- Use your website to show the community that your church is prepared to include people with disabilities.
- Invite people to events outside of church.
- Provide ways for groups of people to participate in the service.
- Invite people's gifts and invite them to serve using those gifts.
- Advertise through print and digital channels.

Welcomed

The ways people are greeted and treated at church impact their sense of belonging. Welcoming people with disabilities and affirming others from their faith as a member part of a community, look for ways to be genuinely hospitable.

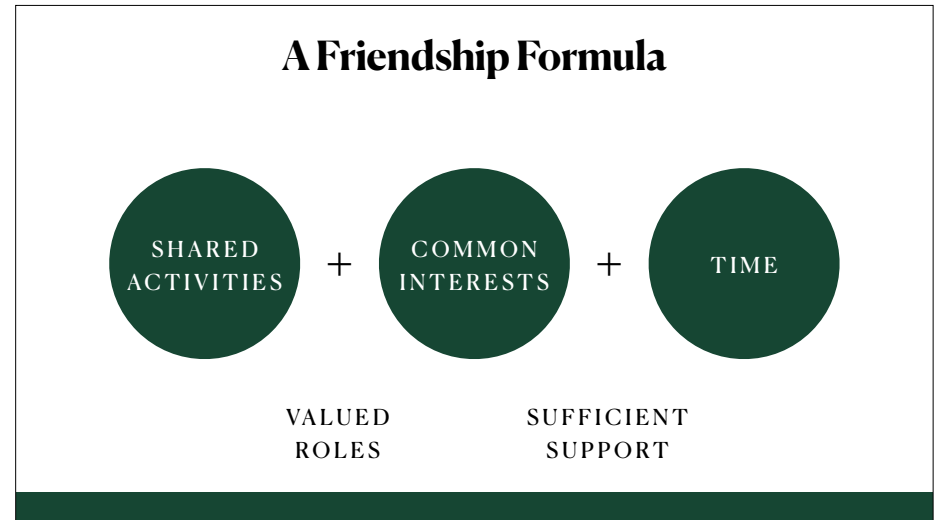
IDEAS INCLUDE:

- Have members of your "welcome team" focused on building connections with new church attendees.
- Provide time and space for greeting and connecting.
- Create space to share prayer requests and follow up on those requests.
- Foster connections to ensure everyone feels like they have a community in the church.

BAYLOR CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

<http://bcdd.soe.baylor.edu/faith>

Peer-Mediated Supports



Peer-Mediated Supports

Peer Support Arrangements Peer Networks Peer Partner Programs

What are Peer Support Arrangements?

- *Peer support arrangements* involve equipping and supporting peers to provide ongoing social, behavioral, and/or academic support to a student with disabilities within general education classrooms
- Promote students' academic engagement of students across classroom activities
- Help students learn and practice new social and communication skills
- Enable students to meet new classmates
- Increase the number of people to whom students can turn to for needed help
- Raise expectations about what students with disabilities can learn and accomplish
- Diminish the potential stigma of always having a paraprofessional close by

Source: Carter, Cushing, & Kennedy (2009); Carter (2020)

What are Peer Networks?

- *Peer networks* involve creating a core social group (usually 3-6 students) around a student with a disability that meets regularly outside of the classroom
- Increase opportunities for students with disabilities to meet others at school
- Strengthen students' social and communication skills
- Help students to develop new friendships
- Connect with peers with whom they can have fun
- Encourage students to become involved together in school or after-school activities
- Shift attitudes throughout the school

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Learn More



<https://tiescenter.org/topics/peer-engagement/peer-engagement-implementation-guides>



<https://www.engagealllearners.ca/sal/peer-mentoring/>



<https://www.kypeersupport.org/how-to-modules/>

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