

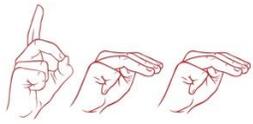


# **DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL**

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY CONCERNS OF THE  
BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE



**Baltimore-Washington Conference**  
The United Methodist Church



# *DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL*



**COMMISSION ON DISABILITY CONCERNS OF  
THE BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE  
2017**

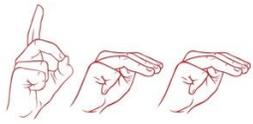
Dear Church,

The Commission on Disability Concerns is glad you wish to learn about disability ministries. We hope this disability ministries manual, a working guide, will be helpful to you and pray that your faith community will be more accessible, more inclusive, better empower, and be partners in welcoming the church to all people, especially our brothers and sisters with disabilities and their families.

Sincerely,  
Rev. Leo Yates, Jr.  
Chairperson of the  
Commission on Disability Concerns

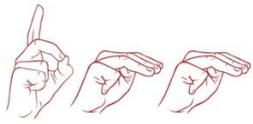
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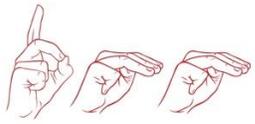
## **Acknowledgements**

The Commission on Disability Concerns wish to thank the following persons for reviewing this document. They are Bishop Peggy A. Johnson, Rev. Nancy Webb, Lisa Harvey, and LaSander Saunders. Their feedback and input were invaluable. The disability commission is grateful to the external resources that helped to make parts of this manual, such as the Committee on Disability Ministries, Joni and Friends, Inc. and others. We are thankful to Rev. Leo Yates, Jr. for researching and writing this manual. We are also thankful for the Baltimore-Washington Conference for its faithfulness for including and empowering people with disabilities in the life of the church and this conference.



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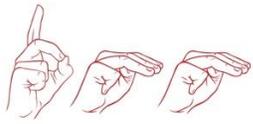
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## DEVELOPING A DISABILITY MINISTRY

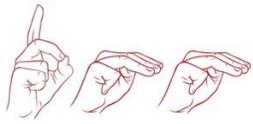
So, you are thinking of starting a disability ministry and are not sure what to do next? Your church can start disability ministry with something as simple as having a person by the disability accessible parking spaces designated, to welcome, escort, assist or otherwise help. This practical and yet uncomplicated action puts you ahead of 85% of the churches in America!

A disability ministry grows over time. Start out simple, meeting the needs of those God has placed in the church or in your community. As individual, family, and communal spiritual needs are attended to, new opportunities will arise that allow the ministry to grow. Every church is different and it's a process. Always start by using the resources God has already placed in your church.

Resources include individuals in your church who are willing to serve and some of them are: nurses, educators, physical and occupational therapists and many more. Resources also include your current church facilities. God has supplied the resources for the ministry He has called your church to do in your community.

From Joni and Friends, a long-standing disability ministry organization, they suggest the following steps for growing your ministry.

1. **Pray** Prayer is the best place to start. Pray for God's wisdom for yourself and for discernment for leaders in your church. Ask God to call people to serve in the ministry and to bring people affected by disability in your community into the life of your church.
2. **Enlist Leadership Support** Leadership support is needed for a strong disability ministry. It is vital to stay connected with your minister(s) and any governing boards for their support and commitment. Follow the normal protocol for starting a ministry at your church.
3. **Gather a Team** A team is at the heart of any successful ministry. Gather a core leadership team to oversee the ongoing development of the ministry. It also takes many willing volunteers to build and support a growing inclusive program.
4. **Begin Small** Begin with the people and resources that God provides. You can't go too slowly, but you can try to move too fast. Develop a plan utilizing resources which will accommodate the current needs of worshipers with disabilities. Look for available resources and wait for God to provide the



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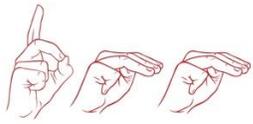


increase.

5. **Educate Team and Congregation** Educate your team and the church. Obtain training resources from Joni and Friends or other sources to train your team and congregation. Conduct a church survey to discover unknown needs within your congregation and to raise awareness.
6. **Assimilate into the Church** Assimilate people affected by disability into the fabric of the church. Look for ways to include people affected by disability in existing church programs. When possible, allow people with disabilities to use their spiritual gifts to serve the church body.
7. **Adjust and Grow the Ministry** The needs of children and adults with disabilities are ever changing. Be ready to adjust to them as new opportunities become available. If a plan is not working, try something new.

\* Retrieved from Joni and Friends at

[/www.joniandfriends.org/media/uploads/PDFs/church\\_relations\\_process\\_map\\_rev2.pdf](http://www.joniandfriends.org/media/uploads/PDFs/church_relations_process_map_rev2.pdf)



## DISABILITY MINISTRY MODELS

When it comes to disability ministry, there are a few common models that are used by some churches. Across these models is the need to have support, inclusion, an understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and being familiar with community resources. The following models are based on the experience of this writer. These disability ministry models that have been observed by some churches include, but not limited to:

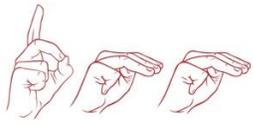
- Accessibility Model
- Empowerment Model
- Disability Specific Model
- Promoting Awareness Model
- Advocacy Model
- Special Needs Ministry Model
- Respite Care Model
- Combination Model

The **accessibility model** consists of the church's pledge to be an accessible church to individuals with disabilities and their families. Examples are offering large print materials and bulletins for people with some vision loss, having a sign language interpreter, having wheelchair accessible restrooms, having closed captions and subtitles for videos turned on, having a hearing loop system (assisted listening system), posted disability signs, and on-going desirability to ensure accessibility within the life of the church.

The **empowerment model** is the church's pledge to be inclusive of people with disabilities and their families. People with disabilities are represented in all aspects of the church that include: leadership positions, serving on committees and boards, assist in leading worship, and include disability-friendly church policies. While inclusion is the goal of this model, it is really about empowerment and ensuring individuals with disabilities are empowered in all levels of the church that includes leadership roles.

The **disability specific model** is the church's primary focus on accessibility and inclusion for a specific type of disability. For example, having a Sunday School class that includes children with autism spectrum disorder. Sometimes this model occurs when a family with a person with a disability begins attending worship and the church is moved to ensure individual and the family are welcomed and included within their faith community. Another example is having a mental health ministry.

The **promoting awareness model** is just as the title infers. The church pledges to promote disability awareness in the life of the church and community, which can include, but is not limited to:



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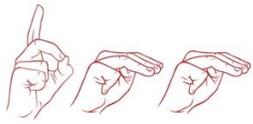
1. observing a Disability Awareness Sunday
2. offering a resource table for various disabilities and/or community resources
3. including monthly bulletin inserts of a specific observed disability (e.g. HIV Awareness month, Deaf awareness month)
4. celebrating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) milestones
5. including disability-related articles in the church's newsletter.

The **advocacy model** is the church's pledge to be disability advocates within their church and or in their community. Working with or collaborating with community and or national advocacy organizations is one example, while being a disability advocate for a family who struggles to get an individualized education program (IEP) or accommodations for a child with a disability is another example.

The **special needs ministry model** is a church program to provide ministry with one or more types of disabilities. For example, a Sunday School class for children with disabilities is one type, and a group of adults with intellectual disabilities who attend church activities (e.g. monthly luncheon or Sunday School class) is another form of this ministry model.

The **respite care model** is a church program that offers respite to caregivers. Sometimes the caregiver need time to relax or time to tend to personal responsibilities. Churches can provide at-home relief by staying with the person with a child or adult with a disability while the caregiver is given relief and or provide home services (e.g. lawn mowing, shopping and or provide meals). Read more about this model in the section called Respite Care Ministry.

The **combination model** combines two or more of these ministry models, whether facilitating them simultaneously or continually focusing on one model and occasionally facilitating a secondary model.



## **OVERVIEW OF DISABILITIES**

The Disabled World website defines a disability as:

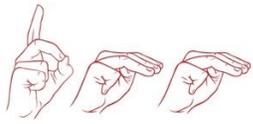
A disability is defined as a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual or group. The term is used to refer to individual functioning, including physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual impairment mental illness, and various types of chronic disease.

Disability is conceptualized as being a multidimensional experience for the person involved. There may be effects on organs or body parts and there may be effects on a person's participation in areas of life.

(Retrieved from <https://www.disabled-world.com/disability/types/>)

According to Johns Hopkins University, they list several types of disabilities, which is not limited to:

- Blindness or Low Vision
- Brain Injuries (e.g. Difficulty with organizing thoughts and/or processing information, with social interactions and possibly with short-term memory)
- Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Late-Deafened
- Learning Disabilities (e.g. Difficulty with oral and/or written expression, with reading comprehension, with time management, with problem solving, and interpreting social cues)
- Medical Disabilities (e.g. Cancer, Epilepsy, Lupus, substance abuse, and diabetes)
- Physical Disabilities (e.g. Resulting from congenital conditions, accidents or diseases)
- Psychiatric Disabilities (e.g. Ranges from behavioral and/or psychological problems that can include anxiety, mood swings, and psychosis)
- Speech and Language Disabilities (e.g. May result from hearing loss, cerebral palsy, or physical conditions resulting in articulation)
- Invisible Disabilities (e.g. Asthma, chronic pain, mental illness, allergies, chemical sensitivity, and arthritis)



## **DISABILITY ETIQUETTE**

The following tips for disability etiquette are from the United Spinal Association. Some of it has been adapted for the church setting. These tips will provide some awareness as your faith community works toward being (more) accessible to individuals with disabilities.

### **Ask Before You Help**

Just because someone has a disability, don't assume she needs help. If the setting is accessible, people with disabilities can usually get around fine. Adults with disabilities want to be treated as independent people. Offer assistance only if the person appears to need it. A person with a disability will often times communicate when he or she needs help. And if she does want help, ask how before you act.

### **Be Sensitive About Physical Contact**

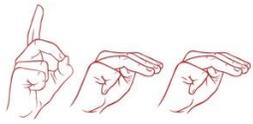
Some people with disabilities depend on their arms for balance. Grabbing them, even if your intention is to assist, could knock them off balance. Avoid patting a person on the head or touching his wheelchair, scooter or cane. People with disabilities consider their equipment part of their personal space.

### **Speaking to People with Disabilities**

Always speak directly to the person with a disability, not to his companion, aide or sign language interpreter. Making small talk with a person who has a disability is great; just talk to him as you would with anyone else. Respect his privacy. If you ask about his or her disability, he or she may feel like you are treating him or her as a disability, not as a person in the Body of Christ. However, many people with disabilities are comfortable with questions about their disability after getting to know someone. The person with a disability may simply let you know if you if he or she does not wish to speak about it.

### **Don't Make Assumptions**

People with disabilities are the best judge of what they can or cannot do. Don't make decisions for them about participating in any activity.



## Respond Graciously to Requests

When people who have disabilities ask for an accommodation at your church, it is not a complaint. It shows they feel comfortable enough with your church to ask for what they need. And if they get a positive response, they will probably come back again and tell their friends about the hospitality they received.

## Terminology Tips

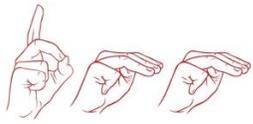
Say “person with a disability” rather than “disabled person.” Say “people with disabilities” rather than “the disabled.” For specific disabilities, saying “person with Tourette syndrome” or “person who has cerebral palsy” is usually a safe bet. Still, individuals do have their own preferences. If you are not sure what words to use, ask. Avoid outdated terms like “handicapped, crippled or retarded.” Be aware that many people with disabilities dislike jargony, euphemistic terms like “physically challenged” and “differently abled.” Say “person who uses a wheelchair” rather than “confined to a wheelchair” or “wheelchair bound.” The wheelchair is what enables the person to get around and participate in society; it’s liberating, not confining.

## People Using Wheelchairs

Those who use wheelchairs have different disabilities and varying abilities. Some can use their arms and hands. Some can get out of their wheelchairs and even walk for short distances. People who use wheelchairs are individuals, not equipment. Don’t lean over someone who uses a wheelchair to shake another person’s hand or ask a wheelchair user to hold coats. Setting your drink on the desktop attached to someone’s wheelchair is a definite no-no. Don’t push or touch a person’s wheelchair; it’s part of his or her personal space. If you help someone down a curb without waiting for instructions, you may dump him or her out of the chair. You may detach the chair’s parts if you lift it by the handles or the footrest.

For more information about disability etiquette, please read [Disability Etiquette: Tips on Interacting with People with Disabilities](#) by the United Spinal Association. Also, [The Church and People with Disabilities](#), the UMW Mission U book, provides additional information regarding disability etiquette.

\* Retrieved from [www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf](http://www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf).



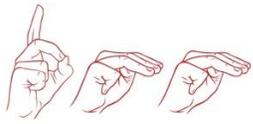
## COMMON BARRIERS

There are a number of barriers, some of which people who do not have a current disability may not be aware of. Consider the following from the book, *Deaf Ministry*.

- **Architectural barriers** – Are your church doorways wide enough for wheelchairs? Can individuals navigate the worship space, classrooms, and restrooms in your church? What does the building communicate about the commitment and values the congregation holds towards individuals with disabilities (e.g. not having ramps)?
- **Attitudinal barriers** – This is usually inadvertent through events and activities that were planned without consideration for individuals with disabilities in mind. Sometimes individuals encounter words and actions (sometimes unintentionally) that are demeaning, paternalistic, or condescending. As well-meaning as comments may be, they can neglect to affirm their gifts and contributions.
- **Communication barriers** – This type of barrier can include issues regarding sight, sound, language, and listening (e.g. not offering large print bulletins or not having listening devices).
- **Programmatic barriers** – Some churches do a wonderful job for inviting participation in church programs, but sometimes no consideration is given for individuals who are d/Deaf, hard-of-hearing, late-deafened, Deaf-blind, or who have a disability, as some may need assistance in order to participate (e.g. transportation needs).<sup>1</sup>

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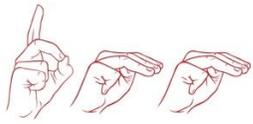
<sup>1</sup> Carter, E.W. (2007). Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families, and Congregations. Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co, Inc.



## **RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE**

### General Guidelines for Talking about Disability

- Refer to a person's disability only when it is related to what you are talking about. For example, don't ask "What's wrong with you?" Don't refer to people in general or generic terms such as "the girl in the wheelchair."
- When talking about places with accommodations for people with disabilities, use the term "accessible" rather than "disabled" or "handicapped." For example, refer to an "accessible" parking space rather than a "disabled" or "handicapped" parking space or "an accessible bathroom stall" rather than "a handicapped bathroom stall."
- Use the term "disability," and take the following terms out of your vocabulary when talking about or talking to people with disabilities. Don't use the terms "handicapped," "differently-abled," "cripple," "crippled," "victim," "retarded," "stricken," "poor," "unfortunate," or "special needs."
- Just because someone has a disability, it doesn't mean he/she is "courageous," "brave," "special," or "superhuman." People with disabilities are the same as everyone else. It is not unusual for someone with a disability to have talents, skills, and abilities.
- It is okay to use words or phrases such as "disabled," "disability," or "people with disabilities" when talking about disability issues. Ask the people you are with which term they prefer if they have a disability.
- When talking about people without disabilities, it is okay to say "people without disabilities." But do not refer to them as "normal" or "healthy." These terms can make people with disabilities feel as though there is something wrong with them and that they are "abnormal."
- When in doubt, call a person with a disability by his/her name.

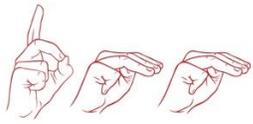


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<b>Disability</b>	<b>Out-Dated Language</b>	<b>Respectful Language</b>
Blind or Visually Impairment	Dumb, Invalid	Blind/Visually Impaired, Person who is blind/visually impaired
Deaf or Hearing Impairment	Invalid, Deaf-and-Dumb, Deaf-Mute	Deaf or Hard-of-hearing, Person who is deaf or hard of hearing
Speech/Communication Disability	Dumb, "One who talks bad"	Person with a speech / communication disability
Learning Disability	Retarded, Slow, Brain-Damaged, "Special ed"	Learning disability, Cognitive disability, Person with a learning or cognitive disability
Mental Health Disability	Hyper-sensitive, Psycho, Crazy, Insane, Wacko, Nuts	Person with a psychiatric disability, Person with a mental health disability
Mobility/Physical Disability	Handicapped, Physically Challenged, "Special," Deformed, Cripple, Gimp, Spastic, Spaz, Wheelchair-bound, Lamé	Wheelchair user, Physically disabled, Person with a mobility or physical disability
Emotional Disability	Emotionally disturbed	Emotionally disabled, Person with an emotional disability
Cognitive Disability	Retard, Mentally retarded, "Special ed"	Cognitively/Developmentally disabled, Person with a cognitive/developmental disability
Short Stature, Little Person	Dwarf, Midget	Someone of short stature, Little Person
Health Conditions	Victim, Someone "stricken with" a disability (i.e. "someone stricken with cancer" or "an AIDS victim")	Survivor, Someone "living with" a specific disability (i.e. "someone living with cancer or AIDS")

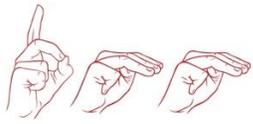
\* Retrieved from the National Youth Leadership Network at [www.aucd.org/docs/add/sa\\_summits/Language%20Doc.pdf](http://www.aucd.org/docs/add/sa_summits/Language%20Doc.pdf).



## DISABILITY MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

Considerations for a disability ministries committee can be helpful, in which it can provide input to a number of functions within the church. Some guidelines include:

1. Offer assistance to church leadership in planning the observance of the Disability Awareness Sunday.
2. Be a resource to church leadership when trying to be accessible and empowering of people with disabilities.
3. Review church policies and programs to help ensure inclusion and accessibility of people with disabilities.
4. Hold awareness events outside of the Disability Awareness Sunday. Check out the [Disability Awareness Sunday Church Kit](#) for ideas.
5. Keep a community resource guide for various disabilities for when referrals are needed.
6. Stay connected with the national committee, which is the [Committee on Disability Ministries](#) and receive their quarterly newsletter to stay informed about disability ministries across the denomination.
7. Stay connected with the [United Methodist Association of Ministers with Disabilities](#) and receive their weekly news updates so you can stay informed on disability-related news.
8. Stay connected with the [Commission on Disability Concerns](#) of the Baltimore Washington Conferences.
9. Keep a record of accommodation requests and review them for completion.
10. Provide support in completing the [annual accessibility audit](#) and keep tabs on meeting any goals that were documented. Help keep the church accountable with this.
11. Complete the [Indicators of Welcome](#) survey each year (in a subsequent section of this manual). Compare previous surveys for progress.
12. Work with families to ensure their inclusion and accessibility.
13. Provide periodic disability awareness trainings and education to church ushers, Sunday School teachers, office staff, and others who serve the church so people with disabilities will have access and feel welcomed.
14. Review resources such as [The Church and People with Disabilities](#) or [Speaking Out](#) or others such as those listed in this manual.
15. Help to identify stakeholders in disability ministries (e.g. church leaders, families with disability, advocates, etc.) and network with them.
16. Work to build partnerships with other ministries such as Deaf ministries, older adult ministries, the United Methodist Women, Christian education programs, and mental health ministries.
17. Invite guest speakers to share their expertise or to hear their testimonies (i.e. person with a disability) to keep a pulse of the struggles in the community.



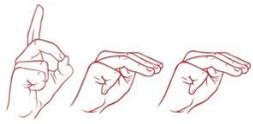
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18. Help disability awareness to be a visible part of your church. Check out the [Disability Awareness Sunday Church Kit](#) for ideas.
19. In order to maintain the ministry, recommend creating a budget and have it be a part of the church's overall budget.
20. If needed, assist the finance committee in applying for church grants (e.g. for accessibility reasons).

Persons to serve on the disability ministries committee can include a disability ministries coordinator, advocates, persons with disabilities, church leadership, caregivers, and other stakeholders. Ideally, the committee will meet either monthly or quarterly, depending on committee's work and goals. Have members sign a sign-in sheet and take minutes. Certainly, consider opening the meeting in prayer or with a brief devotional and conclude the meeting with prayer. After the meeting, share a summary with church leadership or the Church Council (or share the minutes).

\* Consider reading the ["Creating a Local Church Accessibly Committee"](#) article on the Committee on Disability Ministries website for more ideas and suggestions.



## DISABILITY MINISTRIES TEAM

If needed, consider having a disability ministries team that can assist the disability ministries committee in doing its work. Considerations for a disability ministries team can include the following:

- Coordinator
- Prayer partners
- Volunteer recruiter/coordinator
- Specialists
- congregational care (providing assistance or advocacy in the church setting, such as a Sunday School class)
- visitation team (to visit in the hospital, at the home, or other location)
- respite care (to provide assistance or respite to the caregiver)

### Position Descriptions

**Coordinator:** Will provide oversight to the ministry by working with other volunteers, church staff, and families that helps to provide resources, coordination, inclusion, and empowerment of people with disabilities.

**Prayer partner:** Will provide daily/weekly prayers for the ministry coordinator, the ministry team, those involved in the ministry, and for families requesting prayers.

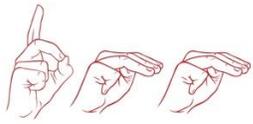
**Volunteer recruiter/coordinator:** Will be responsible for recruiting volunteers and specialists for the ministry. This person will schedule volunteers as needed.

### **Position Description Example**

From Shiloh Seventh-day Adventist Church, they provide additional tasks that the coordinator is responsible for. This is for information purposes only.

God's church is a community of people who share the Gospel with everybody. Christ healed the boy with deaf and dumb spirits (Mark 9). His healing of the paralytic (Luke 5:18-26) is clear evidence of a new, intentional disabilities ministry. It suggests that in every congregation there should be a band of compassionate workers responsible for sensitizing and reminding the entire church of its mission to people with disabilities.

Disabled people within the community and local church are often spiritually neglected. The signs on the front of our churches say "WELCOME," but many of these same churches present insurmountable barriers to the disabled. The steep stairs, narrow doorways and hallways, and restrooms located on another floor or in distant locations are generally unreachable by the disabled and elderly.



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Inaccessible pews prevent the disabled from sitting with family members. Strict adherence to worship schedules prevent the participation of people with certain disabilities because of the extra time needed in moving from seat to duty and back. In too many places these barriers discourage the disabled from attending and joining—even when they are looking for a church home.

Governments within North America have taken steps to abolish the barriers that deny equal opportunity of employment, public services, transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunication services to disabled individuals. Church members are expected to enable the disabled in their communities and congregations by eliminating physical and attitudinal barriers, too. They should see the removal of restricting obstacles for the disabled not only as a present challenge, but a high priority if their church is seeking to fulfill the Christ's mission of reaching, nurturing, and enabling all people.

Church leaders are to demonstrate the acceptance of all members as equals in work and worship environments. Unless leadership clearly appreciates the diversity of those whom God loves, disabilities ministries will be in vain. Realizing this, the position of disabilities awareness coordinator has been established at the union conference, local conference, and local church levels to give special attention to members and others with disabilities.

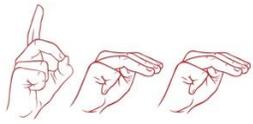
## **Duties of the Disabilities Ministries Coordinator**

Specifically, the job description of the disabilities ministries coordinator is to

1. Monitor physical access to the church facilities and functions, and make recommendations that will help to make the church fully accessible to people with disabilities.
2. Provide education for the church members concerning mental, emotional, and physical disabilities and the people they affect.
3. Assist in the process of assimilating people with disabilities into the active life of the church.
4. Conduct surveys to identify the needs of disabled people in the church and community.
5. Develop, coordinate, and maintain vital programs to meet the spiritual needs of disabled members.
6. Serve as a liaison with Christian Record Services (the church's ministry to the blind, [www.christianrecord.org](http://www.christianrecord.org)) and local organizations that provide services to people with disabilities.

Responsibilities in the Local Church, by the Church Resources Consortium, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist Church. Copyright © 1997, Revised 2002.

\* Retrieved from [www.shilohadventistchurch.org/article/48/departments/disabilities-ministry](http://www.shilohadventistchurch.org/article/48/departments/disabilities-ministry).



## **RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS**

Depending on your type of disability ministry, there may be a need to recruit volunteers, whether on-going or for special events. There are plenty of ways to recruit quality volunteers to help out at your church. Sometimes we recruit volunteers from within the church and other times we recruit volunteers from the community. Here are a few ideas:

**Advertise in local retirement communities.** Older volunteers volunteer more consistently than younger volunteers. They do not require a lot of supervision.

**Advertise with the guidance counselor at the local high school.** Insist that the guidance counselor must personally recommend each student applying from that school.

**Make flyers and post them in your church's bulletin board so that church members who are adults will encourage their kids to volunteer.**

**Mail out flyers to family members, letting them know that your church is accepting volunteers.**

**Have applicants fill out the volunteer application on-site.** Take applicants for a tour of your church when they are finished filling out the application.

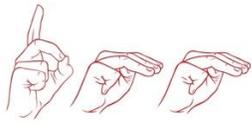
**Advertise at local churches and synagogues.** You may be able to recruit older volunteers who can assist during the day. Your ministry may just become their ministry.

**Make a list of two to three upcoming events that you need volunteers for and put that information on flyers.** Post these flyers in retirement communities and places of worship. Once potential volunteers see a particular activity listed that they like doing themselves, like Sewing Club, they may decide to volunteer their time for that activity.

**To show your church's appreciation, have an annual volunteer appreciation lunch in which you invite the volunteers to eat lunch with the residents.** After lunch, hand out certificates to the volunteers to show your appreciation.

**Mail out birthday cards to volunteers.** This mailing actually accomplishes two things. First, it shows the volunteers that you care about them and appreciate their hard work. Second, it reminds volunteers who have been absent recently, like seasonal volunteers, that your church can still use their help.

\* Retrieved from [www.notjustbingo.com/articles-and-resources/how-to-articles/quality-volunteers.html](http://www.notjustbingo.com/articles-and-resources/how-to-articles/quality-volunteers.html).



## TRAINING

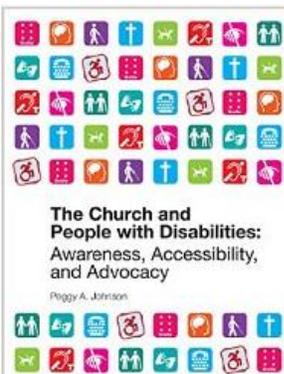
In some circles, we are all considered to have a disability or eventually will be. One way of looking at people who do not have a disability is seeing them as temporarily abled. Training for disability ministries often includes (1) learning about disabilities, (2) familiarizing yourself with the Americans with Disabilities Act (the ADA), (3) learning about a few (or more) community resources, (4) becoming sensitized to some of the struggles people with disabilities experience, (5) help to identify barriers and figure out ways to remove them, (6) learn ways to be an advocate, and (7) commit to fostering awareness about disabilities.

Borrowed from our Lutheran brothers and sisters, together we can:

- Welcome all people warmly and without hesitation. We are a church that belongs to Christ. There is a place for you here.
- Use language that honors and respects the individual person, language that always puts the person first — “person with a disability.”
- Get to know people as people — not as labels, problems or diagnoses. Find out about a person’s interests and gifts.
- Ask the person if he or she needs help before offering assistance.
- Encourage all people to grow in their faith and their spiritual practices, and to use their gifts for the good of the church.

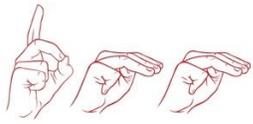
*“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)*

There are a number of preparation materials for a disability ministries team. Each offers its own spin or brand for disability ministries. Consider the following:

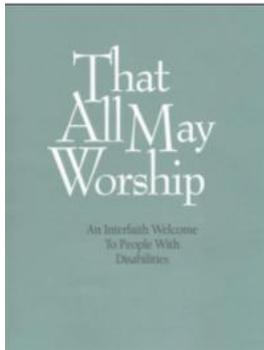


*The Church and People with Disabilities* was written by Bishop Peggy A. Johnson for Mission U. It is a great resource. It can be purchased at

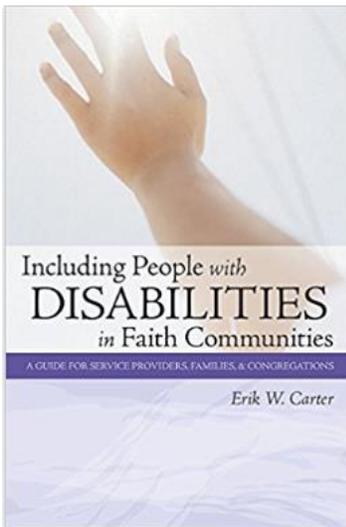
<http://www.umwmissionresources.org/products/the-church-and-people-with-disabilities-awareness-accessibility-and-advocacy-english>



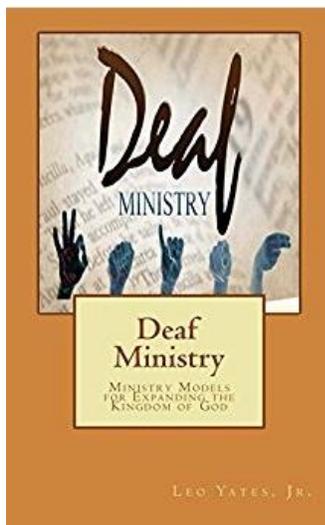
# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



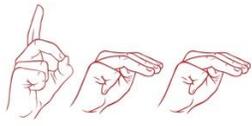
*That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome to People with Disabilities* is an online document that helps churches and ministry settings to be sensitive and inclusive of people with disabilities. The URL is [www.aapd.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/That-All-May-Worship.pdf](http://www.aapd.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/That-All-May-Worship.pdf).



One of the most informational books on disability ministries is the Erik W. Carter book, *Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities*. A disability ministry coordinator will want to have this on hand.



A helpful resource guide is the book, *Deaf Ministry*. It includes a chapter on disability ministry, as well as other resources and ministry models specific to Deaf ministries.



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**Joni and Friends, Inc.** is a long-standing ministry that offers digital resources. Their website is [Joniandfriends.org](http://www.joniandfriends.org). The site is

<http://www.joniandfriends.org/store/category/dvd-s/other-dvd-s/>

**The Special Friends Ministry YouTube Channel** has over a hundred videos that are helpful to disability ministries.



The website is <https://www.youtube.com/user/specialfriendsfbo>

The **Disability Ministries Committee** has a wealth of resources that are online.

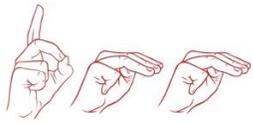


DisAbility Ministries Committee  
of the United Methodist Church

The website is [www.umdisabilityministries.org/resource.html](http://www.umdisabilityministries.org/resource.html) .



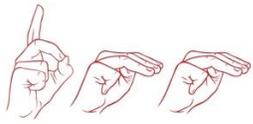
**Rest Ministries** is an organization that provides support for people and families in which chronic pain and other forms of disabilities are a factor in their life. They offer



# *DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL*



“hope keepers groups” in multiple states, even offering ways to begin a group in your own church. Their website is [www.restministries.com](http://www.restministries.com) .



## RESPITE CARE MINISTRY

A respite care ministry is considered compassionate care. Millions of Americans provide unpaid assistance each year to elderly family, friends, and neighbors to help them remain in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. Sometimes these caregivers need time off to relax or take care of other responsibilities. This is where respite care can be helpful. It provides the family caregivers with the break they need, and also ensures that their loved one is still receiving the care that is needed.

The types of respite care look like, but are not limited to, the following:

Informal and Volunteer Respite Care: This is as simple as it sounds. It is accepting help from other family members, friends, neighbors, or church volunteers who offer to stay with the elderly individual while you go to the store or run other errands. Sometimes your local church group or area agency on aging (AAA) will even run a formal “Friendly Visitor Program” in which volunteers may be able to provide basic respite care, as well. Many communities have formed either Interfaith Caregiver or Faith in Action Programs where volunteers from faith-based communities are matched with caregivers to provide them with some relief.

In-home respite care: Generally speaking, in-home respite care involves the following four types of services for the more impaired person with a disability:

1. Companion services to help the family caregiver supervise, entertain, or just visit with the person with a disability when he or she is lonely and wants company.
2. Homemaker services to assist with housekeeping chores, preparing meals, or shopping.
3. Personal care services to help the person bathe, get dressed, go to the bathroom, and/or exercise.
4. Skilled care services to assist the family caregiver in tending to the person’s medical needs, such as when administering medications.

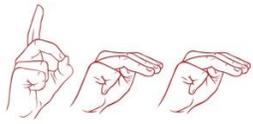
If your church or ministry setting wishes to participate in an already established respite care service in the community, be sure to check out [Eldercare Locator](#) (a government website). The website has additional resources and information about respite care.

\* Retrieved from

[www.eldercare.gov/ELDERCARE.NET/Public/Resources/Factsheets/Respite\\_Care.aspx](http://www.eldercare.gov/ELDERCARE.NET/Public/Resources/Factsheets/Respite_Care.aspx).

Other types of respite care services look like:

1. **Financial Support** – a church may be unable to have their own respite care program, but may instead help fund another existing respite program in the community.
2. **Respite Site** - allow others to use their facility as a place to provide respite, like in a child care area during the afternoon or evening.



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



3. **Support Group Respite** - sponsor a support group. During the meetings, there may need to be child care or elder care provided as well.
4. **Respite Vouchers** - no direct services are provided, but vouchers may be provided to the family to help cover caregiver's cost of hiring a provider.
5. **Adopt-a-Family Program** - a congregation provides care for a family needing respite.
6. **Family Caregiver Cooperatives** - two or more families needing respite trade off care for each other's child, children, adult, or aging family member who is the care recipient.
7. **Trained Respite Providers** - a faith community can create a provider registry by training church members to become direct respite service providers, either for pay or as volunteers.<sup>2</sup>

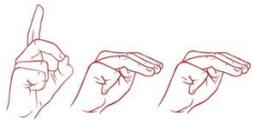


The Arch National Respite Network is a wonderful resource that includes online webinars and trainings, articles, support, networking, and so on. Their website is <https://archrespite.org/>.

The Arch website has numerous articles that can be helpful to a respite care ministry. The webpage that lists these article is located at <https://archrespite.org/productspublications/arch-fact-sheets>

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<sup>2</sup> ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center. (2010). "The Technical Assistance Center for Lifespan Respite. Fact Sheet 53." Retrieved from <http://archrespite.org/>.



## NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Global Ministries has a committee called **The Disability Ministries Committee** and it has website with a wealth of information. Their website is [www.umdisabilityministries.org](http://www.umdisabilityministries.org).

The **United Methodist Association of Ministers with Disabilities** is another United Methodist-related organization worth belonging to. Their website is [www.umdisabledministers.org](http://www.umdisabledministers.org).

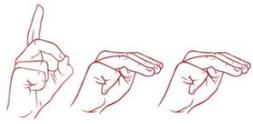
The **United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries**, a sister committee of the disability ministries committee, is another resource to be connected to. Their website is [www.umdeaf.org](http://www.umdeaf.org).

**The National Organization on Disability** is wonderful resource with a wealth of information. Their website is [www.nod.org](http://www.nod.org).

The **National Center on Disability and Journalism** lists many national disability-related organizations and their websites. Their website is <http://ncdj.org/resources/organizations/>.

A few organizations from the National Center on Disability and Journalist include:

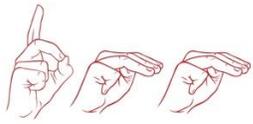
- Alzheimer's Association
- American Academy of Pain Medicine
- American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- American Association of People with Disabilities



## GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

A few government agencies to be aware of are

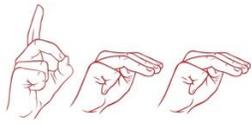
- **Social Security Administration**  
This has information about some of the public benefits individuals with disabilities are entitled to. Its website is [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).
- **Vocational Rehabilitation**  
V.R. offers employment training and job readiness to individuals with disabilities. To find your state's office, go to <https://rsa.ed.gov/about-your-state.cfm>. In Maryland, these offices are called Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).
- **The Department of Justice Civil Rights Division** has a list of federal agencies with ADA and disability responsibilities. Their website is [https://www.ada.gov/ada\\_fed\\_resources.htm](https://www.ada.gov/ada_fed_resources.htm)
- Your State **Department of Aging** office  
Some offices offer disability support, in part, because the largest population with disabilities are seniors. Maryland's is <http://aging.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.
- **Department of Disabilities**  
In Maryland, the Maryland Department of Disabilities, which has a list of community resources. Their website is <http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/12dod/html/dod.html>.
- **ODHH**  
In Maryland, the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) offers a directory of resources. Their website is <http://odhh.maryland.gov/>.



## ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

There are a number of advocacy organizations that are available to the public. The following are just a few:

- The **Maryland Disability Law Center** has legal services. Their website is <http://disabilityrightsmd.org> .
- The **Arc of Maryland** has chapters all over MD that includes policies, resources, habilitative services, and day services. Their website is [www.thearcmd.org](http://www.thearcmd.org) .
- The **Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene** has a lengthy list of organizations. The website is <http://specialneeds.dhmh.maryland.gov/SimpleNav.aspx?subcatid=48> .
- The **Anabaptist Disabilities Network** is a strong faith-based organization that promotes disabilities within the church and community. Their website is [www.adnetonline.org/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.adnetonline.org/Pages/default.aspx) .
- The **Disabled World** has a plethora of news and information. The website is [www.disabled-world.com](http://www.disabled-world.com) .
- The **Maryland Department of Disabilities** lists community resources on their website. The website is <http://mdod.maryland.gov/community/Pages/Home.aspx>.



## AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

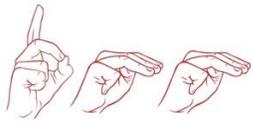
The ADA is considered the civil rights law for people with disabilities. Disability ministries should be familiar with it. Here is a summary of the law.

### **THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: A BRIEF OVERVIEW**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990. Its overall purpose is to make American Society more accessible to people with disabilities. In 2008, the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) was passed. Its purpose is to broaden the definition of disability, which had been narrowed by U.S. Supreme Court decisions.

The ADA is divided into five titles:

1. **EMPLOYMENT (TITLE I)** - Title I requires covered employers to provide reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all aspects of employment. Reasonable accommodation includes, for example, restructuring jobs, making work-sites and workstations accessible, modifying schedules, providing services such as interpreters, and modifying equipment and policies. Title I also regulates medical examinations and inquires. For more information, see <http://AskJAN.org/links/adalinks.htm#I>
2. **PUBLIC SERVICES (TITLE II)** - Under Title II, public services (which include state and local government agencies, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, and other commuter authorities) cannot deny services to people with disabilities or deny participation in programs or activities that are available to people without disabilities. In addition, public transportation systems, such as public transit buses, must be accessible to individuals with disabilities. For more information, see <http://AskJAN.org/links/adalinks.htm#II>
3. **PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS (TITLE III)** - Public accommodations include facilities such as restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, retail stores, etc., as well as privately owned transportation systems. Title III requires that all new construction and modifications must be accessible to individuals with disabilities. For existing facilities, barriers to services must be removed if readily achievable. For more information, see <http://AskJAN.org/links/adalinks.htm#III>
4. **TELECOMMUNICATIONS (TITLE IV)** - Telecommunications companies offering telephone service to the general public must have telephone relay service to individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TTYs) or similar devices.



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5. **MISCELLANEOUS (TITLE V)** - This title includes a provision prohibiting either (a) coercing or threatening or (b) retaliating against individuals with disabilities or those attempting to aid people with disabilities in asserting their rights under the ADA.

The ADA's protection applies primarily, but not exclusively, to individuals who meet the ADA's definition of disability. An individual has a disability if:

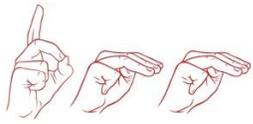
1. He or she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of his/her major life activities;
2. He or she has a record of such an impairment; or
3. He or she is regarded as having such an impairment.

As mentioned above, the ADA's definition of disability was broadened by the ADAAA, which went into effect in January 2009. For more information, see Accommodation and Compliance Series: The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 at <http://AskJAN.org/bulletins/adaaa1.htm>

Other individuals who are protected in certain circumstances include 1) those, such as parents, who have an association with an individual known to have a disability, and 2) those who are coerced or subjected to retaliation for assisting people with disabilities in asserting their rights under the ADA.

While the employment provisions of the ADA apply to employers of fifteen employees or more, its public accommodations provisions apply to all sizes of business, regardless of number of employees. State and local governments are covered regardless of size.

\* Retrieved from <http://askjan.org/links/adasummary.htm>.



## **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

Unfortunately, churches do not fall under the ADA requirements for providing reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities, in part, because of the separation of church and state. New churches that are built are required to be ADA compliant. Thankfully, many churches do try to provide reasonable accommodations. Understandably, providing accommodations is a social justice issue which enables everyone to have access to worship and the life of the church. It's important to have a specific person who the accommodation request should be given. Sometimes, it's a church staff person, other times accommodation requests are given to a disability ministry coordinator.

Here is a brief article about accommodations that provides insight about the subject.

### **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: THE ADA**

#### **EMPLOYERS MAY NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST APPLICANTS AND EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES.**

By Amy DelPo, Attorney

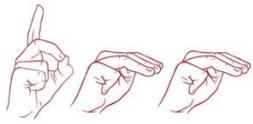
People with disabilities make valuable contributions at work -- if they are given the opportunity to do so. In the past two decades, the federal government and many state governments have passed laws that give people with disabilities this opportunity. The main federal law is called the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), and it and similar state laws have changed the face of the American workforce by prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities and by requiring employers to accommodate the disabilities of employees -- and applicants -- when possible.

#### **Who Is Covered**

The ADA and most state laws protect "qualified workers with disabilities." Thus, someone must be a qualified worker and must have a legally recognized disability to be protected by the ADA. Let's look more closely at these issues.

A qualified worker is a worker who can perform most basic and necessary job duties, with or without some form of accommodation.

There are three ways in which a worker can qualify for protection under the ADA: The worker has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (such as the ability to walk, talk, see, hear, breathe, reason, work, or take



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care of oneself). Major bodily functions, such as cell growth and the proper functioning of the immune, brain, and respiratory systems, also count as major life activities. Episodic impairments (such as asthma) and diseases that are in remission (as might be true of cancer) are also included if they limit a major life activity when active, even if the employee is not currently suffering such a limitation.

The worker has a record or history of impairment. In other words, you may not make employment decisions based on your employee's past disability. You regard the worker -- even incorrectly -- as having a disability. In other words, you can't treat workers less favorably because you believe them to be disabled, even if you are wrong.

For an impairment to be a legal disability, it must be long term. Temporary impairments, such as pregnancy or broken bones, are not covered by the ADA (but may be covered by other laws.)

## **Reasonable Accommodation**

Accommodating a worker means providing assistance or making changes in the job or workplace that will enable the worker to do the job. For example, an employer might lower the height of a desktop to accommodate a worker in a wheelchair; provide TDD telephone equipment for a worker whose hearing is impaired; or provide a quiet, distraction-free workspace for a worker with attention deficit disorder.

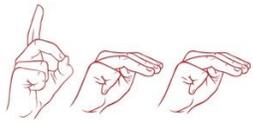
## **Negotiating an Accommodation**

It is your employee's responsibility to inform you of the disability and request a reasonable accommodation -- you are not legally required to guess at what might help the employee do his or her job. However, once an employee informs you of his or her disability, you must engage in what the law calls a "flexible interactive process" -- essentially, a brainstorming dialogue with your worker to figure out what kinds of accommodations might be effective and practical. You do not have to give your worker the precise accommodation he or she requests, but you must work together to come up with a reasonable solution.

## **Undue Hardship Exception**

You don't have to provide an accommodation if it would cause your business "undue hardship." For instance, if the cost of an accommodation would eat up an entire year's profits (building a new wing on your office building, for example), you don't have to do it. Whether an accommodation qualifies as undue hardship depends on a number of factors, including:

- the cost of the accommodation



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



- the size and financial resources of your business
- the structure of your business, and
- the effect the accommodation would have on your business.

You and the employee may have different opinions about what constitutes a reasonable accommodation and what would be an undue hardship. If you're unsure whether you must provide a disabled employee with a specific accommodation, you might want to get some legal help.

\* Retrieved from <http://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/reasonable-accommodations-people-with-disabilities-29492.html>.

The book, *The Church and People with Disabilities*, by Bishop Peggy A. Johnson is a helpful resource that explains some disabilities and their typical accommodations. A must have resource for all church libraries.

The **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)**, a Department of Labor website, offers insight to some disabilities and what the typical accommodations are for them. The webpage is *Accommodation Information by Disability: A to Z*. The website is <https://askjan.org/media/atoz.htm/>. The disabilities and their typical accommodations listed on the webpage includes the following links that takes you to the JAN website:

A

[Addison's Disease](#)

[Aging Employees](#)

[AIDS/HIV](#)

[Albinism](#)

[Alcoholism](#)

[Allergies](#)

[Alzheimer's Disease](#)

[Amputation](#)

[Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis \(ALS\)/Lou Gehrig's Disease](#)

[Anxiety Disorders](#)

[Arthritis](#)

[Ataxia](#)

[Attention Deficit Disorder](#)

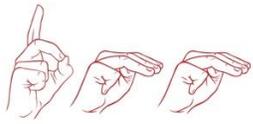
[Auditory Processing Disorder](#)

[Autism Spectrum Disorders](#)

B

[Back Impairments](#)

[Bipolar Disorder](#)



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[Bladder Impairments \(Interstitial Cystitis\)](#)

[Bleeding Disorders](#)

[Body Odor](#)

[Brain Injuries](#)

[Burn Injuries](#)

C

[Cancer](#)

[Cataplexy](#)

[Cerebral Palsy](#)

[Charcot-Marie-Tooth](#)

[Chemical Sensitivity or Environmental Illness](#)

[Chronic Fatigue Syndrome](#)

[Chronic Pain](#)

[Cognitive Impairment](#)

[Color Vision Deficiency \(Color Blind\)](#)

[Complex Regional Pain Syndrome](#)

[Cumulative Trauma Disorders](#)

D

[Deafness](#)

[Depression](#)

[Developmental Disabilities](#)

[Diabetes](#)

[Drug Addiction](#)

[Dystonia](#)

E

[Eating Disorders](#)

[Ebola](#)

[Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome](#)

[Electromagnetic Sensitivity](#)

[Epilepsy](#)

[Essential Tremor](#)

F

[Fetal Alcohol Syndrome \(FAS\)](#)

[Fibromyalgia](#)

[Fragrance Sensitivity](#)

G

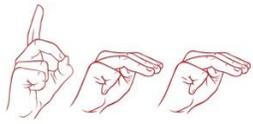
[Gastrointestinal Disorders](#)

[Graves' Disease](#)

[Guillain-Barré Syndrome](#)

H

[Heart Conditions](#)



# *DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL*



[Hearing Loss](#)

[Hepatitis](#)

[Herpes Zoster \(Shingles\)](#)

[HIV/AIDS](#)

[Huntington's Disease](#)

I

[Intellectual or Cognitive Impairment](#)

K

[Kidney Disease](#)

L

[Latex Allergies](#)

[Learning Disabilities](#)

[Leg Impairment](#)

[Lyme Disease](#)

[Little Person](#)

[Liver Diseases](#)

[Lupus](#)

M

[Marfan Syndrome](#)

[Mental Health Impairments](#)

[Migraine Headaches](#)

[Multiple Chemical Sensitivity or Environmental Illness](#)

[Multiple Sclerosis](#)

[Muscular Dystrophy](#)

[Myasthenia Gravis](#)

O

[Obesity](#)

[One Hand Use](#)

P

[Paraplegia](#)

[Parkinson's Disease](#)

[Personality Disorders](#)

[Phobias](#)

[Photosensitivity](#)

[Post-Polio Syndrome](#)

[Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder](#)

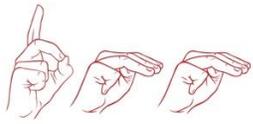
[Pregnancy](#)

[Psychiatric Impairments \(See Mental Health Impairments\)](#)

Q

[Quadriplegia](#)

R



# *DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL*



[Raynaud's Phenomenon](#)

[Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy \(RSD\)](#)

[Renal Disease](#)

[Respiratory Disorders](#)

**S**

[Sarcoidosis](#)

[Seasonal Affective Disorder](#)

[Shingles](#)

[Sickle Cell Anemia](#)

[Skin Disorders](#)

[Sleep Disorders](#)

[Speech-Language Impairments](#)

[Spina Bifida](#)

[Spinal Cord Injury](#)

[Stomach Ulcers and Reflux Disease](#)

[Stroke](#)

[Stuttering](#)

**T**

[Thyroid Disorders](#)

[Tourette Syndrome](#)

**V**

[Vertigo](#)

[Vision Impairments](#)

**W**

[Wheelchair Use](#)

**Remember, the person with the disability will inform you what the best accommodation works for him or her.**



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



- [ABOUT JAN](#)
- [FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS](#)
- [TRAINING](#)
- [HOT TOPICS](#)
- [NEWS](#)

  JAN en Español Print this Page Text Size

- [For Employers](#)
- [For Individuals](#)
- [For Others](#)
- [ADA Library](#)
- [Accommodation Search](#)
- [A - Z of Disabilities](#)
- [Publications](#)
- [Resources](#)

[Home](#) | [ADA Overview](#) | [Accommodation Information: A - Z](#)

## Accommodation Information by Disability: A to Z

The use of the term "disability" in this context does not mean that these conditions are disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For more information on the ADA's definition of disability, see: [How to Determine Whether a Person Has a Disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#). Also visit JAN's [ADA Glossary](#) and JAN's [Employers' Practical Guide to Reasonable Accommodation Under the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#).

The links below provide overview information on impairments, as well as accommodation ideas and organizations you can contact.



### A

- [Addison's Disease](#)
- [Aging Employees](#)
- [AIDS/HIV](#)
- [Albinism](#)
- [Alcoholism](#)
- [Allergies](#)
- [Alzheimer's Disease](#)
- [Amputation](#)
- [Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis \(ALS\)/Lou Gehrig's Disease](#)
- [Anxiety Disorders](#)
- [Arthritis](#)

### E

- [Eating Disorders](#)
- [Ebola](#)
- [Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome](#)
- [Electromagnetic Sensitivity](#)
- [Epilepsy](#)
- [Essential Tremor](#)

### F

- [Fetal Alcohol Syndrome \(FAS\)](#)
- [Fibromyalgia](#)
- [Fragrance Sensitivity](#)

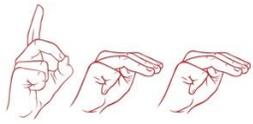
### O

- [Obesity](#)
- [One Hand Use](#)

### P

- [Paraplegia](#)
- [Parkinson's Disease](#)
- [Personality Disorders](#)
- [Phobias](#)
- [Photosensitivity](#)
- [Post-Polio Syndrome](#)
- [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder](#)
- [Pregnancy](#)

<https://askjan.org/media/atoz.htm/>



## **THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE**

The following are excerpts from The Book of Discipline and touches on our call as United Methodists to include people with disabilities in the life of the church. The Committee on Disability Ministries lists these, as well as others [on their website](#).

### **¶ 140: Called to Inclusiveness**

We recognize that God made all creation and saw that it was good. As a diverse people of God who bring special gifts and evidences of God's grace to the unity of the Church and to society, we are called to be faithful to the example of Jesus' ministry to all persons.

Inclusiveness means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the life of the Church, the community, and the world. Thus inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination. The services of worship of every local church of The United Methodist Church shall be open to all persons.

The mark of an inclusive society is one in which all persons are open, welcoming, fully accepting, and supporting of all other persons, enabling them to participate fully in the life of the church, the community, and the world. A further mark of inclusiveness is the setting of church activities in facilities accessible to persons with disabilities.

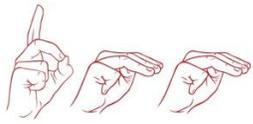
In the United Methodist Church inclusiveness means the freedom for the total involvement of all persons who meet the requirements of the United Methodist Book of Discipline in the membership and leadership of the Church at any level and in every place. In the spirit of this declaration, United Methodist seminaries will make all efforts to meet Americans with Disabilities (ADA) accessibility standards by the year 2011. Exemptions for historical or existing buildings are not allowed under this requirement.

### **¶ 161: The Nurturing Community**

The community provides the potential for nurturing human beings into the fullness of their humanity. We believe we have a responsibility to innovate, sponsor, and evaluate new forms of community that will encourage development of the fullest potential in individuals. Primary for us is the gospel understanding that all persons are important—because they are human beings created by God and loved through and by Jesus Christ and not because they have merited significance. We therefore support social climates in which human communities are maintained and strengthened for the sake of all persons and their growth. We also encourage all individuals to be sensitive to others by using appropriate language when referring to all persons. Language of a derogatory nature (with regard to race, nationality, ethnic background, gender, sexuality, and physical differences) does not reflect value for one another and contradicts the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **¶ 162: The Social Community**

*1) Rights of Persons with Disabilities*—We recognize and affirm the full humanity and personhood of all individuals with mental, physical, developmental, neurological, and



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



psychological conditions or disabilities as full members of the family of God. We also affirm their rightful place in both the church and society. We affirm the responsibility of the Church and society to be in ministry with children, youth, and adults with mental, physical, developmental, and/or psychological conditions or disabilities whose particular needs in the areas of mobility, communication, intellectual comprehension, or personal relationships might make more challenging their participation or that of their families in the life of the Church and the community. We urge the Church and society to recognize and receive the gifts of persons with disabilities to enable them to be full participants in the community of faith. We call the Church and society to be sensitive to, and advocate for, programs of rehabilitation, services, employment, education, appropriate housing, and transportation. We call on the Church and society to protect the civil rights of persons with all types and kinds of disabilities.

## ¶ 166: Our Social Creed

We commit ourselves to the rights of men, women, children, youth, young adults, the aging, and people with disabilities; to the improvement of the quality of life; and to the rights and dignity of all persons.

## ¶ 253: Age-Level, Family, and Specialized Ministry Coordinators

. . . . Where needs for specialized areas of ministry arise (for example, single adults or persons with addictions, mental illness, or disabilities), coordinators of these areas of ministry may be elected.

## ¶ 254: Other Ministry Group Coordinators

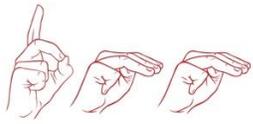
In order to fulfill the mission of the local church, the charge conference may elect annually a coordinator or ministry group chairperson for any or all of these areas: Christian unity and interreligious concerns, church and society, community volunteers, education, evangelism, higher education and campus ministry, missions, prayer advocacy, religion and race, status and role of women, earth advocacy, stewardship, worship, advocacy for persons with special needs, and church media resources.

## ¶ 256: Program Ministries

1. In each local church there shall be a variety of small-group ministries...[which] shall provide people with opportunities for practicing skills for faithful discipleship, including but not limited to . . . service with the poor and marginalized, and advocacy for peace and justice.

1c. *Mission and Ministry Groups*—Christian discipleship is patterned after the servanthood of Jesus, who cared for the sick, fed the hungry, and befriended the outcast. People may participate in small groups in order to serve the needs of the poor and marginalized, advocate for social justice, and demonstrate their faith in all their relationships and whatever setting they find themselves in.

1d. *Support Groups*—Where needed, the local church may organize small



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



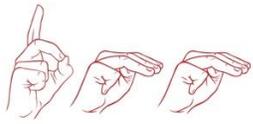
groups to support particular needs of congregation and community members, including but not limited to care and prayer groups, divorce recovery, grief recovery, parenting groups, and support for people who are suffering from chronic illness, including persons with mental illness and their families.

## ¶ 262: Special Sundays

. . . Four churchwide Sundays—Christian Education, Golden Cross, Disability Awareness, and Rural Life—provide opportunities for annual conference offerings.

## ¶ 265: Approved Sundays for Annual Conference Observation—

4. Disability Awareness Sunday . . . shall be observed annually on a date to be determined by the annual conference. Disability Awareness Sunday calls the church to celebrate the gifts and graces of persons with disabilities and calls the Church and society to full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community. If the annual conference so directs, an offering may be received and the funds used by the annual conference to promote the creation of architectural and attitudinal accessibility in local churches. The observance of Disability Awareness Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries.



## ANNUAL OR BI-ANNUAL DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY

In the Baltimore Washington Conference, the annual conference adopted the first Sunday in February as the Sunday to observe Disability Awareness Sunday. The Commission on Disability Concerns of the Baltimore Washington Conference has an excellent resource called *Disability Awareness Sunday Church Kit*. Some things that are included are

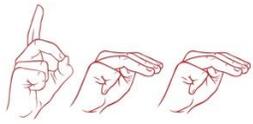
1. Include a bulletin insert with Disability-related awareness dates (i.e. Mental Health Month, World Cancer Day, World Glaucoma Awareness Week, Deaf Awareness Month, and Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month).\*
2. Include a litany or a Call to Worship that highlights disability awareness.\*
3. Read Scripture passages from the Old Testament, the Psalms, the Gospels, and the New Testament.\*
4. Invite a person with a disability to be a liturgist or to be a guest preacher. Check with the district superintendent, as he or she has a list of lay speakers.
5. Conduct an Annual Accessibility Audit and report its findings in worship during the church announcements.\*
6. Hand out an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) fact sheet as parishioners exit the sanctuary.
7. Have a Sunday School class make a collage of pictures for a bulletin board. Pictures can be what an inviting church or an accessible church looks like. This helps to promote awareness.
8. During announcements, share disability-related facts (i.e. Over 56 million people in the U.S. have some type of disability) and highlight the Commission on Disability Concerns as a resource for your church.
9. During the fellowship hour, like after worship, have an exhibit table with disability-related materials.\*
10. If your sanctuary is equipped with multimedia, show the disability awareness video on the disability commission webpage.

\* The Commission on Disability Concerns webpage on the Baltimore-Washington Conference website has materials for your use. Be sure to check out the [Disability Awareness Sunday Church Kit](#) on the webpage.

### Liturgy

Call to Worship:

BEATITUDES FOR FRIENDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



Blessed are you who take the time to listen to difficult speech, for you help me to know that if I persevere I can be understood.

Blessed are you who never bid me to “hurry up” and take my tasks from me and do them for me, for I often need time rather than help.

Blessed are you who asked for my help, for my greatest need is to be needed.

Blessed are you who understand that it is difficult for me to put my thoughts into words.

Blessed are you who, with a smile, encourage me to try once more.

(there is more in the church kit)

## **Scriptures**

Matthew 9:27-33 Jesus heals two blind men and a person unable to speak.

Luke 14:15-24 In Jesus’ parable, he emphasizes that God’s house should be filled and that we are to invite people with disabilities.

(there are more listed in the church kit)

## **Hymns**

“O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing” infers inclusion and eschatological hope.

“Joyful Joyful, We Adore Thee” was written by Beethoven when he was a young boy. Beethoven himself was deaf.

## **Bulletin Information** (a sample service)

*This can be a service that focuses on disabilities in general or on a specific disability.*

We are observing Disability Awareness Sunday this day. Our faith community expresses our thanks to the volunteers who assisted in the planning of this worship service. Liturgy, music, prayers, and Scripture readings are chosen to help us to observe this Sunday. May this time of worship help bring us closer together, be more sensitive, and help us to better recognize our faith community better represents the body of Christ when our sisters and brothers with disabilities are present with us.

Our guest speaker today has a disability and is open to sharing her testimony with us. Please join with us in expressing our gratefulness for bringing the message today.

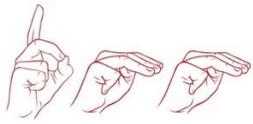
## **Announcements**

### **Call to Worship**

Leader: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing.

**All: Help me, Lord, always to look to you as my shepherd and guide as I travel this road of illness or disability.**

Leader: He makes me lie down in green pastures.



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



**All: Thank you, Lord, for making this journey less difficult and for paving the road with flowers in the form of help along the way.**

Leader: He leads me beside still waters;

**All: You send peace into my troubled life.**

Leader: He restores my soul.

**All: Lord, you know how far away from you this trouble has taken me. You know how far I have sunk. You know when I couldn't pray, so you prayed for me.**

**Amen.**

## **Hymn: Blessed Assurance #369**

Fanny Cosby was an American mission worker, poet, lyricist, and composer. She was blind since being an infant.

## **Lord's Prayer**

Please be sure to follow the video that will show a person signing the prayer in American Sign Language.

## **Scripture Reading: John 9:1-41**

Jesus heals a blind man emphasizing that a disability isn't always caused by sin; moreover, that God's glory is revealed through him.

## **Message**

### **Offering of our Tithes and Gifts**

Part of today's offering is being pledged for the local Melwood office. Melwood provides community support services for people with disabilities. Melwood.org

## **Doxology**

Assisting us with this hymn is a friend from the community who is fluent in American Sign Language. Please follow her as we "sign" the hymn.

## **Hymn: Many Gifts, One Spirit #114**

This hymn helps to focus on diversity and how each of us bring gifts to the body.

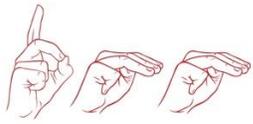
## **Benediction**

\* Another model worship service from UMCOR can be found here [www.umdisabilityministries.org/dasunday/serviceumcor.html](http://www.umdisabilityministries.org/dasunday/serviceumcor.html).



**Promotion Flyer for the Special Sunday**

Join Us in  
Observing  
Disability  
Awareness  
Sunday on the  
First Sunday in  
February



## **Disability-related Awareness Dates**

### **January**

Co-dependency Awareness Month - (U.S.), Glaucoma Awareness Month - (U.S.), Weight Loss Awareness Month

### **February**

Heart and Stroke Awareness Month, February 4 – World Cancer Day, February 20 – World Day of Social Justice

### **March**

Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month, Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Month, National Problem Gambling Awareness Month, March 12 – World Glaucoma Day, March 21 – World Down Syndrome Day

### **April**

Alcohol Awareness Month, Autism Awareness Month, Child Abuse Prevention Month, Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month

### **May**

ALS Awareness Month, Asthma Awareness Month, Better Sleep Month, Lupus Awareness, Month Stroke Awareness Month June

### **June**

June 6 – World Hunger Day, Men's Health Month, PTSD Awareness Month  
June 15 – World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

### **July**

July 16 - Disability (ADA) Awareness Day, Cataract Awareness Month

### **August**

Cataract Awareness Month, Immunization Awareness Month, August 21 – National Senior Citizens Day, August 31 – International Overdose Awareness Day

### **September**

Prostate Awareness Month, National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, Deaf Awareness Month

### **October**

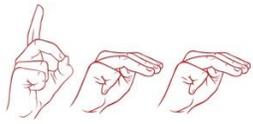
AIDS Awareness Month, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Depression Education and Awareness Month, Lupus Awareness Month

### **November**

Adoption Awareness Month, COPD Awareness Month, Alzheimer's Awareness Month, Epilepsy Awareness Month

### **December**

December 1 -World AIDS Day, December 3 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities



## MONTHLY OR QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

One of the ways to promote your disability ministry is by having monthly or quarterly newsletter. Even a one-page newsletter or a digital version can help to promote the work your ministry is doing. Article ideas include:

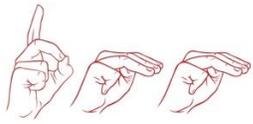
- article on a specific disability or disabilities in general
- interviews
- articles that highlight your ministry
- do a book review
- highlights from the community
- mention any awareness day/week/month (i.e. A disability of the month article)
- church or community updates

Be sure to subscribe to the **Committee on Disability Ministries**, a Global Ministries committee, newsletter to not only stay connected, but to stay informed and for article ideas. Their website is [www.umdisabilityministries.org](http://www.umdisabilityministries.org) .

The **Anabaptist Disabilities Network** has regularly distributed disability newsletter that is worth subscribing to. Their website is [www.adnetonline.org](http://www.adnetonline.org) .

The **Office on Aging and Older Adult Ministries** is a United Methodist ministry that disability ministries may want to connect with, in part, because the largest population with disabilities are older adults. The ministry has a newsletter called The S.A.G.E. newsletter (Spiritually Aging Gracefully Empowered). The website is [www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/older-adults](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/older-adults) .

Be sure your newsletter is accessible that includes large print and images that are tagged (a description). Some organizations offer a standard newsletter and an accessible newsletter (in Word 97-2003).



## **CHURCH WEBPAGE**

If your church is going to have a disability ministry, then promoting it on your church website is crucial. It helps show new people and those already attending your church your visible presence and your church's commitment to this ministry.

An overview of the history of your disability ministry (how it came about), an introduction to the ministry, the types of accommodations your church offers (e.g. large print bulletins, a wheelchair ramp, and so on), explanation of disability symbols that might be posted around the church, and a contact person and his/her contact information are items to be on your ministry webpage.

It is important to be sure your website is accessible for individuals with disabilities. Be sure to publicize that the website is accessible. Tim Vermande, from the Disability Ministries Committee, wrote an article that highlights the need for accessible websites that includes suggestions. The article can be found here.

[www.umdisabilityministries.org/tech/website.html](http://www.umdisabilityministries.org/tech/website.html)

Here is a short list of United Methodist Churches in the U.S. that has a disability ministry webpage.

St. James UMC in Tampa, FL

<http://stjamestampa.org/specialneeds.php>

Fredericktown UMC in Fredericktown, OH

<http://www.freddieumc.org/Special%20Needs>

Custer Road UMC in Plano, TX

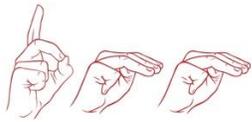
<https://www.crumc.org/connect/ministries/care/special-needs/>

Community with a Cause in Great Mills, MD

[www.community-umchurch.com/](http://www.community-umchurch.com/)

These and other churches listed are on the Committee on Disability Ministries website.

[www.umdisabilityministries.org/resource.html#8](http://www.umdisabilityministries.org/resource.html#8)



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## ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

The annual accessibility audit is a required charge conference form that is to be completed and signed at each charge conference. While filling it out is essential, it is just as helpful to share the results with the congregation. Some churches have made copies available to disseminate during worship.

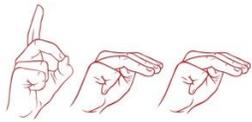
### ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT FOR UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES (¶2533)



Church \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

Date Form Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Charge Conference Date \_\_\_\_\_

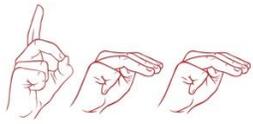
YE S	N O	N/ A	Description / Guidelines	Explain "NO" Answers
<b>GETTING INTO THE CHURCH</b>				
			Clearly visible signs direct people to accessible entrances	
			Designated parking spaces on level ground are close to entrance and do not require crossing traffic or moving behind parked cars	
			At least 1 per 25 spaces is clearly marked with access symbol on vertical signs and on pavement (# of accessible spaces:____)	
			Accessible spaces are 8' wide with adjacent 5' access aisle.	
			At least one space is van accessible with adjacent, painted with slash lines, 8' access aisle on right side of vehicle	
			36" wide curb cuts (curb ramps) are provided close to parking	
			Sidewalks are smooth, flat, and at least 36" wide providing an access route to an accessible entrance into the church	
			Ramp has maximum incline of 1:12, preferably 1:20 (length:____ rise:____ ratio:____) with no more than 30' between landings	
			Ramp has minimum width of 36" between handrails (width:____) and has non-slip surface	
			Handrails are 34-38" high on both sides of ramp/ stairs and extend 12" beyond; lower railing is no higher than 4" above deck	
			There is a 60" x 60" level platform at entry door and at least 18" on pull side of door	



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



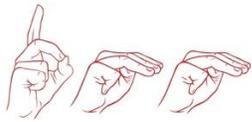
YE S	N O	N/ A	Description / Guidelines	Explain "NO" Answers
			Entrance door is 36" wide; threshold level or max beveled ½" high; no more than 10 lb force needed to open door	
<b>GETTING AROUND THE CHURCH</b>				
			Corridors are at least 36" wide with 60" passing spaces every 200' and non-glare floor surface	
			No objects protrude more than 4", and lowest part of protruding object is no more than 27" above floor height to allow a person who is blind to detect the object with a cane and avoid injuries	
			Multi-level building has interior elevator, lift and/ or ramp to allow access to all common/ program areas	
			Doorways have a minimum of 32" clearance and thresholds are level or no more than ½" high and beveled	
			Door handles are easy to grasp and operate with one hand/single effort, using no more than 5 lbs. force	
			Carpet pile is level and no more than ½" thick, with no or firm padding; all floor mats have rubberized backing and are stable	
			Fire alarm controls and extinguishers are no more than 48" from floor; visual and auditory fire alarms are in place	
			At least one accessible marked unisex restroom (or both male and female restrooms) per floor has 60 x 60" turning space	
			Sink has 29" clearance from floor, controls easy to operate (lever style, automatic, etc.), drain pipes insulated,	
			Soap and paper towels are no higher than 48", bottom edge of mirror is 40" or lower	
			One+ stall is 66"x 60" with 33" – 36" high wall-mounted grab bar by toilet extending 54" from back wall; toilet height 17" – 19"	
			Drinking fountain is no higher than 36" with easy hand controls and wheelchair clearance or paper cup dispenser	
			Stairs and ramps have handrails on both sides; surface is non-slip; leading edges are marked with a contrasting color	
<b>SANCTUARY, CLASSROOMS, FELLOWSHIP AREA</b>				



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



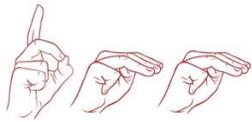
			Level pew cuts/ wheelchair spaces are next to aisles and distributed throughout the room for choice in seating. Spaces are 33"x48" forward approach, and/or 33"x60" side approach, with view of screen/ pulpit when others stand	
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Description / Guidelines</b>	<b>Explain "NO" Answers</b>
			Chancel area and choir loft are accessible (via ramp, or platform lift if needed)	
			If there are steps to the chancel, handrails are provided	
			Aisleways are at least 36" in common areas	
			Fellowship area and work area in kitchen are accessible	
			In fellowship area and classrooms at least one table has minimum of 29-30" clearance on underside; some chairs have armrests and height of chair seat from floor of these chairs is 18" or more	
<b>COMMUNICATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT</b>				
			Members sensitized about need to minimize use of fragrances	
			All soaps, cleaning products and other chemicals fragrance free; candles are unscented and non-petroleum-based	
			Lighting adequate for reading in meeting areas, for safety in halls	
			Large/bold print provided via projection or bulletin, songbook, and Bible; Braille or alternative media available upon request	
			Microphone used by all speakers or comments repeated; assisted listening devices provided; ASL interpreter provided upon request	
			Printed copies of sermon are available if requested	
			Videos and other media are clearly captioned	
<b>ATTITUDES</b>				
			Access and accommodations available are described in church phone message, website, internet postings, signage, etc.	
			Pastor(s)/ ushers/ greeters/ leaders/ members have had training in disability awareness and etiquette	
			Signs or bulletin boards give visible evidence that people with cognitive challenges, mental illness, and chronic	



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



			illness are welcome and included in the life of the congregation	
			Disruptions are accepted and incorporated into worship	
<b>YE S</b>	<b>N O</b>	<b>N/ A</b>	<b>Description / Guidelines</b>	<b>Explain "NO" Answers</b>
			Service animals or guide dogs are welcome within the church building(s) including the sanctuary	
			Worship leader invites people to "rise in body or in spirit" and to "be in an attitude of prayer" or uses similar inclusive language	
			Educational programs are adapted as needed for inclusion of children and adults with disabilities	
			Disability Awareness Sunday was celebrated during past year	
			Persons with disabilities serve in worship and leadership roles and help plan ways to improve access	
			Needs of those on special diets considered when food is offered, including gluten free communion elements	
			Transportation; valet parking assistance; buddy system (for those needing 1:1 assistance) offered if needed	
<b>GOALS FOR ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR</b>				<b>Target Date</b>
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



<b>YES __ NO __ Request consultation from Disability Concerns Committee</b> <b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Signature of Pastor:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Signature of Trustees chair:</b>	
<b>Signature of District Superintendent:</b>	

Form completed by \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information \_\_\_\_\_

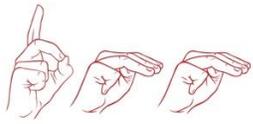
Contact person for church \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- **This form is for use on existing buildings only; please refer to current ADA and state regulations for new construction or major remodeling projects:**  
<http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADASTandards/>.
- **The audit should be completed by a team including a member of the trustees, and people with construction, architecture and rehabilitation backgrounds. Include persons with disabilities and family members, especially someone who uses a wheelchair and someone with low vision, in the audit process.**
- **Interview individuals with disabilities and family members of children and adults with disabilities to learn how welcoming your congregation is and to help set priorities.**
- **This is not an all-inclusive listing of ADA guidelines, but rather represents basic first steps that a church may take to begin to implement accessibility measures.**

REVISED JANUARY 2014; USED WITH PERMISSION OF THE DISABILITY MINISTRIES COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



## HOSPITALITY AND WELCOMING ALL

An important part of the work of a disability ministry is to help the overall church be a place of hospitality and welcoming for individuals with disabilities and their families. This includes ushers knowing where restroom accessible bathrooms are, ushers knowing how to sign “Good morning” in sign language, where assisted listening devices are located, and so on. From the book, Deaf Ministry, this survey for a welcoming church is recommended to be completed from time to time.

### Indicators of Welcome

#### **Perspectives**

Whose perspectives were sought as a part of the reflection process?

- Clergy
- Person(s) with disabilities
- Community members
- Children/youth program leaders
- Adult program leaders
- Support providers
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Presence and Participation**

What steps have been taken to identify individuals with disabilities?

What steps have been taken to identify individuals with disabilities beyond the church?

In what ways are individuals with disabilities and their families participating in the following ways in the church?

	Actively	Sometimes	Never	Unsure
Worship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fellowship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



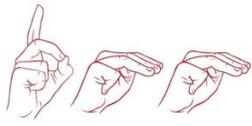
	Actively	Sometimes	Never	Unsure	
Religious education (children and adult)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Bible Study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Summer programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Greeters, ushers & other worship assistants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Choir or worship team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Church committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Outreach ministries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

What barriers seem to be hindering their involvement in these areas?

**Architectural and Physical Accessibility**  
 Can the following areas of the building and grounds be navigated easily by people using wheelchairs, walkers, and scooters, as well as other adaptive equipment?

At present, how accessible are we?

	Completely	Somewhat	Not at all	Uncertain	Comments
Sanctuaries & other worship space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Classrooms & meeting rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Fellowship Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Nursery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Restrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Playgrounds & recreation areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Gymnasium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Parking lots & sidewalks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



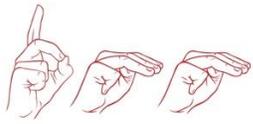
	Completely	Somewhat	Not at all	Uncertain	Comments
Doorways & hallways	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Church offices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Kitchen & eating areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
School building & childcare center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Which three architectural barriers are the most pressing?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

To what extent does each statement below describes our church?

	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not at all	Uncertain
<b>Worship services</b>				
Greeters, ushers, & other worship assistants know how to extend welcome and offer assistance to people with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with disabilities are supported to sit with friends, family, or whomever they choose.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faith partners are available to sit with, befriend, and support people with disabilities, if desired.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worship experiences are designed to engage multiple senses and allow for participation in various ways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



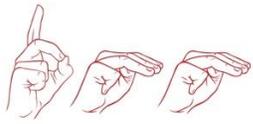
	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not at all	Uncertain
Congregational leaders are willing to explore alternate ways for participating in worship and the sacraments, as necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with disabilities are contributing to worship services in varied ways, including as greeters or choir members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The congregation expresses comfort with people who worship in different ways (e.g. making noises, rocking, flapping their hands).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The congregation is periodically asked about chemical sensitivities, food allergies, or other issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religious Education</b>				
Children with disabilities participate in the same activities and classes as their peers without disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities are adapted and supports are provided so that children with disabilities can participate in activities to the greatest extent possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religious curricula appeals to children who learn, participate, and contribute in a variety of ways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basic information, training, and support are provided to lay volunteers who work with children with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers and helpers are ready to include children with disabilities, in their classes from the moment families first arrive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not at all	Uncertain
Topics related to hospitality, inclusion, disabilities, and community periodically are woven into education curricula.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth with disabilities participate in preparation classes for membership, confirmation, bar/bat mitzvah, and other rites of passage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adults with disabilities are included in religious education programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools and daycare programs sponsored by our congregation include children with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with disabilities contributes on planning teams and serve in leadership positions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Efforts are made to discern the gifts of people with disabilities and connect them with opportunities to share their gifts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with disabilities are serving in varied capacities within the congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with disabilities are serving in varied capacities beyond the congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



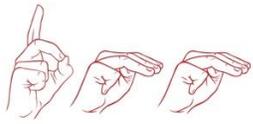
<b>Outreach</b>	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not at all	Uncertain
Intentional efforts are made to invite people with disabilities and their families to participate in congregational life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility symbols and images of people with disabilities are included in our materials and advertising.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation to congregational activities is provided or arranged for individuals who cannot drive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitation programs are extended to people with disabilities and their families, as well as those who are homebound.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We actively seek out ways to address unmet needs of people with disabilities living in our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Members are informed of opportunities to support people with disabilities within and outside the congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>General Awareness</b>	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not at all	Uncertain
Our policies and practices clearly communicate our desire to worship and serve alongside people with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our vision to be inclusive is frequently shared with members and broadcast throughout the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not at all	Uncertain
Reflection on our accessibility and hospitality is conducted at least annually.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basic disability awareness is communicated through sermons, bulletin inserts, newsletters, religious education curricula, and other avenues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility and support needs are considered when congregational events are planned.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our resource library includes books and materials about disabilities, as well as resources for family members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our clergy and ministry leader's are familiar with disability issues related to specific programs, roles, and responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Families</b>	<b>Absolutely</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>
Families feel welcomed and included in the congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Families contribute to discussions on congregational accessibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If respite care is available, families are aware of it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support groups are available to interested parents, siblings, and others within our congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial support is available to people with disabilities and their families, as it is to all members of the congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



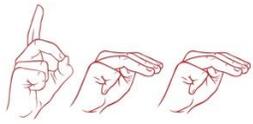
	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not at all	Uncertain
People with disabilities and their families know who to contact to ask for support and assistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clergy and care ministers feel equipped to provide spiritual care and support to people with disabilities and their families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Partnerships with Community Groups</b>	<b>Absolutely</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>
We have developed relationships with agencies and organizations serving people with disabilities in our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have invited people with disabilities and advocacy groups to provide us with feedback about our materials, programs, and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff from service and support organizations are helping us to improve our capacity to welcome and support people with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We know where to turn when we need more information about specific disability-related issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We advocate for laws, policies, and resources that improve the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other Indicators</b>	<b>Absolutely</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>
We have developed a written plan describing how we will improve our accessibility and welcome.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not at all	Uncertain
Intentional efforts are made to support people with and without disabilities to develop meaningful social relationships.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A key person or group in our congregation is committed to making sure that the needs of people with disabilities are being addressed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with disabilities and/or their family members are involved in visioning and planning for the future of the congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a process for identifying the emotional, spiritual, practical, and other support needs of congregational members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Plan of Action</b>				
List up to five goals for improving our congregation's welcome and accessibility. What specific steps will we need to take to realize those goals? When will we aim to accomplish each goal? Who will be responsible to ensuring that each goal is followed through to completion?				
<b>Goals</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
Comments:				
<p>Permission given. Carter, E.W. (2007). <u>Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families, and Congregations</u>. Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co, Inc.</p>				



## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Some churches find it difficult to provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Here is a list of funding suggestions from the Commission on Disability Concerns' webpage.

### **Joni & Friends, Inc.**

Here is a website for Joni & Friends (their grant webpage). They offer a small grant.

<http://www.joniandfriends.org/help-and-resources/organizations/christian-fund-disabled/>

### **External Grants Recommended by the Baltimore-Washington Conference**

The BWC lists a few external grant opportunities on their website.

<http://bwcumc.org/toolbox/where-can-i-find-grants-and-other-funding-opportunities-forministry-in-my-church/>

### **The Unified Funding Taskforce**

The Unified Funding Taskforce at the BWC offers grants for strategic growth. If your church is trying to grow by reaching out to individuals with disabilities, then try this.

[www.bwcumc.org/administration/finance/local-church-resources/grants-and-loans/](http://www.bwcumc.org/administration/finance/local-church-resources/grants-and-loans/)

### **Baltimore-Washington Conference Loans and Grants for Building Renovations**

The BWC offers grants and loans for churches needing renovations. Perhaps putting a power chair lift would qualify.

[www.bwcumc.org/administration/finance/local-church-resources/grants-and-loans/](http://www.bwcumc.org/administration/finance/local-church-resources/grants-and-loans/)

### **The Disability Ministries Committee of The United Methodist Church**

The Disability Ministries of The United Methodist Church offers limited grants for churches to be accessible to individuals with disabilities. Here is a link for their grant application. <http://www.umdisabilityministries.org/download/GrantApplication2016.doc>

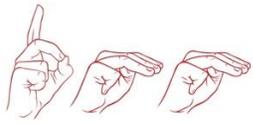
### **Fundraising Ideas**

Another suggestion is to do a few fundraisers to help raise the funds to pay for the lift. Here is a website with several fundraising ideas.

<http://www.abcfundraising.com/fundraising-ideas/ideas-for-church-fundraisers/>

### **Pathways**

Pathways.org offers grants to faith communities for the purposes of inclusion and accessibility. They offer Open Hearts Awards and Junior Open Hearts Awards. Here is their website. <https://pathways.org/tools-resources/inclusion-worship/awards/>



## CAMPS AND RETREATS

There are specialty camps around this annual conference, some sponsored by churches, others by non-profit organizations.

Sponsoring a camper or a family is one way a disability ministry can make a difference. Why not be bold and plan a retreat for people with disabilities. Retreats can be a one-day event to a weekend long event. Invite specialists to come in from spa-like professionals (e.g. hair stylists and pedicures) to various crafts to specialty foods, even to a movie day. If hosting this at one of the annual conference camping retreat centers, they will likely have applications that can be adapted for your retreat. Additional volunteers are usually needed for this, but it's well worth it! For insight, ask one of the already established camps for advice.

The **Committee on Disability Ministries** has a list of some specialty camps. The website is here [www.umdisabilityministries.org/resource.html](http://www.umdisabilityministries.org/resource.html) .

In Maryland, a **list of special needs camp** by non-profit organizations can be found here [www.veryspecialcamps.com/Maryland/Special-Needs-Summer-Camps.shtml](http://www.veryspecialcamps.com/Maryland/Special-Needs-Summer-Camps.shtml) .

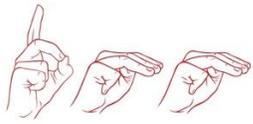
### **Retreat Guidelines**

Retreats are great resources for any church group or ministry organization. They can be used to provide training and education, to cultivate and strengthen relationships, and to give an outlet for recreation and fellowship. As valuable as a retreat can be, it requires a lot of advanced planning and preparation. The following checklist has been compiled in order to make retreat planning easier by providing a comprehensive checklist of things to consider, what to organize, and things to do. It is advisable to have a retreat planning team in place before getting started. Be sure to make the event accessible. Checklist planning sections can be divided among individuals or groups with set tasks assigned to each group.

Click here to download your own copy of the Retreat Planning Checklist.

#### INITIAL PLANNING:

- Determine your audience. For whom is this retreat planned: men, women, couples, singles, youth?
- Create a theme. Having a central idea makes organizing speakers and activities easier.
- Schedule coordinating activities. Choose activities that fit the theme and meet the needs of attendees.
- Set a date for the event.



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



## BUDGET PLANNING:

- Create a budget to include costs of promotion, venue, activities, food, supplies, etc.
- Secure a venue. Decide how much service you need for your group. A full-service venue is recommended, but a self-service venue may be more fitting for your budget. It is also important to find out how many attendees a venue can accommodate.
- Determine cost for attendees. How much will you need to charge in order to cover costs?

## ACTIVITY PLANNING:

- Contact speakers/guest presenters. Find out if they are available on your set dates and how much they charge.
- Determine a schedule of events. Decide on times for meetings, seminars, organized activities and meals. Be sure to leave room for unstructured personal time.
- If you are using a self-service facility, plan a daily menu with available options.

## PROMOTIONAL PLANNING:

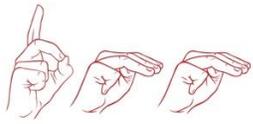
- Send out mail and/or email informational brochures or newsletters.
- Create a social media event page on Facebook or twitter for promotion, updates and reminders. Social media is often the fastest way to communicate to an audience.
- Set deadlines for sign-ups and/or deposits. It is easier to coordinate if you can get a solid count of attendees early on in planning.

## FINAL PLANNING:

- Check in with the venue to ensure the location and staff are ready for your event.
- Check in with speaker/guest presenter to ensure he or she is still on board and prepared. It is advisable to have a back-up speaker available should there be any last-minute changes. Emergencies happen, so it is always better to be prepared.
- meet with your volunteers and planning team to go over schedules and checklists. This ensures that everyone is on the same page and has all the needed supplies and equipment.

Planning a retreat does not have to be a source of stress. Having an enthusiastic and competent planning team helping you to bear the load will go a long way toward a successful retreat. Plan as far ahead as possible and don't be afraid to delegate. A balanced and well-coordinated event will be the most enjoyable for your guests and for you.

\* Retrieved from <http://christiancamppro.com/ultimate-retreat-planning-checklist/>



## SOCIAL / RECREATIONAL GROUPS

Social events are a way of connecting individuals and their families with one another and help to connect the church with the community. Some families may really enjoy bringing their family member with a disability to the church's social event. These events help to connect with the church in a different, but meaningful way. Social events can be monthly or quarterly. It can be a 2-hour event to a half a day to an all-day event. Social groups should be geared appropriately toward children or adults.

Hospitality, providing transportation, and recruiting volunteers should be considered for this type of activity. If you need **social activity ideas**, go to [www.notjustbingo.com/activity-calendars.html](http://www.notjustbingo.com/activity-calendars.html).

**S & S Worldwide** is a company that has catalogs for all sorts of occasions. Games, crafts, decorations, and party supplies are sold on the website. Their website is [www.ssw.com](http://www.ssw.com).

In order to get you started, here are several ideas to consider.

**Relaxation Retreat** – Have aroma therapy, serve hot tea, provide hand massages, and offer a short lecture on the importance of daily relaxation.

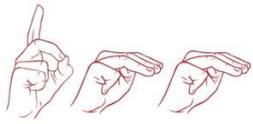
**Baking Club** – Have guests (or friends of guests) make tasty cupcakes to share at an afternoon social.

**Baseball Game Party** – Host a fun baseball game party that includes giving out baseball caps and interesting facts about the history of baseball and some of its legends. Serve popcorn and Cracker Jacks, even hotdogs as snacks.

**Show & Tell Social** – Have guests bring an item or two they have collected over the years to pass around. Individuals can share the history and meaning behind the collected item. Ice cream or a sundae bar can be offered.

**Study Hall Social** – Have guests come prepared with their thinking caps and play an American history trivia game. Small hand-held American flags can be given to guests. Light refreshments can be served.

**Picnic in the Park** – Have guests meet at a local park for a picnic. It can be a potluck or a church group (like a women's group) can cook and bring food. Fried chicken, potato salad, chips and sodas will be a great addition.



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



**Passover 101** – Invite Jewish guests to educate non-Jewish guests about the history and tradition of Passover. Light refreshments can be served. Other Jewish or Christian holidays/festivals can be substituted.

**Holiday Party** – Observe one of the national or religious holidays by having a holiday themed party. Share a brief history education about the holiday or even a trivia game about the holiday. Hors d'oeuvres, a dinner, or a potluck meal can be planned. Be sure to include specialty foods that are unique to the observed holiday.

**Flea Market** – Plan a flea market where individuals can bring in items to sell. This can be either an indoor or an outdoor event.

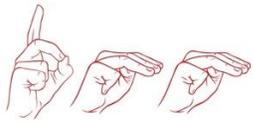
**Sweet Tea Tasting Social** – Serve a variety of sweet teas to guests. Educate guests about each tea. Guests will know more about teas than anyone else in their community. Butter cookies or other refreshments can be served.

**Speaker Series** – Have guest speakers come and provide lectures on interesting topics. Light refreshments or a potluck meal can be planned.

**Yogurt and Granola Social** – Plan to have a variety of different flavored yogurts with an assortment of toppings like nuts and berries. Share the history of yogurt and its significance in some cultures.

**Health Seminars** – Provide an education series on a variety of health topics. Light refreshments can be served.

**Cookout** – Invite guests to come to a cookout, using either a charcoal grill or an indoor/outdoor George Foreman grill. Hotdogs with all the fixings, potato salad, a mixed fruit salad, baked beans, potato chips, and baked cookies can spruce up any cookout. Briefly share with guests about the history of the cookout followed by an afternoon social. This can be an indoor or outdoor event.



## **BIBLE STUDIES**

There are a number of Bible studies that a disability ministry can host or suggest. Be sure to make this an accessible study group.

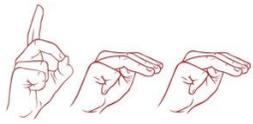
**Joni and Friends** has a website that has a number of resources worth considering. Their website is [www.joniandfriends.org/education-and-training/](http://www.joniandfriends.org/education-and-training/) .

**Lifeway Book Store** has a webpage dedicated to Special Needs. Their website is [www.lifeway.com/n/ministries/Special-Needs/](http://www.lifeway.com/n/ministries/Special-Needs/) .

The **Beyond Suffering Bible** was developed by Joni and Friends, which was developed in mind for people with disabilities, caregivers, and other people. The Bible has a reading list for different Biblical topics worth studying. The Bible can be purchased on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

**Cokesbury**, a United Methodist book store, also includes resources for Bible studies. A simple “disabilities” search will provide multiple results. The website is [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com) .

The **Disability Ministries Committee** of the UMC has a number of resources including the [Faith Development and Confirmation Curriculum](#) for Teens and Adults with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities.



## COMMUNITY FAIR

Hosting a community fair is a great way to connect the congregation with the community and vice versa. This can be a way to foster awareness, increase sensitivity, and improve access for individuals with disabilities.

There are a few different types of health fairs: awareness, screenings, and demonstrations.

**Awareness:** Health-Awareness risk, first aid, women's health, men's health, back care, driving safety, stress management, elder care resources, AIDS, cancer prevention, diabetes, heart disease, substance abuse, smoking cessation, teen issues, child abuse and family violence.

**Screenings:** Blood pressure, total cholesterol, blood glucose, vision testing, hearing testing, stress testing, mammography, oral cancer checks, skin cancer checks, foot screenings, fitness assessments, spinal screenings, bone-density screenings.

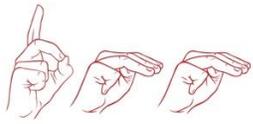
**Demonstrations:** Healthy Cooling, CPR, First Aid, AED training, Self-defense, exercise-equipment demonstrations, martial-arts, aerobic-dancing, Tai Chi, Yoga, Upper body massage, ask the doctor/nurse booth. Health fairs are an excellent way to kick off health programs, bring attention to disability issues, or just promote healthier living.

### **A few important tips:**

- Plan ahead
- Have a committee to divide tasks and handle them effectively
- Keep a notebook with all contact names and phone numbers, and use those contacts each year

### **Nine to 12 months before your event:**

- Form your committee, and include people from all levels of your group
- Have a committee meeting to discuss why you want to have an event and who your target audience is (i.e., who you want to come to your fair)
- Start to develop your budget, especially if you need it approved by a board
- Set your date, time, and place
- Put your date on the official activity calendar and book the room(s)
- Ask local companies or congregation members for sponsorship money



## **Six to nine months before your event:**

- Decide what health screenings and displays you want to offer
- Decide if you want speakers, and, if so, what topics you want them to cover
- Invite potential speakers, screening organizations, health organizations, and other vendors to participate
- Reserve a tent and any other large or unusual items such as signs, tumblers, and carnival rides
- Plan children's activities, if applicable, and book any necessary vendors or volunteers to handle activities (face painting, arts and crafts, physical activities, etc.)

## **Six months before your event:**

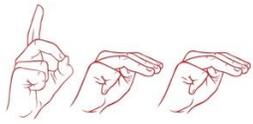
- Develop any necessary paperwork your event participants need to complete
- Write down how you plan to promote your event, and assign committee members to each part of plan. This is one of the most important parts of planning your event. Here are some ideas for promoting your event:
  - Send a mailing to your members (postcards and letters are inexpensive)
  - Include an insert in your bulletin
  - Include an article in your newsletter (two issues is best)
  - Put information on a prominent sign
  - Send information to your local newspaper and television stations
  - Put flyers on doors in the neighborhood
  - Hang a banner on the building
  - Make yard signs
  - Put an ad in the paper
  - Make announcements during services or other programs

Having other activities during your health fair can boost attendance.

\* Information is from <http://www.premiercommunityhealth.org/pchdefault.aspx?id=30530>.

## **Organizations to Invite - Sampling**

Arthritis Foundation  
Alzheimer's Association  
Cancer Society  
Diabetes Association



# *DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL*



American Red Cross  
American Heart Association  
Office for Aging  
Action for Older Persons  
United Health Services – Stay Healthy  
County Health Departments  
Council of Churches Faith in Action Volunteers  
Prison Ministry  
SOS Shelter  
YMCA  
YWCA  
Hospice  
Catholic Charities  
Mothers and Babies Perinatal Network  
Family Enrichment Network  
Veteran’s Administration  
Mental Health Association  
Epilepsy Foundation  
Multiple Sclerosis Society  
Asthma Foundation  
HIV County Health Department  
Salvation Army  
Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS)

## **Spiritual Focus in Health & Wellness Fairs**

Ideas may include:

Blessing board: joy, peace, comfort and other similar blessings

Burden Bear cards: distribute to people to encourage others

Pass It On cards: notes of encouragement or uplifting words

Rx Bottles with Scripture messages: The doctor on the label would be the “Great Physician” and instructions can include “use daily” or “should be refilled”

Hug Coupons

Bible Quizzes

Spiritual well-being assessments

Displays: Jesus’ Health and Healing Ministry, using our bodies as a temple of the Holy Spirit

Holistic Health: research proving that prayer and faith is a positive factor in health

Memory Wreath or prayer intentions or prayer tree

Emergency Numbers for loneliness, worry, fear, grief



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



- Meditation Corner
- Walk to Jerusalem or Bethlehem
- Resource table of Bible studies on health-related topics
- Religious Art Gallery

## After the Fair

- Study the evaluations! Hold a committee meeting.
- Give Thanks to your Faith Community, and their assistance!
- Give Thanks to providers/vendors.

## Evaluation

Evaluation should include overall impression of health fair, length of the fair, date, time and location evaluation, rating each provider, what was done well, what could have been done better, and future ideas for health fairs.

### Sample Evaluation Form Health Fair

Faith Community \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Poor 1 Fair 2 Excellent 3

1. How would you rate the event's location? \_\_\_\_
2. How did you hear about the health fair? \_\_\_\_
3. How would you rate your learning of health issues? \_\_\_\_
4. Did you benefit from the vendors/providers today? \_\_\_\_
5. Would you have any suggestions for future health fairs?

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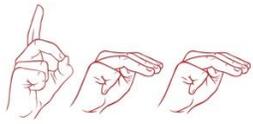


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\* Some of this information is from the Lourdes Parish Nursing Program  
<https://www.lourdes.com/media/2751/HealthFairManual.pdf>



## **TRANSPORTATION**

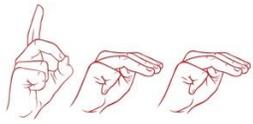
Transportation provides a vital lifeline for people with disabilities to access employment, education, healthcare, and community life. Transportation services allow individuals with disabilities to live independently within their communities. Some churches have volunteers to bring people without reliable transportation, while other churches do not.

Paratransit is recognized in North America as special transportation services for people with disabilities, often provided as a supplement to fixed-route bus and rail systems by public transit agencies. Paratransit services may vary considerably on the degree of flexibility they provide their customers. At their simplest they may consist of a taxi or small bus that will run along a more or less defined route and then stop to pick up or discharge passengers on request. At the other end of the spectrum, fully demand responsive transport, the most flexible paratransit systems offer on-demand call-up door-to-door service from any origin to any destination in a service area.'

### **MTA Mobility/Paratransit Program**

Mobility/Paratransit service is for citizens who are unable to use Local Bus, Metro/Subway or Light Rail service. Mobility/Paratransit service is provided by the MTA via contracts with Veolia Transportation, MV Transportation, and First Transit Inc. Here is the website: <https://mta.maryland.gov/mobility/> .

Local and statewide transit info can be found here <https://mta.maryland.gov/local-and-statewide-transit-info> .



## CHECKLIST FOR ACCESSIBLE EVENTS

This section focuses on events being accessible for individual with disabilities. Much of this information was gathered from the [New York Health Department](#) and are for information purposes only. If there is a need for more in-depth ADA checklist for facilities, The New England ADA Center offers an [online checklist](#). For a comprehensive list of facilities and checklist, checkout [ada-compliance.com](#).

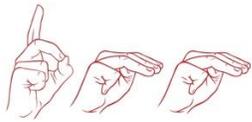
### People First: How To Plan Events Everyone Can Attend

- "[People First: How to Plan Events Everyone Can Attend](#)" is also available as a PDF (PDF, 303KB, 13pg.)

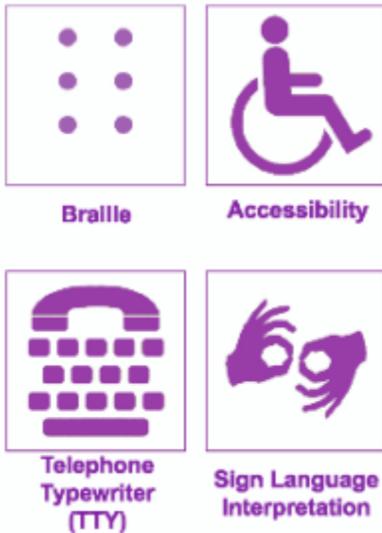


This publication provides tips on planning meetings, conferences, health fairs and other events in which everyone can participate. Even when you may not know in advance whether any of your participants may need accommodations, you should be prepared to:

- Arrange meetings and events at accessible locations where people with disabilities can participate without assistance, or with minimal help.
- Conduct an on-site visit to evaluate the facility's restaurant, bedrooms, bathrooms, meeting rooms, signs (both Braille and tactile), as well as parking options. Even when a facility says it complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you need to check so that there are no last-minute surprises.
- Offer materials and presentations in alternative formats, such as Braille, tapes, computer disk, closed caption, and large print. Inquire about preferred format in your registration material. Also, inquire about the need for sign language interpreters.
- Make modifications to the physical environment, such as rearranging furniture.



- Create event-planning policies that support accessibility.



## HOW DO I PLAN AN ACCESSIBLE MEETING?

Start by developing a policy that documents your group's positive attitude toward accessible events. For example, your policy should state that your organization will hold events only at facilities that have been determined to be accessible. Using a survey, such as the [Justice Department's checklist](#), shows your agency's good faith effort to include everyone in your events.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A WRITTEN POLICY?

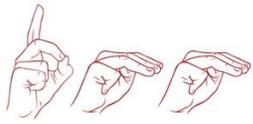
A policy:

- Shows that your organization welcomes everyone.
- Sets directions for your organization planners.
- Helps your organization be prepared.

Sometimes, you may need to take action to meet an immediate need. For example, you are working with a facility that does not have Braille signs. The facility cannot acquire permanent Braille signs before your scheduled event. However, it does offer to place temporary Braille signs in the area of your meeting space and agrees to install permanent Braille signs before your next event. This accommodation will meet the immediate need and lays the groundwork for the facility improving its accessibility.

## WHAT DOES "ACCESSIBLE ACCOMMODATION" MEAN?

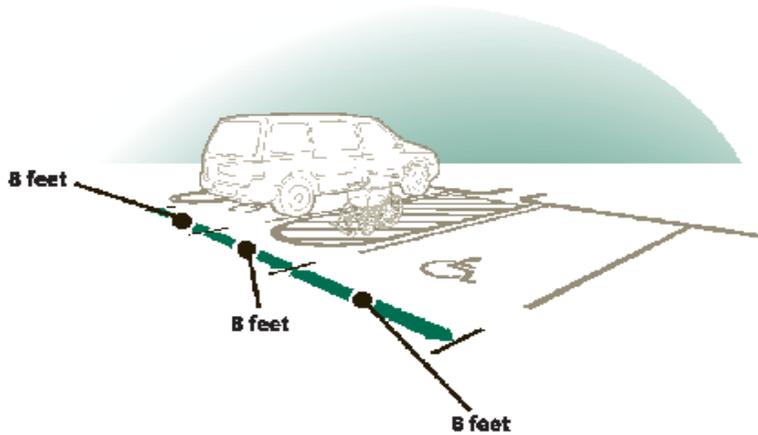
The following examples are from the "Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal" and the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) ([www.resna.org](http://www.resna.org)).



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL

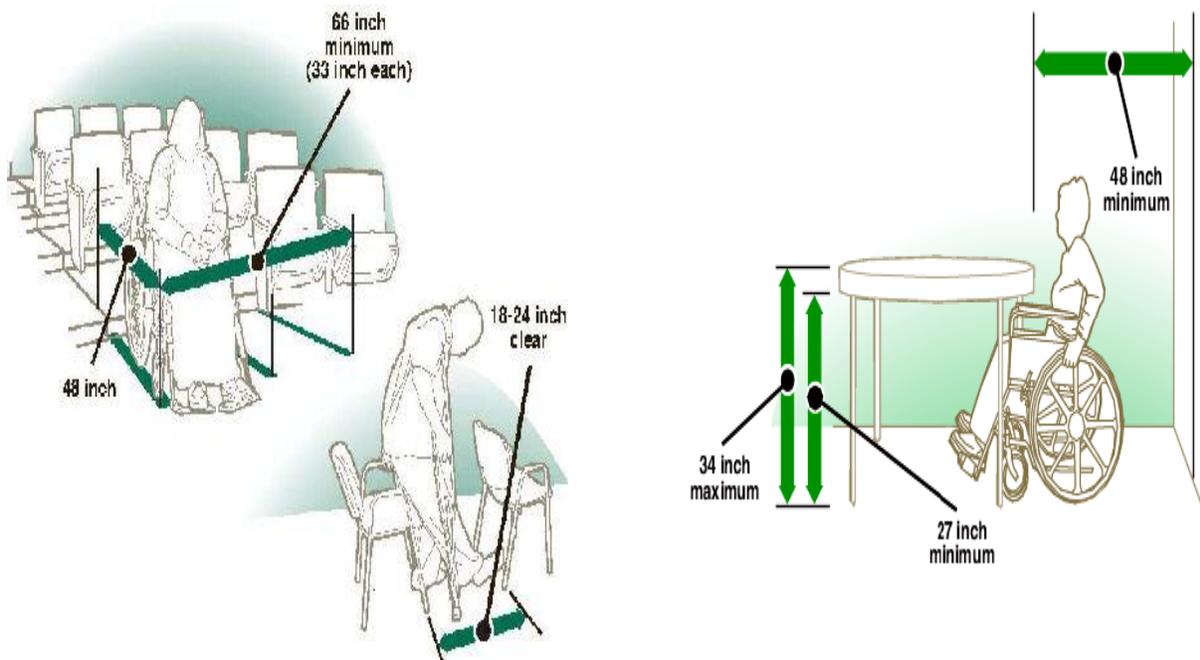
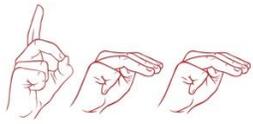


- Choose locations near accessible transit options. If the event is to be held over several days, evaluate the accessibility of local restaurants, movie theaters, and shopping malls that participants may want to visit.
- Plan for 30 percent more meeting space when 10 percent or more of the participants will use mobility aids.
- On the registration form, ask participants to indicate their need for accommodations.



Look for accessible parking. Parking stripes should allow 8 feet for a car/van plus a 96-inch access aisle. The access aisle should be marked with a "No Parking" sign. The accessible spaces should be closest to the accessible entrance, and there should be signs indicating accessible parking. To ensure that only those in need of these parking spaces use them, there should also be an enforcement policy.

The event should ensure that doors are a 36-inch minimum width to allow a wheelchair to pass. If not, the facility can widen doors or install offset (swing-clear) hinges. There should also be 18 inches of clear wall space on the pull side of the door, next to the handle. If not, the facility can relocate furniture or remove the obstruction, move the door or add a power-assisted or automatic door opener. Check for hazards that will cause people to trip, and have the facility fix them. Have the facility remove mats and patch holes in the pavement.

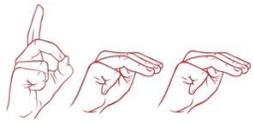


- Check seating options so people with disabilities are not limited to the back or front of the room. Most standard tables can comfortably accommodate wheelchairs.
- Ensure that both registration and conference materials are accessible.
- Ask about accommodation needs in your registration form.

## Sample registration questions

I will need the following accommodations in order to participate:

- ASL Interpreter
  - Note taker
  - Open captioning
  - Large print
  - Braille
  - Audio cassette or CD
  - Wheelchair access
  - Assistive listening device
  - Disk (format):
  - Special diet.
  - An assistant will be accompanying me.     Yes     No
- Make sure registration staff are aware of accessible places and materials for the conference.



## ACCESSIBLE MATERIALS

To ease communication barriers, the presenter can:

- Put event materials in binders for easy page turning.
- Create easy-to-read visual aids. Text should be displayed in large bold letters. Eight lines of text (18-point type with high contrast) are maximum for a slide or transparency.
- Talk clearly and slowly, spell out unusual names and words for a sign language interpreter, and use closed-captioned films and videos.
- Use microphones and face the audience when speaking to assist those who read lips or use assistive listening devices.
- Inquire about Computer-Assisted Realtime Translation (CART). A court reporter/stenocaptioner enters the speaker's words into a computer that displays them as text for the participant. The National Court Reporters Association at 1-800-272-6272 [www.ncraonline.org](http://www.ncraonline.org) maintains a list of certified realtime reporters.

## ACCOMMODATIONS CHECK LIST:

### Parking and Pathways

- Are there accessible parking spaces near the accessible entrance? Are spaces clearly marked with the international symbol of accessibility? Are the spaces and access aisles 8 feet wide? Are the access aisles marked with "No Parking" signs?
- Is there an accessible route from parking/drop-off to the entrance? Is sidewalk a minimum of 36 inches wide at all points?

### Entrance and doors

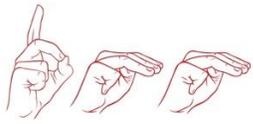
- Does entrance door have opening of at least 36 inches of clear width?
- Do non-accessible entrances have signs giving directions to the accessible entrance? Is there an automatic door? Or, is pull force on door five pounds or less?

### Public Areas

- Does registration area have a lowered counter?
- Is there a text telephone (TTY)?
- (Alternatively, online relay services can be accessed online through a laptop or computer with a Wi-Fi connection.)
- Are all accessible routes free of protruding objects?
- Are all elevator call buttons located at 42 inches or below? Is there raised letter and Braille signage on door jams designating each floor?

### Public restrooms

- Are restrooms located along an accessible route of travel?
- Does signage at inaccessible rest rooms direct people to accessible restrooms?
- Does door to restroom provide a minimum of 36 inches of clear opening width?



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



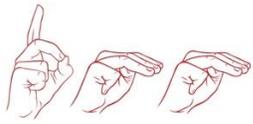
- ❑ Does restroom have levered handles?  
Does stall have adequate maneuvering space? (30 to 36 inches clearance front and side of toilet.) Is toilet seat 17 to 19 inches above floor? Are there appropriate grab bars?
- ❑ Does lavatory provide knee clearance of 29 inches? Are soap, towels and amenities located at or below 48 inches?

## **Meeting rooms**

- ❑ Are meeting rooms on accessible route of travel?
- ❑ Do doors provide at least 36 inches clear width?
- ❑ Does stage have an accessible ramp?
- ❑ Is there an assistive listening system available?
- ❑ Does room have movable seating?

## **Emergency**

- ❑ Are exits clearly identified and accessible?
- ❑ Do fire and emergency alarms have both audible and visual signals?



## **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

It is important to do background checks of employees and volunteers, as a safeguard for serving individuals with disabilities. From the Baltimore Washington Conference:

One of the most important ways to protect your ministry with children and youth is to complete a background check on all adults who participate in ministry and/or programs that relate to children, youth and vulnerable adults. Background checks through our two vendors are confidential, thorough and customized for safe sanctuaries. They offer online services in one to two days' turnaround time. Records are stored online and easily sorted by name, date of background check and will notify you when a new background check should be ordered. Ordering background checks on all adults working with children and youth is the number one safety recommendation to protect your youth, your adults and your congregation.

Recommended background check vendors are:



[Trak-1](#)

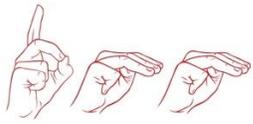
And



[Protect My Ministry](#)

Both companies offer online services and comparable pricing. A basic Safe Sanctuaries background check consists of the following:

- SSN Verification and Address History
- National Criminal Database Search
- National Sex Offender Search
- Re-verification of criminal records
- Alias Names



# *DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL*



## **Where to begin**

Go to the [Trak-1](#) or [Protect My Ministry](#) website and fill out a request to open a new an account. Be sure to list the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church along with your church name.

A representative from the vendor will contact you by phone or e-mail to walk you through the process of opening an account.  
Request the basic Safe Sanctuaries background check.

The companies also offer Safe Sanctuaries training, videos, forms and screening programs at additional costs. These are not required.  
If you have any questions/problems with opening an account or pricing, contact [Pam Bowen](#) or [Debbie Albrecht](#).

Have each person fill out a [background check authorization form](#) before you order the background check.

\* Retrieved from <http://www.bwcumc.org/resources/safe-sanctuaries-sexual-misconduct/background-checks/>



# DISABILITY MINISTRIES MANUAL



## AUTHORIZATION AND REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize

\_\_\_\_\_ Church to request the \_\_\_\_\_ police/sheriff's department to release information regarding any record of charges or convictions contained in its files, or in any criminal file maintained on me, whether said file is a local, state, or national file, and including but not limited to accusations and convictions for crimes committed against minors, to the fullest extent permitted by State and Federal law. I \_\_\_\_\_ do release said police/sheriff's department from all liability that may result from any such disclosure made in response to this request.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

PRINT APPLICANT'S FULL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT ALL OTHER NAMES THAT HAVE BEEN USED BY APPLICANT (IF ANY): \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (IF REQUIRED BY SHERIFF'S DEPT.) \_\_\_\_\_

DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE ISSUING LICENSE: \_\_\_\_\_

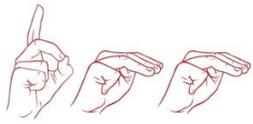
### Request sent to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone:

\_\_\_\_\_  
TRAK-1 TECHNOLOGY  
918-779-7000 CHILD PROTECTION PACKAGE



## **MANDATORY REPORTING**

People with disabilities are considered to be a special population that is to be protected. Certain professionals, which includes clergy, are mandatory reporters when it comes to reporting neglect or abuse. The typical reporting agency is the Department of Social Services, which have divisions specific to the type of abuse, such as adult protective services (APS) and child protective services (CPS).

### **Adult Protective Services**

This program serves persons aged 18 or over who lack the physical or mental capacity to provide for their daily needs. The purpose of the program is to prevent or remedy the abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or exploitation of adults who are unable to protect their own interests and are at risk of immediate harm to their own person or to others. The program provides professional services to protect the health, safety, and welfare of endangered, vulnerable adults. All suspected cases of adult abuse and neglect should be reported to your local department of social services or by calling 800-332-6347. For more information, go to the DHR website at <http://dhr.maryland.gov/office-of-adult-services/adult-protective-services/>.

#### **Maryland**

800-332-6347

#### **Washington, DC**

202-541-3950

#### **West Virginia**

800-352-6513

### **Child Protective Services**

**Child Protective Services (CPS)** is a specific social service provided by DHR to assist children believed to be neglected or abused by parents or other adults having permanent or temporary care or custody, or parental responsibility. The program also offers service to household or family members who may require intervention to decrease the risk of any continuing physical, sexual or mental abuse or neglect. The first priority of CPS is to safely maintain a child in their home and to protect the child from further harm and maltreatment.

#### **Maryland**

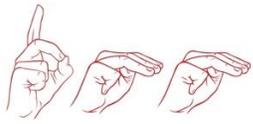
800-332-6347

#### **Washington, DC**

202-442-6100

#### **West Virginia**

800-352-6513



## MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRIES

Mental health ministries is a ministry program that often overlaps with disability ministries. In fact, when there isn't a mental health ministry, a disability ministry is often looked to for resources and information about mental health. Though mental health ministries is a ministry of its own, it is one of the spokes on a wheel related to disabilities due to some of the struggles that individuals and families experience. One aspect of the ministry is to promote awareness in order to destigmatize mental illness. Keeping a pulse on what is going on with mental health ministries is a good idea. Not surprising, there is a need to make referrals to this form of ministry. The United Methodist Church does a good job in promoting mental health ministries.

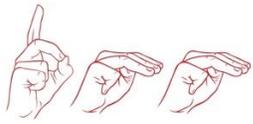
Here is a resource webpage on The United Methodist Church website.

<http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/faith-and-mental-health>

[Mental Health Ministries](#) is a website that has a plethora of resources that includes worship suggestions, bulletin inserts, handouts, brochures, and so on.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Encouraging the observance of this is recommended. The **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** has recommendations for how to observe it. The website is [www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events](http://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events).

[Saint John's United Methodist Church in Austin, TX](#) has an informative mental health ministry that covers a number of mental health areas that includes resources, descriptions, mission, statistics, and so on. Consider reviewing their website.



## **OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES**

Since the largest population of individuals with disabilities are older adults, it is helpful to stay abreast of what older adult ministries are doing. Keeping a pulse of news, resources, and other updates about this type of ministry should be a part of disability ministries. Sometimes, a collaboration between the two ministries is needed.

One way to stay informed about older adult ministries is to subscribe to newsletters. The United Methodist Church does a good job in promoting older adult ministries. Here is the UMC website.

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/older-adults>

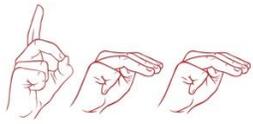
Here is a good article about how to engage seniors in the church.

<http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/steps-for-vital-older-adult-ministry>

The S.E.N.I.O.R.S ministry model consists of a framework that includes the focus on spiritual, enrichment, nutrition, intergenerational, outreach, recreation, and service. Here is an article that explains more about this ministry model.

[www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/112/advanced\\_search.html](http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/112/advanced_search.html)

[West Market Street UMC](#) in Greensboro, NC has an older adult ministry that offers worship participation, ministry participation, a statement and purpose for the ministry, and various ministry projects. It is one model for an older adult ministry and is worth reviewing.



## DEAF MINISTRIES

Deaf ministries sometimes overlap with disability ministries. It is important to know that most deaf and hard of hearing people do not consider themselves as having a disability due to the cultural aspect of deafness and feel that communication access is all that is needed. Other distinctions are the value of Deaf culture and the desire to grow a ministry specifically made up of Deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, and Deafblind individuals and their families, which is not typically at the forefront of a disability ministry. Nonetheless, the resources that Deaf ministries have can be helpful to disability ministries and these two types of ministries are often collaborative. Some of the overlapping factors includes inclusion, accessibility, awareness, and empowerment.

**The Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries** is a committee of Global Ministries. Their website has a wealth of information helpful to churches who wish to establish a Deaf ministry. The website is [www.umdeaf.org](http://www.umdeaf.org). It also has congregational resource guides that are free.

The committee also offers a document titled, ***Breaking the Sound Barrier***, which provides helpful information and resources for having a ministry with hard of hearing and late-deafened individuals. It can be located here.

<https://www.umdeaf.org/download/breaking.pdf>

Also, the [United Methodist Congress of the Deaf](#) promotes Christian leadership and discipleship within the United Methodist Church.

In addition, The UMC has a glossary of many videos in American Sign Language, a project of the committee. The website can be found here.

[www.umdeaf.org/resource/glossary.html](http://www.umdeaf.org/resource/glossary.html)