

A VERSION OF THE BEATITUDES

(by a person with a disability)

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

Blessed are you who walk with us in public places and ignore the stares of strangers, for in your companionship we find havens of relaxation.

Blessed are you who never bid us to “hurry up”, and more blessed are you who do not snatch our tasks from our hands to do them for us, for often we need time rather than help.

Blessed are you who stand behind us as we enter new and untried ventures, for our failures will be outweighed by the times when we surprise you and ourselves.

Blessed are you who ask for our help, for our greatest need is to be needed.

Blessed are you when by all these things you ensure that the thing that makes us individuals is not our peculiar muscles, nor our wounded nervous system, nor our difficulties in learning, but in the God-given self which no infirmity can confine.

This booklet is a resource to be used over the years. It is not complete. Do feel free to let us know any new ideas you have, and what you included in your “Disability Awareness” service.

If you have any questions do contact us at



ELEVATE Christian Disability Trust
P.O. Box 13-322, Onehunga, Auckland 1643
Ph 09 636 4763
info@ELEVATEcdt.org.nz
www.ELEVATEcdt.org.nz



Some **IDEAS** you might find helpful for **DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY**



The third Sunday in June

The place of people with disabilities in our churches

Statistics say that *one in five* people has a disability, but is this the ratio that we find in our churches? Sadly, in many congregations we often find only one or two people who have a disability, and in others not even one- Not only do these people have just as great a need of Jesus Christ as anyone else, but also many with disabilities who are Christians have talents and a richness in their walk with Christ which would greatly bless those in the church. These are two of the great thrusts of ELEVATE Christian Disability Trust. The participation of people with disabilities in church services and the holding of a Disability Awareness Sunday play a big part in educating the Body of Christ.

DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY THROUGHOUT THE BODY OF CHRIST

The idea originally came from Joni Eareckson-Tada, and in 1994 the ELEVATECDT approached the Anglican Church about having one Sunday in the year declared "Disability Awareness Sunday". This led to such a service being held that year in the Cathedral of The Holy Trinity. The next year the Anglicans designated "Disability Awareness Sunday" throughout all their congregations, many churches have since similarly recognised this day.



25 SUGGESTIONS FOR A SHORT SLOT IN THE SERVICE

1. Do a short educational skit. You could use the Skits and Drama booklet (See page 7)
2. Get someone who is blind to read a scripture in Braille.
3. Ask the parents of a child with a disability how they cope with the resultant demands.
4. Get someone to speak about those who have intellectual disabilities, the homes in which they live in your district, and how people in your church can help.
5. Ask someone with a disability to speak on "mobility" or "access".
6. Get someone whose spouse has a disability to share about the difficulties they have had to overcome, and the ways people can help them.
7. Include a signed song.
8. Find someone who is deaf to speak about being deaf (with an interpreter if possible)
9. Read out a poem written by someone with a disability. (It could possibly be acted out or danced.)
10. Ask someone with a disability to sing or play an instrument.
11. Get someone to tell about the overseas work with people with disabilities. The ELEVATECDT has initiated a work in Fiji and the Philippines.
12. Tell the story or testimony of someone with a disability such as Joni – this is very effective with pictures and DVD's etc.

ANALYSING THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In question (1)

Yes to (a) You might consider the installation of a "loop system". See if there is anyone in your congregation who knows signing and check on the quality of the lighting, which is an important consideration when following a person signing.

Yes to (b), You could investigate the supply of Christian tapes, Braille material and Big print literature.

Yes to (c) You could tell them how to contact Joy Ministries. You could seek to find others and start up a special Sunday school for them. Contact ELEVATECDT to get more information on any of these areas.

RESOURCE MATERIAL AVAILABLE FROM ELEVATECDT

The following resources have been developed to assist ministers and church leaders.

The Blessing of Including People with Disabilities in Your Church
Supporting People with Disabilities
Working with People with Intellectual Disabilities
Communication
Personal Cares
Helping People with a Disability
How to Start a Disability Ministry
What about Healing?
Everyone Welcome?

Testimonials and additional resource material is available on Request or through our website.

DID YOU KNOW THAT CFFD TEAMS HAVE TAKEN MANY SERVICES IN CHURCHES IN NZ?

Since 1980, CFFD teams have been going into churches throughout NZ, hosting disability awareness services. They are often asked to share testimonies, perform a drama, or simply share about what it is like being a person with a disability. If you would like our team to come along and share for a short time or perhaps take a full service, please contact us on info@ELEVATEcdt.org.nz and we will coordinate this for you.

AN EXAMPLE OF A QUESTIONNAIRE

You will of course include Name, Address, Phone number and other relevant questions.

1. If you have a disability, tick which of the following applies to you:
 - a. Are you deaf or hearing impaired?
 - b. Are you blind or visually impaired?
 - c. Do you have a physical disability?
 - d. Do you have an intellectual disability?
 - e. If yes what is it?

2. It is said that one in five in our country has a disability, but almost all of us have a minor disability of some kind or other. Do you have one which hinders you in any way at all in your daily living. If so, what is it?

3. Whether or not you have a disability, do you know of anyone else with a disability living in the area who could be interested in coming to church, or being helped by people in the congregation, or (if living in Auckland) coming along to the ELVATECDT Drop In Centre?

4. Is there anything in our church which makes it harder for you to gain access to the building or be able to fully participate and enjoy the services?

5. If you ticked any of the disabilities in question 1

Do you need transport to church? _____

Do you need help of any kind during the service? _____

Do you have respite care? _____

Do you have a need for help at home? _____

If so, what type of help is needed? _____

13. Childrens ministry is available. Contact us or Children's Bible Ministries for more resources and information.
14. Have someone talking on communication and get the whole congregation to do a little exercise. See our "Communication" booklet for examples
15. Ask someone to pray for different areas of need in the disability world. If you get hold of a person who can sign you could suggest the congregation prays with their eyes open to appreciate how the Deaf have to pray.
16. Read the Beatitudes for "People with Disabilities" (given on the last page of this booklet.)
17. Get someone with a disability to prepare his or her testimony, If that person has difficulty speaking, it could be read out by someone else, or put on a voice synthesiser.
18. Get someone with a walking disability to relate what day to day living is like for them.
19. Get a person in a wheelchair to tell an advocate the problems they have had to overcome.
20. Work with the worship leader to be sure that the scriptures, hymns and choruses chosen for this day complement the theme. One suggestion would be to choose hymns written by the exceptional blind lady, Fanny Crosby.
21. Be sure the bulletin design is in keeping with the day's theme.
22. Include a questionnaire in the bulletin (see page 6 for ideas on this), to help determine the needs of people with disabilities in the congregation as well as to identify your church members' relatives and neighbours who may have a disability.
23. Read a testimony or story out of a previous Encourager magazine or from similar source to inspire others.
24. Get someone with a hidden disability to describe the difficulties they have had to overcome.
25. In addition to any of the above include people with disabilities in the service where appropriate – greeting, distributing bulletins, singing or playing an instrument – whatever their skills and abilities will allow.



SUGGESTIONS FOR A LONGER PART IN THE SERVICE

1. Get a CFFD team to take the service. This could include a testimony, Bible reading, a message from a person with a disability, as well as some of the 25 suggestions.
2. Get an experienced speaker with a disability to give their testimony or the sermon. If you haven't such a person, you can obtain testimonials from the Centre from people such as Grant Allely or Marg Thomson.
3. Do one of the dramas in the ELEVATECDT booklet, "Skits and Dramas", such as "The Parable of the Talents" and "Who should be invited to the Banquet?" Alternatively you could make up one from other Bible references (see pg 5)
4. Do a presentation majoring in one disability. For instance if you were featuring blindness, you could get a blind person to give a testimony, explain about Braille and other devices people use, have a Braille Bible reading, and act out a skit about bringing the volumes of the Braille Bible to church.
5. Break into groups to discuss how the church could more effectively minister to those with disabilities with regard to transport, access etc.
6. Have a panel of people made up of people with disabilities, parents of those who are disabled and medical people, and get the congregation to ask questions. (make sure you prepare a few beforehand in case the questions are not readily forthcoming.)
7. Have one of the Joni films, especially one of the three on "Blessings out of Brokenness". (Available through our Centre)
8. Show a video (the Joni ones are particularly good), or a film featuring a person with a disability.
9. The minister or a person in the congregation could preach on the Spiritual principles re disabilities or on one little area of it.
10. Before the service get several in the congregation to be "blind" for the time before and during the service, and then to talk about this experience.



11. Get someone from the Emmanuel Fellowship, the Joy Ministry or the Agape Trust to talk about the ministry of their group.
12. Give a presentation with slides or acetates on achievements of people with disabilities. (Resources are available through us)
13. Put the question to your congregation, "What could people with disabilities do as a ministry in your church?" You could use a black or white board to record the key words of the answers. The conclusion should be "anything and everything". Their gifts are the same as those of so called "able-bodied people". Lead a discussion, "How could YOU help a person with a disability reach their full potential?" Hopefully the discussion will draw out that YOU could be the hands, feet, ears, eyes etc, but , - are YOU prepared to do this? (It might be better to break into groups to discuss and then report back).

SOME HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.
(1 Sam 16:7)

My Grace is sufficient for thee and my strengths made perfect in weakness. (2 Cor 12:19)

Through the outward man perish the inward man is renewed day by day. (2 Cor 4:16)

God has chosen the weak of this world to confound the wise.
(1 Cor 1:27)

Go into the streets and lanes and bring in the poor, the disabled, and the blind.
(Luke 14:21)

All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.
(Rom 8:28)

REFERENCES IN THE SCRIPTURES

Mephibosheth	(2 Sam 9)
The weakest parts of the body are necessary.	(1 Cor 12:12-26)
How we are made	(Ps 139)
God made each of us	(Ex 4:10-11)
The healing of the paralysed man	(Matt 9:1-8)
The healing of the man born blind	(John 9:1-12)