



Equipping Churches To Serve Families Affected By Disability

## Welcome Teams & Disability Inclusion

When it comes to trying a new church, first impressions are important. Does your Welcome Team know how to make families affected by disability feel welcome?

### 5 Tips For First Impressions

**1. Greet Everyone** - When welcoming families, talk directly to everyone, including those who may not be able to speak back to you. Even if a person is nonverbal, they can usually understand everything they hear. So, assume competence and treat each person like you would want to be treated.

**2. Have Information Ready**- Families DO want to hear about your church disability inclusion plans, but they don't always want all of that information right away. So, if appropriate, let families know that information is available and that you can give it to them when they are ready. Also, try some of these:

- **Disability Resource Binder** - Put a resource binder at your welcome desk that lists important church disability info in an easy to find way. That way, greeters can be ready to answer questions.
- **Ask Questions That Invite Further Discussion** - Even adding something as simple as "Do you have any questions?" can make all the difference.
- **Include Visual Communication** - Putting up a sign that shows you value people of all abilities or even tells people where to go to access disability information is a great way to make families feel welcome and empowered.

**3. Show Inclusion**- Include people with disabilities in your greeter teams.

**4. Respect Personal Choice**- Even if your church has an amazing inclusive ministry, if a family isn't ready to try it yet, don't pressure them. Respect their decision and meet them where they are.

**5. Connect Not Correct** - Understand that sometimes families have had painful experiences at church before and this can make trying a new church feel stressful. Also, know that no church will be perfect. So, if a family shares a concern about your church, don't dismiss or correct their feelings. Instead, connect with them by acknowledging their feelings, listening to understand, trying to help make things better in the moment, and offering to pass their concerns on to the staff.

**One More Thing...** The best way to make new families feel welcome is to Include people with disabilities and their families in your Welcome Team planning and training meetings.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful, I know that full well. - Psalm 139:14