

Intellectual Disability and the Church Three Things to Look For...

Students with intellectual disabilities come in all shapes and sizes, needs and strengths, personalities, and life experiences. In fact, each person is beautiful, complex, and unique. It's important to consider what we focus on with our students with Intellectual Disabilities because it can directly affect their experiences at church. Here are a few things to consider:

1. See the Person, Not the Disability

Take time to really get to know your students. Look past what may be challenging according to their disability and look for what makes them – them. Find out, what do they like? What do they dislike? What makes them laugh, and what makes you laugh with them? Look for who God made your student to be and then focus on building a genuine relationship.

2. See What May Be Helpful

Intellectual disabilities range from mild to intensive, and each person is affected differently. This means some students may benefit from having adaptive classroom tools and a buddy, while others may just need a little extra processing time. So, be sure to find an appropriate method for your student.

3. See Their Strengths

Make it a point to notice what your student excels at. Look for her strengths and gifts and find places where your student can serve or lead. The world will become a better place to be with them serving in it.

One More Thing...

Challenge yourself to spend some time SEEING the people around you with fresh eyes. What assumptions have you been making and what has a second look taught you now?