

## Disability Self-Advocacy Talk

Inviting a student to talk to his class, and educate them about his disability, can be empowering and create a more inclusive classroom for everyone. Check out the steps below for setting student self-advocates up for success.

### Disability Education Talk For The Church Classroom

**1. Plan Ahead** - Before a student talks to his class, meet with him and his family to create a plan for the talk. Some thing you will want to consider will be:

- **Logistics** - When, where, and how long is the talk?
- **Speakers** - Who is speaking - the student, the family, an expert, or all? Should a few classmates be chosen ahead of time to lend support too?
- **Privacy** - Determine what can be shared and what is private before it begins.
- **Talking Points** - What is the objective of the talk? Does the student or his family want others to understand his disability diagnosis better? Do they want more social support from peers? Do they want to educate others on what is helpful and what is challenging? Find out what they hope to accomplish from the talk and help your student hit those talking points in his presentation.
- **Questions** - Will there be a Q and A time at the end?
- **Audio Visual** - Find out if any audiovisual equipment will be needed for the presentation.

**2. Set Up For Success** - Right before the student begins speaking, invite the class into prayer. Remember that this is a big day for the student, his family, and the church. Invite Jesus in. Then set the expectations for the class. Remind them to be good listeners and tell them when it is appropriate to ask questions. Also remind them that if the speaker doesn't want to answer something due to privacy, that is OK.

**3. Invite Others In** - After the student speaks, engage the class in discussion. What did they learn? Ask reflective questions to get them thinking. Consider asking for suggestions on how the class can be more supportive for everyone and then making a class poster out of the ideas.

**One More Thing** - Remember that helping students advocate is NOT a one-time event. Keep modeling inclusion, compassion and friendship, and empowering everyone to support each other.