

Outreach and Disability Accessibility

Church outreach should be a place where everyone in the church can serve. But, often outreach is just out-of-reach for many people in the church. Discover three tips for accessibility.

3 Tips For Outreach Accessibility

1. Try a New Perspective - It's easy to plan events through our own perspective. This can lead to not noticing when things become inaccessible for others. Instead, look at outreach plans through the lens of others. Try asking yourself these questions:

- Could people who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices participate?
 - What might this outreach experience be like for someone with autism?
 - How would someone without reliable transportation come to the outreach?
 - How easy is it to register?
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- Once you have identified some obstacles, call the place where your event is to take place and ask about accessibility options.
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- Strive for outreaches that are inclusive. However, if an outreach is not disability accessible, be clear and honest about expectations in your promotions. Also, be willing to listen to feedback as you plan more outreaches.

2. Be Prepared for Accommodations - The good news about accessibility and outreach is that often obstacles can be overcome through planning ahead.

- When promoting the outreach be clear about how people can ask for accommodations.
- Know who will be responsible for making sure that accommodations are followed through.
- Be prepared for common accommodations like:
 - Arranging for transportation.
 - Having extra instructional support available.
 - Having a buddy or peer support available

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3. Offer a Variety of Ways to Serve - One of the best ways to create accessible outreach environments is to remember that each one of us has gifts and skills that God has given us. And we were given these because God wants ALL OF US to use them to show His light to others. So, when it comes to providing ways to serve, have a variety of ways to do it.

Like these:

- Add greeter and encouragement roles into each outreach.
- Try breaking tasks down into smaller parts.
- Create roles based on the individual's unique gifts. (Check out WW Disability Empowerment and Serving the Church to learn more about this.)

Let's make church OUTREACH IN REACH for everyone!