

Partners in Faith Formation: Youth with Autism and Developmental Disabilities



*The whole community of faith needs
to be aware of the presence of
persons with special needs within it
and be involved in their catechesis.*

National Directory for Catechesis 49

**Office for Persons with Disabilities & the Deaf Apostolate
Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Spring 2025**

www.opdarchphilly.org/parish-religious-education-programs/

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National Catholic Partnership on Disability

DRE / Catechist Courses



ONLINE LEARNING

 NATIONAL CATHOLIC
PARTNERSHIP ON DISABILITY

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

This 8-module online course is designed as a resource for persons who are preparing children or adults with disabilities to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (with an additional module devoted to the Sacrament of Reconciliation).

Produced by:
Michele Chronister &
NCPD Education Committee

ONLINE LEARNING

 NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARTNERSHIP ON DISABILITY



Liturgical Access

Learn what needs to be considered to make liturgical life fully accessible to persons with disabilities and their families.

Tips and Tools on Disability

Topics Covered in this course: Classroom Management, Multi-Sensory Lesson Planning, Music & Movement, Social Stories, Sacramental Prep and more.



NCPD ONLINE COURSES:

Go to: <https://ncpd-us.teachable.com/courses>

Visit NCPD website for the most recent courses.

Please email opd@archphila.org if you wish to receive updates from the Office for Persons with Disabilities.



What is a Sensory Friendly Mass?



Training Sessions and Resources



Parish Planning Resources



Parish Awareness & Communication Resources



Mass Tool Kit for Parishes and Families



Parishes with Sensory Friendly Masses

The Office for Persons with Disabilities

Archdiocese of Philadelphia /
www.opdarchphilly.org

Please visit our website for resources and updates.

Consider having your parish host a Sensory Friendly Mass.

<https://opdarchphilly.org/sfm/>

Partners in Faith Formation of Children & Youth with Autism & Other Developmental Disabilities

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“Catechesis, in a special way, is called to discover and experiment with coherent forms so that every person, with his or her gifts, limits and disabilities, even serious, may encounter Jesus on the way and abandon himself to Him with faith. ”

Pope Francis, 10.21.18

***Office for Persons with Disabilities & the Deaf Apostolate
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USCCB STATEMENTS - DISABILITIES

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

*Office for Persons with Disabilities
& the Deaf Apostolate*

1978-1995-1998-2017

1978 PASTORAL STATEMENT OF U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

We call upon people of good will to reexamine their attitudes toward their brothers and sisters with disabilities and promote their well-being, acting with the sense of justice and the compassion that the Lord so clearly desires. Further, realizing the unique gifts individuals with disabilities have to offer the Church, we wish to address the need for their integration into the Christian community and their fuller participation in its life. (1)

Defense of the right to life, then, implies the defense of other rights which enable the individual with a disability to achieve the fullest measure of personal development of which he or she is capable. (10)

The central meaning of Jesus' ministry is bound up with the fact that He sought the company of people who, for one reason or another, were forced to live on the fringe of society. (cf. Mk. 7:37) The Church finds its true identity when it fully integrates itself with these marginal people, including those with physical and psychological disabilities. (12)

The parish is the door to participation for individuals with disabilities, and it is the responsibility of the pastor and lay leaders to make sure that this door is always open. (18)

If the participation of persons with disabilities and their families is to be real and meaningful, the parish must prepare itself to receive them (19)

It is essential that all forms of the liturgy be completely accessible to persons with disabilities, since these forms are the essence of the spiritual tie that binds the Christian community together. To exclude members of the parish from these celebrations of the life of the Church, even by passive omission, is to deny the reality of that community. (23)

Download the entire document: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/upload/Pastoral-Statement-of-U-S-Catholic-Bishops-on-Persons-with-Disabilities.pdf>

1998 Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities: A Framework of Access and Inclusion

Download this document: <http://www.usccb.org/upload/justice-persons-disabilities-bulletin-insert.pdf>

Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities, Revised Edition 2017

All human beings are equal in dignity in the sight of God. Moreover, by reason of their Baptism, all Catholics also share the same divine calling (1)

Catholics with disabilities have a right to participate in the sacraments as fully as other members of the local ecclesial community. (Codex Iuris Canonici (CIC), c. 835, §4) “Sacred ministers cannot deny the sacraments to those who seek them at appropriate times, are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving them.” (CIC, c. 843, §1.) (2)

Pastors are responsible to provide evangelization, catechetical formation, and sacramental preparation for parishioners with disabilities (CIC, c. 777, 49), and dioceses are encouraged to establish appropriate support services to assist pastors in this duty. Persons with disabilities, their advocates and their families, as well as those knowledgeable in serving those with disabilities can make a most valuable contribution to these efforts. Parish catechetical and sacramental preparation programs may need to be adapted for some parishioners with disabilities, though, as much as possible, persons with disabilities should be integrated into the ordinary programs. They should not be segregated for specialized catechesis unless their disabilities make it impossible for them to participate in the basic catechetical program. (NDC 49) Even in those cases, participation in parish life is encouraged in all ways possible (5)

Baptism: *Adults and children of catechetical age with disabilities should be welcomed into all stages and rites of the initiation process. (13)*

Confirmation: *To the degree possible, those with disabilities should be included along with others during the preparation and celebration of the sacrament. At times, pastoral need may necessitate an accommodated setting and a simpler manner. (18)*

Eucharist: *...the criterion for reception of Holy Communion is the same for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities as for all persons, namely, that the person be able to “distinguish the body of Christ from ordinary food,” even if this recognition is evidenced through manner, gesture, or reverential silence rather than verbally. (CIC, c. 913, §2; Sacramentum caritatis 2007, 58.)(22)*

Reconciliation: *Catholics with significant communication disorders may be permitted to make their confessions using the communication system with which they are most fluent. Individuals preparing for the sacrament are to be taught to be as independent as possible in the use of their communication system to allow for the norm of private reception of the Sacrament. (29)*

Conclusion: *These guidelines are presented to all who are involved in liturgical, pastoral, and catechetical ministry. All persons with disabilities have gifts to contribute to the whole Church. When persons with disabilities are embraced and welcomed, and invited to participate fully in all aspects of parish community life, the Body of Christ is more complete. “The Church owes persons with disabilities her best efforts in order to ensure that they are able to hear the Gospel of Christ, receive the sacraments, and grow in their faith in the fullest and richest manner possible.”59*

DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

July, 2020

Chapter VIII / 6. Catechesis with Persons with Disabilities

The church's solicitude for persons with disabilities springs from God's way of acting.

#269

This “calls for twofold attention: an awareness of the possibility to educate in the faith the people with grave or very grave disabilities; and a willingness to consider them as active subjects in the community in which they live.

... vulnerability belongs to the essence of humanity and does not prevent happiness and self-realization.

#270

Precisely because they (persons with disabilities) are a witness to the essential truth of human life, persons with disabilities must be welcomed as a great gift.

#271

It is the task of the local Churches to be open to the reception and ordinary presence of persons with disabilities within the programs of catechesis, working for a culture of inclusion against the logic of the disposable.

This requires that Catechists seek new channels of communication and methods more suitable for fostering the encounter with Jesus.

#272

Persons with disabilities are called to the fullness of sacramental life, even in the presence of severe disorders.

The Sacraments are gifts from God, and the liturgy, even before being rationally understood, needs to be lived: therefore no one can refuse the sacraments to persons with disabilities.

The community that is able to discover the beauty and joy of faith which these brothers are capable become richer.

In fact, they are not only recipients of catechesis, but participants in evangelization.

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/new-directory-catechesis>



INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN CATECHETICAL PROGRAMS: A CHURCH PERSPECTIVE

Catechesis, according to the Directory of Catechesis (GDC 29), is one of the most important ecclesial activities. The catechetical program reflects the broader meaning of the mission of the Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church points out that the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion with Jesus Christ (CCC 426). Further the General Directory of Catechesis states that good and faithful catechesis accommodates the proclamation of the revealed word to *meet each person*, taking into account the full spectrum of diverse circumstances and situations, including age, intellectual development, psychological condition, and spiritual maturity (GDC, 170). In accord with canon 777(# 4) and the GDC (#167) all the baptized, because they are called by God to maturity of faith, need and have therefor the right to adequate catechesis. It is then the responsibility of pastor and the Church community to respond to this in a fitting and satisfactory manner. This vision prompted the United States Catholic Bishops in their 1978 *Pastoral Statement on People with Disabilities* (#25) and the 2017 *Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities Revised Edition* (#5) to state that catechetical and sacramental programs need to be inclusive of parishioners with disabilities and catechetical formation programs may need to be adapted for some parishioners with disabilities.

Keeping in mind that all the baptized have a right to catechesis and that every person, however limited, is capable of growth in holiness (GDC 189). It is incumbent on those responsible for the catechetical program to invite, welcome and provide for those with physical, sensory, mental and behavioral disabilities (NDC 61:B.1). Present documents of the Church encourage that as far as possible persons with disabilities should be integrated with the ordinary catechetical activities of the parish (NDC 49). It is the responsibility of the parish community to accommodate for individuals with disabilities by providing generous, competent and realistic programing, seeking dialogue with families, and proposing appropriate forms of education proportionate to the concrete possibilities and needs of the individuals. For individuals with disabilities meaningful and appropriate integration will necessitate different forms of accommodation and varying forms of programing from inclusion in the parish religious education classroom, to smaller group or individualized instruction (NDC 61:B.1). In order to provide this full inclusion Directors of Religious Education, coordinators and catechists need to seek out and utilize the resources of families, parishioners and diocesan personal to support a program that can be accessible and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

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Categories of Disability Under IDEA -Part B

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/categories>



Current as of 2024

[In Spanish | En español](#)

The nation's special education law is called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA. **As part of making special education and related services available to children with disabilities in the public schools, Part B of IDEA defines the term “child with a disability.”** That definition includes specific disability terms, which are also defined by IDEA, as this webpage describes.

The IDEA's disability terms and definitions guide how States in their own turn define disability and who is eligible for a free appropriate public education under special education law. The definitions of these specific disability terms from the IDEA regulations are shown beneath each term listed below. Note, in order to fully meet the definition (and eligibility for special education and related services) as a “child with a disability,” a child's educational performance must be [adversely affected](#) due to the disability.

[Autism](#)
[Deaf-blindness](#)
[Deafness](#)
[Developmental delay](#)
[Emotional disturbance](#)
[Hearing impairment](#)
[Intellectual disability](#)

[Multiple disabilities](#)
[Orthopedic impairment](#)
[Other health impairment](#)
[Specific learning disability](#)
[Speech or language impairment](#)
[Traumatic brain injury](#)
[Visual impairment, including blindness](#)

In the list below, if a disability term is linked, clicking on the link will take you to a fact sheet for that particular disability and to other related information.

1. [Autism](#)...

...means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that [adversely affects](#) a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engaging in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term autism does not apply if the child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in #5 below.

A child who shows the characteristics of autism after age 3 could be diagnosed as having autism if the criteria above are satisfied.

2. [Deaf-Blindness](#)...

...means concomitant [simultaneous] hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

3. [Deafness](#)...

...means a hearing impairment so severe that a child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that [adversely affects](#) a child's educational performance.

4. [Developmental Delay](#)...

...for children from birth to age three (under IDEA Part C) and children from ages three through nine (under IDEA Part B), the term developmental delay, as defined by each State, means a delay in one or more of the following areas: physical development; cognitive development; communication; social or emotional development; or adaptive [behavioral] development.

5. [Emotional Disturbance](#)...

...means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that [adversely affects](#) a child's educational performance:

(a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.

(b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.

(c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.

(d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.

(e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

6. Hearing Impairment...

...means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that **adversely affects** a child's educational performance but is not included under the definition of "deafness."

7. Intellectual Disability...

...means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently [at the same time] with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that **adversely affects** a child's educational performance.

*(Editor's Note, February 2011: "Intellectual Disability" is a new term in IDEA. Until October 2010, the law used the term "mental retardation." In October 2010, **Rosa's Law** was signed into law by President Obama. Rosa's Law changed the term to be used in future to "intellectual disability." The definition of the term itself did not change and is what has just been shown above.*

8. Multiple Disabilities...

...means concomitant [simultaneous] impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness, intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

9. Orthopedic Impairment...

...means a severe orthopedic impairment that **adversely affects** a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

10. Other Health Impairment...

...means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that—

(a) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome; and

(b) **adversely affects** a child's educational performance.

11. Specific Learning Disability...

...means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction,

dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

12. Speech or Language Impairment...

...means a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

13. Traumatic Brain Injury...

...means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech.

The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

14. Visual Impairment Including Blindness...

...means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Considering the Meaning of “Adversely Affects”

You may have noticed that the phrase “adversely affects educational performance” appears in most of the disability definitions. This does not mean, however, that a child has to be failing in school to receive special education and related services. According to IDEA, states must make a free appropriate public education available to “any individual child with a disability who needs special education and related services, even if the child has not failed or been retained in a course or grade, and is advancing from grade to grade.” [§300.101(c)(1)]

****Highly Rated Resource!** This resource was reviewed by 3-member panels of Parent Center staff working independently from one another to rate the quality, relevance, and usefulness of CPIR resources. This resource was found to be of “High Quality, High Relevance, High Usefulness” to Parent Centers.

IDEA at a Glance

- The law requires that schools provide special education services to eligible students.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) covers 13 conditions.
- Not every student with learning or attention issues qualifies.

The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) requires schools to provide [special education](#) and [related services](#) to eligible students. But not every child with learning or attention issues qualifies. To be covered, a child's school performance must be "adversely affected" by one of the 13 conditions below.

For kids with learning and attention issues, two of these conditions are the most relevant. They are "[specific learning disability](#)" and "other health impairment."

1. Specific learning disability (SLD)
2. Other health impairment
3. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
4. Emotional disturbance
5. Speech or language impairment
6. Visual impairment, including blindness
7. Deafness
8. Hearing impairment
9. Deaf-blindness
10. Orthopedic impairment
11. Intellectual disability
12. Traumatic brain injury
13. Multiple disabilities

In 2022–2023, around 7.5 million students ages 3 to 21 received special education services under IDEA. That's 15 percent of all public school students. The most common way students qualify is with a specific learning disability. Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

Key Takeaways

- For kids with learning and attention issues, two IDEA conditions are the most relevant: "specific learning disability" and "other health impairment."
- Conditions like [dyslexia](#), [dysgraphia](#) and [dyscalculia](#) would fall under the "specific learning disability" category.
- "Other health impairment" can cover [ADHD](#).



Your Words, Our Image

You are in a unique position to shape the public image of people with disabilities. By putting the person first and using these suggested words, you can convey a positive, objective view of an individual instead of a negative, insensitive image.

Do say

Disability	Differently abled, challenged
People with disabilities	The disabled, handicapped
Person with spinal cord injury	Cripple
Person with autism, on the autism spectrum	Autistic
Person with Down syndrome	Mongoloid
Person of short stature	Midget, dwarf
Uses a wheelchair, wheelchair user	Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound
Has a learning disability	Slow learner
Has chemical or environmental sensitivities	Chemophobic
Has a brain injury	Brain damaged
Blind, low vision	Visually handicapped, blind as a bat
Deaf, hard of hearing	Deaf-mute, deaf and dumb
Intellectual disability	Retarded, mental retardation
Amputee, has limb loss	Gimp, lame
Congenital disability	Birth defect
Burn survivor	Burn victim
Post-polio syndrome	Suffers from polio
Service animal or dog	Seeing eye dog
Psychiatric disability, mental illness	Crazy, psycho, schizo
How should I describe you or your disability?	What happened to you?
Accessible parking or restroom	Handicapped parking, disabled restroom

Want more information?

Download our brochure *Guidelines: How to Write and Report About People with Disabilities* at www.rtdl.org/guidelines. **EXCELLENT RESOURCE TO DOWNLOAD.**

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Solving Organizational Barriers to Inclusion

The parish is the door to participation for individuals with disabilities, and it is the responsibility of the pastor and lay leaders to make sure that this door is always open. (USCCB Pastoral Statement #18)

Knowledge, Creativity & Teamwork

◇ **Attitudinal Barriers**

- Labels & Stereotypes
- Fear of the Unknown
- Segregated Programs of the Past

◇ **Administrative Barriers**

- Outreach Network
- Inexperienced staff & volunteers
- Adequate support

◇ **Architectural/Physical Barriers**

- Inaccessible building
- Lack of materials or resources

◇ **Programmatic Barriers**

- Content/Materials
- Lack of Staff Support
- Inflexible Program

◇ **Attitudinal Solutions**

- Modeling
- Language
- Beginning at an early age

◇ **Administrative Solutions**

- Teaming with Parents
- Creating Instructional Support Teams
- Utilizing available Resources/Persons

◇ **Architectural/Physical Solutions**

- Plan in advance for Persons of mixed abilities
- Identify barrier free, safe environments

◇ **Programmatic Solutions**

- Inclusion Facilitator/Advocate
- Training Staff
- Accommodations /Flexible Grouping

Believe in Inclusion

- ⇒ Educate yourself about inclusion practices
- ⇒ Identify inclusion barriers
- ⇒ Take creative, problem solving approach to generate inclusion practices
- ⇒ Choose a solution and persevere until the barrier is removed (Document your plan)

Adapted from Linda A. Heyne/Solving Organizational Barriers to Inclusion

Sr. Kathleen Schipani, IHM/Archdiocese of Philadelphia 2012

Parish Bulletin Announcement

A Parish that Welcomes Children with Disabilities

Catholics believe that all people are made in the image and likeness of God, and that all the Baptized share in the life and mission of the Church. This includes people from every range of ability. As a parish we are mindful and respectful of families who have children with disabilities. At times due to the behavioral aspects of some disabling conditions, parents seem to sense from some parishioners that their child may not be welcome during the celebration of Mass. Can we work together to change this perception? As a parish community, let us strive to be patient, respectful and helpful to individuals with disabilities and seek ways to assist families so that they can worship together as a family and we may have the blessing of their presence with us as we become one Eucharistic community of faith.

More if needed: Approximately, one in 36 children in the US is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and 5 in 100 having some type of disability. It is safe to say that our parish community has many families raising children with disabilities, whether you are aware of them, or not. Together, let us seek ways to be welcoming and supportive of all our families. For more information on inclusion of people with disabilities in the life of the Church go to the National Catholic Partnership on Disability at www.ncpd.org.

Open Your Heart, Open the Classroom, Open to Grace

GATHERING INFORMATION

1. USE OF THE REGISTRATION FORM: Request information on the PREP registration form.

MEDICAL/LEARNING DATA

If any of the following apply to your child, please list his/her name and give details in the appropriate spaces.

Child's Name	Medical Conditions / Allergies	Prescribed Medications	Disability / Learning Support	Individualized Education Plan— IEP

* As defined by *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), the term "child with a disability" means a child: "with intellectual disability, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

2. PARENT INTERVIEW

- Please let us know how the PREP program staff and volunteers can support and make your child's PREP experience more successful.
- Does your child have any conditions, allergies, physical, sensory, intellectual, or social/emotional disabilities of which we should be aware so we can make your child's PREP experience more successful?
- Describe your child's special education programming or community-based services. Is there other information that would help us in planning for your child's religious education?
- Is there other information about your child that should be communicated?

3. CHILD INFORMATION FORM

If the child has a disability and has an IEP in his/her school setting, ask the parent to fill out all or part of the Child Information Form. The parent may seek help from the child's school teacher or other members of the child's IEP team in completing the form.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

Information on the Registration Form and on the Child Information Form is confidential. Catechetical Leaders, Catechists and support staff must all keep professional confidentiality.

Request for Volunteers Template

NAME OF PARISH welcomes children of all abilities into the religious education setting. Classroom catechists and aides familiar with disabilities are needed in providing faith formation that meets the varied needs of each child. Those with professional background, personal experience or a desire to assist in the program are welcome to assist in some way. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering their time, expertise and service to the needs of the Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) please call _____.

Include in Registration Announcement

Our Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) provides classes for children of all abilities. Children with developmental, intellectual, sensory, physical or behavioral disabilities are welcome and encouraged to attend weekly (PREP) classes.

OFFICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE DEAF APOSTOLATE

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

E-Mail: opd@archphila.org / Phone: 215-587-3530/ www.opdphilly.org

PARISH FAITH FORMATION

Child Information Form

Date _____

Child _____ DOB _____

Religious Education Level _____

Religious education goals:

The child and his/her parents/guardians desire that:

Please identify your child's disability _____

Does your child have an IEP? Yes ☐ No ☐

If needed, may the parish religious education program have access to your child's IEP?

Yes ☐ No ☐

It is understood that this report contains confidential information which may be shared with the religious education program personnel who agree to confidentiality.

Parents/guardians _____ Date _____

DRE/CRE of parish _____ Date _____

Catechist _____ Date _____

Catechist _____ Date _____

Other _____ Date _____

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BACKGROUND:

Is your child able to attend Mass? Please comment. _____

Has your child had previous religious education classes: Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please indicate location and level(s). _____

Circle the Sacrament(s) which your child has received:

Baptism

Reconciliation

Eucharist

Confirmation

Please check all recommended accommodations.

I. COMMUNICATION *(What is the best way to communicate with your child?)*

A. Receptive Language Skills

To communicate with my child:

_____ speak in short sentences; use simple vocabulary

_____ give instructions one step at a time; allow time for the completion of each step

_____ make direct eye contact to focus attention

_____ avoid direct eye contact which distresses him/her.

Other _____

☐ **My child has partial hearing**

To communicate with my child:

_____ face child so that he/she can read your lips

_____ speak into his/her good ear ____left ____ right

_____ use an assistive listening device (if made available by the family or IU).

Other _____

☐ **My child is deaf** _____

To communicate with my child:

_____ use American Sign Language *

_____ speak facing child so he/she can read lips

_____ furnish a written outline and notes if possible

_____ arrange chairs in a circle so child can see other children when they are speaking

_____ indicate visually who will speak next

_____ use board, flip chart or technology to write important information when possible.

Other _____

** The Deaf Apostolate of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia assists parishes by providing a Religious Education Program in American Sign language. Contact the Deaf Apostolate at 215-587-3913 or DeafCatholic@archphila.org*

B. Expressive Language Skills

My child:

_____ speaks clearly

_____ responds in brief sentences or phrases

_____ gives one word responses (routinely)

_____ gives yes/no responses (routinely)

_____ processes language slowly

_____ communicates non-verbally by:

_____ pointing

_____ eye movement

_____ gestures

_____ manual signs

_____ manual picture board

_____ electronic picture board

_____ other: _____

Other _____

Recommended accommodations for use by the catechists:

_____ ask if child understood you correctly by repeating what they think they heard

_____ provide more time for language processing by:

_____ repeating the question slowly

_____ requiring think time before any responses

_____ inviting children to signal when they are ready to reply

_____ provide visual cues to support responses

_____ give alternative modes of expression such as drawing or acting out a response.

Other _____

C. Reading / Writing Language Skills

Please comment on your child's reading ability: _____

My child:

_____ needs someone to read with him/her

_____ uses tape recorded books

_____ uses computer assisted reading/writing technology: _____ at home _____ in class

_____ needs someone to write down his/her responses

_____ needs assistance in writing. Please explain: _____

Other

☐ **My child is partially sighted / blind**

My child:

_____ uses large print materials

_____ uses tape materials

_____ uses Braille materials

_____ uses computer assisted reading/writing technology: _____ at home _____ in class

Other

II. MOTOR SKILLS

A. Fine Motor Skills

My child needs assistance with the following skills:

___ cutting ___ coloring ___ pasting/gluing ___ writing
___ copying from board ___ buttoning ___ zippering ___ tying shoes

Other _____

Comment on useful accommodations: _____

B. Large Motor Skills

My child needs assistance with:

___ sitting down ___ standing up
___ walking short distances ___ walking long distances
___ putting on coat ___ toileting

Other _____

Comment on useful accommodations: _____

My child needs mobility assistance:

___ walker ___ wheelchair
___ crutches ___ cane
___ needs a sighted guide (due to low vision needs a peer or aide to assist with mobility)

Other _____

Comment on useful accommodations: _____

III. LEARNING STYLE

My child learns best from:

_____ what he/she hears

_____ what he/she does

_____ what he/she sees

_____ what he/she talks about

_____ what he/she touches/handles

Other _____

What holds your child's attention?

What is distracting to your child?

Please indicate methods/techniques that do not work for your child.

Additional techniques, recommendations and information:

IV. EMOTIONAL / SOCIAL WELL BEING

How will the catechist know if your child is becoming unhappy, agitated or emotionally upset?

Please describe behaviors. _____

What types of events might trigger these behaviors? _____

What are some ways/techniques a catechist might help your child regain emotional composure?

What should we know about how your child interacts socially? _____

Are there social goals we should know about? Explain: _____

Other social or emotional concerns: _____

V. ALLERGIES

Foods

My child has allergies to the following foods: _____

My child can have the following snacks: _____

Will parents/guardians supply snacks when needed?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Pollens

My child has allergies to the following pollens (specify): _____

Are the allergies severe enough to restrict bringing plants into the classroom or going outside?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Chemicals

My Child has significant allergies to: _____

Animals

My child has significant allergies to: _____

E. Other significant allergies: _____

Instructions in the event of an allergic reaction: *(Please attach more detailed instructions if needed.)*

VI. MEDICAL CONDITIONS

My child has the following medical conditions: _____

My child's current medications are: _____

Instructions in the event of a medical emergency: *(Please attach more detailed instructions if needed.)*

OFFICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES &
THE DEAF APOSTOLATE
Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Phone: 215-587-3530, Video Phone: 267-507-1215
E-Mail: opd@archphila.org
www.opdphilly.org

Building a Toolkit to Breakdown Obstacles to Learning

Tools

- *Maintain a Proper Perspective*
- *Build a Foundation of Knowledge*
- *Implement Research-Based Best Practices*
- *Understand Foundations of Behavior*
- *Follow the Process of Instruction*

1. Maintain a Proper Perspective

Know all the dimensions of the student, not just the disability.

2. Build a Foundation of Knowledge

Autism is a group of neurological, physiological, developmental disorders known as autism spectrum disorder (ASD). ASD causes substantial impairment in three areas of functioning:

- ⇒ **Communication**
- ⇒ **Social Interaction**
- ⇒ **Behavior**

3. Implement Evidence-Based Best Practices: <https://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/ebps/>

28 practices have been identified that meet the criteria for evidence-based practices for children with autism spectrum disorders:

<https://ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/sites/ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/files/imce/documents/NCAEP%20Report%20-%20Table%203.1%20-%20EBP%20list.pdf>

- A. Applied Behavior Analysis**
- B. Task Analysis**
- C. Communication Devices**
- D. Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS)**
- E. Social Stories**
- F. Assistive Technology and more...**

4. Understand Foundations of Behavior

All behavior has 1 of 4 functions: Sensory, Escape, Attention, Tangible result (SEAT)

<https://paautism.org/resource/behavior-sensory-attention/>

5. Follow the Process of Instruction

- Give step-by-step instructions with visual organizational aids,
- Be as explicit as possible with instructions,
- Uses visual models and hands-on activities,
- Provides visual schedules and review them,
- Follows a routine,
- Organizes the work space the same each time,
- Keeps strategies consistent across classrooms and at home.

Deborah Schadler, PhD, CPCRT, PRSE
Gwynedd Mercy University
Director, Autism Institute
Schadler.d@gmercyu.edu

Catherine Heller, EdD
Souderton Area School District
Supervisor of Curriculum
cheller@soudertonsd.org

Some Strategy Suggestions

- Think of the WHOLE Person

Begin with the person before you.

Relationship is central to the catechetical process

Ask about his/her gifts, likes, dislikes AS WELL AS specifics of diagnosis and learning methods

Parents, teachers, and the individual are a great source of insight and guidance

Communication and behavior are critical considerations for learning across ALL abilities

- Attend to Communication - Receptive/Expressive/Combination

Everyone communicates

Use shorter phrases

Avoid speaking in the negative

Wait before repeating yourself

Visualize sequenced directions

Check for misunderstandings

- Preparation for Transitions - Advance Warning Systems

Verbal countdown

Picture or word schedule

Use Concrete language—be descriptive

- Using Visuals to Reinforce What We Say

- Writing Stories to Help Anticipate New Situations

- Thinking Alongside the Person – understanding how he/she learns and interacts with the world.

- Behavior Supports

Schedules, text or pictures: *Promote Independence; Provides predictability; Allows Self-Mgt*

Making Routines Comfortable

Task Analysis

Shaping

Prompting and Prompt Fading

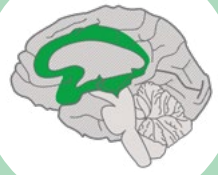
- Ask for suggestions/guidance from school teacher and parents

For more information see Masters, Anne. *Pastoral Ministry WITH Persons WITH Disabilities Parish Resource Guide*.

Advocate Publishing Corp. 973-497-4201 or check resources at www.rcan.org/disabilities

Key Questions to Consider When Planning Lessons - UDL

Think about how learners will engage with the lesson.



Does the lesson provide options that can help all learners:

- regulate their own learning?
- sustain effort and motivation?
- engage and interest all learners?

Think about how information is presented to learners.



Does the information provide options that help all learners:

- reach higher levels of comprehension and understanding?
- understand the symbols and expressions?
- perceive what needs to be learned?

Think about how learners are expected to act strategically & express themselves.



Does the activity provide options that help all learners:

- act strategically?
- express themselves fluently?
- physically respond?

From: *Universal Design for Learning: Theory and Practice*

Available at www.cast.org

For print and accessible EPUB, contact publishing@cast.org or any book retailer.

Provide multiple means of
Engagement



Affective Networks
The “WHY” of Learning

Access

Provide options for
Recruiting Interest ⁽⁷⁾

- Optimize individual choice and autonomy (7.1)
- Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity (7.2)
- Minimize threats and distractions (7.3)

Provide multiple means of
Representation



Recognition Networks
The “WHAT” of Learning

Provide options for
Perception ⁽¹⁾

- Offer ways of customizing the display of information (1.1)
- Offer alternatives for auditory information (1.2)
- Offer alternatives for visual information (1.3)

Provide multiple means of
Action & Expression



Strategic Networks
The “HOW” of Learning

Provide options for
Physical Action ⁽⁴⁾

- Vary the methods for response and navigation (4.1)
- Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies (4.2)

Provide options for
Sustaining Effort & Persistence ⁽⁸⁾

- Heighten salience of goals and objectives (8.1)
- Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge (8.2)
- Foster collaboration and community (8.3)
- Increase mastery-oriented feedback (8.4)

Provide options for
Language & Symbols ⁽²⁾

- Clarify vocabulary and symbols (2.1)
- Clarify syntax and structure (2.2)
- Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols (2.3)
- Promote understanding across languages (2.4)
- Illustrate through multiple media (2.5)

Provide options for
Expression & Communication ⁽⁵⁾

- Use multiple media for communication (5.1)
- Use multiple tools for construction and composition (5.2)
- Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance (5.3)

Provide options for
Self Regulation ⁽⁹⁾

- Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation (9.1)
- Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies (9.2)
- Develop self-assessment and reflection (9.3)

Provide options for
Comprehension ⁽³⁾

- Activate or supply background knowledge (3.1)
- Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships (3.2)
- Guide information processing and visualization (3.3)
- Maximize transfer and generalization (3.4)

Provide options for
Executive Functions ⁽⁶⁾

- Guide appropriate goal-setting (6.1)
- Support planning and strategy development (6.2)
- Facilitate managing information and resources (6.3)
- Enhance capacity for monitoring progress (6.4)

Expert learners who are...

Purposeful & Motivated

Resourceful & Knowledgeable

Strategic & Goal-Directed

Goal

Internalize

Build

First Penance Prep Tips: Adaptations for Children with Special Needs

June 9, 2021



By David and Mercedes Rizzo

The sacrament of Penance can be difficult for some people with special needs. This sacrament may pose a challenge for those with intellectual disabilities, limited language skills, or difficulty distinguishing right actions from wrong actions. For instance, many individuals with autism, Down syndrome, and other cognitive disabilities, have trouble expressing and understanding emotions such as remorse and contrition. Additionally, it can present access issues for people with hearing impairments and physical disabilities. Fortunately religious education programs can be designed with these barriers in mind. When the proper supports are put into place, individuals with special needs can achieve success in receiving this important sacrament.

[The bishops of the United States have laid out guidelines](#) for receipt of this sacrament for those with intellectual disabilities. Emphasis is placed on the ability to show contrition, even if in a non-verbal way, and explicitly supports the use of the alternative communication system in which the person is

most fluent. These guidelines encourage confessors to work with families to learn how individuals with special needs communicate, so they can be as independent as possible in the confessional. The bishops likewise present guidelines for physical access for those who use wheelchairs where access to a confessional may not be possible.

We offer the following tips to help pastors, parish catechetical leaders, and catechists prepare children with special needs to receive the sacrament of Penance.

1 – Work on finding ways to distinguish right and wrong actions. This can be done in creative ways using cards, videos, and drawings.

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities may need to be taught how to distinguish between right actions and wrong actions. They may already have a limited understanding that can be developed by learning to match or sort out actions as right or wrong. Since people with special needs often respond best to pictures, catechists may use pictures of actions, or PECS ([Picture Exchange Communication System](#)) icons, to teach which actions are right and which are wrong. Students can be taught to point to, place or sort these pictures into the correct category using hand over hand or other prompts.

2 – Use prompts and reinforcement to help children with intellectual disabilities learn required content and develop the skills they need to successfully receive the sacrament of Penance.

Students with intellectual disabilities of all sorts may learn better when instructors use prompts and reinforcement. Prompts lead a student to the correct response, such as giving an answer to a question or learning a physical skill. There are different types of prompts that teachers can use such as hand over hand prompts, gestural prompts, and verbal prompts. Prompts are very important during the early stages of learning and can make a big difference for those with intellectual disabilities.

Reinforcement is a reward given to the student when they have given a correct response. The types of prompts and reinforcement that work best for individuals with special needs vary greatly so it is important for DRE's and catechists to speak with parents to find out what has proven most successful in the past.

3 – Sit down with the child, family, and pastor to decide if the individual should use a confessional versus a reconciliation room (face-to-face).

Each person with special needs is an individual with different needs and abilities. Some will have no difficulty using a confessional and interacting with the priest through a screen. Others may not be able to do this, and their needs may best be met by using a reconciliation room.

The bishop's guidelines specifically mention providing such an option for people who use wheelchairs. The bishops state that "every effort should be made to ensure that penitents who are wheelchair users have access to both face-to-face and private confessionals, with due regard for the right of the priest to insist on confession behind a fixed screen."

People with attention deficits, hearing and visual impairments, or intellectual disabilities may also have difficulty using a confessional. Therefore, it is important that parents, guardians and others, as well as the child, be involved and give their input.

4 – Decide how the child will confess and make their contrition known.

People with intellectual and other language disorders who use electronic or augmentative communication systems to express themselves can use these same devices during confession. In fact, the bishops specifically say that they should use the communication system in which the person is most fluent. For some this means verbal speech. For others it may mean using a picture exchange system, electronic device, or sign language. Sometimes a person will use more than one technique.

Nonverbal persons with limited cognitive abilities can express their contrition with an "I'm Sorry" icon which they give to the priest. Others with more verbal and cognitive abilities may confess individual sins, perhaps by using a picture based examination of conscience.

The bishops address methods of communication in detail for those who are deaf.

Catholics who are deaf should have the opportunity to confess to a priest able to communicate with them in sign language, if sign language is their primary means of communication. They may also confess through an approved sign language interpreter of their choice. The interpreter has the obligation to observe secrecy. When neither a priest with signing skills nor a sign language interpreter is available, Catholics who are deaf should be permitted to make their confession in writing or through the use of an appropriate portable electronic communication device that can be passed back and forth between the penitent and confessor. The written or digital materials are to be returned to the penitent and properly destroyed or deleted.

([Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities](#), Paragraph 30)

5 – Facilitate interaction early on between families, individuals with special needs, and confessors to maximize independence in the confessional.

Due to the importance placed on the seal of the confessional, children with special needs must learn to be as independent as possible when they receive the sacrament of Penance. This means that the priest hearing confession must be educated in how to prompt such children to initiate the sacrament and make a good confession within the limits of the child's ability. Parish catechetical leaders and catechists can work with families, children, and priests to ensure that everyone knows what to do when the time comes. Parents are most familiar with the ways their children communicate and learn. It's important that a parent be involved in showing the priest how to prompt their children to use preferred communication tools and strategies before they enter the confessional. Starting to address issues early on in the process leaves time to work out complex barriers such as finding priests who can sign or other approved sign language interpreters.

As you can see, the sacrament of Penance poses unique challenges for people with special needs of all sorts. However, these challenges can be overcome with proper planning and preparation that involves all parties, especially families of those involved.

DAVID AND MERCEDES RIZZO write and speak from a faith perspective as parents of a child with autism. Find their books, *The Adaptive First Eucharist Preparation Kit*, *Spiritually Able*, and *Faith, Family, and Children with Special Needs*, as well as *Praying for Your Special Needs Child* at DavidAndMercedesRizzo.com.

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Image credit: Joanna Dorota / Shutterstock 742215487

Inclusive Classroom Support Wish List

- 1. Catechists** - Catechist with skills as an educator, particularly special education or the parent of a child with a disability. Sense of humor and flexibility are a huge asset.
- 2. Aides/Assistants** - Caring adults who can be present in groups to be extra eyes, hands, legs and hearts.
- 3. Teen Aides** - Caring teens who can be present in groups to be extra eyes, hands, legs and hearts.
- 4. Buddies** – Someone who will support one child in particular in a larger group, in a noninvasive way.
- 5. Inclusion Consultants** – People with special education, psychology or behavior specialist background that can serve as consultant/support for catechists.
- 6. Hall Monitors** – Some facilities have many entrances and exits. It's good to have extra people around for the restroom and keeping in those who belong inside and keeping out those who belong outside.
- 7. Crafters** – Some materials/activities may require extra preparation for children with limited fine motor skills. It can be a huge help to catechists if someone else can prepare the material once he/she has determined what is needed.
- 9. Audio Recorders** – Someone with a good speaking voice to record prayers, songs, and other catechetical material. This is especially helpful for children with visual impairments or who are blind, but also helpful for others, particularly children with attention issues.
- 10. Digital Photographer** - A volunteer who assist in taking pictures to assist with making materials specific to your parish to assist with enabling the children with disabilities to make the connections.
- 11. Inclusion Facilitator or Coordinator** – This person expands the capabilities of the Parish Catechetical leader. S/he can make phone calls to schedule meeting, make contacts for adaptive services, reach out to families who have indicated special needs on the registration form and assist with the Child Information Form process.

Web Sites: Inclusive Religious Education



These web sites provide information and materials to support Inclusive Religious Education:

- www.ncpd.org **National Catholic Partnership on Disability:** The National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) works collaboratively to ensure meaningful participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of the life of the Church and society. This website contains webinar trainings for catechists, tip sheets, forms and resources for catechesis of persons with disabilities.
- www.dayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/ipi/inclusive_catechesis_resources/books.php **Inclusive Catechesis:** As part of the University of Dayton Institute for Pastoral Initiatives, the *Inclusive Catechesis*, serves as a support network and resource to individuals with disabilities and their families. Resources for Sacramental preparation, print and DVD's to assist with religious education are provided.
- <https://pathways.org/team-belong/resources/> *That Every Ability May Belong* program of **Pathways Team Belong** assists congregations of all faith traditions to include people with physical, sensory, mental or emotional differences into all aspects of faith life. The web site also includes downloads of lesson plans for religious educators to teach students age 8 to 18 about the gifts received when everyone is included.
- www.xaviersocietyfortheblind.org **Xavier Society:** The Xavier Society continued its pioneering mission by producing Braille, large print, audiocassette and most recently digital formats of religious books and periodicals.
- www.ncod.org **National Catholic Office for the Deaf:** NCOD develops and disseminates religious education and pastoral training resources for ministry with deaf and hard of hearing individuals.
- <https://vkc.vumc.org/vkc/resources/tipsheets/> **Vanderbilt Kennedy Center:** General disability specific tip sheets and faith formation tip sheets. Teaching strategy tip sheets like: How to Write a Social Story Tip Sheet.
- www.acceptingthegift.org **Catholic parents** of children with disabilities share stories and resources related to passing on the faith, religious education and other practical helps.
- <https://opdarchphilly.org/sfm/> **Sensory Friendly Mass** training and resources and mass tool kit resources for parishes and families to assist children with Autism and other disabilities to attend mass.
- <https://catholicmhm.org/> **The Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers:** Provides resources and training for a Catholic approach to accompanying people with mental health issues within parishes.

OFFICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE DEAF APOSTOLATE

Phone: 215-587-3530 Fax: 215-587-3561 Web: www.opdarchphilly.org

opd@archphila.org

ADAPTIVE Catechetical Resources for Children and Youth

A PARTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

CATHOLIC CURRICULUM RESOURCES

Loyola Press:

Adaptive First Eucharist Preparation Kit for Children with Autism and Other Special Needs

Adaptive Reconciliation Preparation Kit for Children with Autism and Other Special Needs

Adaptive Confirmation Preparation Kit for Children with Autism and Other Special Needs

The kits contain tactile components, including picture cards and other manipulatives. These kits also include *social stories* and *picture exchange communication system* (PECS) strategies.

Adaptive Finding God Program: A full curriculum offering faith formation for children with special needs adaptable to a variety of settings and situations. Includes lesson plans and adaptive materials for each grade level and sacramental prep. www.loyolapress.com/adaptive-finding-god.htm * *Parts of this curriculum will be available digitally August 2020 during the covid pandemic.*

How to Welcome, Include and Catechize Children with Developmental Disabilities by Deacon Larry Sutton, PH.D 2013. A guide book and how-to book.

Faith, Family and Children with Special Needs by David Rizzo 2012

Spiritually Able: A Parent's Guide to Teaching the Faith to children with Special Needs by David Rizzo 2015

The Adaptive Teacher by John Barrone & Charleen Katra 2019. Faith-based strategies to reach and teach learners with disabilities to maximize the effectiveness of the catechist.

***Current Adaptive Finding God customers can go [here](#) and enter the code in their Catechist Guide and have access to the Digital Adaptive Resources:**

<https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/special-needs/adaptive-finding-god/catechists-and-teachers/>

Contact: www.loyolapress.com (www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/special-needs/adaptive-finding-god/)

Inclusive Catechesis Resources, University of Dayton:

Sacramental Preparation Penance, Eucharist, Confirmation: Individualizing Lesson Plans

Sacraments: Gifts for All (Confirmation, Eucharist, and Reconciliation)

Welcome One, Welcome All: Inclusive Religious Education Resource Binder

All About Mass - Student Edition: Uses limited vocabulary and simple images to explain the mass in a way that both young children and adults with developmental disabilities can understand.

Apostles Creed/Mary/Sacraments/Beatitudes/Saints: Individual books on a variety of topics that can be used as a supplement.

Contact: jchaffin1@udayton.edu

https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/ipi/inclusive_catechesis_resources/books.php

937-229-3126

Awakening Spiritual Dimensions: *A Model of Catechesis and Prayer Services for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities* by Fr. William Gillum, OFM Cap., AuthorHouse, 2020. Offers a program and method whereby persons with severe intellectual and physical disabilities and their catechists are given the tools to awaken the Spirit of God within them and learn about the love of God for them. www.AuthorHouse.com, 800-839-8640 or amazon.com

National Catholic Office for the Deaf

My First Eucharist / Sacrament of Reconciliation: These videos and teacher's guides created by the National Catholic Office for the Deaf (NCOD) provides a signed and closed captioned sacrament preparation to assist in preparing deaf children to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist .

Strengthened in Faith: Confirmation: Three DVD's that contain 12 video lessons in American Sign Language, captioned and voiced in English and a Teacher Manual. Produced by the National Catholic Office for the Deaf (NCOD) for individuals who are deaf and very effective for any visual learners. Voiced and captioned in Spanish Version available in 2015.

Contact: www.ncod.org

RCL-Benziger:

Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Program to Improve Catholic Religious Education for Children and Adults with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities.

Level based Student Activity books are also available.

Autism Supplement (2014)

Published by Diocese of Pittsburgh; distributed by RCL-Benziger

Series of picture books published by Diocese of Pittsburgh and distributed by RCL-Benziger:

My Church: A young girl shares her Catholic Deaf Community

Created in God's Image: A Photo-essay on Faith, Family, and Friendship

Seeing Through God's Eyes / Just Like Me

We Go To Mass (geared for children with autism)

One Flock, One Shepherd: A Collection of Prayers by Parents of Children Who Are Disabled

Contact: RCL-Benziger - www.rclbenziger.com or 1-877-275-4725

Cardinal Stritch University Bookstore:

Journey with Jesus: Call to Love by Sr. Sheila Haskett, O.S.F. Suggestions for Special Religious Education for Persons Categorized as Severely/Profoundly Mentally Retarded. Topics covered: Call to Be; Call to Respond; Call to be Loving

Call to Communion; Call to Reconciliation. Call to Service (Confirmation). Each of these also has a black line picture book for the participants. (Note: These are for those with special education needs, but not classified as severely/profoundly mentally retarded.)

Seasons of Grace: Sacramental Preparation for Mentally Handicapped Teens and Adults by Brigid O'Donnell.

Journey with Jesus Gospel Study: A Curriculum Guide for Adult Special Religious Education by Sr. M. Sheila Haskett, O.S.F., Ph.D. and Sr. M. Coletta Dunn, O.S.F., Ph.D.

Contact: Cardinal Stritch University Bookstore; (414) 410-4035 or www.csu.bkstr.com

OTHER CATHOLIC RESOURCES

Praying for Your Special Need Child by David Risso and Mercedes Rizzo, The Word Among Us Press, 2018. A delightful guidebook for parents to encourage prayer at every stage of their journey with their child with a disability. www.wau.org

How to talk to Children about People with Disabilities by Charleen Katra, Twenty Third Publication, 2019. A booklet that helps parents and teachers in conversations about disability.

Salt and Light: Church, Disability, and the Blessing of Welcome for All by Maureen Pratt, Twenty-Third Publications, 2018. A practical handbook that covers many aspects of parish life and the blessings of welcome, inclusion and belonging. Order through Amazon or at www.twentythirdpublications.com

Special Children, Blessed Fathers: Encouragement for fathers of children with special needs by Randy Hain. Emmaus Road, 2015. A great gift for fathers of children with disabilities. It is inspirational and instructional. Order through Amazon.

A Place for All: Ministry for Youth with Special Needs by John E. Barone, St. Mary Press, 2008. A manual that provides background and practical skills for creating a learning environment and preparing dynamic lessons to accommodate all youth in religious education programs. St. Mary Press, www.smp.org, 800-533-8095

Catechists for All Children by Dr. Joseph White and Ana Arista White, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, 2002. Offers insights and methods for accommodating unique emotional and behavioral needs in the classroom. Our Sunday Visitor, 800-348-2440, www.osv.com.

Handbook for Adaptive Catechesis: Serving those with Special Needs by Michele E. Chronister. Ligouri Press, 2012. Explores how a parish religious education program can address the needs of children with special needs. Ligouri Press, 800-325-9521, www.ligouri.org.

Mass a Guide for Visual Learners. A booklet that goes through the Mass especially designed for children with ASD or children who are visual learners. Faith Publishing Service, Lansing MI, 48906. 517-853-7600 or www.faithmag.com

Special Needs Support for Faith Formation. Laura Demkovitz, Michelle Herstek Woelkers and Louse Timko, 2012. Catechist Resources, Westfield, NJ,. www.catechistplace.com

This Is My Church. A power point template of a church tour that you may insert digital photos of your own church to share with your child(ren). Department for Pastoral Ministry with Persons with Disabilities, Archdiocese of Newark. masteran@rcan.org or 973-497-4309

Mass Tool Kit and Other Resources: Sensory Friendly Mass training and resources including materials catechists and families can use to assist with preparing children with IDD for Mass. <https://opdarchphilly.org/sfm/mass-tool-kit-for-parishes-and-families/>

Monthly Lessons. National Catholic Partnership on Disability, Lessons from the IDD Council <https://ncpd.org/adapted-faith-formation-program>

RESOURCES FROM THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS (USCCB):

Bishops' Statements/Publications:

- *Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities*, 1978, rev. 1989.
- *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, 2017.
- *Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities: A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops*, 1998.
- *National Directory for Catechesis*. USCCB, 2005.

Contact: USCCB Publishing, 800-235-8722, www.usccb.org.

Web Version of these documents also available at: www.ncpd.org

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE RESOURCES

My First Eucharist, The Sacrament of Reconciliation, The Sacrament of Confirmation and videos available from the National Catholic Office for the Deaf, www.ncod.org or www.osvparish.com, 301-577-4184 (tty/vp), 301-577-1684 (voice/fax).

Liturgical Prayers in American Sign Language: Basic Congregational Responses in the Mass in ASL DVD. Produced by NCOD, 2013, includes a book that gives background and explanations. Available from www.ncod.org.

The Religious Sign App for Families- This App produced by the *Deaf Apostolate of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia 2017* is a fun way to learn signs for religious words and to teach young children how to pray in American Sign Language. The App can be used by Deaf and hearing as a way to encourage families to pray together in American Sign Language. It can be used in classrooms for Religious Education and in Catholic Schools. It is available in the Apple and Google Play Store. To learn more about the App go to www.ReligiousASLApp.org.

Hands of Grace Video Series and Workbook: Lessons on the Catholic Sacraments in American Sign Language for Adults. This DVD set, which includes the 7 sacraments, which are divided into 3, 6-10minute segments (21 total segments)--plus the video glossary of Catholic signs. The videos are presented in American Sign Language with voiceover, graphics, and closed captioning. www.ascensionpress.com

Deaf YouCat: The Youth Catechism in American Sign Language is being posted on line at: www.archkck.org/ministries--offices/deaf-ministry/deaf-youcat

BRAILLE & LARGE PRINT RESOURCES

Xavier Society for the Blind –Provides free spiritual and inspiration reading materials and lending library services in Braille, large print and audiocassette formats. 212-473-7800; 1-800-637-9193, www.xaviersocietyfortheblind.org

Large print Lectionary and Sacramentary available from the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, 202-529-2933, www.ncpd.org.

INTERFAITH RESOURCES

Autism and Faith: A Journey into Community by M. Walsh, W. Gaventa, (Eds.). (2008). A resource booklet for faith communities on including people and families living with autism. It is a collaborative product of The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and COSAC.

Autism and Your Church: Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of People with Autism Spectrum Disorders by Barbara J. Newman, 2006. This book will enable church leaders to more fully include children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) into the Church. Available from Faith Alive Christian Resources, 800-333-8300, sales@faithaliveresources.org, www.friendship.org.T

Helping Kids Include Kids with Disabilities by Barbara J. Newman, 2001. Available from Faith Alive Christian Resources, 1-800-333-8300, sales@faithaliveresources.org, www.friendship.org.

Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families & Congregations by Eric Carter. Baltimore, London, Sydney: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 2007.

ON LINE TRAININGS AUTISM AND OTHER DISABILITIES:

IRIS Center is offering professional development modules on a variety of researched based strategies for free: <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/iris-resource-locator/> The modules for which certificates can be earned can be accessed on the link below. <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/pd-hours/available-modules/>

Autism Modules Covering a Variety of Topics
<http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/>
<http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/evidence-based-practices>

Autism Center for Excellence Trainings: <https://vcuautismcenter.org/resources/EBP.cfm>

Universal Design for Learning ULD
www.udlcenter.org and www.cast.org

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Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Office for Persons with Disabilities & the Deaf Apostolate
For Power Point and other Resources go to:
www.opdarchphilly.org - Click on Faith Formation

Sample Models of Inclusion

Parish Religious Education Programs

(Office for Persons with Disabilities, Archdiocese of Philadelphia)

Be creative. Inclusive faith formation programs are only limited by your imagination.

Integration with Accommodations

The student participates in classroom with the support of a catechist assistant, peer tutor or therapeutic support staff. Supplemental materials could be used.

Integration in Parish Program

The student participates in the religious education classroom with peers.

Program Integration in Learning Support Classroom

The student participates in small group learning support classroom using an adapted curriculum and materials.

Integration with Individualized Instruction

The student participates in classroom opening prayer, program liturgies and special classroom activities. Student receives individualized instruction.

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The catechist, then, is a Christian who is mindful of God, who is guided by the memory of God in his or her entire life and who is able to awaken that memory in the hearts of others. This is not easy! It engages our entire existence! ... Dear catechists, I ask you: Are we in fact the memory of God? Are we really like sentinels who awaken in others the memory of God which warms the heart?

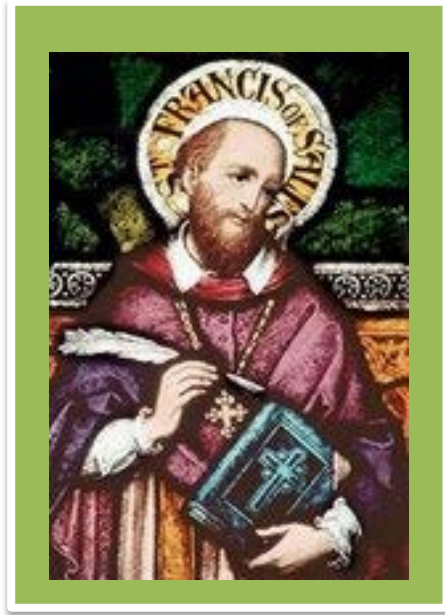
Pope Francis, 9.30.13 Homily to Catechists

Every parish should seek out its parishioners with cognitive, emotional, and physical disabilities, support them with love and concern, and ensure that they have ready access to a catechetical program suited to their needs and abilities.

National Directory for Catechesis 61:B,1, 2nd paragraph

Office for Persons with Disabilities

215-587-3530 / www.opdarchphilly.org / opd@archphila.org



*It is to those who have the most
need of us that we ought to show
our love more especially.*

St. Francis De Sales

