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Appendix

Suggestions for Deepening Your Encounter with Persons with Disabilities (PwD)

As people of faith who respect the innate dignity of every person, because each person is created in the image of God, it is important to listen to the voices of disabled people with empathy and connect with the emotions associated with the message.

During our session we explored the above mostly in general terms, rather than through incarnational examples, the lived experiences of particular disabled individuals. The suggestions below will introduce you to different individuals with one or more disability, sharing their perspectives about language or their experiences in life as a disabled person. Listening with empathy is one of the critical behaviors in *Accompanying Persons with Disability in a Synodal Church*.

The questions below may be helpful to reflect on what you've watched or read:
How did this add to your understanding of PwD?

Specifically, how did this writing or video interact with our conversation about perceptions of PwD, or disability related language?

What surprised or challenged you ?

After reading or watching this, I'm wondering

How will this impact my ministry?

How Some People See Me—Experiences of Disability

Jordyn Zimmerman is an autistic woman who communicates predominantly through her augmentative and alternative communication system. Jordyn didn't have access to helpful robust communication support until she was 19 years old. Up until that time her teachers judged her on what she couldn't do and had very low expectations of her. Since gaining access to appropriate supports, she went on to graduate from high school, completed her Bachelor degree in Education Policy from Ohio University and her Masters in Education from Boston College, and today works in human services and is President of the Board of Directors of CommunicationFIRST. You can get to know Jordyn a bit through a few different options:

"Jordyn Zimmerman is Redefining Communication As a Nonspeaking Advocate for Disability Rights" by Sara Luterman in *The 19th* section on Disability and Aging, April 19, 2023. Read it [here](#).

See Us. Hear Us.—*Jordyn Zimmerman*, video (6:27) In this short video Jordyn shares her struggles, joys, and achievements very compellingly in her own words. Watch [here](#). You can also see information about other videos in the series, *See Us. Hear Us* on CommunicationFirst website [here](#).

In *Listen* we see Jordyn again along with a number of other nonspeaking autistic individuals. It is short film (5:25) in which nonspeaking autistic people talk about how nonspeakers are represented in books, theatre, and film. They provide guidance for changing the narrative. You

can watch it [here](#). You can learn more and access transcripts, translations, and a toolkit at <https://communicationfirst.org/LISTEN/>

INTELLIGENT LIVES stars three pioneering young American adults with intellectual disabilities – Micah, Naieer, and Naomie – who challenge perceptions of intelligence as they navigate high school, college, and the workforce. Academy Award-winning actor and narrator Chris Cooper contextualizes the lives of these central characters through the emotional personal story of his son Jesse, as the film unpacks the shameful and ongoing track record of intelligence testing in the U.S. It will *profoundly* impact you! It's longer than above options at 70 minutes, but worth every minute! Learn more about the story at [INTELLIGENT-LIVES](#). Website also has option for home viewing or purchase. You can also rent or buy on Amazon [here](#).

Language—Person-First—Identity-First—And Other Issues

Some individuals with different disabilities speaking about language.

Jevon Okundaye, an autistic young man discusses both person-first and identity-first language and explains his own preference. You can read his full blog entry, “Ask a Self-Advocate: The Pros and Cons of Person-First and Identity-First Language” [here](#).

Sharon Shapier-Lacks, Executive Director of a human service organization and disability advocate, and lives with Cerebral Palsy makes her case about euphemistic language in “Special” Does Not A Disability Make.” You can read her full article [here](#).

Emily Ladau has a physical disability, is a disability rights activist, author of *Demystifying Disability* and blog, Words I Wheel By, offers her perspective on euphemistic language in “4 Disability Euphemisms That Need to Bite the Dust.” You can read it [here](#).

CommunicationFirst is a non-profit organization. Its mission is to protect and advance the rights, autonomy, opportunity, and dignity of people with speech-related disabilities through public engagement, policy and practice change, and systemic advocacy. They have published a position statement on language, “The Words We Use: CommunicationFirst’s Style Guide.” You can read it [here](#).

Some Pastoral & Video Resources

Pastoral Videos

One Pastor Reaches Out In His Own Way Watch [One Pastor](#).

Believing in Possibilities: Raising a Son or Daughter with a Disability Watch [Believing in Possibilities](#). (30 minutes)

Disability and the Church, Archdiocese of Newark Synod Synthesis Report. Office for Pastoral Ministry with Persons with Disabilities. Read [Report](#)

Came for the Juice Boxes, Stayed for the Soul Food
Watch [Came for the Juice Boxes](#). (7 minutes)

Ministry website: www.rcan.org/disabilities

#TheChurchIsOurHome, Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life video series and excerpts from Synod on Synodality Listening Sessions. Watch [ChurchIsOurHome](#)

Websites

Feel free to poke around the ministry website www.rcan.org/disabilities. It is organized into sections: Disability and Accompaniment; Disability and Liturgy; Disability and Catechesis; Disability and Synodality.

Some more great websites:

AAIDD Religion & Spirituality Interest Network <https://aaidreligion.org/>

Autistic Catholics <https://www.autisticcatholics.org/>

Baylor Center on Developmental Disabilities <https://bcdd.soe.baylor.edu/>

Center for Autism and Theology, University of Aberdeen

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/dhpa/research/centres/centre-for-autism-and-theology/>

Institute on Theology and Disability <https://faithanddisability.org/institute-on-theology-and-disability/>

National Catholic Partnership on Disability <https://www.ncpd.org/>

Pastoral Support Forms

Pastoral Support Plan Template for:

Parish:

Goals	<i>Include learning, practice, and interactive participation goals for each step. Interactive participation refers to interaction with 'typically developing' peers, both for compatibility and collaborative learning partners. Fostering relationships within the Body of Christ is integral to formation process.</i>
Long Term:	
Short Term:	
Next Stage:	

Pastoral Plan	Objectives, Strategies, and People Remember to identify role(s) relevant to setting based on the person's strengths and interests.
Environment & Goals: Catechesis Mass Service Fellowship	
For individual	
For Community	
Weekly Time Estimates	
Review: establish timeline/dates	<i>Purpose is to assess and reassess: are goals being properly served or counteracted?</i>
Who is Involved?	

Learner: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Setting: _____ Activity: _____

Observe and Describe what is done		Discrepancy—Barrier Analysis		Constructive Support Plans
Activity Step <i>What do peers do?</i>	Learner Participation or Activity (+ or -)	Describe Opportunity Barriers (e.g., practices, others' attitudes, others' behaviors)	Describe Skills/Strengths- Barriers/Limits (learner's skills or behaviors)	Skills Instruction, Adaptation, or Supportive Strategies

Word changes: learner for student, activity for performance, supportive strategies for beneficial supports.