

Helpful Resources

for Ministry to People with Disabilities



- › *Circles of Friends: People with Disabilities and Their Friends Enrich the Lives of One Another* (1988) is a beautiful book written by Robert Perske and illustrated by Martha Perske. A collection of true stories that focus on issues surrounding friendships between people with disabilities and so-called normal people. This encouraging resource for parents, teachers, and leaders was published by Abingdon Press.
 - › *Breakthrough*, a free, quarterly publication from Bethesda Lutheran Communities, is for congregations and teachers serving people who have developmental disabilities. It includes various resources and informational articles. For more information visit bethesdalutherancommunities.org/breakthrough or call 800-369-4636, Ext. 4449.
 - › *Bridges to Faith* is a video describing and documenting a collaborative project sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation, the Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford, area parishes and congregations, and human service agencies in the Greater New Bedford Area. The mission of *Bridges to Faith* is to provide opportunities for spiritual enrichment to persons with developmental disabilities and the faith communities who welcome them. A good video to use when starting a new program for adults with disabilities. For more information, contact Colleen Perkins at 508-992-1848, Ext. 309, or e-mail colleen.perkins@dmr.state.ma.us.
 - › *Learning Styles* (1995) by Marlene LeFevre, introduces the four ways people learn, how to identify them, and explores these styles in different Christian learning environments such as in the classroom, during worship, and at home. It includes effective activities and methods that can be used with learners of all ages, from elementary through adult. It is a “must-have” resource for all church/school libraries. Consider also the companion book to this title, *Creative Teaching Methods* by Marlene LeFevre, which provides more teaching ideas.
 - › *God Plays Piano, Too: The Spiritual Lives of Disabled Children* (1993) by Brett Webb-Mitchell is a collection of narratives that look into the spiritual lives of children with autism and behavioral disorders. The author gives voice to those who are seldom heard and shows us that God is often hidden in the most surprising places.
 - › *Unexpected Guests at God’s Banquet: Welcoming People with Disabilities Into the Church* (1994) by Brett Webb-Mitchell, which flows from Jesus’ parable of the banquet feast, is a practical and challenging call to a more inclusive church and shows why people with mental impairments, physical impairments, and others, must be a part of congregational life, along with how, where, and what to do.
 - › Disability Resources, Inc., offers these two resources:
 - *Disability Resources Monthly* is a monthly newsletter that monitors, reviews, and reports on resources for independent living. The goal is to keep the reader informed about good books, pamphlets, videos, organizations, and other resources that can help people with disabilities live, learn, love, work, and play independently.
 - DRM Webwatcher, and DRM Regional Resource Directory are available on the Disability Resources website. This website has an extensive list of resources, as well as many links to other organizations. It is an excellent source of information about disabilities, but does not necessarily relate to religion or congregational issues.
- For more information, visit disabilityresources.org or call 631-585-0290.
- › *Helping Kids Include Kids with Disabilities* (2001), by Barbara J. Newman, helps equip teachers, church activity leaders, and kids with information they need to practice inclusive education in their congregational and Christian school communities. The book includes information for understanding children with special needs, guidelines for churches, information about specific and general areas of impairment, lesson plans, letters to families, and devotions for families. Contact Faith Alive Christian Resources/CRC Publications, at faithaliveresources.org or 800-333-8300 for more information.

- › JAF Ministries, the disability outreach of Joni Eareckson Tada, has an extensive list of materials available. Check their website, joniandfriends.org, or call them to get a full listing of their resources and prices. For more information, call 818-707-5664 or to place an order, call 800-523-5777.
- › *A Place for All: Mental Retardation, Catechesis, and Liturgy* (1992) by Mary Therese Harrington is written from the author's own experience of catechesis, liturgy, and sacramental initiation with those who have significant developmental disabilities. She reflects on various modes of intellectual functioning, catechesis, and liturgy.
- › *In Heaven There Are No Thunderstorms: Celebrating the Liturgy with Developmentally Disabled People* (1992) by Gijs Okhuijsen and Cees Van Opzeeland, is a gentle and moving account of liturgies celebrated with residents of Huize Ursula and De Hartekamp, institutions for the mentally disabled in The Netherlands. This book gives some very concrete and creative ideas for illustrating Biblical concepts through worship activities.
- › *That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome to Persons with Disabilities* (1992) is meant to assist congregations and other groups in welcoming people with disabilities into all aspects of worship and religious life. It is a "coaching manual" written to encourage, prod, and prayerfully push religious leaders and their congregations to change the ways people with disabilities are, or are not, included in their congregations.
- › *Exceptional Teaching: A Comprehensive Guide for Including Students with Disabilities* by Jim Pierson explains the characteristics of 77 diagnoses to help in identifying the challenges, how to approach a child, what teaching and discipline methods work best, and what you can expect a child to accomplish. This book is written from a Christian perspective and includes chapters on providing Christian education, ministering to the family of a student with a disability, and disability ministry programs.
- › *Emmaus Eyes: Worship with the Mentally Challenged* (1996) by LoAnn and David Trembly, offers practical suggestions for designing worship that includes mentally challenged individuals. It includes five worship services structured for inclusion of mentally challenged individuals. The book is available directly from the authors: David & LoAnn Trembly, 5526 N. 34th St., Milwaukee, WI 53209, or (414) 527-4747.
- › *Extraordinary Kids: Nurturing and Championing Your Child with Special Needs* (1997) by Cheri Fuller and Louise Tucker Jones, is filled with the personal experiences and anecdotes of many parents who raised children with limitations. This book endeavors to provide mothers and fathers with the hopes, inspiration, and insight they need to capture the unique joy of parenting a child with special needs and to help them reach their full potential.
- › *Dancing with Disabilities: Opening the Church to all God's Children* (1996) by Brett Webb-Mitchell, relates the struggles and triumphs, frustrations and joys, of children and adults with disabilities that Webb has met through his ministry. It is these people who put a genuinely human face to "disabilities," and whose presence challenges the church to welcome all God's children to their rightful place in the Christian community.
- › *And Show Steadfast Love: A Theological Look at Grace, Hospitality, Disabilities, and the Church* (1993) includes individual essays from pastors and theologians reflecting on current attitudes and behaviors toward people with disabilities. The writers envision a Christian community in which the humanity of each person is recognized and flourishes to the benefit of all.
- › *Strong at the Broken Places: Persons with Disabilities and the Church* (1989) by Stewart D. Govig, himself disabled, provides a practical resource that enables congregational communities to achieve a balance of realism and hope in responding to the needs of all of its members.
- › *Children with Autism: A Parent's Guide* (1989) is an authoritative guide on autism covering daily and family life, early intervention, educational programs, legal rights, advocacy, and a look at the years ahead with a chapter on adults with autism.
- › *Differences in Common: Straight Talk on Mental Retardation, Down Syndrome, and Life* (1991) by Marilyn Trainer is a collection of almost 50 essays spanning more than 20 years. Written about her experiences raising a son with Down syndrome, Trainer covers a wide variety of issues with the warmth and insight only a mother can provide.
- › *From the Heart: On Being the Mother of a Child with Special Needs* (1995) shares the stories of nine mothers exploring the intense, sometimes painful emotional terrain of raising children with special needs as autism, Down syndrome, ADD, and multiple disabilities. They discuss relationships with professionals, family life, work, school issues, and reflect on feelings about themselves and their closest friends and family.