

A CONGREGATIONAL ACTION PLAN

How well are you doing? For each step of the journey of your congregation, select the category that best describes your current progress. Each new step represents a greater commitment on the part of the congregation toward the goal of fully welcoming people with disabilities into your community of faith.

	<i>The Journey of a Congregation</i>	Not started	Getting started	Well on our way	We're there
1	AWARENESS. Recognition by some congregation members or the pastoral leadership that certain barriers were preventing children or adults with physical, sensory, or mental disabilities from accessing a full life of faith (including worship, study, service, and leadership)				
2	INTERNAL ADVOCACY. Growing advocacy within the congregation to welcome people with disabilities as full participants and to remove barriers (architecture, communications, and attitudes) to this participation.				
3	DISCUSSIONS. Concerns raised regarding ability of the congregation to meet the challenges (e.g., Are there enough people with this need to justify the expense? Will people with disabilities feel comfortable in joining us once barriers have been removed?) And then solutions identified ideally with input from people with disabilities and other experts.				
4	PLANS. Invitation of people with disabilities to join the congregation as full members, action plans devised to achieve barrier-removing goals, and formal commitment made to welcome people with disabilities.				
5	ACCOMMODATIONS. Accommodations made to improve the participation of people with disabilities (e.g., large print bulletins, trained ushers, accessible parking spaces, ramps and pew cuts, improved lighting and sound systems, appropriate religious education for children with disabilities.				
6	WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT. Appreciation expressed for the changes being made and friendships extended to people with disabilities and their family members by increasing numbers within the congregation.				

7	HURDLES. Identification of architectural (elevator, accessible restrooms, ramp to the altar or chancel) communications (sign language interpreter or alternative formats for materials), transportation (wheelchair accessible van), financial, or other barriers and ways found to move forward in spite of them.				
8	INCLUSION. Increased participation of people with disabilities in worship, study, and service to others, as well as increased comfort levels of members with a more diverse congregation.				
9	OUTREACH. Options explored and action plans formulated for partnership opportunities with local agencies and organizations serving people with disabilities.				
10	LEADERSHIP. Recruitment of lay members with disabilities for leadership roles within the congregation and a willingness demonstrated to accept and accommodate an ordained leader with a disability.				
11	NEW CONSCIOUSNESS. Resistant barriers of attitude within the congregation toward people with disabilities addressed (e.g., through adult education forums, interactive experiences for children, consciousness raising by the leadership of the congregation, and one-on-one friendships)				
12	TRANSFORMATION. Ongoing transformation of the congregation (through enriched opportunities, responsibilities, and friendships) into a place where children and adults with disabilities are welcomed, fully included, and treated with respect.				
13	EXTERNAL ADVOCACY. An expanded advocacy role for congregation members regarding the needs and rights of persons with disabilities in the community-at-large.				
14	OUTREACH. Successful strategies, insights, and effective practices compiled and shared with other congregations and communities.				
15	SHARING THE STORY. The story of the transformation of the congregation publicized through articles, presentations, and media events.				