

Friendship Companion Training

Spirituality, and People with Intellectual Disabilities

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Spirituality is an important part of human experience that may be expressed both through religious practice, spiritual activities and relationships that carry personal meaning and reflect the person's values.

- Faith communities should be encouraged to build their capacity to welcome, and even embrace individuals with intellectual disabilities, their families and caregivers.

Spirituality, and People with Intellectual Disabilities

- Our Christian brothers and sisters with intellectual and developmental disabilities all bring spiritual gifts and natural talents that were downloaded in them by their creator
- Their gifts are intended to build up the Church, just as people whose disabilities are less noticeable (1 Corinthians 12)
- Like all of us, people with intellectual disabilities practice their faith with varying degrees of understanding and enthusiasm.

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All of us have similarities, but we are also very different, whether we have an intellectual disability or not. Some of our friends with disabilities may be;

- less inhibited about their faith
- joyful in their fellowship with Jesus and friends.
- content with their situation and complain less

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They may also;

- be angry
- resist relationships because people come and go in their lives
- be quiet or distant from others, but also act out as a result of their disability
- use medications to maintain behavior that can also reduce their ability to function

We all Need Jesus

- ALL created in the image of God. (Gen. 1:27)
- ALL have sinned and fallen short. (Rom. 3:23)
- ALL of us need a Savior. (John 14:6)
- ALL have spiritual gifts. (Eph. 1:13; 1 Cor. 12:21-22)
- ALL need to be part of the Body of Christ. (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- ALL spiritual matters are matters of the Spirit, not of the intellect.
(Romans 8:26)

Communicating Biblical Truth

- Be an authentic friend

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2: 5-8)

- *Look for the gifts in your friends with disabilities, be watchful, listen, be available*

Communicating Biblical Truth

- Keep concepts simple
- Use concrete examples
- Relate to the individuals life
- Teach by example, modeling
- Repetition
- Visual aids (Bible study skits, costumes, puppets, crafts, etc.)