

# Lunch & Learn

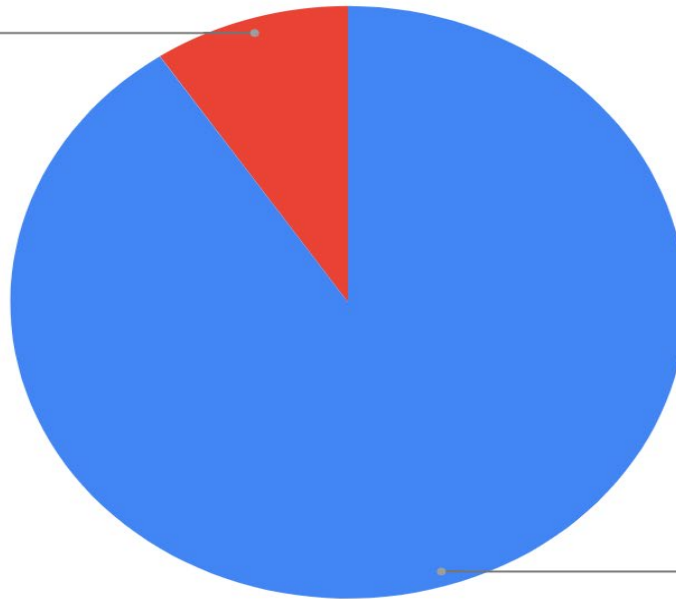
2021 Resources



## Statistics

### Disabled Catholics in the Diocese of Raleigh

21,709  
9.4%



230,945  
90.6%

According to the 2021 Diocese of Raleigh fact sheet the total registered Catholic population is 230,945. According to US Census data, 9.4% of North Carolinians are disabled. That means we can expect at least 21,709 disabled Catholics in parishes in the Diocese of Raleigh.

## Neurodevelopmental Differences and Parish Life

ADHD and autism are both correlated to less belief in God. These groups are not developing a relationship with God, seeing Christ in other, or knowing that the Spirit dwells within them. They live in a society that judges their value by their outward behaviors and perceived abilities.

Catholic social teaching calls us to build a different society, one where we can all be our authentic selves. One that respects the intrinsic value of all; the value we all have because we were created and are cherished by God. We are called, as the hands and feet of Christ, to build this society.

*“We call upon people of good will to reexamine their attitudes toward their disabled brothers and sisters and promote their well-being, acting with the sense of justice and compassion the Lord so clearly desires.”*

*(Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities, 1978)*



## Luke 14 Mural

Luke 14 Mural by Hyatt Moore (<https://www.hyattmoore.com/egallery/2015/02/24/luke-14-mural-revealed/>)

The mural depicts a take on Jesus's parable in Luke 14 where a man prepared a grand banquet but everyone invited was too busy to come. So he instructed his servants to go out and get people from among "the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame." (Hyatt Moore)

Depicted in this image are people who are **neurotypical**, which means that their brains have not developed along the typical or expected path and timeline. Several people in this group have experienced brain development along a path that is outside that expected norm - they are **neuroatypical** or **neurodivergent**. From just looking at this picture, this is not evident, but this picture is a **neurodiverse** group.

## Conversation Tips for Persons with Disabilities

Talk to the disabled person directly (even if they have an aide, caretaker, or interpreter with them).

Ask before helping.

Speak in a regular tone of voice.

Refer to people how they want to be referred. (Listen for cues of person-first language: person with a disability, or identity-first language: disabled person).

Educate yourself.

Respect processing time.

Acknowledge and accept.

Be open to feedback.

Don't let the possibility of making mistakes keep you from reaching out.

Make a consistent effort to build relationships.

## General Descriptions and Insights

**ADHD** is an acronym for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which experts and people who have this condition often say is a misnomer. The person with ADHD has delayed development in executive function, working memory, and self-regulation. This can lead to problems learning classroom material, but it can also lead to challenges with motivation, persisting on a task that isn't personally interesting, coping with difficult emotions, and much more.

**Autism** is a spectrum of conditions. Spectrum is *not* a continuum of 'mild' to 'severe'. It is more of a 3-dimensional concept of the many different challenges that might be experienced. A number system is used to express how much support the person generally needs. Autism can be thought of as a unique perception of the people and environment, which leads to differences in thinking and communication.

**Sensory processing** or **sensory integration disorder** is in regards to getting the right amount of sensory information so the brain knows how to respond different situation. In someone with sensory processing challenges, the brain is getting either too much or too little information. This can happen with any of the 5 senses that you already know about, but there are also 3 others: vestibular (information about balance and position), proprioceptive (information about contact and pressure), and interoceptive (information about internal sensations). Sensory processing disorder is different from **auditory or visual processing disorders** which have less to do with the amount of information being sent to the brain and more to do with how the brain is processing that information.

**Intellectual disability** is any generalized condition that limits a person's ability to learn and function as expected based on their chronological age. Intellectual disability can co-occur with a number of other conditions or exist completely on its own.

**Anxiety** and **depression** is not just about worrying or sadness. They are characterized by differences in multiple areas of brain function and development and can impact motivation, attention, impulsivity, mood, perception.

**Specific learning disability** refers to challenges in learning within a specific area, typically reading, writing, or math.

**Masking** is an attempt to hide one's challenges with a more acceptable image. This behavior is a sign a person is in social survival mode and the experience can be extremely damaging to their long-term mental and physical health. Some examples of this would be the autistic girl who mimics the behaviors and language of her peers or the dyslexic boy who manages to keep up with his schoolwork by puzzling together enough pieces and parts. Masking can be so effective that the person isn't diagnosed or is misdiagnosed for decades.

*Masking can be so effective  
in people with invisible differences and disabilities  
the person isn't diagnosed or misdiagnosed for decades.*

## Resources for Faith Formation Leaders

### United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – Catechesis for People with Disabilities

<https://www.usccb.org/committees/evangelization-catechesis/catechesis-people-disabilities>

The link provides resources for welcoming disabled parishioners, a disabilities video series, guidelines for celebrating the sacraments with disabled people, and a webinar about teaching prayer to disabled people.

### The National Catholic Partnership on Disability - <https://ncpd.org/>

Rooted in Gospel values that affirm the dignity of every person, 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.

The NCPD website offers a wide variety of resources to renovate and sustain ministry to-and-with all people with disabilities and their families.

### Loyola Press - <https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/special-needs/>

Offers adaptive learning kits and inclusive faith resources.

### University of Dayton - [https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/ipi/inclusive\\_catechesis\\_resources/index.php](https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/ipi/inclusive_catechesis_resources/index.php)

Support network and resource to individuals with disabilities and their families by providing DVDs, and print resources, consultations, and networking opportunities on the national and local level.

### Autism Internet Modules (AIM) - <https://autisminternetmodules.org/>

The Autism Internet Modules are a set of online training modules centered around autism in the home, in the classroom, on the job and in the community. It is hosted by the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence Disabilities (OCALI). AIM is free to anyone and just requires that you set up a login/password to use it.

### Autism Consecrated - <https://autismconsecrated.com/>

A contemplative ministry led by an autistic priest and an autistic self-advocate

### The Xavier Society - Resources for the Blind - <https://xaviersocietyfortheblind.org/>

Provides religious, spiritual, and inspirational reading materials in braille and audio to blind and visually impaired individuals worldwide. Materials are provided free of charge.

## Diocesan Resources

### Collaborative Special Needs Ministry and Webpages:

<https://dioceseofraleigh.org/faith-formation/special-needs>

### Office of Evangelization and Discipleship Faith Formation Ministry

- Lendable Braille Bible

### Deanery Coordinator Access

- Loyola Adaptive Kits for Confirmation, Eucharist and First Reconciliation in English and Spanish available.

# Welcoming Tools for Parish Communities

## Special Needs and Disabilities Surveys

**LAMB Assessment:** Language, Accessibility, Meaningful Participation and Belonging

Inclusive Participation Assessment Tool from the NCPD

[https://ncpd.org/files/resources-toolkits/LAMB\\_Assessment\\_Key\\_English.pdf](https://ncpd.org/files/resources-toolkits/LAMB_Assessment_Key_English.pdf)

## Physical Disabilities Access Survey

Includes analysis of doorways, ramps, elevators, lavatories, drinking fountains, usability of rest rooms and more in parish facilities from the Diocese of Toledo

[https://toledodiocese.org/images/uploads/page\\_assets/Equal%20Access%20Ministries/EAAccessForm.pdf](https://toledodiocese.org/images/uploads/page_assets/Equal%20Access%20Ministries/EAAccessForm.pdf)

## Sunday Experience Resources & Ideas

<https://dioceseofraleigh.org/faith-formation/liturgy-special-needs>

*Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*

<https://www.usccb.org/committees/divine-worship/policies/guidelines-sacraments-persons-with-disabilities>

Bulletin Announcement Suggestions <https://dioceseofraleigh.org/faith-formation/liturgy-special-needs>

Prayers of the Faithful <https://dioceseofraleigh.org/faith-formation/liturgy-special-needs>

Invite persons or families with differences to participate in Liturgy

*Opening Doors of Welcome and Justice to Parishioners with Disabilities: A Parish Resource Guide*, USCCB Publishing <https://www.usccb.org/upload/justice-persons-disabilities-bulletin-insert.pdf>

Making Worship Services Accessible to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities

<https://onlinegrad.baylor.edu/resources/making-worship-services-accessible-deaf-hard-of-hearing-communities/>

## Parish Life Ideas

Consider having a parish liaison for special needs and disabilities

- Listen to the needs
- Help them find their place in the community

Create a partnership ministry

- Match parishioners who need accompaniment with parishioners who can listen and connect

Provide opportunities to host self-advocates

- Empower people with differences and disabilities
- Stimulates openness to relationship in the community

## Parish Care Ministry Ideas

Provide respite care for parents or caregivers with special events on a regular basis (monthly or quarterly)

Compile a list of practical resources recommended by the parish community like doctors, therapists, transportation, group homes, legal aid, and job counseling



## Spiritual Accompaniment

### Outreach to Parents

- Show true concern for the parent
- Appreciate their child
- Celebrate the child's progress as it occurs
- Partner parents with other parents
- Personally invite them to a parish community event
- Invite the child or family to participate based on their gifts and abilities

### Outreach to Teens & Young Adults

- If you notice someone who is disengaged or struggling to connect note
  - They might have a disability
  - They might not want to share it
- Continue to reach out – it may take awhile
  - Families whose members have special needs or disabilities live with a lot of stress and feel alienation
- Small Changes for a Big Impact
  - Watch for masking – a survival skill used to look or behave like others
  - Build trust and respect
  - Encourage consistent relationships

### Spiritual Life of Teens & Young Adults

- Many grow to accept that belonging to a Church is not meant for us
- Many decide there is no God or God hates them.
- Get to know them individually
  - Get a sense of who they are
  - What they like and don't like
  - What are their interests
  - Know their processing style
  - Ways they learn best (reading, listening, visual or activities)
  - Do they prefer to work alone or be together?
  - How they like to pray
  - Ask them to share questions about their faith
  - Find out how they might like to share their faith through words or actions

## Parish Opportunities - Teens & Young Adults

- Weekend Retreat
  - For students who have aged out of summer VBS or other formation programs
- Study and Engagement Programs for post-confirmation students or young adults
  - Bible studies
  - Small groups
  - Formational programs
  - Book clubs
- Offer service opportunities to include persons with differences in
  - Mobility
  - Sensory perception
  - Communication

## Engaging – Teens and Young Adults

- For those who want alone time to process
  - Write or say prayers for the week's theme
  - Ask them to take names to pray for others' intentions on their own time and schedule
  - Create prayer partners
- Engagement will be better when there is a balance of visual, academic, and experiential spirituality offered for teens and young adults
- Offer faith, hope, and love. They need to know God's love.
- Offer them ways to be a part of Christ's mission.

