Resources and Materials for Inclusive Special Religious Education in all Parishes
What Does Inclusion Mean?

- Inclusion is part of a much larger picture than just placement in the regular classroom. It is being included in all aspects of life and participating using one's abilities in activities as a member of the community.
- Inclusion is creating an environment that allows all to be members of the Body of Christ with equal privileges to share His Table.
- Inclusion is respectful compassion and recognition of our shared fragility in communion with one another.
- Inclusion focuses on what people with disabilities can teach us about strength and acceptance. It is not a focus on what we can do for them.
Why Should we focus on Inclusive strategies?

- According to the latest statistics, 20% of all parishioners have some form of a disability (NCPD, 2011) and 1-10 students in religious education classes have been diagnosed with a disability (NCPD, 2011).

- “As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ (Corinthians:12:1)”.

- People with disabilities are an essential part of the Body of Christ. If we think of the human body, they maybe the eyes, they may even need glasses, but they give us the ability to see.

- Persons with disabilities are God’s gift to the Church and to all humanity. They bring with them special insight into the meaning of life; for they live, more than the rest of us perhaps, in the shadow of the cross. And out of their experience they forge virtues like courage, patience, perseverance, compassion and sensitivity that can inspire others.

- Jesus revealed by His actions that service to and with people in need is a privilege and an opportunity as well as a duty. When we extend our healing hands to others, we are healed ourselves.
What does the Catholic Church Teach Us about Inclusion

Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities. A Framework of Access and Inclusion, A Statement of the U.S. Bishops

- Twenty years ago we issued a statement calling for inclusion of persons with disabilities in the life of the Church and community. In 1982 the National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities was established to promote this ministry. And in 1995 we strengthened our commitment with passage of the Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities.

1. People with disabilities seek to serve the church and they have the same duty to do so. We are a single flock under the care of a single shepherd. There can be no separate church.

2. Each person is created in God's image, yet there are variations in individual abilities. Positive recognition of these differences discourages discrimination and enhances the unity of the Body of Christ.

3. Parish liturgical celebrations and catechetical programs should be accessible to persons with disabilities and open to their full, active and conscious participation.

4. Since the parish is the door to participation in the Christian experience, it is the responsibility of both pastors and laity to assure that those doors are always open.

5. We must recognize and appreciate the unique gifts persons with disabilities have to offer the Church's spiritual life and encourage them to do the Lord's work in the world according to their God-given talents and capacity.

6. We welcome qualified individuals with disabilities to ordination, to consecrated life, and to full-time, professional service in the Church.

We join the Holy Father in calling for actions which "ensure that the power of salvation may be shared by all" (John Paul II, Tertio Millennio Adveniente). Furthermore, we encourage all Catholics to study the original U.S. bishops and Vatican documents from which these principles were drawn.
What Makes Inclusion Successful for catechists?

I. Know your student

A. Involve families in planning a program. They are the experts in knowing what works, what motivates and what triggers their child.

  1. **resources for family involvement** - inclusive parish religious education forms, student interest inventory forms, parent interviews forms, IEP information, behavior plans

  a. *(all of these tools help address things like attention span, motivational interests, perceptual difficulties, reading level, limitations to participation, strategies that work, child's unique strengths, ways to relate to the child and causes of behavior)*

*without family and student input pastoral workers run the risk of presenting programs that seem creative but are ineffective because it may fail to identify and meet the needs of the individual child.*
Forms to Aid Successful Inclusion

Published on NCPD - National Catholic Partnership on Disability (http://www.ncpd.org) For the most part, forms are to be used as working documents and need not be placed in the student file. In determining which forms should be part of the student file, care is taken to ensure that the child will not be permanently branded by negative evaluations. Student files are reviewed and culled periodically. Confidentiality is maintained through strict procedures.

B. Registration forms

1. Inclusive Registration Forms: (from Diocese of Orange)(Click to open in Word [1]/ PDF [2])
Offers sample questions to be included in the registration form for all students in the religious education programs; offers permission to photograph; offers a statement to be signed by the parents as a legal safeguard in the event that a parish is unable to provide religious education services desired by the family. Along with the “Alternative Religious Education Program Guidelines,” this statement applies to all students, not only those with special learning needs.

2. Registration Form (from Diocese of Cincinnati)(Click to open in Word [3]/ PDF [4])
To be used with students with disabilities to record method of communication, medical information, skills, specific concerns.

3. Registration Form, Parts I-III (from Archdiocese of Washington)
Part I, to be filled out by parents or caregivers, solicits basic information; Part II, to be completed by teacher or instructor in day program notes student skill levels; Part III, filled out by the student’s previous catechist records a cumulative record of student progress, materials used and concepts covered.

4. Individualized Religious Education Plan (IREP). (Word [5]/ PDF [6]) questionnaire which asks for detailed information on the student’s medical needs, communication skills, learning styles, physical considerations, and emotional needs.

5. Alternative Religious Education Program Guidelines. (In conversion) Guidelines for offering an alternative course of religious studies, such as a special class, a class at a neighboring parish, a tutorial situation or supervised home study. An alternative to inclusion in a regular program should be made only after careful evaluation and consultation with the family.
Forms to Aid Successful Inclusion

6. Placement. ([Word](#)/ [PDF](#)) Records the placement agreed upon by the parents, inclusion coordinator, and catechist. Placement is to be reviewed annually or as otherwise indicated.

7. Confidential Student File. ([Word](#)/ [PDF](#)) Is attached to the cover of the student's file. The requirement to sign in when accessing the file heightens awareness of the confidential nature of the information.

8. Teaching Strategies. ([Word](#)/ [PDF](#)) Is used to record specific teaching tips for the catechist and/or aide.

9. Release of Information. ([Word](#)/ [PDF](#)) Provides authorization for qualified parish religious education staff to access the student's school file. This would only be needed if significant questions remain after completion of the IREP process. Observe the rules of confidentiality.

10. Volunteer Recruitment. ([Word](#)/ [PDF](#)) Provides sample bulletin announcements.

11. Planning Meeting. ([Word](#)/ [PDF](#)) Used to evaluate the year and provide information for the next catechist as to the strengths of the student and teaching methods that have been helpful.

12. Program Evaluation. ([Word](#)/ [PDF](#)) Provides parents and guardians an opportunity to give in-put in regard to their child's religious education program.

13. Report of Behavioral Incident. ([In conversion]) This form can be furnished to all catechists, not only catechists of students with recognized special needs. It is used to document the parish religious education staff's response to a behavioral incident or emergency which required immediate intervention. The report should be filed in the student's file so that, in the event that questions are raised later in regard to the incident, a clear account is on file.

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II. Catechesis must be geared in Content and methods to their particular situations

A. Enlist the help of professionals - special educators, therapists, professional organizations and parish staff - Trained support resources can help catechists learn about specific disabilities, behavior strategies, how to teach using a multi sensory, hands-on learning to foster interest and understanding. How to make modifications and adaptations in lesson planning. They can help catechists learn how to provide a structured environment that minimizes confusion and disruption and foster teaching moments that engage and excite students.

1. service delivery model
   - 1/2 Large group lessons - 1/2 small group
   - re-teaching activities
   - Classroom aids one on one aids
   - altered class time
   - co-teaching
   - per tutors from local high school as aids
   - inclusion awareness lessons and celebrations.

2. Adaptation and accommodations
   - Modify text reading levels
   - Reduce key objectives per lesson (3 main points per lesson)
   - Kids highlight in the text/verses notes
   - Outline handouts of lesson
   - Display class schedule verbal or pictorially
   - Allow oral responses
   - Adapt questions to yes, no or multiple choice responses
   - Use visual aids (pictures of characters, clip art, drawings)
   - Take breaks/use timers for some kids (egg timers work best for student to monitor on her/her desk)
Resource material for different learning styles

http://www.loyolapress.com/about-the-adaptive-first-eucharist-

The Adaptive the Preparation Kit for Individuals with Autism and Other Special needs and how it can help you when parenting or teaching individuals with disabilities. Great for all visual and tactile learners as well as kids with ADHD. Offer One class mode to with all students. It works great in learning stations (ask your priest for unconsecrated hosts to practice the taste in a familiar setting with people the child trusts)

Works well with all students. Can be used in whole group lesson, helpful with children with anxiety about reconciliation. It visually walks a child step by step. It can be used in the confessional for children with panic and anxiety disorders or non verbal children. It has a visual interactive Act of Contrition to make them feel comfortable an example of sins pictorially so children can nod yes or no, use sign language or communication boards to response It helps say their prayer through pictures. The soft interactive pictures help lessen anxiety can and help children focus memorization of prayer and God's healing love. A good first experience leads to more frequent confessions in life.

Picture missal is an inexpensive resource to keep kids active, paying attention and gives them an aid to keep them following alone visually and tactically. When kids know what is coming next they are less likely to feel anxious and act out.
Resource material for different leaning styles

Color creation: 52 Bible lesson - WWW.group.com Coloring Creations can be used as a stand-alone Bible lesson or as an enhancement for an existing lesson. The handy Scripture index makes it easy to find the Coloring Creations page that fits your needs. Each page includes a Scripture verse to go with the picture and a creative hands-on activity so kids understand and remember the biblical truth behind each story. There's also a discussion guide for each page that will help you ask thought-provoking questions to get kids talking and learning. Coloring Creations is designed to be simple to implement. Each page is perforated and reproducible so you can make the copies you need. The activities also come with an easy supply list, brief step-by-step instructions, and thought provoking ASK, SAY, and PRAY discussion guides.

A snip here and a clip there help Bible studies unfold. While telling the Bible story, the teacher makes quick cuts in a piece of paper. This technique combines familiar stories and an impressive visual aid that helps capture the attention and stimulate imagination. Patterns and directions are provided for cutouts for the ten Old and ten New Testament stories. Most require only a piece of paper and scissors.
This book is fun, easy-to-use, and the children stay focused on the story. There are many ways to explain the Sacraments to children, but it is a lesson well taught when the children are involved. It only takes about two minutes to tell each story. They are written so well that they do a beautiful job of relating the simple truths to kids.

This book is fun, easy-to-use, and the children stay focused on the story. There are many ways to tell stories of the Bible to children, but it is a lesson well taught when the children are involved and having a wonderful time. Unlike flannelboard stories, you only need to grab a piece of paper and something to write with to prepare for this fun form of storytelling. It only takes a few minutes to tell the story, and you can easily continue the lesson by allowing the children to draw what you have drawn, and/or by inviting them to help you draw other things that illustrate the story.
With only a large sheet of paper (or a dry-erase board, chalkboard, or overhead projector), a marker, and Draw and Tell Saints, you can easily share with your students - or your children or grandchildren - the fascinating and inspiring stories of the Church's holy ones. Youngsters respond best - and remember more - when you capture their attention ... and keep it. Now, as never before that's getting harder and harder to do in our high-tech world. Draw and Tell Saints is a memorable way to share the amazing lives of these holy men and women! As you read a story about a saint (or a blessed), you draw a line, put in a sqiggle, add a swirl. (The book tells you when!) By the end of the tale, your final picture shows a symbol of that person. No artistic talent is needed. (Really!) This active learning approach is ideal for children K-6. The wording is easily adaptable to the age of the listeners. And the picture is so simple, your students can focus on the lesson, not the illustration. Younger children have fun guessing what that final symbol will be. Older ones enjoy drawing along with the storyteller/illustrator. Children of every age will receive clear, solid, Catholic religious education. Look for Our Sunday Visitor's Bible Stories to Draw and Tell and Draw and Tell Sacraments.
New Handbook Guides Catechists to Create Inclusive Religious Education Programs
Author Urges Catechists to Recognize and Nurture the Unique Callings of Individuals with Special Needs

covers a variety of the most-encountered special needs, along with approaches for meeting them. She discusses key strategies for having fruitful dialogues with parents, identifying students for a special needs program, recruiting effective catechists or teachers, and developing lesson plans. Throughout, the text and examples are practical and easily understood, specifically by catechists and directors of religious education who may not have the formal theological training required to fully use other resources available. Catechists in traditional classrooms can also use this book as a resource of creative teaching techniques for students who have ADD/ADHD or mild learning disabilities. All will find this book an indispensable guide for helping individuals with special needs live out their unique vocations and become the saints God is calling them to be.
1. Catechesis with Children and Youth having Disability/ Part I: March 12, 2008
2. Catechesis with Children and Youth having Disability/ Part I: May 6, 2008

Free shipping
* Each CD contains a replay of the webinar, transcript, PowerPoints and a full set of printable handouts.
Tip Sheets" and Other Helpful Materials!
http://www.nafim.org

Catechesis

- Tips for Working With Special Needs Children
  - Suggestions for Successful Inclusion of Special Students

- Consejos para Trabajar con Niños y Jóvenes con Necesidades Especiales
  - Tips for Working with Special Needs Children en español

- Role of the Special Needs Assistant
  - Tips for Student and Adult Aides in the Classroom

Catechesis: Individualizing Lesson Plans

- About Individualizing Lesson Plans
  - Introduction to tip sheets under this heading

- Parish Model for Inclusive Religious Education
  - Model developed at St. Luke Church, Beavercreek, OH

- Parent Interview
  - Preparing for a student with special needs

- Getting to Know Your Student
  - Introduction to the multi-action planning system form

- Multi-Action Planning System Form
  - Information to prepare a plan of action

- Learning Styles and Class Planning
  - Introduction to working with diverse learners

- Modifying an Existing Lesson Plan
  - Eleven Hints

- Modified Lesson Form
  - Form to adapt lesson to different learning styles
Visual learners Resources

Here are a few sites for making pictures to go with your lessons:
They are great to use with visual learners and children with Autism

- http://pdictionary.com/
- http://visual.merriam-webster.com/
- http://elt.heinle.com/cgi-telt/course_products_wp.pl?fid=M2b&product_isbn_issn=1413022561&subject_code=DIC01&discipline_number=301
- http://www.esl.net/oxford_picture_dictionary.html
- http://www.enchantedlearning.com/books/picturedictionaries
St. Jude Parish Begins Inclusion Ministry

Kara Favata, Assistant Director for Special Religious Education, Archdiocese of Indianapolis Kara shares with us an article and photos from her Archdiocesan newspaper, The Criterion. “St. Jude Parish begins inclusion ministry team” by Mary Ann Garber.

Welcoming children with special needs to religious education classes is one goal of St. Jude Parish’s new inclusion ministry. St. Jude’s faith formation commission also wants to promote more awareness and acceptance of Catholics of all ages who have a large spectrum of special needs and are members of the Indianapolis South Deanery parish. “We’re excited that we get to share Christ with these families,”

St. Jude parishioner Casey Strange of Indianapolis said. “... We want to respond to everyone’s [spiritual] needs.” ...read more.