



HELP YOUR PARISH

Share the Perfect Gift

THIS ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Welcoming *all* to our parishes – Office of Special Needs Ministries ADW

Mary O' Meara - Executive Director of Special Needs Ministry **Rachel Chung** – Disabilities Coordinator
Rev. Frank Wright, S.M.A. – Chaplain, Special Needs Ministries & Gallaudet University

Recognize the Gifts of Persons with Special Needs

Is your Church space ready?

- Accessible parking spots reserved or Accessible entrance to the Church is clearly marked with signage
- All accessible features of your Church are clearly noted on any communications regarding Advent services (i.e. location of the ramp to the Church, hearing loops available, large print worship guides)
- Train ushers and greeters on the needs of persons with disabilities (SEE Tips for Ushers and Greeters)
- Accessible seating is available throughout the Church
- For persons with gluten intolerance, low gluten hosts may be made available. For those with severe gluten intolerance the option for Precious Blood only is available. Please note all hosts must contain a percentage of wheat, per canon law, therefore no host is completely gluten free. Additionally, low gluten hosts must be kept separate at all times.
- People with sensory issues including people with Autism, can be overwhelmed with the increased number of people, decorations, lit candles, etc. This may be exhibited by humming, jumping, and rocking back and forth; these behaviors help calm the person
- Any guides, song sheets etc are available in large print
- The Feast of the Epiphany is one way to especially highlight the gifts of persons with disabilities; several ADW parishes celebrate this feast in this way
- Families with children with disabilities are often excluded from religious education classes.

Resources available <http://adw.org/disabilities/>

Reaching out to people in the margins

- Consider reaching out to community organizations who support persons with disabilities (people who live in group homes etc.) and invite residents to Advent services/events and Christmas Mass
- Consider hosting events which involve different ministries at your parish. For example, one ADW parish hosts a “holiday sing-a-long” with the youth choir leading the singing. The youth group is invited to participate. A community organization supporting people with disabilities provides musical instruments for people to borrow and use. People with disabilities both from the parish and the community are invited. The event is open to everyone in the parish.
- There are scheduled American Sign Language (ASL) Masses throughout the Archdiocese of Washington.

The list is available on this link:

<http://adw.org/center-deaf-ministry/>

Opening the Gifts of Persons with Disabilities

- Include people with disabilities in Advent Masses and Christmas Masses in a visible way: lectors, lighting the Advent wreath, greeters, offertory procession, etc.
- As the pastor personally greet families with loved ones with special needs; this is an example to everyone present that all are truly welcomed.
- Highlight ministries for persons with special needs exists in your parish in flyers, bulletin announcements, brochures.

Celebrate the Gifts of Person with Disabilities

Contact the Department of Special Needs Ministries for additional resources

<http://adw.org/specialneeds/> 301-459-7464 or 301-841-5430 VP



Archdiocese of Washington
Evangelization



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