

# Church is for everyone!



## Welcome

Everyone coming to church should get a good welcome.

Welcome people with learning disabilities and try to get to know them.

Tell them your name and talk to them (and to their carer if they have brought a carer).

Are they familiar with church or is this a new experience for them?

Over time as you get to know them you can find out

- What special needs they have
- Is reading or writing difficult for them
- Do they have vision, hearing or any other physical issues?

You can

- Ask how to help them feel comfortable
- Ask what resources would help them
- Offer the most appropriate resources you have for their needs, for example
  - a large print hymn book,
  - or a friendly person to sit with them and explain what happens in the service
- Think about finding new resources that might help.

Some people find interacting with others challenging. Be sensitive and take your lead from the person.

Respect their wishes.



## Verbal reminders and visual reminders

- Try to use pictures and symbols as well as words.

Many people with learning disabilities struggle with reading. They may not be able to read and understand a written text on paper or screen.

When there is information people with learning disabilities need to understand, have someone speak it out loud.

It may help to have someone beside the person quietly say the words of the next line of each hymn.

## Accessible songs

Many songs we sing in church use words which are rich in meaning, but which are not used in everyday conversation.

Perhaps choose one or two songs that use simpler words.

Or say a few words to explain the meaning of a song which uses less familiar language.



## Sermon summary

People with learning disabilities might find it hard to concentrate during a sermon.

After the sermon, you could move on to the next stage of the service.

Then later in the service come back and repeat the main point of the sermon in a sentence or two.

It's not only people with learning disabilities who will be grateful.



## All have gifts, all have a place

1 Corinthians 12 tells us that all Christians, including people with learning disabilities, have Spiritual Gifts.

These gifts are given to build up the whole church.

People with learning disabilities should have the chance to use their gifts.

They could perhaps lead a prayer, do a Bible reading, sign during worship songs, welcome people at the door or carry the Bible in.

This will bless others in the church and they will see that everyone is important and has a role.

## Support people to grow in faith

Prospects Across Scotland can help you find suitable resources to support people as they grow in faith.

We can suggest Bible reading notes, Zoom groups, worship CDs, Easy Read Bibles and other resources.

## Think about starting a small group

In most areas at least 20 in every 1000 people have a learning disability.

If people with learning disabilities attend your church, think about starting a small group to learn and grow in faith together. Prospects Across Scotland can give advice on how to start and can help with resources.



**A church that is more accessible for people with learning disabilities is more accessible for everyone.**

For details of the work of Prospects Across Scotland please contact

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