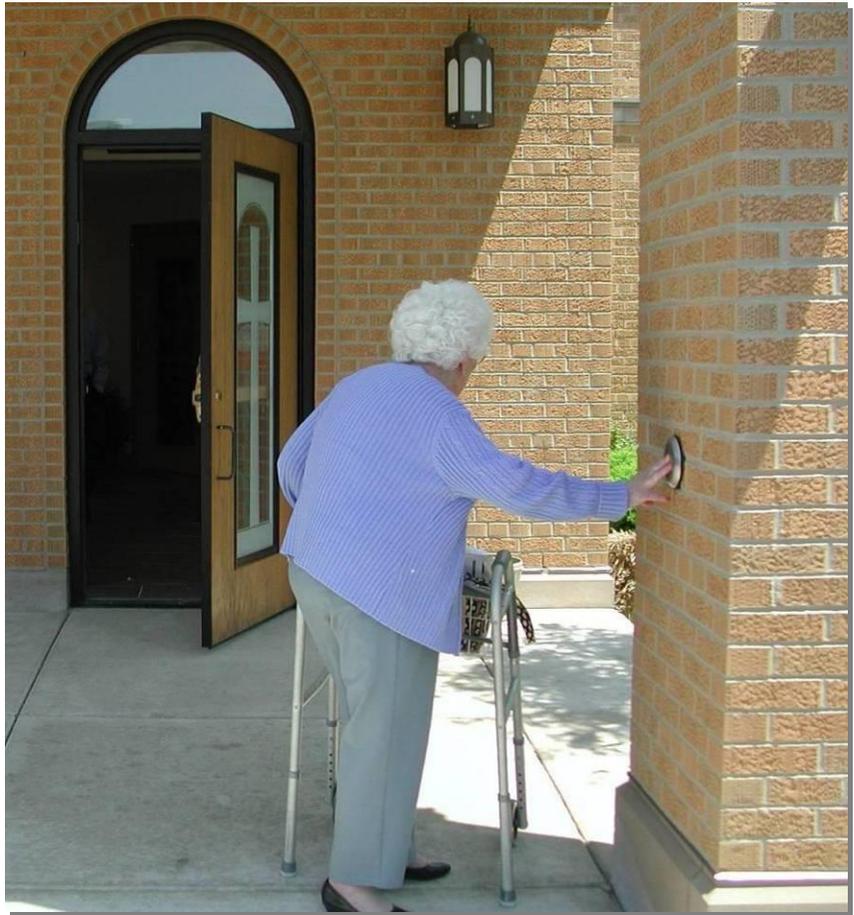


That Every Ability May Belong Month



Protestant Workbook

LOOK INSIDE FOR

- Planning Materials • Children's Activities
- Accessibility Survey

TEAM Belong
That Every Ability May Belong



www.TEAMBelong.org 1-800-364-1337

INTRODUCTION TO THAT EVERY ABILITY MAY BELONG MONTH

Please join us in celebrating That Every Ability May Belong Month with an emphasis on creating houses of worship and religious schools where individuals of all abilities *belong* as fellow missionary disciples, working *alongside* their brothers and sisters in faith.

Based on input from stakeholders, our former *Awareness Day* has been expanded to a month long *That Every Ability May Belong Month* with religious schools celebrating along with houses of faith. The goal is to set aside time to intentionally move from individuals with disabilities being present to individuals with disabilities *belonging* as co-workers in the Vineyard.

TEAM Belong is a ministry of Pathways.org, a Chicago based not for profit organization. TEAM Belong provides educational materials, events and grants to support congregations and religious schools as they create a sense of belonging for worshipers of all abilities.

We hope this workbook of prayers, educational materials and activities will encourage your participation in That Every Ability May Belong Month. Please visit our website, www.TEAMBelong.org, for more information on moving your community of faith from inclusion to belonging for individuals with disabilities.

Thank you!

Children's TEAM Belong Award winning drawing.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

COUNTDOWN TO TEAM BELONG MONTH.....	4
IDEAS TO WELCOME WORSHIPPERS OF ALL ABILITIES.....	5
TEAM BELONG MONTH WORSHIP SERVICE.....	6
BLESSING THE ASSEMBLY DURING TEAM BELONG MONTH ...	7
USING YOUR BULLETIN TO CREATE BELONGING.....	8
TEAM BELONG MONTH BULLETIN ARTICLES	9
HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE	10
KNOW YOUR DISABILITY ETIQUETTE	11
REFLECTING ON BELONGING	13
INVOLVING CHILDREN IN TEAM BELONG MONTH	14



Children's TEAM Belong Month artwork for a TEAM Belong Month Display.

On the cover clockwise from left: a wheelchair cutout, an automatic door opener and assistive listening devices are some of the access features that make it possible for people who happen to have disabilities to worship in their house of faith.

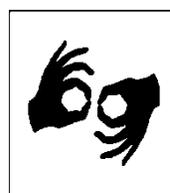
COUNTDOWN TO TEAM BELONG MONTH

Begin planning now for TEAM BELONG Month! Use the checklist below to get started. Visit www.TEAMBelong.org for helpful handouts.

- **Select a date and mark your congregation's calendar for your celebration of TEAM BELONG Month.**
- **Recruit a TEAM BELONG Ministry to raise awareness to the need for welcoming worshippers of all abilities. Introduce TEAM BELONG members to the congregation during TEAM BELONG Month. Use tips on starting an inclusion committee at www.TEAMBelong.org.**
- **Plan a series of bulletin articles for TEAM BELONG Month. Use this workbook and more ideas on www.TEAMBelong.org for suggestions.**
- **Survey your congregation to find out the needs of your members with our Survey of Congregant Needs or use the facilities survey in this workbook to determine how accessible you are. Announce access plans during TEAM BELONG Month.**
- **Nominate your house of faith for a TEAM BELONGS or a children's Junior TEAM BELONG Award of up to \$1,000 to help fund projects that welcome worshippers of abilities. Nomination packets and deadline info are available at www.TEAMBelong.org.**
- **Invite members of your congregation who happen to have disabilities to participate in ministries during TEAM BELONG Month. Provide accommodations and continue their participation throughout the year.**
- **Invite members of your congregation who happen to have disabilities to speak during TEAM BELONG Month about what belonging to your faith community means to them.**

IDEAS TO WELCOME WORSHIPPERS OF ALL ABILITIES

- Find out who uses a wheelchair in your congregation and make sure they can get into church, direct them to accessible seating and ask them if they need further assistance.
- Does your congregation include children with intellectual challenges in religious education programs and sacramental preparation with the necessary supports? Find out what you can do to help.
- Does your congregation give people with physical, intellectual or sensory challenges the opportunity to minister or volunteer? A personal invitation and providing accommodations can make participation a reality.
- Find out whether anyone in your congregation needs transportation to church. Then make arrangements for their transport. People who live in group homes or supported living arrangements and people with vision loss often do not have transportation on weekends.
- Does your congregation have trained greeters who make a special point to invite people with challenges to worship and then greet them when they come in? Why not volunteer to be a greeter?
- Is there a need for a sign language interpreter for those who communicate with sign language? Explore how you can make this happen. People in your congregation who use sign language would know where to find an interpreter.
- Use access symbols on print materials and signage to publicize your access features.



TEAM BELONG MONTH WORSHIP SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

(To be announced prior to worship service)

Today we join Pathways.org *That Every Ability May Belong* in celebrating TEAM BELONG Month. We actively and intentionally welcome people of all abilities in worship and ministries because we are all members of the Body of Christ. When we open our hearts and our community to the gifts each person brings we create belonging for people of all abilities.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR TEAM BELONG MONTH

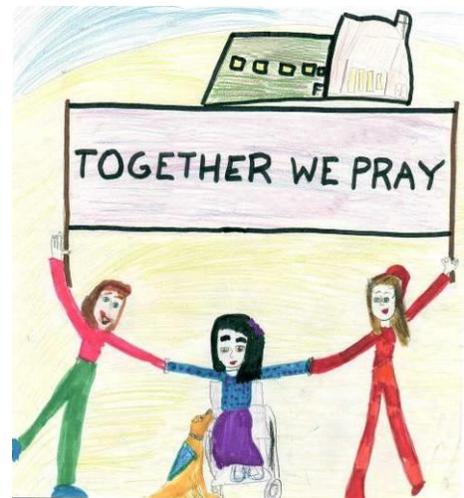
Open Doors by Sandy Martin (Sheet music is available for downloading at www.TEAMBelong.org)

PRAYER FOR AN OPEN HEART

Gracious God, you have fashioned each one of us according to your image and embraced each of us with your generous love, may we in turn open our hearts wide and welcome each other. Because you value and accept each one of us, may we also come to accept and value all those you have created. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR AWARENESS

God, Creator of all, help us to recognize that each of us has abilities and each of us has limitations. And yet we all have a part to play in bringing about Your Kingdom. You love each of us profoundly. In the spirit of gratitude and solidarity, we ask you to increase our awareness of both the gifts and the needs of those around us. Open our hearts, minds and doors to the gifts of every person. Help us to become truly welcoming communities where everyone can find a place at Your Table. We ask this in Your name, Amen.



Children's *Junior* TEAM BELONG Award winning

BLESSING THE ASSEMBLY DURING TEAM BELONG MONTH

Ask the assembly to please be seated.

Presider:

Loving God, in your wisdom you created your people to have a variety of talents and skills, needs and desires. Help us to receive both our skills and our limitations as part of your divine plan. And give us a heart that recognizes You in everyone we meet.

Extend your hand over the people.

Presider:

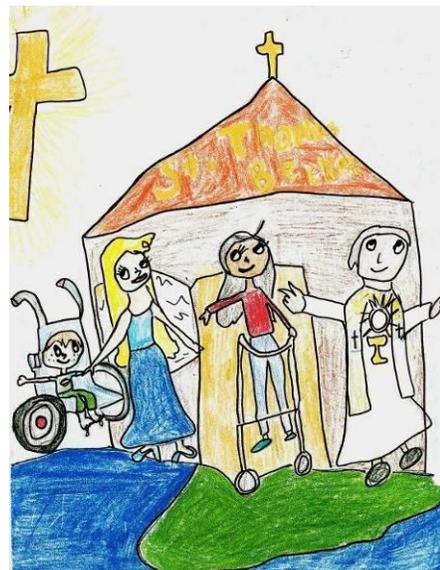
I call upon God to bless the unique blend of talents, skills and abilities that each of you brings to your family, your work, your neighborhood and your church community. May you always use these talents for the honor and glory of God. May they never separate you from God's ways, but help you to find true happiness in this life and joy in the life hereafter.

Continue extending your hand over the people.

Presider:

Heavenly Father, when your son, Jesus, walked this earth he empowered all those who believed. May we gain strength from his example and use both our talents and our limitations to help bring about your Reign. We ask this in confidence because we know you are at our side forever.

Response: Amen



Children's *Junior* TEAM BELONG Award winning drawing.

USING YOUR BULLETIN TO CREATE BELONGING

Your bulletin or worship aide can be a tool to intentionally create belonging for all abilities. Including hospitality information every week makes everyone feel welcome. The following example may give you ideas for a permanent hospitality section for your worship aid. Customize it with your congregation's access features.

WELCOME

Please make yourself at home. For your comfort and convenience, we would like you to know:

- The accessible rest rooms are located (_____).
- If you have difficulty approaching the altar for Holy Communion, please tell an usher, and Communion will be brought to you.
- If you need a large print worship aid, please ask an usher.
- If you need an assistive listening device, they are available. Please ask an usher.
- If there is any way we can be of service, please let us know by calling (_____) at (_____).



The United Methodist Church of Fredericktown, Ohio, used their \$1,000 team Belong grant for two padded glider chairs and one rocking chair to accommodate congregants with back, leg and sensory needs as well as mothers with infants.

TEAM BELONG MONTH BULLETIN ARTICLES

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

During TEAM BELONG Month assumptions about our worship community being a place where “all are welcome” are challenged. Can everyone truly participate? Is welcoming members of all abilities the work of the entire congregation? How do we sustain our efforts throughout the year so we don’t wait until the next TEAM BELONG Month to make changes?

Already as a faith community, we are working to take steps toward being more welcoming to worshippers of all abilities. However, this is not something our staff can do alone. It is the responsibility of the entire congregation to make a sense of belonging for all of our members a reality. While we all work through what it means to be an intentionally welcoming faith community and our attitudes begin to change, everyone must contribute to our mission of being a place where individuals of all abilities belong.

OPENING HEARTS

During TEAM BELONG Month, we renew our commitment to becoming a fully accessible faith community where all of our members are valued and can participate. TEAM BELONG Month reminds us to open our hearts to others and to recognize the gifts of every person. When we affirm one another’s gifts and talents we enrich our faith community. During TEAM BELONG Month we celebrate our progress toward becoming a caring, accessible and welcoming faith community.

BULLETIN SERIES

Download the series of eight educational bulletin items at www.TEAMBelong.org and place in bulletins, on websites or in newsletters so every congregant can do their part to welcome worshippers of all abilities.

How YOU Can Make a Difference

Reach Out with Compassion to Parishioners with Mental Illness

- End stigma: break the silence and talk respectfully about mental health conditions.
- Realize mental illnesses are medical conditions and are NOT due to personal weaknesses.
- Recognize that mental health conditions are treatable and recovery is possible.



HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

There are many things that you, as an individual, can do to help people of all abilities feel welcome in your house of faith.

1. I will treat ALL people as PEOPLE FIRST – as I would like to be treated.
2. I will SPEAK DIRECTLY to the person with a disability, not only to the nearby family member, companion, interpreter, or the canine companion.
3. I will offer to SHAKE HANDS when introduced to a person with a disability. (Persons with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb may shake hands. Shaking the left hand is okay, too.)
4. I will place myself at EYE LEVEL, in front, for easy conversation with a person in a wheelchair, with crutches, or with a walking frame.
5. I will OFFER ASSISTANCE AND WAIT until the offer is accepted. I will wait and then ask for instructions.
6. I will be PATIENT AND WAIT for the person with difficulty speaking, rather than speaking for the person. I may help by asking short questions that require short answers, a nod, or a shake of the head.
7. I will see the WHOLENESS OF SPIRIT beneath the surface of someone with a disability and overcome the tendency to turn away or ignore the person.
8. I will TREAT ADULTS with developmental disabilities AS ADULTS, not as children. I will use first names only when using the same familiarity for all persons.
9. I will get the attention of someone who is hearing-impaired by LIGHTLY TAPPING their elbow or shoulder, or by WAVING MY HAND. I will look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to establish if the person can read my lips.
10. I will guide a person with visual impairments by GIVING VERBAL CLUES to steps, curbs, escalators or doors.

KNOW YOUR DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What do you say when you meet a person with a disability?
How about “Hello?”
2. Because each person has gifts and abilities, ask a person with a disability to usher, to read, etc.
3. Speak directly to the person with a disability or difference, not only to the family member, companion, interpreter, or canine companion.
4. Ask the person with the disability if you can help. Respect any refusal.
5. Be sensitive to where a person wishes to receive Holy Communion – modify according to needs.
6. A warm smile and friendly conversation are very welcoming.
7. Feel comfortable using words like see, walk, and listen with persons with disabilities.
8. Use people-first language such as “people with disabilities” NOT “the disabled.”
9. Offer large-print prayer books, bulletins, or assistive listening devices.
10. Use the accessibility logo. Include the words “All Are Welcome.”



**ALL ARE
WELCOME**

WELCOMING MEMBERS WITH BLINDNESS OR VISION LOSS

1. Identify yourself when you greet the person. Tell the person when you are about to leave.
2. Talk normally, using your customary voice and typical expressions like “See you later.”
3. Offer your arm when assisting; the same way an usher does at a wedding.
4. Give verbal cues such as “We are going through a doorway.” Explain the traffic pattern with clear, calm instructions such as “Go up the center aisle.”

WELCOMING MEMBERS WITH MOBILITY DIFFERENCES

1. **Speak directly to the person.**
2. **Offer assistance, but accept a “No, thank you.”**
3. **Sit down so that you are at eye-level if the conversation will last more than a few minutes.**
4. **Shake hands or lightly touch a shoulder in the same way you would with others.**
5. **Keep a person’s wheelchair or walker near the person. A person who uses a chair may be able to walk but still needs the chair.**

WELCOMING MEMBERS WITH DEAFNESS OR HEARING LOSS

1. **Face the person. He/she will appreciate seeing your facial expression and may read your lips. Your face, gestures, and body movements help in understanding.**
2. **Move closer rather than shout.**
3. **Speak clearly and slowly. Writing may be necessary.**

WELCOMING MEMBERS WITH SPEECH DIFFERENCES

1. **Be patient. Let a person talk at his/her own pace.**
2. **Remember a person may have communication means other than speech, such as writing.**
3. **Ask questions that require short answers or a shake of the head. If you cannot understand, rephrase the question.**
4. **Repeat or paraphrase what was said in order to confirm that you understand.**

WELCOMING MEMBERS WITH COGNITIVE DIFFERENCES

1. **Greet the person and interact normally.**
2. **Keep things simple and uncomplicated.**
3. **Treat people equally regardless of their participation level. For example, if a Sunday bulletin is distributed, give to all.**

Please duplicate and share with others.

REFLECTING ON BELONGING

So often we think we have done our job if individuals with disabilities are present. But that is only the first step. So much more work follows to ensure that individuals who happen to have disabilities experience true belonging.

Are people with disabilities and their families ...	What are we doing well in this area?	What could we do better or differently in this area?
PRESENT		
INVITED		
WELCOMED		
KNOWN		
ACCEPTED		
SUPPORTED		
CARED FOR		
BEFRIENDED		
NEEDED		
LOVED		

What next steps should we take to address these areas well?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

ABOUT THAT EVERY ABILITY MAY BELONG

TEAM Belong: That Every Ability May Belong is a national, interreligious program that provides information and educational materials to congregations of all faith traditions about access and **TEAM W: That Every Ability May Worship**.

For more information about ***TEAM Belong: That Every Ability May Belong*** visit our website at www.TEAMBelong.org

THAT EVERY ABILITY MAY BELONG EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOADING AT www.TEAMBelong.org

- **TEAM BELONG Awards application packets**
- **Junior TEAM BELONG Awards application packets**
- **Different Gifts, Same Spirit Religious Education Lesson Plan Series**
- **TEAM BELONG Month Prayer Card (4 per sheet with icon)**
- **The Stages of Belonging**
- **TEAM BELONG Month Workbooks, Roman Catholic Edition**
- **Inclusion Shabbat Workbook for Jewish Congregations**
- **TEAM BELONG Month Workbook for Episcopal Congregations**
- **TEAM BELONG Month Workbook for Protestant Congregations**
- **TEAM BELONG Month Workbook, Eastern Orthodox Christian Edition**