

# Different Gifts, But the Same Spirit

## JR. HIGH CATECHIST

### INTRODUCTION

This lesson will enable the catechist and students to explore the uniqueness of each person with a special focus on people with disabilities and their inclusion in our church.

### OBJECTIVES OF THIS LESSON

Students will:

- reflect on inclusion of people with disabilities through stories and experiences;
- discuss the gifts we bring to the Body of Christ using a passage from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians; and
- develop an action plan to assist them in becoming more aware of ways to be inclusive.

### PREPARE YOURSELF

Read 1 Cor. 12:4-11, the scriptural basis for this lesson. Practice using "people-first" language, always emphasizing the person and his or her abilities before the disability. For example: a boy who uses a wheelchair, a girl who walks with crutches, or a man who is blind. Pathways Awareness Foundation's 20-minute video, *Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors*, is a helpful starting point for thinking about inclusion. The video and its accompanying booklet may be available in your parish library. If not, you may schedule a free screening with a Pathways representative.



### PREPARE MATERIALS

- Bible
- index cards or paper of same size
- pens
- paper to back the shields
- colored markers

### TEACHING HINTS

1. To begin this lesson, ask the students to discuss what inclusion means. Has anyone experienced being excluded?
2. Read together the first paragraph of the story, *The Gifts We Have*.
3. Give students about 5 minutes to fill in the list of talents (student lesson page one).



8. Look at the challenge questions and discuss your own church.

- Who ministers in your church? Is there anyone with a visible difference?
- Are missalettes available in large print for everyone?
- Are there loops or other assistive devices for people with hearing difficulties?
- Are there accessible pews throughout the church?
- Is the altar accessible?
- Are there curb cuts in the sidewalks outside the church?
- Are the restrooms accessible?

As a class, take a walk around the parish grounds and note what you see. Upon returning to the classroom, work together on forming a plan to place the questions before the right parish organizations.

For example, if there are not ministers with disabilities in your parish, go to the Liturgy team and ask what can be done to change that. If the church building needs to be more accessible, go to the parish council and raise the questions.

9. End the session by agreeing on an action that can be accomplished by your class. Also agree on actions for each student to take steps to

personally be more inclusive, like by using people-first language.

10. Join together in a prayer!

Dear Lord,

We thank you for the many different gifts you have given to all of us.

We thank you for inviting all to your table.

Help us to have open hearts to reach all those who want to join us.

Help us to have open minds to begin to know better the gifts that each person brings to our family.

Help us to open the doors of your church for all people.

We know your love is for each and every one of us!

AMEN.



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