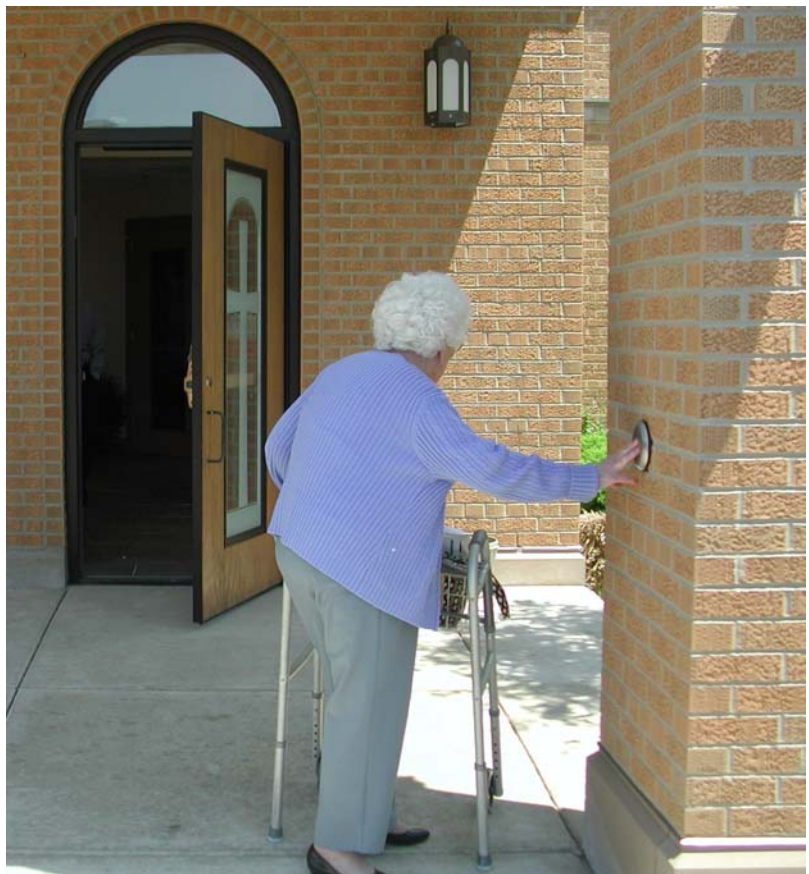




# INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY WORKBOOK

2009 Roman Catholic Edition

PATHWAYS AWARENESS • OPEN HEARTS OPEN MINDS  
creating access and inclusion in worship  
every day of the year



**LOOK INSIDE FOR**

- Liturgy Planning • Children's Activities
- St. Damien de Veuster

## A LETTER FROM PATHWAYS AWARENESS

Summer 2009

Dear Religious Leader:

Pathways Awareness inaugurated the *Open Hearts, Open Minds* inclusion movement in response to a young man's unfulfilled desire to be an altar server. Since then the program has grown into a national, interreligious initiative. We have assisted congregations across the United States to welcome worshippers of all abilities into liturgy, ministry and leadership roles with our educational materials, Open Hearts Awards cash grants and annual Inclusion Awareness Day.

We invite you to observe **Inclusion Awareness Day** in your faith community on **October 11, 2009** or an alternate date this fall. The interreligious Inclusion Awareness Day Workbooks of planning materials, posted on the Pathways Awareness website, [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org), are provided to encourage participation.

Our faith communities are strengthened when we provide accommodations so members of all abilities can participate. Thank you for opening hearts, minds and doors to worshippers of all abilities, not only on Inclusion Awareness Day, but every day of the year.

Sincerely,



Shirley W. Ryan  
Chairman

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*Acknowledgements: We wish to thank the Diocese of Honolulu for sharing their materials on Blessed Damien de Veuster. Please visit their website at [www.fatherdamien.com](http://www.fatherdamien.com) for more information.*

*The image of the icon of the Trinity on the Inclusion Awareness Day prayer card is used compliments of the Blessed Isaac of Syria Skete, Boscobel, Wisconsin, [www.skete.com](http://www.skete.com).*

## INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY ACTIVITIES

Listed below are ideas for your Inclusion Awareness Day event. Use the materials in this workbook to plan your parish celebration.

- With the approval of your pastor, designate the weekend of October 11 as Inclusion Awareness Day or select an alternate date this fall.
- Plan liturgies that focus on the gospel message of inclusion (see pp. 13-17). Ask homilists to preach about Blessed Damien de Veuster and inclusion (see pp. 14-16). Invite a parishioner to give a Communion reflection about what inclusion at your parish means to them.
- Plan an Inclusion Awareness Day reception after masses with children's activities that communicate welcome and inclusion for all. See *I Am "Thumb" Body* and the paper doll activity in this workbook. Invite your youth group to assist (see pp. 18-20).
- Place articles in your bulletin about Inclusion Awareness Day. See the sample bulletin articles, *How You Can Make a Difference* and quotes from *The Vulnerable Journey* by Father Henri Nouwen in this workbook (see pp. 6-11).
- Print and cut apart the Inclusion Awareness Day prayer card available at [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org). Distribute on Inclusion Awareness Day.
- Send out a press release to local media outlets to publicize your Inclusion Awareness Day events. See sample press release in this workbook (see p. 21).

## INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY PRAYER CARD

A PDF of the Inclusion Awareness Day prayer card is available at [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org). Download, print the prayer card at your local office supply store, on card stock, double sided and have the cards cut apart. Distribute the prayer cards to worshippers on Inclusion Awareness Day. See page 5 for an explanation of how the icon of the Trinity relates to Inclusion Awareness Day.

## ICON OF THE HOLY TRINITY BY RUBLEV

Father Henri Nouwen laid the spiritual foundation for the Pathways Awareness *Open Hearts, Open Minds* movement with his keynote address *The Vulnerable Journey* at the 1996 Pathways Awareness inclusion conference.



The icon of the Holy Trinity was selected for the Inclusion Awareness Day prayer card because it is a source of meditation and prayer on the Trinity, hospitality and inclusion. In his book, *Behold the Beauty of the Lord: Praying with Icons*, Father Nouwen explains that icons do not reveal themselves at first site but only gradually, after patient, prayerful reflection. They draw us into closer communion with God. “I have memorized them as I have memorized the Our Father and the Hail Mary, and I pray with them wherever I go.”

Nouwen describes the Trinity icon as an invitation to know God, not through our intellect, but through our hearts, a more inclusive approach to prayer. He writes, “As we place ourselves in front of the icon in prayer, we come to experience a gentle invitation to participate in the intimate conversation that is taking place among the three divine angels and to join them around the table.” Nouwen says that in gazing on the icon we are beckoned to enter a house of love that “has no boundaries and embraces everyone who wants to dwell there.” The image of the three figures extends beyond the picture to include the viewer. The icon invites each of us to join the three figures to complete the image. We are all welcome to participate. We are all invited to take our place at the Table. We are all included.

Source: “*Behold the Beauty of the Lord: Praying with Icons*” by Henri J.M. Nouwen, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2007.

## QUOTES FROM FATHER HENRI NOUWEN'S *The Vulnerable Journey*

**“The great mystery of our faith is that we get closest to God when we are willing to be vulnerable, when we are willing to say, ‘I need somebody else’.”**

*Father Henri Nouwen  
The Vulnerable Journey*

**“I suddenly realized that it was not in strength and power that God was coming to me, but in weakness.”**

*Father Henri Nouwen  
The Vulnerable Journey*

**“One of the great gifts of people with visible disabilities is that they help those of us with invisible disabilities to get in touch with them.”**

*Father Henri Nouwen  
The Vulnerable Journey*

**“You have to rediscover that the church is a fellowship of the weak, that the church is a place where God shows his unconditional love through poverty, the poverty of Jesus and the poverty of the followers of Jesus, and that the most poor and the most weak belong right in the center, right in the heart.”**

*Father Henri Nouwen  
The Vulnerable Journey*

From: *The Vulnerable Journey* by Father Henri Nouwen, Pathways Awareness, Chicago, IL, 2006. Available in DVD and CD format from Pathways Awareness. Call 1-800-955-2445 or order online at [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org).

## **BULLETIN ARTICLES BEFORE INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY**

On \_\_\_\_\_ (insert date and parish) \_\_\_\_\_ will join other congregations in observing Inclusion Awareness Day. Inclusion Awareness Day is an integral part of the Pathways Awareness *Open Hearts, Open Minds* movement. The goal is to raise awareness to the gifts received when accommodations are provided so worshippers of all abilities can participate in liturgy, ministries, fellowship and leadership roles.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Insert name of parish) \_\_\_\_\_ welcomes parishioners of all abilities every day and seeks to enable everyone's full participation. By observing Inclusion Awareness Day we hope to educate our faith community about the needs of some of our parishioners as well as to recognize the gifts our community receives when all can worship and minister together.

AND/OR

Inclusion Awareness Day focuses on awareness, acceptance and inclusion for visitors and members of varying abilities in our faith community. Our participation in Inclusion Awareness Day affirms our commitment to making our place of worship welcoming and accessible to all individuals in our community.

October 11, 2009 (or your parish's alternate date) is Inclusion Awareness Day. That day we will focus on access and inclusion through prayer, preaching and reflection. Participation in Inclusion Awareness Day is just one step toward making our church more accessible. To have a real and lasting impact, we must extend our efforts beyond this special day. Together we can open our community to people of all abilities so that everyone can participate in worship, ministries and fellowship every day of the year. (Follow this article by a bulleted list of accommodations you provide such as large print missals, assistive listening devices, accommodations for Celiac Sprue etc. and how parishioners access these accommodations).

*Contributed by Old St. Patrick's Church, Chicago, IL*

## **BULLETIN ARTICLE ON INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY**

Today we join other congregations in celebrating Inclusion Awareness Day, an integral part of the Pathways Awareness *Open Hearts, Open Minds* movement to include people of all abilities in worship and ministry. The movement encourages us to look beyond a person's outward appearance and first impressions and open ourselves to his or her gifts.

Pathways Awareness *Open Hearts, Open Minds* began in April 1996 with a conference on inclusion called by the late Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, then Archbishop of Chicago. The conference was the origin of a dramatic shift in public attitude toward including parishioners of all abilities in liturgy, ministries, fellowship, and leadership roles in parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Today the initiative has grown into an interreligious movement with congregations across the United States participating.

The 1996 conference featured one of the last public appearances of the late Father Henri Nouwen, noted theologian and author. In his energized, animated presentation, *The Vulnerable Journey*, Father Nouwen led conference participants on a spiritual discovery centered on acknowledging and embracing lessons that lie beneath the vulnerabilities in all of us. *The Vulnerable Journey* laid the spiritual foundation for the Pathways Awareness *Open Hearts, Open Minds* interreligious inclusion movement that continues today. The *Open Hearts, Open Minds* program has awarded over \$90,000 in grants to congregations across the United States for access and inclusion projects. The annual Pathways Awareness Inclusion Awareness Day celebrates the progress made on creating accessible and inclusive faith communities where all can participate. Today our faith community joins the effort to open hearts, minds and doors so that all may worship.

*The complete keynote address, The Vulnerable Journey by Father Henri Nouwen, is available from Pathways Awareness in DVD and CD format. To order call 1-800-955-2445 or visit [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org).*

## TEN WAYS TO AFFIRM PARISHIONERS OF ALL ABILITIES

1. Form a well-rounded inclusion committee under one of the commissions of your parish council to keep inclusion in the forefront of parish life.
2. Include children, youth and adults of all abilities in liturgical ministries as ushers, musicians, choir members, altar servers, gift bearers, lectors and ministers of communion by providing and publicizing accommodations.
3. Educate the entire congregation about disability issues by periodically running pieces in your bulletin about hospitality and welcome. See “How You Can Make a Difference” in this workbook.
4. Train ushers and lay leaders as role models to include and welcome worshippers of all abilities and their families. See “Guidelines for Ushers and Lay Leaders” in this workbook.
5. Reinterpret disability narratives in the scriptures as symbolic “healing” stories for all, not “curing” stories.
6. Refer to saints and biblical leaders who had disabilities and their contributions in homilies, sermons and religious education classes.
7. Place an “inclusion box” in the worship space with paper and pencils for suggestions for better inclusion.
8. Include children of all abilities in religious education classes with appropriate supports. Publicize that all children are welcome.
9. Consult parishioners who use wheelchairs, walkers or crutches when planning renovations or additions.
10. List accessible features and supports available in a permanent “For your comfort and convenience...” section of the bulletin or worship aide.

## HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

*There are many things that you, as an individual, can do to help people with disabilities 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.

## **GUIDELINES FOR USHERS AND LAY LEADERS**

### 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, lector etc. and provide supports needed.
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 PARISHIONERS 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 PARISHIONERS 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 PARISHIONERS 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 PARISHIONERS 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 PARISHIONERS WITH COGNITIVE DIFFERENCES

1. Greet the person and interact normally.
2. Keep things simple and uncomplicated.
3. Treat people equally regardless of participation level; give prayer books or hymnals to all; allow everyone a chance to speak.

*Please duplicate and share with others.*

## **SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY**

A Place at the Table	Murray/True
Plenty Good Room	Traditional Spiritual arr. Glover
Ubi Caritas	Browning
One Lord	True
Holy Is God	Lawton
All Are Welcome	Haugen
Sing a New Church	NETTLETON/Dufner
I Need You to Survive	Walker

*Contributed by Old St. Patrick's Church, Chicago, Illinois*

*Visit [http://www.inclusioninworship.org/open\\_awareness\\_day.php](http://www.inclusioninworship.org/open_awareness_day.php) and scroll down to download the sheet music and audio of the song "Open Doors" by Sandy Martin.*

## **READINGS FOR INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY**

October 11, 2009  
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Reading 1  
Wisdom 7:7-11

Responsorial Psalm  
Ps 90:12-13, 14-15, 16-17

Reading II  
Heb 4:12-13

Gospel  
Mk 10:17-30 or 10:17-27  
The story of the rich young man.

## **HOMILY HINTS FOR INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY**

Inclusion Awareness Day, October 11, 2009, is the date for the canonization of Blessed Damien de Veuster. You may wish to preach about Blessed Damien's life and work as it relates to the message of today's readings and Inclusion Awareness Day.

- Unlike the young man in today's reading, Damien had the courage to live the gospel message to the fullest. How can I take action on Inclusion Awareness Day to live the gospel message of inclusion to the fullest?
- Damien showed compassion for people who were marginalized by society. He believed that all people were made in the image and likeness of God and he worked for equitable treatment for all people. How can I make sure everyone, regardless of abilities, feels welcome in my faith community?
- Damien created community by compassionately being with others. Can I build community by coming together with the members of my parish to make it possible for all to participate?
- Damien affirmed the dignity of people who were marginalized. How can I affirm individuals in my parish who may feel marginalized?
- Damien brought the most vulnerable people of his time to their place at the Lord's Table. What accommodations are needed at my parish to bring everyone to their place at the Table?
- Damien worked in solidarity with the people quarantined on Molokai. Do I work in solidarity with the members of my faith community who happen to need accommodations to participate? Do I recognize the contributions everyone can make? Do I recognize my own vulnerabilities?

*Adapted from Blessed Damien Curriculum (grades 9-12), Diocese of Honolulu website, [www.fatherdamien.com](http://www.fatherdamien.com).*

## **PREACHING WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT ABOUT BLESSED DAMIEN DE VEUSTER AND THOSE HE SERVED**

"While I - and many others who call Kalaupapa\* home – were excited to hear that Father Damien de Veuster will be canonized, it was also deeply offensive to once again see the hurtful terms, "leper priest" and "leper colony" used in some of the local media to describe Damien and my

beloved home.” (The late Kuulei Bell, resident and former postmistress of Kalaupapa, Molokai)

General Rule: Avoid the use of the term “leper”. Use people first language instead and say “a person with Hansen’s disease”.

The word leprosy remains acceptable because it is the name of a disease. But Hansen’s disease is the correct term, named after the doctor who identified the bacillus that causes the disease. Hansen’s disease has been curable for many years (everyone at Kalaupapa has long been cured).

Kalaupapa is not a “colony”. Refer to it as a “settlement” or a “community”.

The feast of Blessed Damien is May 10th; the day in 1873 that he set foot on Molokai. That feast will now be celebrated on the church calendar universally after canonization on October 11, 2009.

*Source: Frequently Asked Questions, Diocese of Honolulu website, [www.fatherdamien.com](http://www.fatherdamien.com).*

\*Kalaupapa is pronounced

KA (RHYMES WITH "MA") - LAU (RHYMES WITH "COW") - PAPA.

It is a peninsula on the north coast of the island of Molokai where 8,000 Hawaiians with Hansen’s disease were quarantined over a period of one hundred years from 1866 until 1969.

## **BLESSED DAMIEN DE VEUSTER (1840 – 1889)**



Joseph de Veuster was born in Tremelo, Belgium, in 1840. He entered the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary when he was eighteen years old, taking the name of Damian, a fourth-century physician and martyr. Dedicated to bringing the compassionate love of Jesus and Mary to the world, the missionary order sent priests to then remote areas of the world. Damien’s brother Pamphile, also a member of the order, contracted typhoid and was unable to go to the Hawaiian

Islands as a missionary. Damien asked to take his place. Damien was ordained a priest in May 1864, two months after arriving in Honolulu, Hawaii, and began a ten year ministry on the "Big Island".

During an epidemic of Hansen's disease in 1863, the Hawaiian government quarantined people suspected of having the then incurable disease to a settlement on the island of Molokai. Several of Father Damien's parishioners were forcibly sent to the island by the Department of Health. In solidarity with his exiled parishioners, Father Damien volunteered for three months each year to minister to the people banished to Molokai. After seeing the poor living conditions, lack of medical care and suffering of the people exiled on Molokai, Damien asked his bishop to allow him to remain permanently on the island to care for the physical, medical and spiritual needs of the residents. He served on the island of Molokai from 1873 to 1889.

Damien became an advocate for the citizens of Molokai. He obtained government funding for the construction of homes, an addition to the inadequate hospital, an orphanage, a school, roads, a pipeline for fresh water and a wharf during the sixteen years he ministered to his people. He built a church and a parish. He transformed a desolate, isolated and inhuman place into a community of hope.

Damien contracted Hansen's disease and died of its complications in 1889 at the age of 49.

*Source: The Life of Damien, Diocese of Honolulu website, [www.fatherdamien.com](http://www.fatherdamien.com)*

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

May we include those in worship who are not able to be with us today because of illness. Bring healing to them and bless those who love and care for them. They are with us in spirit as we pray especially for:

*List those parishioners who are ill.*

We Pray to the Lord

Response: Lord Hear Our Prayer

*Contributed by Old St. Patrick's Church, Chicago, Illinois*

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. With a spirit of compassion and solidarity, we ask you to increase our awareness of both the gifts and the needs of those around us.

We Pray to the Lord

Response: Lord Hear Our Prayer

Compassionate Father; help us to become truly welcoming communities where everyone can find their way to Your Table. Open our hearts to the gifts of every person and help us to acknowledge the vulnerabilities we all have.

We Pray to the Lord

Response: Lord Hear Our Prayer

For all of us assembled here, may we emulate the virtues of compassion and justice lived by Blessed Damien de Veuster, who is canonized today. Help us to bring the most vulnerable among us to their place at Your Table and to the center of parish life.

We Pray to the Lord

Response: Lord Hear Our Prayer

## **INVOLVING TEENS IN INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY**

Use the ideas below to involve teens in Inclusion Awareness Day.

### Sensitivity Training

Set a date for a sensitivity training meeting and invite teens to attend. Use the *Guidelines for Ushers and Lay Leaders* and *How You Can Make a Difference* in this workbook to instruct teens on proper disability etiquette. Designate which teens will act as greeters at church doors to distribute prayer cards and as helpers with children's activities in the social hall.

### Prayer Cards

Download the prayer card from [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org), photocopy or print on card stock and cut apart. Invite teens to serve as greeters, distributing the prayer cards as they greet parishioners on Inclusion Awareness Day.

### Assisting with Materials for Children's Activities for Inclusion Awareness Day

Ask teens to create paper dolls for children's doll activity on Inclusion Awareness Day. Use the template and instructions of Page 19 in this workbook.

### Assisting with Supervision of Children's Activities on Inclusion Awareness Day

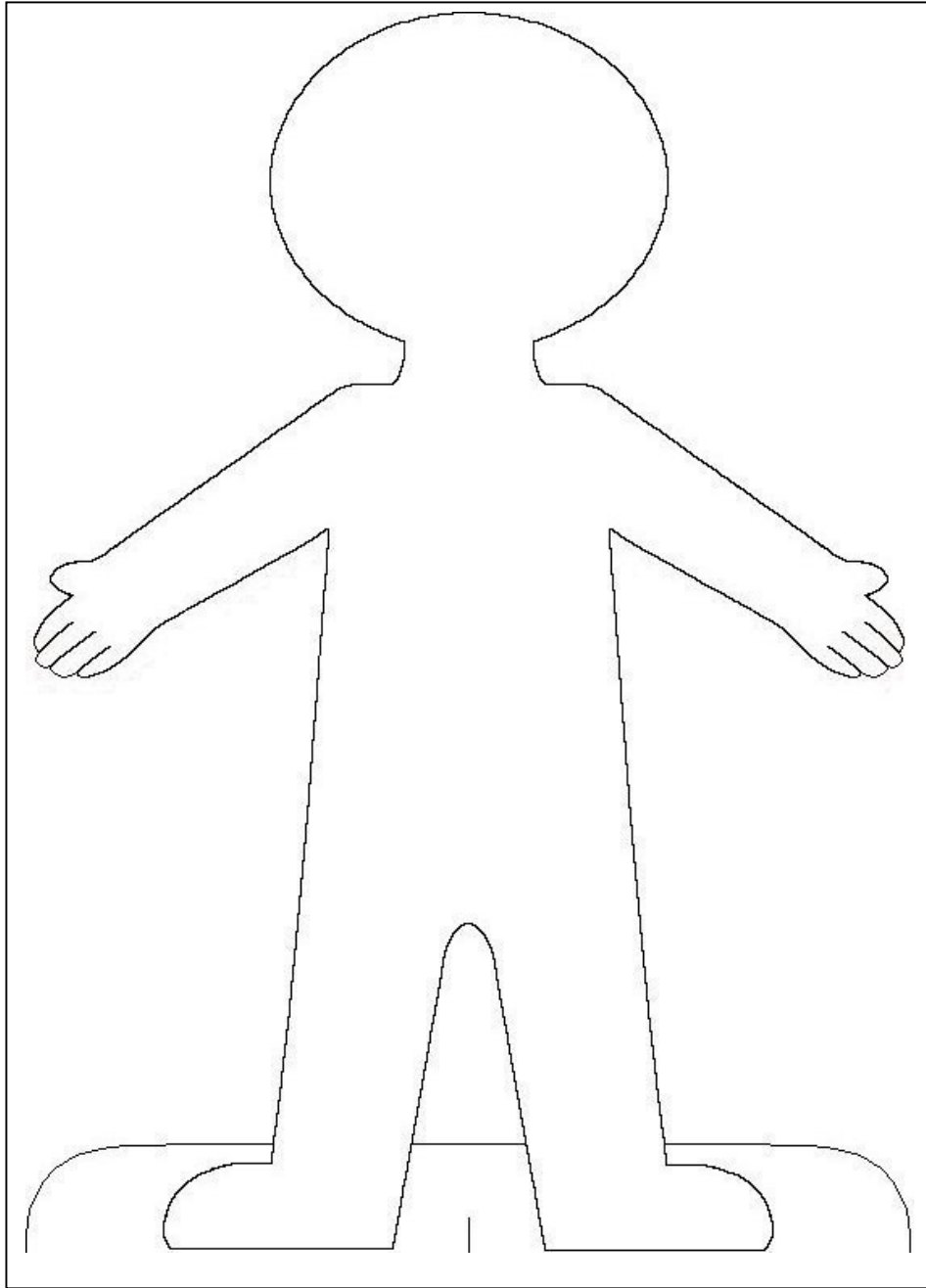
Explain the paper doll activity and the I Am "Thumb" Body activity to teens. Ask teens to sign up to help set up the activities, assist the children of the parish in these activities and clean up afterwards.

## Cut Out Dolls for Inclusion Awareness Day Paper Doll Activity

### Materials:

Stiff card stock paper, scissors, ball point pens, paper doll templates, hole punch, yarn

Trace paper doll outline onto white cardstock and cut out one paper doll for each child participating. Punch holes in hands of dolls. Cut lengths of yarn long enough to tie dolls together at the hands.



## INVOLVING CHILDREN IN INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY

### I AM 'THUMB' BODY ACTIVITY

#### Materials:

Large table  
Large pieces of banner paper  
Stamp pads in various colors  
(create your own using small sponges and food colors)

Black Thin Tipped Felt Markers  
Disposable wipes to clean thumbs

Spread the large sheets of banner paper on the table. Write "I Am Thumb Body" in the center of each banner in large letters. Invite children and adults to coat their thumbs/fingers lightly on the stamp pads and press their prints onto the large banner paper to make a head and a body. Use the markers to draw eyes, nose, mouth, hair, arms, legs, clothes etc. on your thumbprint portrait. Sign your name below your portrait. Clean off thumbs with wipes. When each paper is covered with thumbprint people, display the banner for all to see.

### PAPER DOLL ACTIVITY

#### Materials:

Roll of banner art paper  
Paper dolls pre-cut and punched  
by Youth Group

Yarn pieces pre-cut by Youth  
Group  
Crayons

Set up tables with supplies. Invite children to decorate a pre-cut paper doll of themselves with crayons. String dolls together by inserting yarn into holes in hands of dolls and tying together. Write "We are All Different Yet All Alike in the Eyes of the Lord" in large letters on the banner paper. Attach the yarn joined dolls to the banner and display for all to see.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL ACTIVITY

Distribute the *Different Gifts, But the Same Spirit Lesson Plans* from [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org) to all catechists. Ask them to use the lessons during religious education classes on or closest to Inclusion Awareness Day.

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Use this sample press release to publicize your congregation's Inclusion Awareness Day celebration. Fill in your congregation's information and send the press release to the religion editor of your neighborhood newspaper several days before your event. Follow up with a call to see if the paper will cover your event.

**For Immediate Release**  
**(Date)**

**Contact:**  
**(Your name)**  
**(Your phone and email)**

### **Local Congregation Celebrates Inclusion Awareness Day** *Members take steps to welcome worshippers of all abilities*

(Your town), (Your state) – On \_\_\_\_ (insert date and parish) \_\_\_\_ will join other area congregations in observing Inclusion Awareness Day. Inclusion Awareness Sunday is an integral part of the Pathways Awareness *Open Hearts, Open Minds* movement that raises awareness to the need for accommodations so people of all abilities can participate in worship and ministry.

\_\_\_\_ (Insert name of parish) \_\_\_\_ welcomes worshippers of all abilities and seeks to enable their full participation in the life of the church. By observing Inclusion Awareness Day we hope to raise awareness to the need for accommodations so that all may participate and share their gifts.

*(Name and address of your congregation) will (list your events, e.g.: have a special liturgy, bless new accessible features, etc.) to showcase how people with disabilities are welcomed every day of the year.*

*(Insert the name and title of your religious leader and a quote, e.g. "In the past year our congregation has made a conscious effort to make our facilities accessible. We are delighted that we can open our doors to all.").*

For more information about Inclusion Awareness Day visit [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org) or contact Pathways Awareness at 1-800-955-445 or [friends@pathwaysawareness.org](mailto:friends@pathwaysawareness.org).

The Inclusion Awareness Day Workbook is a publication of the Pathways Awareness *Open Hearts, Open Minds* movement. The national, interreligious *Open Hearts, Open Minds* program provides information and educational materials about access and inclusion in worship to congregations of all communions.

Visit [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org) or call 1-800-955-2445 for more information about:

- The Pathways Awareness annual Chicago area and National Open Hearts and Junior Open Hearts Awards with cash grants of up to \$1,000 for congregational inclusion efforts. Deadline for applications is August 1<sup>st</sup>. Grants are announced on Inclusion Awareness Day. Nomination forms available at [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org).
- The *Open Hearts, Open Minds* DVD and Idea Guide featuring practical ways to include worshippers of all abilities.
- *The Vulnerable Journey* DVD/CD by Father Henri Nouwen.
- Inclusion Awareness Day planning materials.

### **INCLUSION RESOURCES FROM PATHWAYS AWARENESS**

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