

INDICATORS OF BELONGING

The following assessment is an adaptation of Erik Carter's *Indicators of Welcome Tool* as found in:

Carter, Erik W. *Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families and Congregations*. Baltimore, Md: Paul H. Brookes Publishing, 2010.

We encourage you to use this guide as you begin to get a sense of the ways in which people experience belonging in your church community, and next steps to address potential barriers. To explore other helpful resources, read Erik Carter's book and visit us online at www.christian-horizons.org/churches.

A. Perspectives

Whose perspectives were sought as part of this process?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clergy | <input type="checkbox"/> Community members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People with disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Service or support providers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family members | <input type="checkbox"/> Other congregation members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children/youth leader(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worship leader(s) | |

B. Presence and Participation

1. What steps have we taken to connect with people within our congregation living with a disability?

2. What steps have we taken to connect with people beyond our congregation living with a disability?

3. To what extent are people with developmental disabilities, as well as their families, actively participating in the following aspects of our congregational life? *(please complete the checklist on the following page)*

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| ASPECT | ACTIVELY | SOMETIMES | NEVER | UNCERTAIN | COMMENTS |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Worship services | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Sacraments & Rituals | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Fellowship Events | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Adult Religious Education | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Life Groups & Bible Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Children's Religious Education Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Youth Groups & Young Adult Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Summer Camps | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Greeters and Ushers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Choir or Worship Team Members | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Congregational Committees | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Outreach Ministries | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Congregation-sponsored Schools | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Leisure, Recreation, and Social Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| *Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

** Other activities members of your congregation typically participate in*

4. What barriers seem to be hindering their involvement in these areas?

C. Architectural and Physical Accessibility

How accessible are the following areas of our building and grounds? Can they be navigated easily by people using wheelchairs, walkers, and scooters, as well as other adaptive equipment?

| <i>HOW ACCESSIBLE ARE:</i> | TOTALLY | SOMEWHAT | NOT AT ALL | UNCERTAIN | COMMENTS |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Sanctuaries and other worship spaces | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Platforms/stages and pulpits | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Classrooms and meeting rooms | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Fellowship areas | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Nursery | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Washrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Playgrounds and recreation areas | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Gymnasium | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Parking lots and sidewalks | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Doorways and hallways | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Congregational offices | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Kitchen and eating areas | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| School building and daycare centre | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Summer camps | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| *Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

** Other locations within your congregation that visitors or members might encounter.*

Which three architectural barriers are the most pressing?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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D. Questions of Belonging

Read the following statements in each section of congregational life. To what extent does each statement describe our congregation? If you are not sure, mark *Uncertain*.

1. Worship Services

| INDICATOR | TOTALLY | SOMEWHAT | NOT AT ALL | UNCERTAIN |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Greeters, ushers, and other worship assistants know how to extend welcome and offer assistance to people with disabilities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People with disabilities are supported to sit with friends, family, or whomever they choose. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Faith partners are available to sit with, befriend, and support people with disabilities, if desired. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Worship experiences are designed to engage multiple senses and allow for participation in various ways. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Congregational leaders are willing to explore alternate ways for participating in worship and the sacraments, as necessary. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People with disabilities are contributing to worship services in varied ways, such as greeters or choir members. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The congregation expresses comfort with people who worship in different ways (e.g., making noises, rocking, flapping their hands). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The congregation is periodically asked about chemical sensitivities, food allergies, or other environmental issues that impact involvement. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Additional comments or considerations:

INDICATORS OF BELONGING

2. Religious Education

| INDICATOR | TOTALLY | SOMEWHAT | NOT AT ALL | UNCERTAIN |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Children with and without disabilities participate in activities and classes together. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Activities are adapted and supports are provided so that children with disabilities can participate in activities to their greatest extent possible. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Religious curricula appeals to children who learn, participate, and contribute in a variety of ways. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Basic information, training, and support are provided to lay volunteers who work with children with disabilities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teachers and helpers are ready to include children with disabilities in their classrooms. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Youth with disabilities participate in preparation classes for membership (e.g. baptism) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Youth with disabilities are welcomed into youth programs and are a part of a small group. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Adults with disabilities are included in religious education programs. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Additional comments or considerations:

INDICATORS OF BELONGING



3. Service

| INDICATOR | TOTALLY | SOMEWHAT | NOT AT ALL | UNCERTAIN |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| People with disabilities contribute on planning teams and serve in leadership positions. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Efforts are made to discern the gifts of people with disabilities and connect them with opportunities to share their gifts. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People with disabilities are serving in varied capacities <i>within</i> the congregation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People with disabilities are serving in varied capacities <i>beyond</i> the congregation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Additional comments or considerations:

INDICATORS OF BELONGING

4. Outreach

| INDICATOR | TOTALLY | SOMEWHAT | NOT AT ALL | UNCERTAIN |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Intentional efforts are made to invite people with disabilities and their families to engage in congregational life. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Families feel welcomed and supported as members of the church. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Accessibility symbols and images of people with disabilities are included in our materials and advertising. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Transportation to congregational activities is provided or arranged for individuals who cannot drive. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Visitation programs are extended to people with disabilities and their families, as well as those who are homebound. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We actively seek out ways to address unmet needs of people with disabilities living in our community. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Members are informed of opportunities to support people with disabilities within and outside of the congregation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Additional comments or considerations:

INDICATORS OF BELONGING

5. General Awareness

| INDICATOR | TOTALLY | SOMEWHAT | NOT AT ALL | UNCERTAIN |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Our policies and practices clearly communicate our desire to worship and serve alongside people with disabilities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Our vision to be inclusive is frequently shared with members and broadcast throughout the community. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reflection on our accessibility and hospitality is conducted at least annually. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Events promoting Belonging are observed each year. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Basic disability awareness is communicated through sermons, bulletin inserts, newsletters, religious education curricula, and other avenues. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Accessibility and support needs are considered when congregational events are planned. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Our resource library includes books and materials about theology and disability, as well as resources for families. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Our staff and ministry leaders are familiar with disability issues related to their specific programs, roles, and responsibilities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Our policies and practices clearly communicate our desire to worship and serve alongside people with disabilities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Our vision to be inclusive is frequently shared with members and broadcast throughout the community. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Additional comments or considerations:

INDICATORS OF BELONGING

6. Families

| <i>FAMILIES</i> | TOTALLY | SOMEWHAT | NOT AT ALL | UNCERTAIN |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Families who experience disability feel welcomed and included in the congregation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Families who experience disabilities contribute to discussions on accessibility. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Respite care is available to interested parents. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Support groups are available to interested parents, siblings, and others within our community. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Financial support is available to people with disabilities and their families, as it is to all members of the congregation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People with disabilities and their families know who to contact and feel comfortable with asking for support and assistance. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pastors and staff feel equipped to provide spiritual care and support to people with disabilities and their families. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People with disabilities and/or their families are involved in visioning and planning for the future of the congregation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Additional comments or considerations:

INDICATORS OF BELONGING

7. Partnership with Community Groups

| INDICATOR | TOTALLY | SOMEWHAT | NOT AT ALL | UNCERTAIN |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| We have developed relationships with agencies and organizations serving people with disabilities in our community. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We have invited people with disabilities and advocacy groups to provide us with feedback about our materials, programs, and activities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff from service and support organizations are helping us to improve our capacity to welcome and support people with disabilities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We know where to turn when we need more information about specific disability-related issues. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We advocate for laws, policies, and resources that improve the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Additional comments or considerations:

INDICATORS OF BELONGING

8. Other Indicators

| INDICATOR | TOTALLY | SOMEWHAT | NOT AT ALL | UNCERTAIN |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| We have developed a written plan describing how we will improve our accessibility and welcome | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intentional efforts are made to support people with and without disabilities to develop meaningful social relationships. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A key person or group in our congregation is making sure that the needs of people with disabilities are being addressed. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People with disabilities and/or their family members are involved in visioning and planning for the future of the congregation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We have a process for identifying the emotional, spiritual, practical and other support needs of congregation members. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Additional comments or considerations:

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E. Plan of Action

List three goals for improving your congregation's dimensions of belonging and accessibility in your area of ministry. What specific steps will we need to take to realize these goals? When do you hope to accomplish these goals? Who will be the people responsible for making sure these goals are completed?

| GOAL | NEXT STEPS | COMPLETION DATE: | PERSON RESPONSIBLE |
|------|------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |

Additional comments or considerations: