



Preparation Strategies for the Blind and Low Vision Ministry

1. Following Biblical Examples of Caring Church Members in Mark 2:1-5.
 - A. Faithfulness of friends
 - B. There was a plan.
 - C. Tools/resources were available
 - D. The presence of Jesus was sought
 - E. Time and expense were involved
2. The baseline component of the actions taken in Mark 2:1-5 was the faith of the person's friends. (Mark 2:5).
3. Before you begin?

(Helpful Resource: [Biblical Basis for Inclusion](#))

See also the following booklets produced by the General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries: *Keys to Special Needs Ministries – Intellectual Disability* and *Emotional and Psychiatric Disability* and *Communication Disorder*.

- A. *Understand the basics* of biblical inclusion
 - Everyone is unique with individual differences and needs.
 - Everyone is created in the image of God with an inherent dignity
 - Everyone is needed in the body of Christ for it to be whole. Each is valued for who they are.
- B. Assess the *needs* of leaders, members, and the physical structures of *your church building*.
 - Questions Regarding Physical Accessibility. (See also the Accessibility and Belonging Questionnaire):
 1. Entries to buildings
 2. Parking lot
 3. Lighting
 4. Audio
 5. Restrooms
 7. Seating/wheelchair spaces
 8. Ease of Participation
 9. Church hardware – doorknobs, switches
 10. Directional signs
- C. Questions for Leaders

- Education – What training may be needed for a collaborative team approach by those with and without disabilities?
- Encouragement – A mindset is needed for understanding, support, and possibility thinking
- Accommodation – What can be done to provide for meaningful participation by all?
- Has an adequate allocation of financial and other necessary resources for this ministry been provided?
- Prepare leaders and members to understand the need for all to be treated respectfully, physically, emotionally, culturally, and socially.

D. *Assess the readiness* for your church to provide opportunities for those with disabilities so they

- Can participate in the worship, social, and mission activities of the church.
- Can know how to express their desire to participate or not to participate in church activities.
- Will know of the church’s desire to welcome and assist them in becoming a true mission force in the church to reach out to others.

4. Getting Started – A Spiritual Responsibility

A. [What We Mean When We Say Our New Church Is Special Needs Friendly](#)

B. Placed in the Care of the Church

“I saw that it is in the providence of God that widows and orphans, the blind, the deaf, the lame, and persons afflicted in a variety of ways, have been placed in close Christian relationship to His church; it is to prove His people and develop their true character. Angels of God are watching to see how we treat these persons who need our sympathy, love, and disinterested benevolence. This is God’s test of our character.”
(Testimonies to the Church, p.511)

C. A Church That Knows It Needs All People.

- “A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.” (1 Cor. 12:7, NLT)
- “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-13, NIV)

D. A Church That Believes, “All Are Gifted, Needed, and Treasured”

“In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace—in “the beauty of the Lord our

God.” Psalm 90:17. Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust. Revealing in Himself man's true ideal, He awakened, for its attainment, both desire and faith. In His presence souls despised and fallen realized that they still were men, and they longed to prove themselves worthy of His regard. In many a heart that seemed dead to all things holy, were awakened new impulses. To many a despairing one there opened the possibility of a new life.”
Education, p.80

5. Create a Ministry Team.
([Creating A Team](#))
 - A. Identify the process and the key leaders for implementing a new ministry.
 - B. Give an open invitation for the whole church to participate.
 - C. Find those within and outside your church who have a passion for this ministry.
 - D. Identify the kind of resources that will be needed such as materials, equipment, funding.
 - E. Assemble the APM Committee, with the presence of the district pastor, and institute, by vote, the Adventist Possibility Ministries (APM) in the Local Church.
 - F. The APM leader forms its work team by assigning people to specifically care for the Blind and Low Vision Ministry.
 - G. The presence of a visually impaired person in this team is very important and necessary. If the local church does not have a visually impaired member, it should seek advice from other visually impaired Adventists, even from a distance.
 - H. Request appropriate training from the APM of the Mission/Conference/Union in your Field.

6. Creating a Learning and Accepting Culture.
([Classroom Strategies](#)) and ([Teaching So Children Can Learn](#))
 - A. More than physical accessibility is needed
 - B. Know your audience. Learning is built on existing skills and knowledge (Luke 8:4-15).
 - C. Possibilities are built on existing strengths. Often perceived weaknesses are strengths over-emphasized. Tracing a perceived weakness back to a hidden strength can open possibilities for the individual and the church.
 - D. [Empower people with learning disabilities at church](#) “Caring” for those with a disability is not enough. Acknowledgment and encouragement of the gifts and talents that God has given is part of Adventist Possibility Ministries.