



Specific Action Strategies for a Blind and Low Vision Ministry

1. Church Action

- a. By vote of the church board, establish the office and ministry of Adventist Possibility Ministries (APM) in the church.
- b. The APM leader and team should be selected.
- c. A special focus and possibly a separate teach should be selected to care for the blind and low vision ministry.

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 for counsel.

2. Church & Community Survey.

- a. Identify those who have visual impairments
- b. Identify those who are willing to volunteer to work with the visually impaired.
- c. It is not necessary for the local church to have a visually impaired member.

3. Equip Members to Minister

Train, motivate and mobilize the existing group of deacons/deaconesses and church receptionists.

4. Develop a Good Support Team.

Guides and people willing to help with their transport vehicles are needed.

5. Expand the Mission of the Church. The mission of the church will be strengthened when it faithfully reaches out to the marginalized such as those who are blind and those who have low vision.

6. Request Training. Request appropriate training from the APM of your Mission, Conference, Union, or Division.

7. Sabbath School. When there is a significant group of visually impaired people attending Sabbath School, it is recommended that a new unit should be created to meet the specific needs of this group.

- a. It is best to meet in a separate room, if possible.

- b. The group meeting should not be restricted to only those who have impaired vision. The choice of which class to join should always be up to the individual.
- c. An effort should be made for visually impaired people to sit as close as possible to the unit's teacher.
 - By proceeding in this way, the church will be contributing so that the attention of the blind or low vision person is not lost amid the speeches of the various teachers and brothers in the different classes of the Sabbath School.
 - The visually impaired person needs a sound environment free from noise, to facilitate the understanding of the spoken message.
 - The class teacher should encourage the participation of all students, without distinction. When addressing the visually impaired person, you should speak in a normal tone and volume of voice, calling them by name and avoiding using intermediaries in the conversation.
 - Make sure that everyone has access to the Sabbath School Lesson and other literature used to deepen the study.

8. Assistance to Families

- a. The visually impaired person's family should be encouraged to attend lectures and seminars with them as a means of lending support to them.
- b. The family should be integrated into the church community as well.
- c. Support the family by informing them of relevant social projects, laws, and institutions.

9. Evangelism

- a. The work of evangelism is fundamental for the growth and strengthening of the Blind and Low Vision Ministry.
- b. The church needs to recognize that the visually impaired have an important role to play in the mission of the church. Through understanding and empathy, the blind and low-vision people can be effective in reaching out to their non- Adventist friends.
- c. Accessible Bible studies can be sent by mail or by digital means.
- d. A Bible class can be started using accessible literature for the blind and low-vision person when there is sufficient interest.
- e. Form a Real Vision Small Group.

10. Community Outreach

- a. Create workshops with different themes: school reinforcement; introduction to assistive technologies; physical and social activities, among others.
- b. The Blind and Low Vision Ministry team should relate to the local community of people with visual impairments.
- c. Get to know the Blind Associations of the city and, whenever possible, support them in their activities.
- d. Strengthen bonds of friendship, aiming to carry the message of Christ.

- e. Promote sports games, events, themed parties, and other activities in partnership with Rehabilitation Centers and Associations for people with visual impairments to help such institutions in serving this specific audience and attracting them to Christ and His church.

11. Organizing the Ministry Team

- a. The leader's role
 - Motivate your support team.
 - Seek and encourage people to help you in your different tasks by creating a work team.
 - Stay informed about APM - related church events in your field, country, and around the world.
 - Stay informed and updated on topics involving the visually impaired person.
 - Organize events, meetings, lectures, tours, evangelism etc.
 - Be the communication bridge between the Blind and Low Vision Ministry, the local church and the district pastor.
 - Visit, meet and establish partnerships with rehabilitation and support centers for visually impaired people in the community.
 - Work in partnership with the different departments of the church.
 - Prepare the Pathfinders and Adventurers Club to receive children with visual impairments.
 - Keep the team trained, informed of the activities calendar and motivated to serve.
- b. Secretary
 - Register all visually impaired people interested in participating in the Blind and Low Vision Ministry.
 - Register the volunteers of the Blind and Low Vision Ministry.
 - Participate in the preparation of the calendar of activities (monthly, annual).
 - Acquire, manufacture, organize and deliver materials in an accessible format to people registered in the Blind and Low Vision Ministry of the local church.
 - Identify the premises of the local church and other places with accessible labels (Braille and Enlarged Letters).
 - Support the team in organizing events for the Blind and Low Vision Ministry.
 - Prepare the environment so that the service or event becomes as accessible as possible for people with visual impairments. Use the audio description feature; guide the diaconate and reception as to the correct way to guide and assist a visually impaired person.
- c. An action tool – Real Vision Small Group
 - Small Groups are an SDA tool to strengthen relationships between local church members and community friends in order to draw them to Jesus.
 - The Real Vision Small Group follows the same principles of a conventional Small Group; however, it was conceived by people

with visual impairments to meet the specific needs of this segment without, however, being excluding with other people.

- The idea of creating a Small Group that was suitable for the socializing and participation of people with visual impairments was born in the heart of brother Manoel Evangelista Barbosa de Jesus and his wife Débora Toniolo de Jesus. The first Real Vision Small Group took place in 2008 at the Adventist University of São Paulo church in Brazil. As a result of this first work, there were three baptisms of people with visual impairments and one baptism of a person who helped the group as a guide.
- The idea of the Real Vision Small Group has spread and in addition to baptisms, significant results are observed with regard to the emotional and spiritual health of those who attend the group.

People who later lost their eyesight as a result of accidents or illness overcame depression and fear and reported finding a new reason to live.

d. The structure of the Real Vision Small Group

- Choose a visually impaired person to lead the Real Vision Small Group.
They know best what the visually impaired can do and what they need.
 - Form a support team for group meetings. The group host does not necessarily have to be a visually impaired person. If meetings are held on church premises, a host is not required.
 - It is important to keep the focus on the target audience of the Real Vision Small Group, however, sighted people can and should participate supporting whatever is necessary.
 - Choose a location for meetings.
 - Define: the time and dates of the meetings; the themes; the necessary materials; the special guests to deliver the central theme; the songs for collective singing; who will be invited to participate in the Real Vision Small Group and how they will be contacted; the logistics of transporting the guests; other pertinent matters according to the local reality.
 - Regular meetings can be monthly; however, each group is free to establish the regularity of its meetings according to the local reality local.
 - The meetings basically consist of:
 - Praise with Adventist Hymnal and other songs.
 - Testimony, thanks and prayer requests.
 - Lectures by professionals on topics of interest to the group, such as physical and emotional health,

family, healthy cooking, among others. Spiritual message.

- Simple snack for the moment of fraternization.
- Participation of group members in the exchange of experiences and doubts about the subjects addressed in the meetings.
- Set aside time in the program for thematic conversation among group members.
- Ensure that the meeting place is accessible to all.
 - With access ramps.
 - No irregularities on the floor.
 - That it is close to bus, taxi, collective and subway stops.
- g) The Real Vision Small Group must not lose its missionary focus.
- Take care not to turn into a purely social gathering.
- Communication between the Real Vision Small Group team and the leadership of the Blind and Low Vision Ministry of the local church is important.
- At meetings, address a variety of topics and carry out attractive programs in order to maintain the attendance of members and attract new interested parties.

12. Final considerations

When instituting the Adventist Blind and Low Vision Ministry, the local church should know that the primary objective of this ministry is the inclusion of the visually impaired member in church activities.

The church must help all its members, without distinction, to realize their importance in the mission.

Paradigms and prejudices around the blind and low vision person must be eliminated through research, study, training, and especially social interaction.

May God bless all those who dedicate their talents and efforts to the growth of this Ministry.