

# LOVE REACHES OUT - Love In Action

## Caring for people with disabilities



### Scripture:

**1 Sam 16:7:** "A man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

**1 Corinthians 12:12-27** (Printed below)

**2 Cor. 12:9:** "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

**Charity:** ELEVATE Christian Disability Trust

**Response:** Identify and discuss ways our community (church or school) could be more accepting for people with disabilities. Make a plan to eliminate barriers.

**Theme:** God's people come in all different shapes, sizes and abilities. We all have gifts to offer to God.

**Aim:** Children will understand God's people come in all different shapes, sizes and abilities and apply this knowledge to their interaction with people who have disabilities. Children and adults will work together to form a plan for making their church community welcoming for people who are disabled.

### Materials needed:

- Prayer of Saint Francis poster from appendix
- Game cards from appendix (cut and folded as instructed)
- Body parts from appendix (cut into individual parts, but put together in pairs of hands, legs, arms, etc.)
- Long strips of cloth or bandanas for blindfolds, etc.
- Cotton balls or ear plugs

### Time in Church or School Chapel:

Sing together one of these sung versions of the Saint Francis Prayer.

<https://youtu.be/ihhvm6eLWZI?list=RD2svZhZT6Pro>

or

<https://youtu.be/DFyDpc4r2zY>

If you prefer to tell a story during this time, See "We all have different gifts" in the appendix.

### Time in "Sunday School" or the Classroom

#### Greeting time

As you begin your children's lesson (or RE class), greet each child by name or introduce yourself. Ask each child to say his/her name and mention one thing they do well and one thing that is a challenge. "Hi, my name is Ruby. I am a good dancer and sometimes spelling is hard for me."

## Prayer time

Finish by praying the following prayer (or something similar):

*Dear God, Thank you that you have given each of us different gifts. Together we have a lot of strengths that can make up for things that are hard for us. Teach us to work together so that our difficulties seem small compared to the love that we share in you. In Jesus name...AMEN.*

## It's time to open the bible...

This section may be done as a dramatic reading. Large pictures of a foot, eye, and hand may be used for effect. If you have lots of children who really like to read aloud, feel free to divide up the reading into more parts. The current format is a suggestion only.

### 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

#### One Body but Many Parts

Reader or Group One

Reader or Group Two

Reader or Group Three

All

<sup>12</sup>There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ. <sup>13</sup>We were all baptized by one Holy Spirit. And so we are formed into one body. It didn't matter whether we were Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free people. We were all given the same Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup>So the body is not made up of just one part. It has many parts.

<sup>15</sup>Suppose the foot says, "I am not a hand. So I don't belong to the body." By saying this, it cannot stop being part of the body.

<sup>16</sup>And suppose the ear says, "I am not an eye. So I don't belong to the body." By saying this, it cannot stop being part of the body.

<sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how could it smell? <sup>18</sup>God has placed each part in the body just as he wanted it to be. <sup>19</sup>If all the parts were the same, how could there be a body? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many parts. But there is only one body.

<sup>21</sup>The eye can't say to the hand, "I don't need you!"

The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you!" <sup>22</sup>In fact, it is just the opposite.

The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are the ones we can't do without. <sup>23</sup>The parts that we think are less important we treat with special honor. The private parts aren't shown. But they are treated with special care. <sup>24</sup>The parts that can be shown don't need special care.

But God has put together all the parts of the body. And he has given more honour to the parts that didn't have any.

<sup>25</sup>In that way, the parts of the body will not take sides. All of them will take care of one another.

<sup>26</sup>**If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part shares in its joy.**

#### Talking Points:



I wonder what it would be like if our body parts each argued over who was the best...Would it be easy or hard to get things done if your body parts were too busy bragging to work together?



God's people are often called "the body of Christ." What do you think that means?



Like parts of a body, we all have different skills and different ways of doing things, but we work together to get God's work done.



Some of God's people have disabilities. This means that they cannot do certain things the way everyone else does. Often times, people with disabilities find really great ways to serve God that are different than what other people do.



Do you know anyone with a disability? What is something they are really good at?

## Exploring the Word

### Through Game:

**NOTE:** This game works best with children of a reading age. If you have beginner readers in your group, make sure they are paired with older children (or an adult) to help them through the game.

1. Print enough game cards (from appendix) for one to four groups of people, depending on how many children are in your class. A group should have no more than five people in it. If a group has less than five, someone will need to go twice. Each group should have someone who has been assigned (according to the card they get) to be the:
    - a. Head
    - b. Hands
    - c. Feet
    - d. Arms
    - e. Legs
  2. **Before class starts**, hide the body parts (from appendix) around the room. There should be one set of parts per group (e.g. three groups = three sets of legs)
  3. Explain to children that they are each a part of the body. However, each of them has a different disability. Hand out the game cards. Each one will have a part of the body and a disability on it. (e.g. "hand" and "blindness")
  4. The goal for each group/team is to find all the body parts to put together a full body. Because they will each have a disability, they will need to help each other find their designated parts so their group can form a whole body.
- (NOTE: If this sounds confusing, have a look at the game cards and it should be clearer.)

### Playing the Game:

Distribute the cards.

Ask the teams to help each other prepare for their disability.

- If their card says "**blindness**," then they must cover their eyes with a bandana/cloth strip.
- **Unable to walk**=tie their legs together (or if they are wearing lace up shoes, they may tie those together)
- **Deafness**=cotton balls or ear plugs in the ears
- **Mute**=no talking
- **Pride**=they may not ask for help from anyone else. If they are desperate, they must ask rudely. If the prideful person is FIRST to find their body part, they may put it with the others. If they are not first, they must wait until LAST to put it together with the other body parts.

Now explain that they each need to find the body part that is on their card so that the whole group has a whole body. Try not to give any more explanations. Ideally, they will work out that it is best to work in pairs or go one at a time so others can help them.

NOTE: Each person MUST retrieve the body part listed on their own card (e.g. lame person has to figure out how to get over to where their body part is located, even if someone else found it for them.)

Once all the parts have been retrieved, the group must form their parts (still with their disabilities) into a body, like a puzzle. Ask each group if they think something is missing. If they say there is a body missing, ask them to finish this sentence:

"We are the body of \_\_\_\_\_."

If they say "Christ" you may give them the body shape with the word "Jesus Christ" on it.

Once they have completed their body, they may take off their disabling features.

### **Discussion:**

- Was anyone able to retrieve their body part all alone?
- What were some of the ways you helped each other?
- How might this relate to real life?
- In what way was "pride" a disability? How did the other team members feel toward the person who was prideful?
- How is this game like church, a sport team, or your family?
- At the end of the game, you were able to "take off" your disability. What about people who cannot take off their disability at the end of the day?
- How can we make our church a better place so that every member of the body may participate fully?

### **Introduction to a Modern Charity:**

**ELEVATE** Christian Disability Trust

Here is a link to a video that tells about Elevate: <http://elevatecdt.org.nz/about-us/>

If you are able to show this to your group, it's a great explanation of what the charity does and who benefits (EVERYONE!).

If you are not able to show a video in your class, here is a brief introduction to Elevate, adapted from their website. Feel free to adapt it as needed for the age/developmental stage of your children. For more information go to [www.elevatecdt.org.nz](http://www.elevatecdt.org.nz) .

For over 30 years we have been empowering people with disabilities to live to their full potential –

physically, mentally, socially and spiritually.

We create places of belonging, hope and encouragement through branches around New Zealand. Your involvement is warmly welcomed!

### **ELEVATE Christian Disability Trust:**

- Reaches out to people with disabilities and other people of all ages

### **Our Vision Statement**

- To see all people, especially people with a disability living out their full potential in Jesus Christ, through the local Church community.

### **Trust Scripture**

- Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. 1 Sam 16:7a

### **ELEVATE has several different ministries to reach people with different needs:**

**CFFD** – Christian Fellowship For Disabled is a group that supports people with primarily physical disabilities.

**Joy Ministries** – Joy supports people affected by intellectual disabilities.

**Torch Outreach** – Ministers to people who are blind or visually impaired.

**Emmanuel Support** – Our aim is to give spiritual, emotional and practical support to parents and families of a child with any disability.

**Drop In Centre** -- The Drop In Centre (in Auckland) is a great place to connect with other people with disabilities. A friendly, family atmosphere is provided here which encourages spiritual learning, fellowship and support to people. (From [www.elevatecdt.org.nz](http://www.elevatecdt.org.nz))

ELEVATE puts out a monthly newsletter called "The Encourager." It is packed full of personal stories from people living with all different types of disabilities and all the ways they are serving God. Click below to see the copy for June:

<http://elevatecdt.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ENCOURAGER-151.pdf>

## **Love in Action: Forming and Planning our Response**

Now that we are aware of God's love for people with disabilities, what are some ways we can better show Jesus's love?

Here are some ideas to consider:

- Visit the ELEVATE website and learn about their ministries. Find one that appeals to your group and ask how you can be involved. Perhaps someone in your church or school has a disability. They might be interested in contributing to a particular ministry of ELEVATE.
- Learn the correct terminology and manners when interacting with people who have disabilities. Even though people may have different preferences, a humble heart and a kind attitude goes a long way. \*
- Talk together about why it's important to use kind words and good manners around everyone, not just people with disabilities. (Remember "people first" e.g. person who is blind instead of Blind guy or boy with Down's Syndrome instead of "Down's Kid.")
- Celebrate "Disability Awareness Sunday." It is officially scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> June 2016, but any Sunday is a good time to get to know God's people better. There are plenty of resources on the Kids Friendly Website: <http://www.kidsfriendly.org.nz/disability-awareness-sunday-19-june-2016/>
- If there is someone in your church who has a disability perhaps they would like to come and speak to the children about what it is like. Decide ahead of time what questions they might like to ask.
- Think you have it all sussed? See how much you know about disability etiquette by taking the quiz at: <http://www.understandingdisability.org/DisabilityEtiquette>. The questions are thoughtfully worded and the explanations are simple, yet meaningful.

## **Responding in Prayer**

Challenge the children to think about someone they know who has a disability. (If they don't know anyone, ask them to imagine themselves with a disability.)

During the week, let's pray for people we know who have disabilities.

Ask God to:

- Teach me to be a better friend.
- Show me ways that this person is talented.
- Help me appreciate the gifts they have and the ways they can show God's love.

Close your time together by praying aloud on version of the Prayer of St. Francis (found in the appendix).

## More Scriptures about people with disabilities:

### **Jesus did not judge people because of their disabilities:**

**Leviticus 19:14** `Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the Lord.

**Matthew 15:29-31** Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

**John 9:2-7** His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup>As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

### **Paul Struggled with a disabling illness:**

**Galatians 4:13-14** As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you, and even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself.