

March is National Disabilities Month

In 1987 President Ronald Reagan proclaimed March “Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.” We are challenged each year to spend time reflecting on how to treat all persons as having dignity and being created by God in the image of God. This includes persons with physical, cognitive, learning, and emotional disabilities.

Ways we might celebrate National Disabilities Month:

1. Learn about persons with Disabilities: We can learn how to effectively include persons with disabilities into the life of our communities, especially within our parishes, and how to use better language so that persons with disabilities are understood as “persons” first and foremost.

~Link to download of a coloring book, *Ready, Set, Go*, that includes best terminology when speaking about and to persons with disabilities:

<http://www.indianadisabilityawareness.org/assets/docs/ReadySetGoColoringBook.pdf>

~Take time to learn about persons with disabilities through the excellent resources on the website for The National Catholic Partnership on Disability:

<http://www.ncpd.org/node/1201>



Some areas of special interest include:

~Home Page Videos: *A Life Like Yours: Maddie’s Story; Understanding Autism*

~Ministries/Programs providing content on Catechesis, Ministry Specific resources, various Ministry Models, Spirituality and Building Awareness: <http://www.ncpd.org/ministries-programs>

~Bulletin Articles and Video Series on Faith and Mental Illness: <http://www.ncpd.org/mivideo>

~Prayers: <http://www.ncpd.org/ministries-programs/spirituality/prayers>

~Frequently Asked Questions: <http://www.ncpd.org/faq>

Spanish Language Resources: <http://www.ncpd.org/espanol>

Links to Catholic Organizations, secular Organizations, Government Agencies, and Interfaith Organizations: <http://www.ncpd.org/links>

2. Watch videos about participants in the Special Olympics and consider getting involved:
<http://www.specialolympics.org/>

3. Reach out to persons with disabilities and pray daily for them using the *Prayer for Persons with Disabilities*



Prayer for Persons with Disabilities

God our Father, who created all people in your image:
give persons with physical, cognitive, or emotional
disabilities opportunities to do all that they are able to,
and strengthen them to overcome challenges.

Jesus, who showed great compassion for those who suffer:
comfort all who feel like their gifts are not used or that their value is not understood,
so that they might take courage in your affection.

Holy Spirit, who fills believers with all good gifts:
help me to reach out to persons with disabilities through friendship, care, and working
to be sure that our church includes them in everything that we do
and to break down barriers to inclusion in society.

We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
Amen.



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