



## A brief guide to doing ministry for people with special needs

in no particular order/priority

- Remember that they are people just like you and me – treat them and interact with them like you would with anyone else
- Don't treat them like a child if they are not a child, but realize that many of them need things simple, visual and concrete. They love to answer questions and be interactive!
- Keep concepts simple – they understand sin and God's love – don't go into deep theological things like justification and sanctification. Remember, it's all about Jesus. Yes, *Jesus Loves Me* is a great song to sing with them.
- Whatever you do with them, have it be no more than an hour in length – 30 minutes is probably better – broken into 5 minute segments
- Look to see if you have members of your congregation who help serve the special needs community and have them intimately involved in planning what you will do.
- Don't just have one event or service and then nothing else going forward. Have some sort of an initial event and then have a plan for what you are going to do going forward (eg. Monthly worship, monthly Bible class, etc.)
- Make sure that you have screened your volunteers and that you have contact info for parents/caregivers. Also do some brief training/orientation for volunteers. Stress acceptance, love and patience as key concepts. Contact Jesus Cares Ministries if you need assistance.
- Be aware of sensory overstimulation (loud noises, unfamiliar surroundings, flashing/noisy lights) and have a place/plan to allow them to desensitize).
- Have a plan if you encounter any medical situations.
- Make sure that you also make contact with, include and welcome the families. Very often these families are looking for a church which they can trust and find a family of faith with.
- If you are looking for a place to reach out to connect with individual with special needs, seek out local organizations which serve individuals with special needs – Special Olympics, etc.
- Prepare your entire congregation to welcome individuals with special needs and their families, because this might be a blessing of starting a ministry to people with special needs

If you have any questions or need further information or resources,  
please contact Jesus Cares Ministries [jcm@tlha.org](mailto:jcm@tlha.org)