



Ministry with Adults

Disability & The Church Tour 2025

Ryan Wolfe

September 12, 2025 - Cleveland, Ohio

Contact Information



Ryan Wolfe

ryan@abilityministry.com

[@ryanewolfe](#)

(330)806-9420

AbilityMinistry.com

[@abilityministry](#)

FREE STUFF



FREE
One Page
Documents

Ministry with Adults

Survey the Room





Ministry Models

Integrated Ministry Model

- Adults with disabilities will be fully integrated into the body of the church with no specialized programming.

Specialized Ministry Model

- Adults with disabilities will have specialized ministry programming options.
 - Classes, Events, Etc.

Hybrid Option

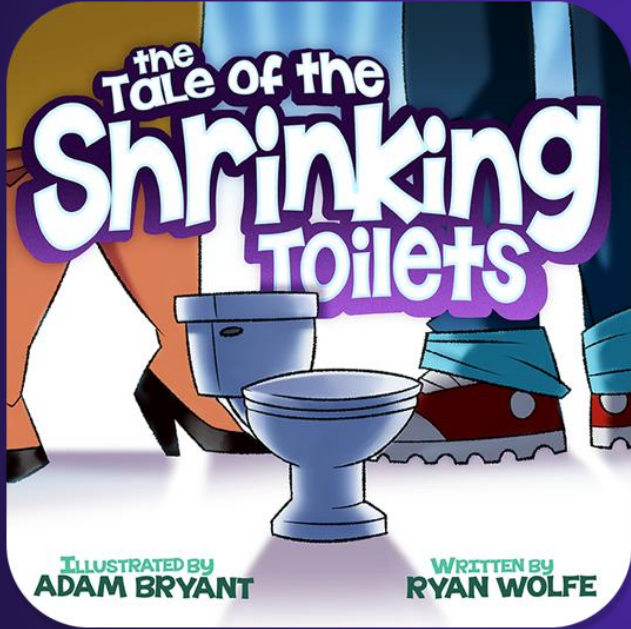


Transition to Adult Ministry

Kids with IDD don't stay kids forever—churches must grow with them, honoring them as adults with real needs, gifts, and purpose.

- **No** they can't stay in Children's Ministry or Student Ministry forever
- **You must** treat adults like adults
- Move towards integration and service

Something to Consider



Universal Sized Changing Tables



Shift from Programming to Belonging

See adults with IDD as you would any other church member with gifts to contribute, not just recipients of care.

- Emphasize full inclusion in worship, small groups, and service.
- Create spaces for friendships to develop





Empower for Service

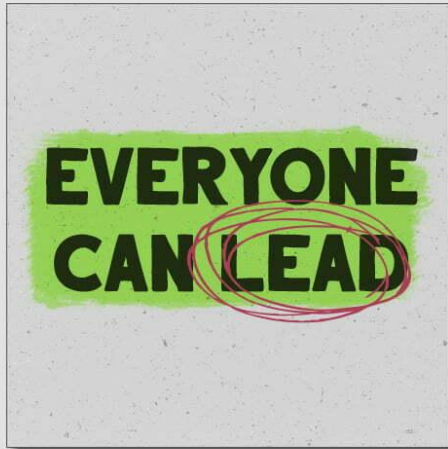
“We all have gifts.” Romans 12:6

“The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all.” 1 Corinthians 12:7

- Match responsibilities to each person's ability and passion.
- Think BIG! Think Leadership
- Don't limit people to just being greeters.



Must Have Resources



DONT DIS MY ABILITY

GIFTS INVENTORY & SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES



God has gifted everyone, no exceptions!

Gifts are no good unless they are actively being used. That being said, too often people with disabilities are not afforded opportunities to use their God given giftedness to build others up (Ephesians 4:12) because they are viewed negatively based upon the label that society has given them. There are no negatives in this inventory, only positives! Fill out the information below, watch for matching themes and strengths. Flip the page over and find a good fit to serve in or through the local church.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ OK to text? ☐ Yes ☐ No

EMAIL: _____

SOCIAL MEDIA: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN/STAFF: _____

Favorite subject in school: _____ Why? _____

Favorite movie, video game, or story: _____ Why? _____

Favorite Food: _____ Do you like to cook or bake? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Interests or hobbies: _____

What do you enjoy doing the most? _____

I'm really good at (Strengths): _____

People use the following words to describe me: _____

Job experience: _____

Spiritual Gifts (Check the ones that sound like you):

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apostleship | <input type="checkbox"/> Healing | <input type="checkbox"/> Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discernment | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> Shepherding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking in Tongues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Encouragement | <input type="checkbox"/> Mercy/Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Interpreting Tongues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faith | <input type="checkbox"/> Miracles | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Giving | <input type="checkbox"/> Prophecy | <input type="checkbox"/> Wisdom |

Where to find the spiritual gifts in the Bible: Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4.

DONT DIS MY ABILITY

GIFTS INVENTORY & SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES



There is a place for everyone to serve regardless of ability level. Below is a list of service opportunities that exist in many churches. Find opportunities from the list below that seem like a good match from the themes that emerged from the inventory on the front of this document. After selecting some options meet with the appropriate staff member to get plugged into service!

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership - Elder, deacon, pastor, group leader, or teacher. | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Services / Kitchen & Café - Café volunteer, catering & banquet volunteer, special events volunteer, baker, bus boy/girl, hostess, dishwasher, meal ministry, or refreshments host. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative - Receptionist, office assistant, bulletin folder, mailing assistant, seat back stuffer, pew card filler, or data entry. | <input type="checkbox"/> Next Steps - New guest follow up, first step table host, or baptism assistant. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Care Ministry - Military family care packages, encouragement cards, hospital caller, nursing home visitation, shut-in visitation, or prayer warrior. | <input type="checkbox"/> Operations - Room set up and clean up, maintenance, landscaping, van driver, parking assistant, security, or medical. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Ministry - Check-in team, new mom meals, curriculum support, nursery helper, Sunday morning substitute, classroom assistant, room leader, audio/visual assistant, worship team, scripture reading, child care, or events assistant. | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Groups & Adult Classes - Host home, table host, group & class assistant, or group and class leader. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications - Photographer, social media team, graphic design, website designer, website developer, or online campus host. | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Ministry - Head coach or assistant coach, referee, game set up or game tear down, scorekeeper, team assistant, team manager, or cheerleader. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Impact - Food pantry assistant, food pantry pick up, food pantry stocker, ESI, (English Second Language) assistant, disaster relief assistant, clothing ministry, Operation Christmas assistant, jail ministry, or recycling ministry. | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Ministry - Check-in team, curriculum support, Sunday morning substitute, small groups assistant, room leader, audio/visual assistant, large group worship team, or large events assistant. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability Ministry - Classroom assistant, inclusion buddy, prom volunteer, or respite event volunteer. | <input type="checkbox"/> Worship Arts - Photographer, painter, actor, sculptor, dancer, singer, audio, visual, lighting, camera operator, stage team, or ASL interpreter. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Impressions - Door or roaming greeter, communion server, offering server, welcome team, first time guest gifts, or usher. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |



Adult Class

Continued specialized discipleship opportunities are still important and no different than having a specific group for seniors, men, women, etc.

- Teach using developmentally appropriate materials.
- Goals: Decisions for Jesus, Becoming more like Jesus, being equipped to serve.

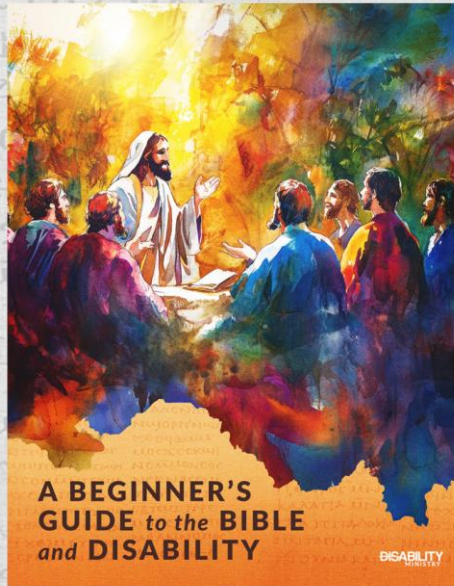


FREE STUFF

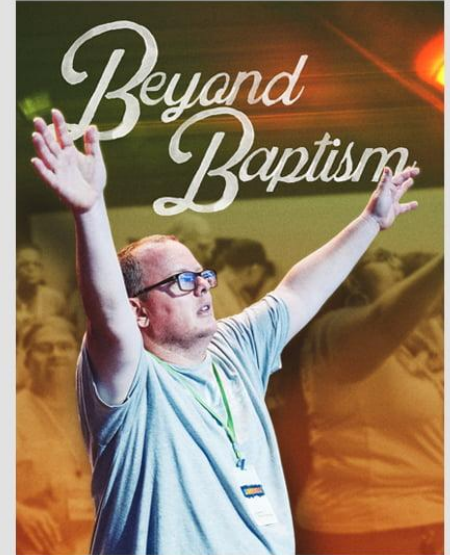


FREE
Curriculum
Samples

Must Have Resources



LARGER PRINT EDITION





Monthly Events

As young adults age out of school, sports leagues, and other opportunities a great need socialization arises.

- Churches are great at this already!
- Movies, Bowling, Jesus Prom, Karaoke Nights, Holiday Parties, etc.





Employment & Job Readiness

Only 16.8% of working-age individuals (ages 16–64) with intellectual disabilities are employed—a stark contrast to 61.3% for those without disabilities.*

- This is a HUGE opportunity for churches to have an impact in their community.
- Hire, offer job training, internships, etc.

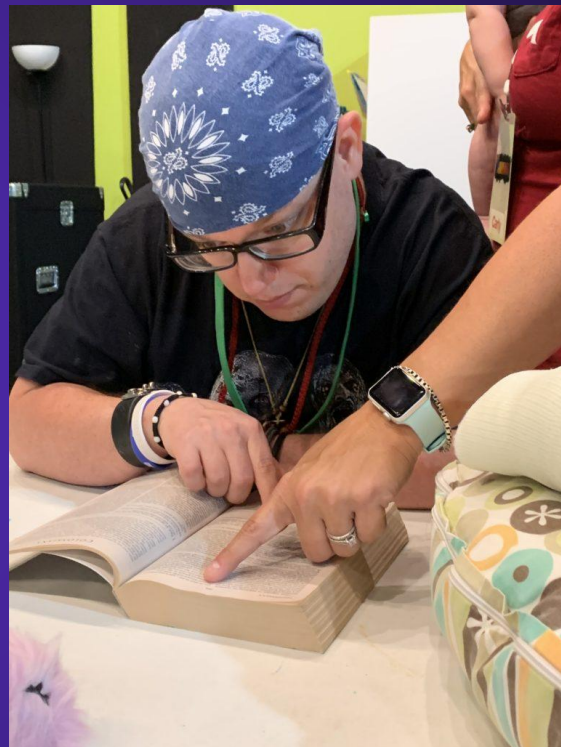




Adult Day Programming

With only 16.8% of adults with IDD being employed many more attend day programming during the week post high school.

- There is a lack of “faith-based” options in adult day programs creating a unique opportunity for churches to bring hope their communities.
- If starting a day program is not a current option get involved in your community day programs.
- Bless them!





Continue Supporting Families and Caregivers

As children with disabilities grow into adults, the need for support from families and caregivers doesn't disappear—it simply takes new forms.

- Continue to provide respite events, support groups, pastoral care, family planning, family inclusive ministry options and events.



Must Have Resources



VOLUNTEER GUARDIANSHIP

A guardian is any adult person, association, or corporation appointed by the Probate Court to assume responsibility for the care and management of the person, the estate, or both, of an incompetent person or minor child.

Why Volunteer Guardianship?

God commands it! "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed." Proverbs 31:8

It addresses one of the greatest social justice issues of our time. People affected by disability are abused and neglected at a higher rate than any other people group in the world.

There is a need in every community. Every community has wards of the state that literally have no family or support network to care for them.

What types of guardianship are there?

- Guardianship of Person: Controls and protects the person.
- Guardianship of Estate: Controls and protects the assets or the property of the ward.
- Guardianship of Person & Estate.

What are the responsibilities of a Volunteer Guardian?

- Visit ward once a month
- Monitor basic needs, safety, and health concerns
- Become the "go to" person for living facility
- Advocate for their wards needs
- Be a friend

How to establish a Volunteer Guardianship program at your church?

- Contact County Probate Court
 - Assess the need and current protocols
 - Ask if there is a current Guardian waiting list?
- Contact County Board of Developmental Disabilities
 - Assess the need and current protocols
- Search for local guardianship agencies
 - See what volunteer opportunities already exist in your community
 - Ask how the church can help or "be a blessing no strings attached?"
 - Partner with existing agencies to provide volunteer training
- Form a community partnership
 - County Probate Court, County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Local Guardianship Agencies, and the Church



abilityministry.com

@abilityministry

/abilityministry

@abilityministry



- Educate congregation of the need
- Recruit volunteers
 - Train, match, and release to be a blessing

What if our congregation is hesitant to get involved in legal relationships with the County Probate Court?

Start with who you have! Look within your congregation and ask yourself the following question: What if everyone had someone?

It is biblical.

Galatians 6:10 states, "When we have the opportunity to do good to anyone, we should do it. But we should give special attention to those who are in the family of believers."

Everyone needs someone. Make guardianship a friendship initiative.

Find people in your existing Disability Ministry, or church, that want a friend. Make sure that people consent to this and want this. Some people want their distance and that is okay too.

Create a profile similar to what you might see on a Compassion adoption event. Here is an example:

Create a profile



No one should ever have to sit alone, spend a holiday or birthday alone, etc.

Recruit volunteers

Train, match, and release to be a blessing!

For further insight on volunteer guardianship, please watch the following video:
<https://abilityministry.com/2021/03/06/volunteer-guardians/>

abilityministry.com

@abilityministry

/abilityministry

@abilityministry



Residential Care & Outreach

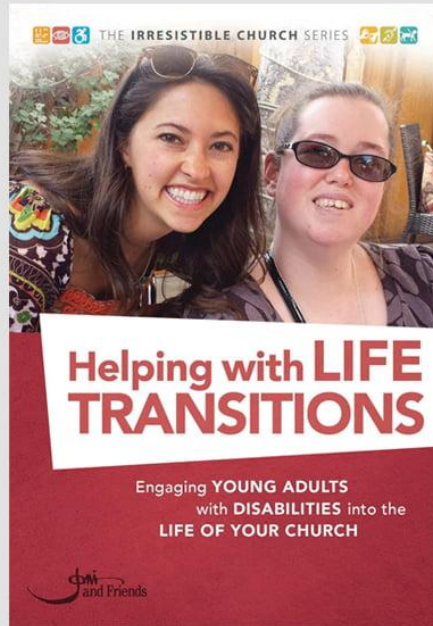
In 2006, 61% of people with an intellectual disability were living with their families, and over 700,000 of those individuals were living with parents aged over 60.

- The church has an amazing opportunity to bring hope to families by providing residential care or blessing those that do.



<https://www.heraldextra.com/lifestyles/2008/nov/16/dow-n-syndrome-generation-first-to-outlive-their-parents/>

More Resources!!!



<https://www.amazon.com/Helping-Life-Transitions-Disabilities-Irresistible-ebook/dp/B07GJRJR6S/>

Contact Information



Ryan Wolfe

ryan@abilityministry.com

[@ryanewolfe](#)

(330)806-9420

AbilityMinistry.com

[@abilityministry](#)



Ministry with Adults

Disability & The Church Tour 2025

Ryan Wolfe

September 12, 2025 - Cleveland, Ohio