LAMB Inclusive Participation Assessment Tool

The Church acknowledges that all persons belong by virtue of their baptism and that disability is an ordinary part of life. From this follows the responsibility of each parish to acknowledge the inherent dignity of each person and to provide access and full integration to individuals with disabilities. Therefore, each parish is called to provide access into all aspects of the communal life of the Church, engaging in relationship and offering appropriate supports. Thus, each person is empowered to achieve the fullest measure of personal participation, belonging, serving, and flourishing as part of the Body of Christ.

~National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD)

Jesus the Christ, Lamb of God

We are called to follow the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, reaching out so that all feel welcomed, valued and affirmed. Expertise is not needed. All that is necessary is the will to meet each person, get to know him or her, and form a relationship. To do this it is important to consider various forms of communication, various ways of moving in spaces, various ways of participating, and various ways to nurture an environment of belonging. Four attributes of thriving communities that foster spiritual growth for all are Language, Accessibility, Meaningful Participation, and Belonging (LAMB). The NCPD Council on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (CIDD) offers the LAMB Assessment Guide to support this vision by guiding the development and evaluation of programs, materials and/or other resources for use in the Church, relative to accessibility or usability for all people.

Language
Language can empower or diminish a person in any setting by the words that are chosen, which often reflect the attitudes of the writer. A person is the sum of many different characteristics: gender, age, height, talents, culture, struggles, vulnerabilities, etc. Yet, first and foremost, each of us is a person. To reflect this reality, "person-first language" is preferred. Remember to always use language that is respectful, age-appropriate, and proper to the setting.

Accessibility
Accessibility enables different modes of engagement in social interactions, community participation and resources: physical, social, and learning. Physical access considers mobility, comfort, age-appropriateness and integration with the community. Human (social) interaction access considers communication. Learning considers learning styles, comprehension and support needs.

Meaningful Participation
Participation is involvement in any life situation, specifically actual activity and functioning of an individual in society. Meaningful participation is not mere inclusion within a group, but rather active involvement within roles that are valid, age appropriate activities. A person's strengths are acknowledged, and interests and goals are respected with supports provided naturally as required. Interactions with all group members are organic and encouraged. Personal input is not only welcomed, but also sought as a part of ordinary engagement in an open and diverse environment.

Belonging
Everyone belongs by virtue of baptism. Further, belonging expands participation and presence to a deeper level. It is relationships among individuals within a group. Relationship is apparent when people are welcome, when people's presence and contributions are missed, when each person's growth is encouraged. It is a mutual sense that we are all a part of each other and without that, we would not be whole as Church. It is a setting for creating and strengthening continuing relationships and building communities, where people have a growing capacity to act together.

FOLLOW THE LAMB

The checklist on the following pages provides examples of considerations within the four categories of **LAMB: Language, Accessibility, Meaningful Participation and Belonging.** It is intended to help you assess resources and programs you are considering using in your parish for such needs as: catechetical and faith formation materials, parish development, small Christian communities, worship aides, environmental assessment, etc. It can also help you assess the inclusiveness of your liturgies and general parish dynamics. Some items may be more appropriate for assessing a resource or program, while others may be more appropriate reflecting on your parish community as a whole or liturgies. We hope it will also help you to better understand each of the attributes.

		Meets requirement: 0 (not at all), 1 (minimally), 2 (moderately), 3 (very well).			
	Aspect	0	1	2	3
Language	Person-first				
	Respectful				
	Age appropriate				
	Proper to setting				
	Persons with disabilities are communicated with directly. [*There should always be the assumption that s/he can advocate for themselves, and understand other people's verbal and body language.*]				
Accessibility	**Physical**				
	Entrance to and moving around is accessible for the church				
	" " the catechetical program				
	" " the community center				
	Sanctuary is accessible to people using mobility devices				
	Church and parish facilities are accessible to people with sensory processing concerns.				
	Accessible restrooms				

	Appropriate seating for participants, for example not chairs for kindergarteners with adults and teenagers				
	Flexible seating options throughout space for people with mobility devices				
	Accommodations for meetings and events are provided upon request (e.g., sign-language interpreter, large-print materials).				
	Available accommodations for meetings and events are described on all print and social media promotions (eg., access symbols for interpreter or wheelchair access)				
	Social				
	Supports interaction between people with different communication abilities.				
	Deaf or Hard of Hearing (HoH): ASL interpreter, closed loop system				
	Vision impairment: Enlarged print, braille, screen reader compatible, electronic documents.				
	Augmented communication device use is supported.				
	Adapted content with pictures and/or symbols				
	Learning				
	Alternate strategies for diverse learning needs are offered				
	Adapted content with pictures and/or symbols				
	Interactive options for engagement with materials				
Meaningful Participation	Appropriate roles and activities included				
	Everyone's strengths are considered				
	Seeks to understand and respect individual goals for parish participation.				

	Facilitates active engagement of all in the parish				
Belonging	Facilitates interaction of persons with diverse abilities.				
	Fosters development of relationships amongst the entire parish.				
	Fosters a sense of community amongst the entire parish.				
	Attitudes support participation [rather than act as barriers].				

Recommendations:

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