



## Welcome to *Opening Doors!*

### ***I. Did You Know?***

*Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God..Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” Luke 19 15-17*

***All are Welcome*** - We have been hearing this in the Catholic Church. Yet, some parents are hesitant or may not know that it is possible for all children with disabilities to receive the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

*The NCPD states: “All members of the Body of Christ are uniquely called by God by virtue of their Baptism. In light of this call, the Church seeks to support all in their growth in holiness, and to encourage all in their vocations. Participating in, and being nourished by, the grace of the sacraments is essential to this growth in holiness. Catholic adults and children with disabilities, and their families earnestly desire full and meaningful participation in the sacramental life of the Church.”*

With the start of a new school year, which also includes the start of a new year for Catholic Religious Formation, we need to be aware of and encourage families with members with disabilities to know that the opportunity to learn about God and to receive the sacraments is available to all members of the Catholic Church.

All children are capable of learning. One story to confirm this statement comes to mind. Claire came to us as a first grader with autism and was only partial verbal. Her mom heard about our religious education program and wanted Claire to make her First Communion. After meeting with Claire and her mom, it was determined she needed one on one instruction and needed to use a picture communication system. Claire and her teacher worked each week learning about God. She would repeat words and point to pictures in the lesson. Much of the material came from Loyola Press-Finding God Program. Bible stories, sticker projects, and children's books help to supplement the curriculum for Claire. She was excited to learn. Because of Claire's limited verbal skills, her teacher did not really know how much she understood. Claire **did** understand and her mother confirmed this when she told her teacher about an incident that happened between Claire and her grandmother. It seems they were at City Park riding in the little Ferris wheel one day. Her grandmother pointed out the trees saying, "Look at the trees." Claire responded with, "**God made the trees.**" Not only was Claire making a statement about God, she was not just repeating something (echolalia) but saying it outside of the classroom, at the park. This was a big statement because Claire took what she learned during Religious Education and transferred it to a general setting.

As this story tells us, we may not know exactly what our children with disabilities are learning unless there is a way for them to let us know. We can instruct them to the best of our abilities with resources that are available. The National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) has guidelines and resources readily available to help teach people with disabilities and include them in parish life. You may access more information at the following website:

<https://ncpd.org/program-type/catechesis>

Loyola Press Resource used in this story can be accessed here:

<https://www.loyolapress.com/general/special-needs>

### **Amtrak Disability Services**

Are you thinking about traveling and seeking accessibility options? Learn how persons traveling with a disability may make the trip quite successful. See the following link (s)

<https://www.frommers.com/trip-ideas/disabled/>

## II. What's Happening!

- **November 9, 2018-Advocate Workshop**-All advocates are encouraged to attend this workshop. It will be held at Transfiguration of the Lord Parish Gym from 9:00-noon.
- **Mass for God's Special Children**, their families and friends is held every month at 2:00 p.m. at St Francis Xavier Church, 444 Metairie Road, Metairie, LA on the following dates:
  - October 13, 2019- Save the date for the 15th Anniversary Mass for God's Special Children, which will be concelebrated by Archbishop Aymond - at 2:00 PM at St. Francis Xavier.
  - November 3, 2019
  - December 8, 2019
- **Quarterly Mass**-Be looking for the date, time, and location of our Quarterly Mass in October. It will be e-mailed to you once this information is determined!

**October 18, 2019-10:00-2:00**

### ***Inclusion Job and Resource Fair***

Are you looking for a sustainable career or some community resources for your family? Come out to The Statewide Independent Living Council Inclusion Job and Resource Fair. Get your career jump started today! For more information, contact Jessica Lewis at 225-219-7552. This event is sponsored by The Statewide Independent Living Council and Healthy Blue.



**November 2, 2019-10:00 - 2:00 Special Needs Day at Audubon Zoo**  
**A Special Day for Special People!**



Highlights will be music, face painting, and hand held animal encounters. A Social Service Fair will also be held on site. Every Special Needs visitor and up to three guests will receive \$3 admission to Audubon Zoo on November 2, 2019. \$3 Admission coupons offered at the Zoo's main entrance upon arrival. Offer valid November 2, 2019 only.

### **III. Question Corner?**

**Q.** *When investigating the need for accessibility at my church, the issue of COST (accommodations are too expensive) is a limiting factor. How do I address this issue?*

**A.** *"Costs must never be the controlling consideration limiting the welcome offered to those among us with disabilities," Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities- A Framework of Access and Inclusion- A Statement of the U.S. Bishops, 1995.*

Cost is an important factor in the successful management of any entity (household or business). Because each parish and school must live within its established budget, there may be limits to what modifications can be done and/or how fast they can be done. The goal is to strive toward the ideal where achieving an accommodation is the priority.

With the help of other advocates and people on the CPD board, we can brainstorm the most cost effective means to providing accessibility in your parish.

We welcome and encourage you to share any information or questions or you would like to see in Opening Doors e-Newsletter to [klivauda@bellsouth.net](mailto:klivauda@bellsouth.net). Please use Opening Doors in the subject line. We encourage you to share some of what is in **Opening Doors** with your parish and consider publishing your presence in your church bulletin.