

# GETTING SENIOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP ONBOARD FOR STARTING A SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY

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# PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY VS SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY



**CARE MINISTRY: Only adults, all churches have parts of this**

- Benevolence
- Counseling
- Hospital/Nursing Home/Homebound Visitation
- Weddings/Funerals
- Prayer Teams
- Support Teams and groups
- Respite Care

# PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY VS SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY



## **SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY:** **Children/adults, few churches**

- Buddy's for weekend service
- Family Support Groups
- Respite Care
- Mission Trips
- Camps
- Bible Studies
- Sibling groups

# WHY IS A SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY IMPORTANT?



90% of individuals with special needs don't attend church.

Largest unreached people group in the United States!



# WHY IS A SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY IMPORTANT?



11% of evangelical churches have an active disability ministry according to a Joni & Friends study.

89% do NOT have an active disability ministry!

# INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES



- The vast majority of pastors I've met want their church to reach people in their community and grow.
- So where is the disconnect when it comes to families with disabilities?

# SEEING VALUE IN DISABILITIES



- If your senior leadership sees value in including children, youth, adults, and senior adults, then they should see the value in including persons with disability, because disability affects every one of those groups.
- So, why isn't there a massive movement to include people with disabilities in the church?

# COMMON CONCERNS FROM SENIOR LEADERSHIP

- We don't have anyone with disabilities in our church, why do we need a ministry?
- Other churches near us have a disability ministry, therefore we don't need to have one – just send them there!
- I'm just too concerned about liability issues and being sued
- It is too expensive and we just don't have the budget
- We don't know where or how to start
- It's just too hard and scary





# COMMON CONCERNS FROM SENIOR LEADERSHIP

- What if we mess something up or say the wrong thing – we don't want any backlash from anyone!
- We don't have people with the right qualifications to lead a ministry like that, nor do we have the resources
- Our outreach ministry already supports a group that assists people with disabilities.
- We don't need another ministry!
- We don't need a whole program for just a couple of individuals
- We need volunteers more urgently in other ministries right now



# COMMON CONCERNS FROM SENIOR LEADERSHIP

- We are a small church, only big churches need to do it
- We don't want to be overrun by needy families
- The staff is already extremely busy and are unable to oversee another ministry, even if a lay leader manages it
- If we "start it, they will come!" We just can't handle that!
- It doesn't fit with our mission statement
- It's just not a need at our church
- We don't have the room



# WHAT IS A SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY?



- The church needs to be a place of refuge for **families** with special needs where the parents know that their child is loved on.
- A special needs ministry is actually a ministry to the **ENTIRE** family, not just the individual with special needs!

# BIBLICAL FACTS ON SPECIAL NEEDS



## View of Jesus:

People with disabilities are no different from those without; they belong to a body of believers and are capable of using their unique giftedness to do God's work



# WHAT IS A SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY?

## 3 GOALS OF A SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY:

1. Open the door to share the Gospel with families affected by special needs and introduce them to a personal relationship with God
2. Integrate those with disabilities into the life of the church and give them opportunities to actively serve God and use their gifts
3. Enable the church to serve as a witness to the community by meeting the spiritual, physical, and social needs of families affected by special needs.



# 3 C's OF SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY

## 3 C's OF SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY UNDERSTANDING:

1. Comprehend – Understand inclusion
2. Communicate – Cast the vision of inclusion
3. Collaborate – Working towards inclusion



# 3 C's - COMPREHEND

## COMPREHEND: Understand inclusion

- Changing philosophy of ministry
- Don't need to hire special positions!
- Comprehension of inclusion comes from relationships!



# 3 C's - COMMUNICATE

## COMMUNICATE: Cast the Vision

- Communicate What, Why, and How, BEFORE you do it with leadership and team!
- Effective communication starts at the top and trickles down
- Great Commission: “*Go and make disciples*” doesn’t differentiate with and without disability!





# 3 C's - COLLABORATE

## COLLABORATE: Work towards Inclusion

- All existing ministries need to work together to be most effective.
- All teams need to be on the same page.
- Start with what you have!
- Develop a plan and goals.



# HANDLING OBJECTION

## OBJECTION:

- Senior leadership is usually uncomfortable with the unknown. The world of special needs and inclusion ministry is a huge black box of unknown! Even elderly respite care is an unknown for many leadership teams.
- Due to a lack of knowledge, these unknowns are usually quickly dismissed.
- Change the objection into objectives!



# HANDLING OBJECTION

## OBJECTION:

- Lack of interest in the ministry

## OBJECTIVE:

- Showing love and compassion to an unreached people group who are frequently marginalized and misunderstood leads to an engaging and exciting ministry!





# HANDLING OBJECTION

## OBJECTION:

- Lack of budget/money for the ministry

## OBJECTIVE:

- Ministry is not expensive to start. Basis is relational and attention, like every other ministry.





# HANDLING OBJECTION

## OBJECTION:

- Liability issues for the ministry

## OBJECTIVE:

- Have an action plan to decrease liability: training of all volunteers, background checks of volunteers, waivers signed by families, church insurance policies usually cover everything without additional coverage



# HANDLING OBJECTION

## OBJECTION:

- Safety issues for the ministry

## OBJECTIVE:

- Have parents/caregivers complete a plan of care to know how to best care for their individual with special needs. Create action plans for elopement and other safety issues.



# HANDLING OBJECTION

## OBJECTION:

- The ministry will grow too fast, or “If we start it, they will come!”

## OBJECTIVE:

- Focus on who you currently have at your church and do ministry to the best of your ability.



# HANDLING OBJECTION

## OBJECTION:

- The church already has a shortage of volunteers

## OBJECTIVE:

- Special needs ministry raises up a whole new class of volunteers not currently serving or engaged in your church.



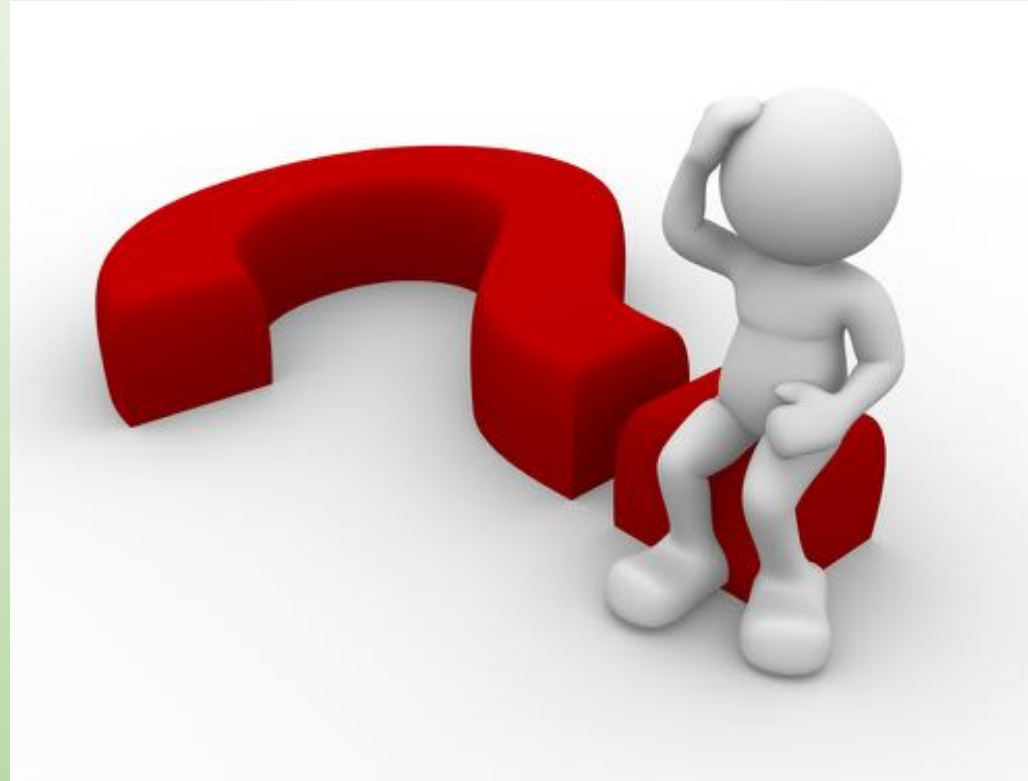


# LET'S PRACTICE TALKING WITH A PASTOR!



# QUESTIONS

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