

Inclusion Fusion Live Workshop

The Special Needs Church as Part of the Gathered Church

Intro

- As a worship pastor, my job is to foster an environment and an experience for everyone to be able to participate, know God's presence, and be fed from God's Word.
- The corporate gathering of believers each week is the most varied and diverse group with which to attempt this feat of unity and cooperation.
 - Nowhere else would we attempt to have such a group do all the same things at once and share common beliefs with all their different ages, backgrounds, preferences, emotional states, physical conditions, and cognitive capabilities.
 - Generational diversity may be the greatest challenge; the native communication/information language of each age group profoundly impacts how they intake a worship service.
 - Greatest generation – Radio/newspapers
 - Baby boomers – Newspapers/Network TV
 - Generation X – Network TV
 - Millennials – Internet
 - Generation Z – Smartphones/social media
- As challenging as it is, I must strive to meet the needs of as many people as possible in the corporate gathering and be a part of efforts churchwide to welcome those with disabilities.

The common solutions

- Sensory room
- Buddy program
- Accessibility
- Inclusion
- Accommodations
- Acceptance/non-judgment

The deeper solutions

- Manageable dB levels
- Calming lighting
- Resources and equipment

- Deaf interpretation
- Transmitters for hard of hearing
- Braille signage
- Subpac
- Fidgets
- Volunteer training
- Visual schedules/children's notes (specific to lesson/sermon)

The Challenging Solutions

- Whole church training/teaching
- Integrating movement into worship
- Seeking out worship musicians with special needs
- Tactile/kinesthetic/visual reinforcements for preaching/teaching
- Specific things addressed to those with disabilities in the service
- Active participation (talking back, hand signals, etc.)
- Ear protection

For the Home

- PATIENCE!
- FLEXIBILITY!
- Be prepared to explain everything
- Learn to use the plainest, simplest terms possible
- Incorporate movement, repetition, and visuals as much as you can
- Use music (yes, you)
- Have them be a part of it
- Acting
- Drawing
- Reading
- Writing
- Creating
- Repentance