

# STRATEGIES FOR SMALL CHURCHES

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## JAMES WAS DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM IN 2010

At the time, my husband pastored a small church in Pennsylvania.

# A SPECIAL-NEEDS MINISTRY WAS BUILT FOR HIM & OTHERS

In the five years following James's diagnosis, our church of about 150 people added new special-needs families, baptizing four adults from those families.

We included children with disabilities in every activity: Sunday school, worship time, Vacation Bible School, and sports camp. We also held quarterly respite nights and hosted our community's autism support group.



## THEN WE MOVED TO TEXAS

We regularly visited four small churches in our area. James had his own system for identifying them.

And even though none of them had a disability ministry, they did all they could to welcome James and our family.

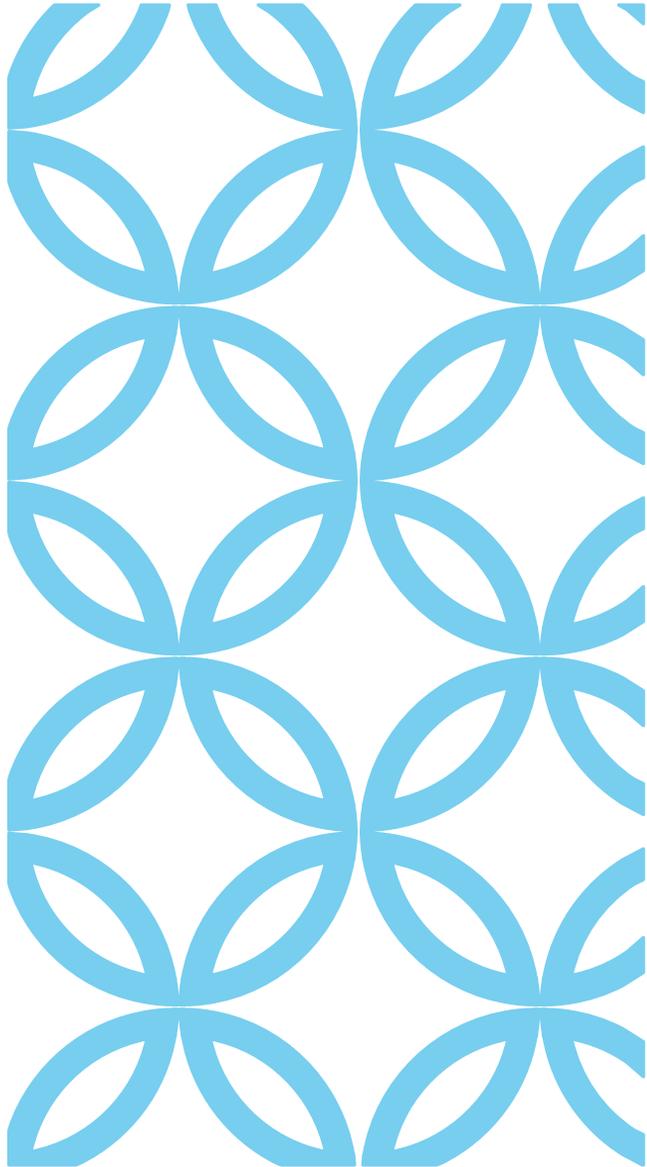


# SPECIAL-NEEDS MINISTRY ISN'T JUST FOR BIG CHURCHES.

50% of all churches in America average less than 100 in worship attendance.

40% of all churches in America average between 100 and 350 in attendance.

10% of all churches in America average more than 350 in attendance.



If we left special-needs ministry  
to the big churches,  
thousands of families would  
not be able to attend church.

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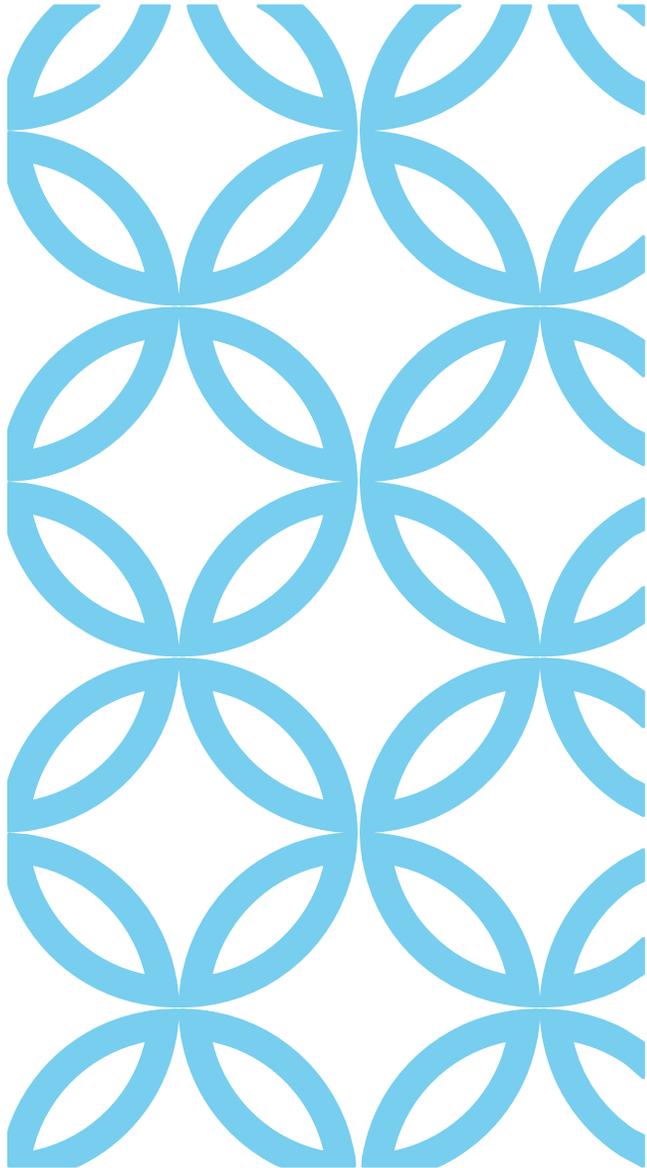
# SO WHY AREN'T MORE SMALL CHURCHES DOING SPECIAL- NEEDS MINISTRY?

- **Money** - "How much money does it take to run a special-needs ministry?"
- **Facilities** - "We are running low on space now. How much room will it take?"
- **People** - "Who is going to serve in this ministry?"
- **Knowledge or Experience** - "We just don't know where to start. How do we learn?"

We don't have to have a plan in place for every person we can imagine walking through our doors.

We just have to love and serve the ones who do. And churches of every size can do that.





**We assessed the needs we currently have in the church.**

**We recruited leadership.**

**We explored curriculum options.**

**We offered an interest meeting for volunteers.**

**We scheduled a respite night and formed a plan to advertise it.**

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**FIRST STEPS WE TOOK TO LAUNCH A  
SPECIAL-NEEDS MINISTRY**

SMALL  
CHURCHES CAN  
HAVE THE BEST  
SPECIAL-NEEDS  
MINISTRIES

The best special-needs ministries minister to the entire family

The best special-needs ministries minister beyond Sunday

The best special-needs ministries ask, “What can we do to keep you connected to Christ and to our church?”