LAMB

Inclusive Participation Assessment Tool

National Catholic Partnership on Disability

NCPD

Language, Accessibility, Meaningful Participation, Belonging

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 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 Tool 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 persons.

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, where the person is mentioned before any disability or diagnosis. 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 persons are welcomed, when one'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 one another, in Christ, and without that, the Church would not be whole. It is a setting for creating and strengthening continuing relationships and building communities, where all persons have a growing capacity to interact 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 for reflecting on liturgies or your parish community in general. We hope it will also help you to better understand each of the attributes.

Assessment Key:
0 (Not at All), 1 (Minimally), 2 (Moderately), 3 (Very Well).

	0	1	2	3
Language				
Person-first				
Respectful				
Age appropriate				
Persons with disabilities are communicated with directly. There should always be the assumption that s/he can advocate for themselves, and understand the verbal and non-verbal (body) language of others.				
Accessibility - Physical				
Entrances, exits and the interior of the church are free of physical barriers.				
Entrance ways to and from catechetical programs are free of physical barriers.				
Entrance ways to and from the community spaces are free of physical barriers.				
Persons can enter the sanctuary using their mobility devices.				
Church and parish facilities provide a calming space or manipulatives (e.g., fidgets) for persons with sensory processing needs.				
Wheelchair accessible restroom(s) are available.				
Family restroom(s) are available.				

	0	1	2	3
Meeting space and furniture compliments chronological age and/or physical stature of participants.				
Persons with mobility devices have options for accessible seating in worship and community spaces (e.g., pew cuts in various locations; not designated to specific sections/pews).				
Accommodations for liturgies, meetings and events are provided upon request (e.g., sign-language interpreter, large-print materials).				
Available accommodations for liturgies, meetings and events are indicated on all print, digital and social media promotions (e.g., use symbols to indicate availability of an interpreter or wheelchair access).				
Accessibility - Social				
Provides opportunities to engage persons with different communication abilities in total parish life.				
Supports provided for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing (HoH) (e.g., ASL interpreter, assistive listening devices, loop systems).				
Supports provided for persons with vision impairment (e.g., large print materials, braille, screen reader compatible, electronic documents).				
Augmented communication device use is supported (e.g., communication boards, pictographs).				

	0	1	2	3
Accessibility - Learning				
Alternate strategies for diverse learning needs are offered.				
Adapted content with pictures and/or symbols is utilized.				
Interactive options for engagement with materials (e.g., multi-sensory approach).				
Meaningful Participation				
Provide opportunities, roles and activities to utilize various talents/gifts.				
Everyone's strengths are utilized to facilitate active engagement of all.				
Individual goals for parish participation are understood and respected.				
Provides opportunities for active engagement in the life of the parish.				
Belonging				
Promotes interaction of persons with diverse abilities.				
Fosters relationship-building among parishioners of all abilities.				
Fosters a sense of community within the entire parish.				
Attitudes support participation rather than act as barriers.				

Recommendations