

SIGHTED GUIDE TECHNIQUES

Allow the person you are guiding to hold your arm and follow as you walk.

Move your guiding arm behind your back when approaching a narrow space so the person you are guiding can step behind you and follow single-file.

Hesitate briefly at a curb or at the beginning of a flight of stairs and tell the person you are guiding whether the steps go up or down.

Be sure to allow the person you are guiding to find the handrail and locate the edge of the first step before proceeding.

Do NOT grab the person you are guiding by the hand, arm, or shoulder and try to steer him.

Do NOT grab the person's cane or the handle of a dog guide's harness.



PRAYER OF INCLUSION

Jesus, help us to understand and recognize that each one of us has gifts and challenges. May we see You in each person and may each person see You in us as we work together to bring about Your kingdom. Help us to open our hearts to relationship as we open our doors to be a welcoming and inclusive faith community.

Amen.

For more resources go to:

www.nfb.org

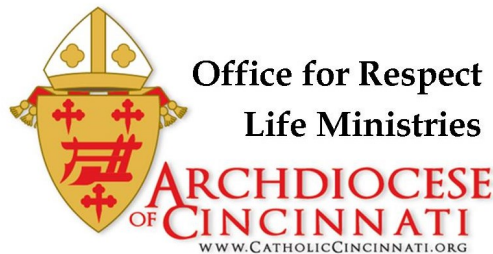
www.nfbohio.org



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www.catholiccincinnati.org/respect-life-2/

Welcoming Those with Blindness



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A WELCOMING APPROACH

Greeting

Greet a person with blindness as you would any other visitor. Introduce yourself and speak directly to the person (not a companion). Suggest a tour of the facilities before or after Mass to show where to find the bathroom, meeting rooms, etc. Touch him/her lightly on the arm to show that you are speaking to him/her. **DO NOT SHOUT.** Those with blindness do not typically have trouble hearing. If he/she does not require assistance, be sure to follow up with him/her after Mass.

Seating

Ask if he/she would like to be guided to a seat. If “yes,” then help him/her find your arm and proceed to a seat on the edge of a pew. See *Sighted Guide Techniques* on the back for more information. If “no,” then remind yourself to follow up after Mass.

Accommodations During Mass

If there is an envelope/survey at the end of the pew or back of the church, offer an opportunity for assistance after Mass.

“If you are unable to complete the form at the end of the pew, assistance will be available after Mass in the Gathering Space.”

Ask if he/she intend to contribute to the collection basket, so that it can be appropriately communicated to him/her when the basket comes around.

Receiving Communion

Ask if he/she intends to receive the Eucharist. If “yes,” discuss how he/she would like to receive. Would he/she prefer to be guided by an Usher through the Communion line or would he/she like to remain in the pew and have a Eucharistic Minister come to him/her.

Accommodations After Mass

Offer to assist him/her out of the pew and into the Gathering Space. Offer to introduce him/her to the priest or deacon. Be sure to be welcoming.

As Catholics, we are called to welcome and respect all people who wish to participate in our sacred liturgy.

- ◆ Respect the wishes of the person with blindness.
- ◆ Do NOT insist upon trying to help if your offer of assistance is declined.
- ◆ Do NOT pet, feed, or distract a guide dog. They are not pets; they are working companions on whom a blind person depends.
- ◆ Treat people with blindness as individuals. People with visual disabilities come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. They each have their own strengths and weaknesses, just like everyone else.

