

FROM EXCLUSION TO EMBRACE

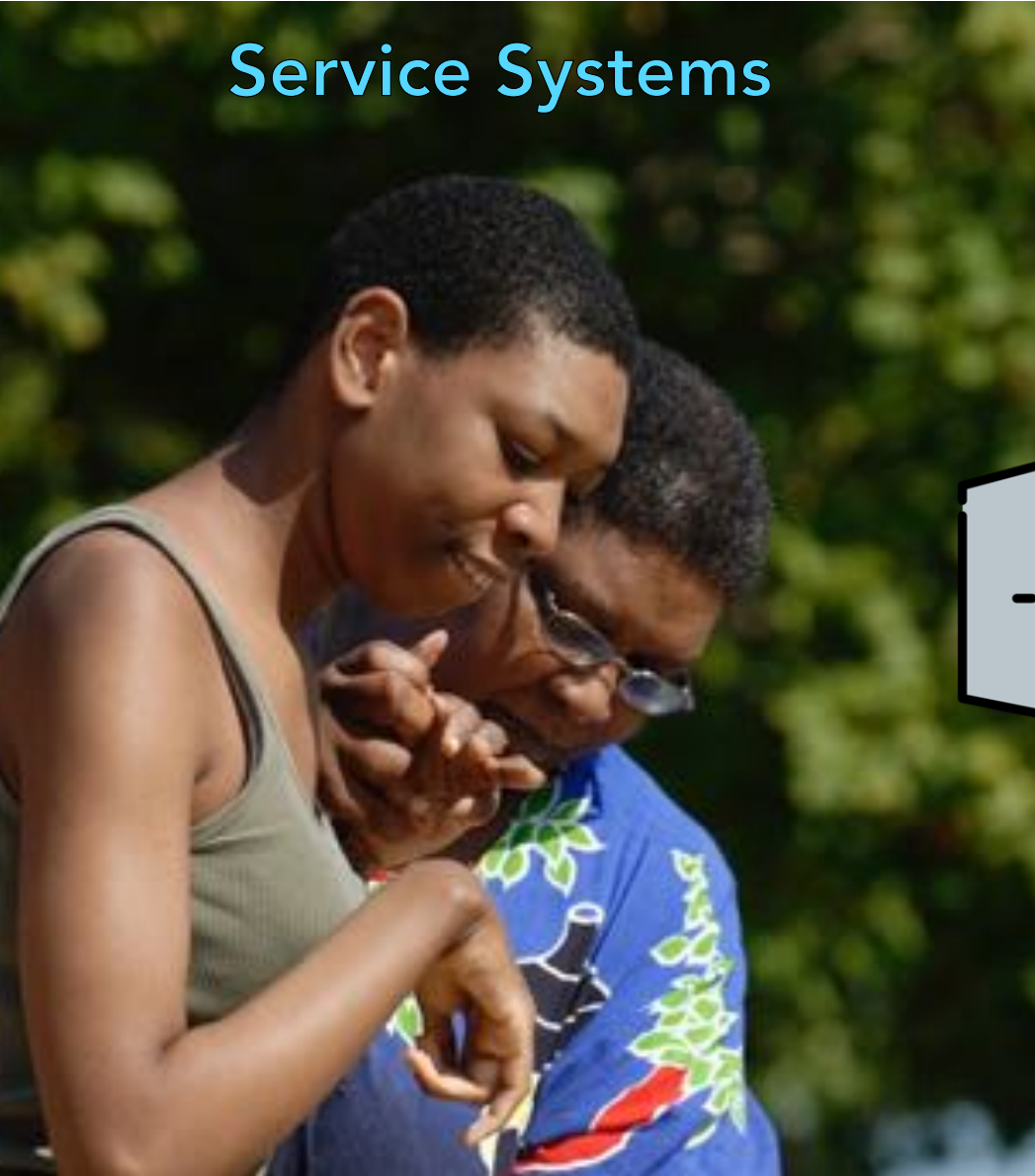
SUPPORTING INCLUSION AND BELONGING
FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE DOORS

ERIK CARTER

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

WWW.ERIKWCARTER.COM/STONEBELT

Service Systems



Congregations





<https://disabilityisbeautiful.com>



“I am a Christian myself. I go to church every Sunday. So, that’s what I do ... I believe that first and foremost, God is the most important thing in my life..”

–JAMES, 15-YEAR-OLD WITH AUTISM

“It is a good church. People good to me. My youth group’s good ... they love me and they cheer me up.”

–MAURICE, 15-YEAR-OLD WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

(Faith and Flourishing Project; Liu et al., 2014; Accessible Worship Project, Carter et al., in press)

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

74%

Being part of a faith community is *somewhat* to very important

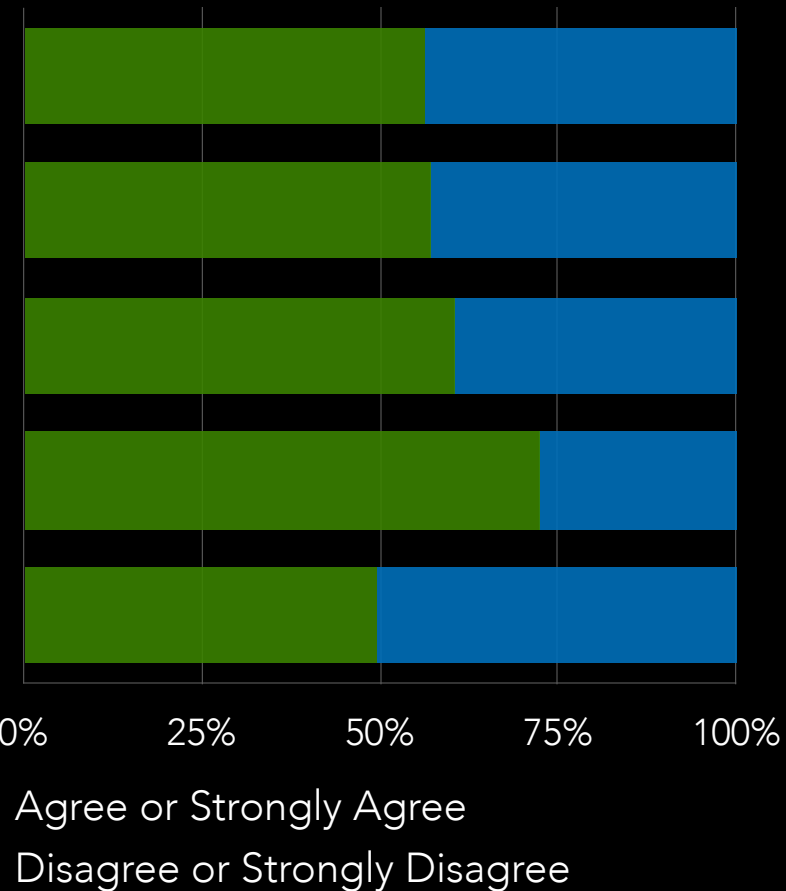
My child prays daily

My child looks to their faith as providing meaning and purpose in their life

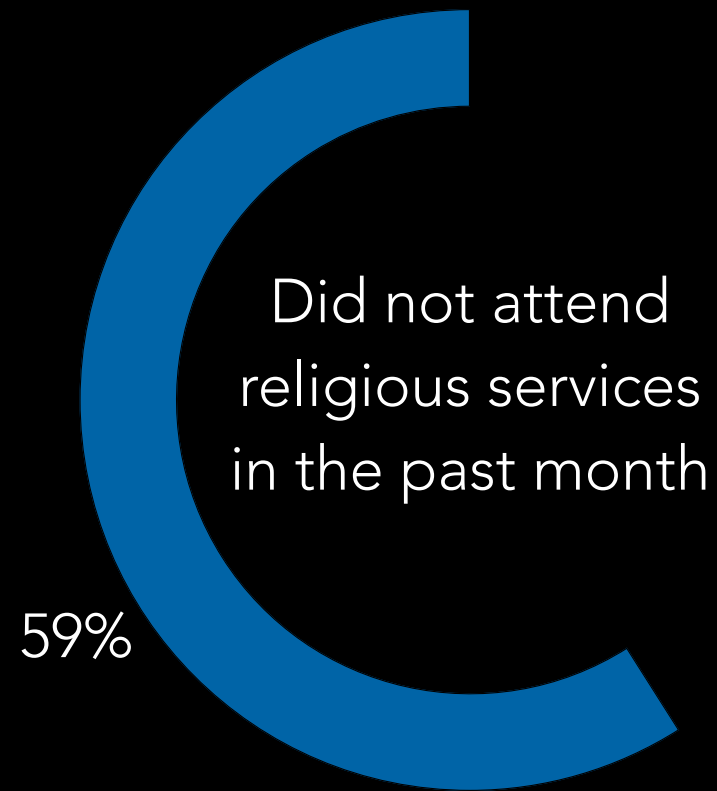
My child considers themselves to be active in their faith community or congregation

My child enjoys being around others who share their faith

My child's faith affects many of their decisions



(Faith and Flourishing Project; Carter & Boehm, 2019; Tennessee Disability Services Study, 2022)



(National Core Indicators Analyses, Carter et al., 2015; in progress)

“There’s a place for everybody here [at my church].
You belong to something that’s greater than the whole.”

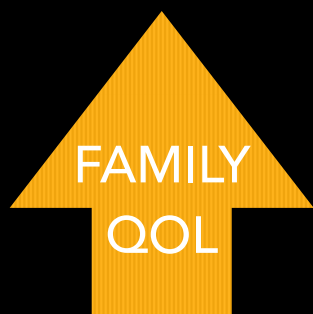
–AUDREY, PARENT OF A DAUGHTER WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

“The small group that we’re in often prays for our family and we talk
about the issues we are dealing with. We feel very connected to
them and, of course, the same things go for the other members.”

–LINDA, PARENT OF A SON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

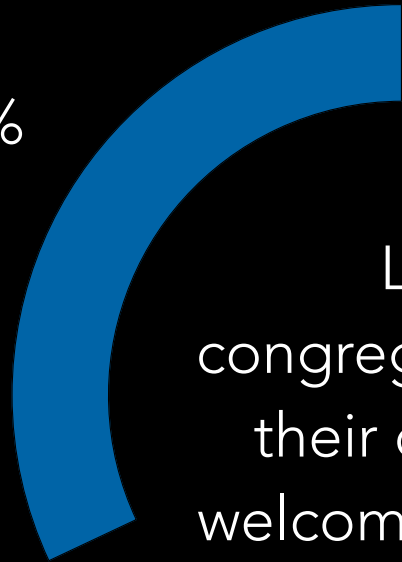
(Faith and Flourishing Project; Carter et al., 2016; Systematic Reviews, Carter. 2021, in press)

PARENT PERSPECTIVES



(Faith and Flourishing Project, Carter & Boehm, 2019; Family Quality of Life Projects; Boehm & Carter, 2015, 2019)

32%



Left their
congregation because
their child was not
welcomed or included

(Aunt et al., 2013)



KEY THEMES OF RESEARCH & PRACTICE

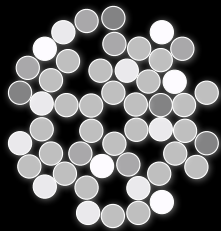
1. Spirituality **has relevance** to the lives of individuals with IDD and their families.
2. Spirituality can have **considerable importance**.
3. Spirituality is experienced and expressed in very **diverse ways**.
4. Spirituality is **rarely static**.
5. Spirituality can be **highly influential**.
6. Spirituality can require **planning and support**.

(Carter et al., 2021)



Communities

Exclusion

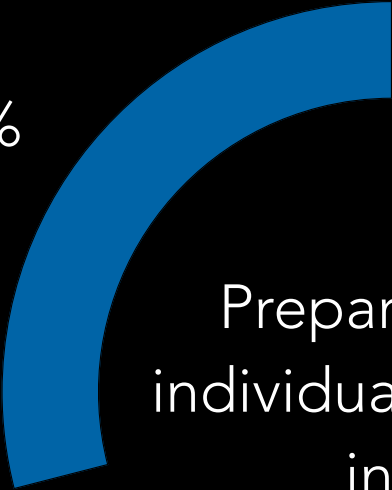


Ministry
Apart

Congregations



29%



Prepared to integrate
individuals with disabilities
into worship

(Annandale & Carter, 2014)

“When I first started going to the Orthodox church and found out that we had a healing service, I was like: ‘Aw, crap! Here we go. Someone's going to try to heal me or something again.’”

–LIZ, 34-YEAR-OLD WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

“You have people who get so stuck in their ways—or think that this is how it needs to be—that it's like you forget that we're all here for a reason. We're all here for one purpose, and that's unity. Christ meant for the whole—for everybody—to be together.”

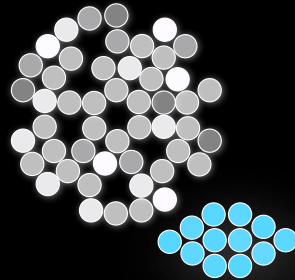
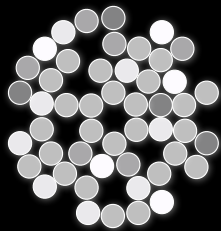
–SIERRA, 35-YEAR-OLD WITH AUTISM

(Accessible Worship Project, Carter et al., 2022; Ault et al., 2013)

Communities

Exclusion

Segregation

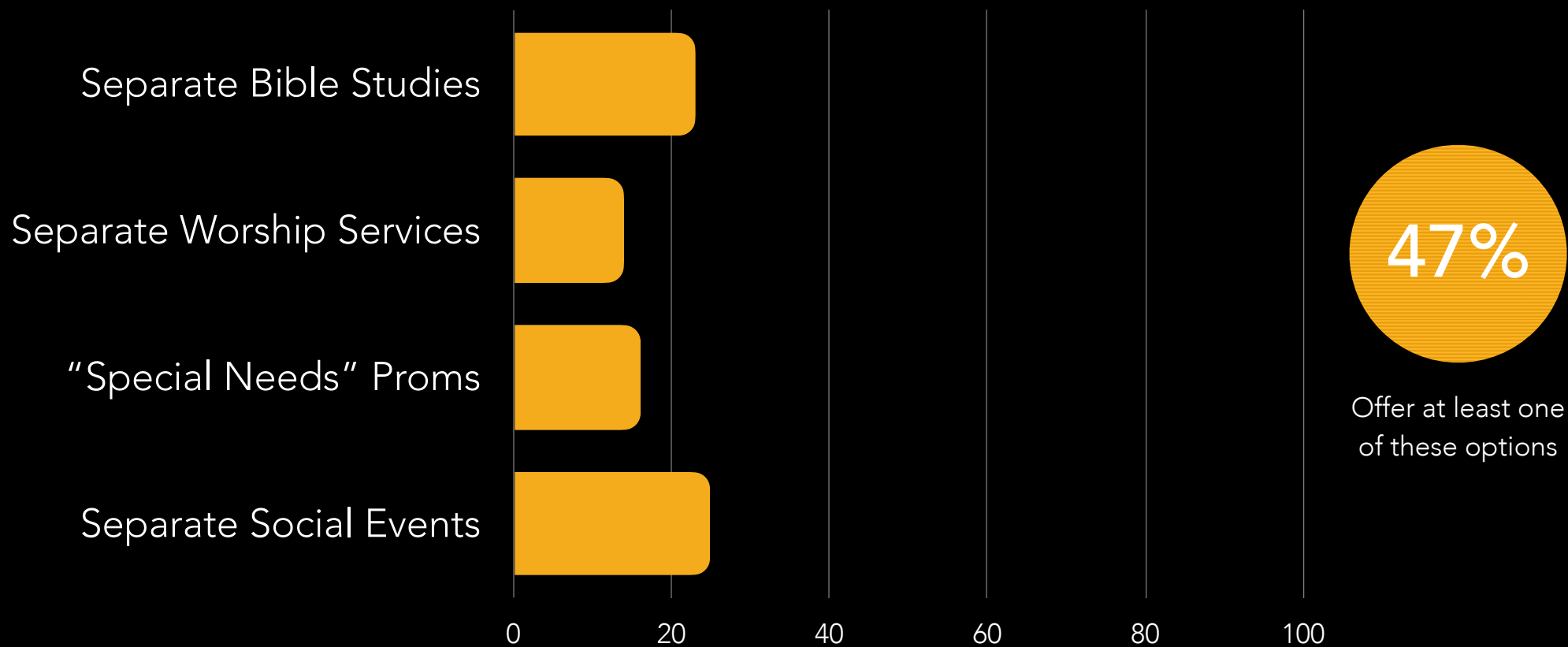


Ministry
Apart

Ministry
To

Congregations

SEPARATE PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



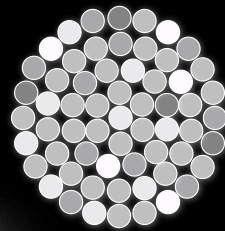
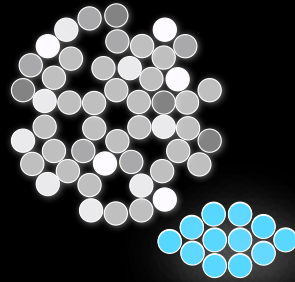
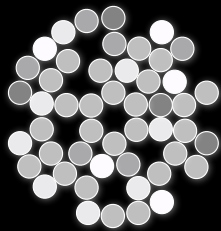
(National Study of Disability and Ministry)

Communities

Exclusion

Segregation

Integration



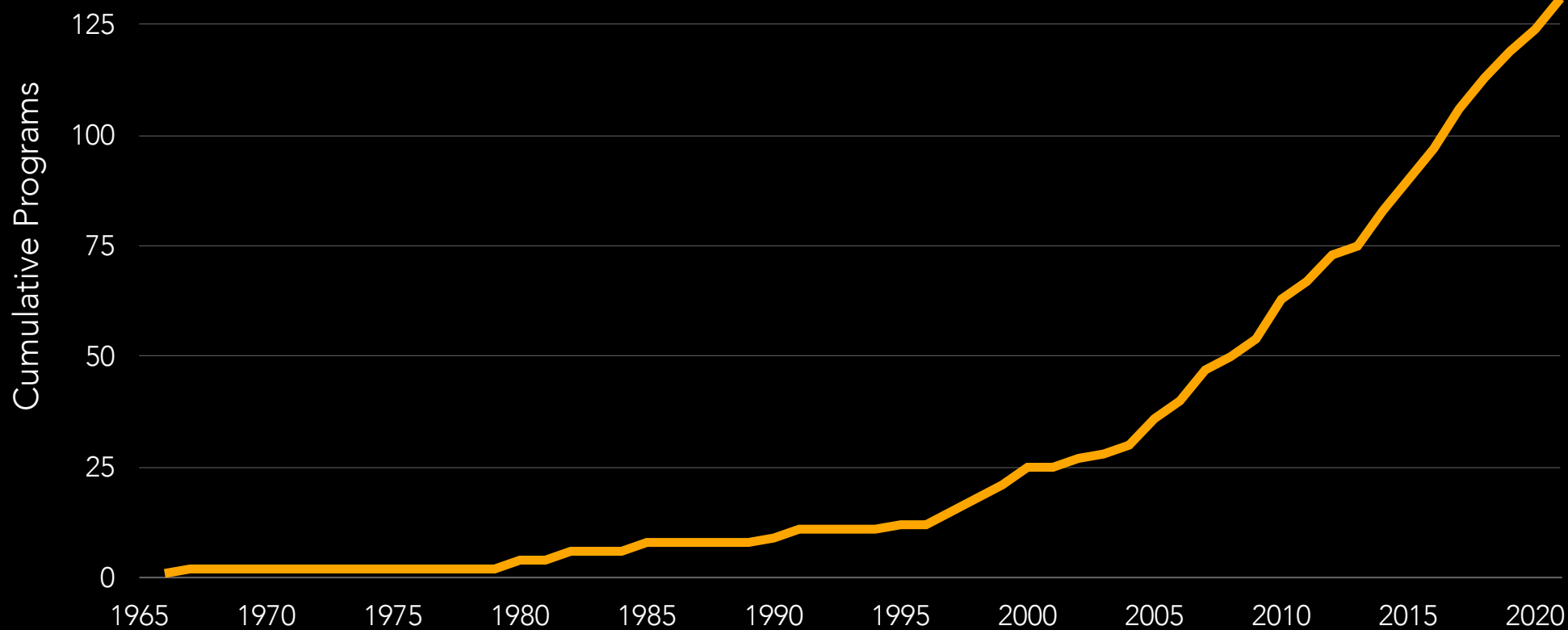
Ministry
Apart

Ministry
To

Ministry
Among

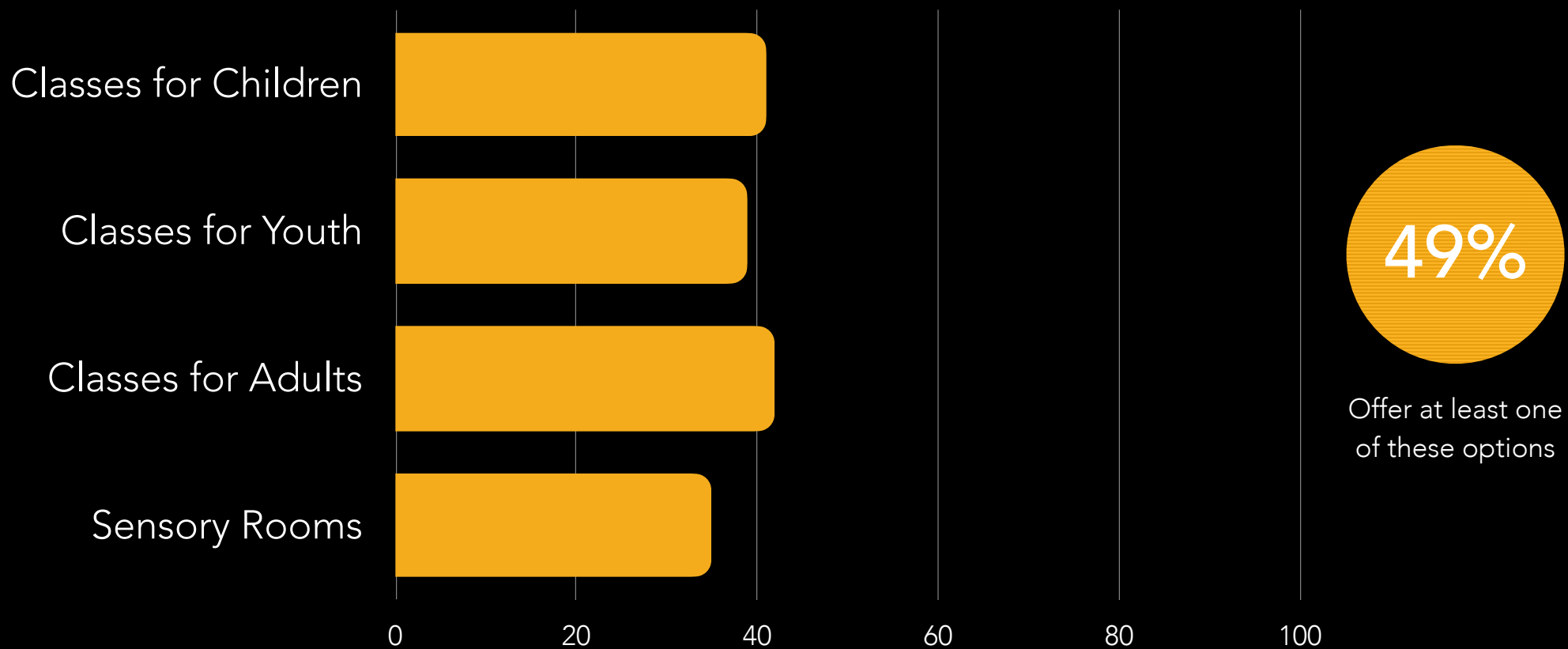
Congregations

TRENDS IN FORMAL MINISTRIES



(National Study of Disability and Ministry)

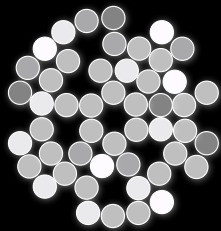
SPECIALIZED CLASSES AND SPACES



(National Study of Disability and Ministry)

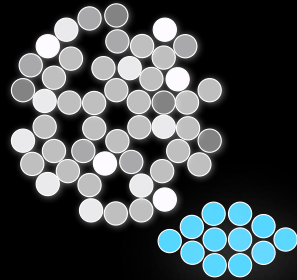
Communities

Exclusion



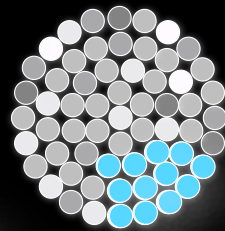
Ministry
Apart

Segregation



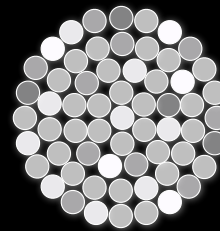
Ministry
To

Integration



Ministry
Among

Inclusion



Ministry
With

Congregations

Communities

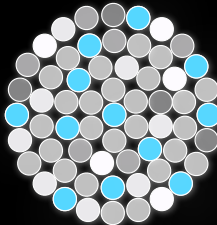
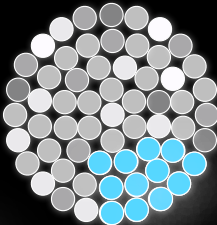
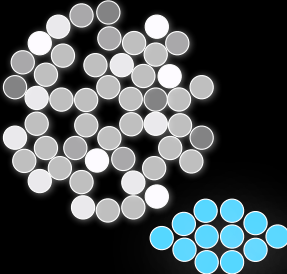
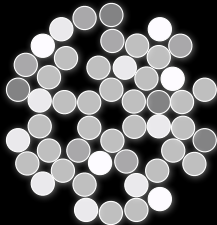
Exclusion

Segregation

Integration

Inclusion

Belonging



Ministry
Apart

Ministry
To

Ministry
Among

Ministry
With

Ministry
By

Congregations

Service Systems

- I do not know how to address it.
- I feel uncomfortable addressing it.
- I never really thought about it.
- I do not have time to address it.
- It is not my responsibility to address it.
- I am not permitted to address it.
- We lack staff to address it
- Someone else is addressing it.
- It is not relevant to this segment of the community.



Congregations

- Awareness
- Attitudes
- Architecture
- Activities
- Communication
- Expectations
- Resources
- Training
- Theology
- And many others...

CHANGING THIS LANDSCAPE

1. Responding
2. Reflection
3. Planning
4. Inviting
5. Supporting
6. Befriending
7. Partnering
8. Celebrating



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RESPONDING

SERVICE SYSTEMS

- Personal aspirations
- Self-determination
- Choice
- Community inclusion
- Supportive relationships
- Cultural competence
- Natural supports
- Quality of life



RATIONALE

Faith and spirituality may offer positive support and help people do for others in our communities. Spiritual beliefs could be represented by religious expressions, and faith communities could provide spiritual support.

Committees and organizations but also provide opportunities for spiritual support in communities.

THEREFORE, the work of people in the field to spiritual support.

es for their lives. TASH further supports people to participate in spiritual expression or activities. TASH promotes the provision of any and all supports needed for people to participate.

STATEMENT

The rights, needs, and preferences of people with disabilities, especially those with acute needs, should be explored in all settings.

“...the right of individuals with disabilities to participate in spiritual expression or organized religion as they so choose and **promotes the provision of any and all supports needed by people with disabilities to so participate.**”

POSITION STATEMENT

People with mental retardation and related conditions have the right to choose their own expressions of spirituality, to participate in spiritual activities, and to participate in religious or spiritual activity.

ISSUES

While many agencies provide religious freedom, they seldom often help people participate in their choice and/or traditions.

Individuals and their families even though many congregations and strategies for support beyond the practice of faith and develop relationships and social and serve others.

"Spirituality, spiritual growth, and religious expression that respect a person's history, tradition, and current preferences **are rights that must be honored by services systems and faith-based communities**, as should the choice not to participate."

- Agencies need education regarding spiritual expression and related developmental disabilities.



CONGREGATIONS

- Love our neighbors
- Welcome the stranger
- Upend societal hierarchies
- See everyone as indispensable
- Move the margins to the middle
- Widen our welcome
- Pursue the unpursued
- Recognize the imago Dei in everyone

American Baptist Churches, USA

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REFLECTING

SERVICE SYSTEMS

- How does your **organization support** the spiritual expressions of those you serve?
- How are you addressing spirituality within **person-focused planning**?
- What are **your own views** regarding spirituality and supports?
- How are you **seeking input** from local faith communities on your community supports?



- ✓ Our mission statement reflects a commitment to support the choices of people with disabilities, including those related to spiritual exploration and religious expression.
- ✓ Our written policies explain the importance of supporting people's religious preferences, as well as point to practical strategies for doing this well.
- ✓ Our staff and the people with disabilities whom we serve are aware of and familiar with these policies.
- ✓ We can identify someone (e.g., staff person, board member, advocate) who is responsible for ensuring that spiritual supports are addressed and that our policies are evidenced in practice.
- ✓ We understand the different ways we should be addressing the spiritual and religious needs of the people whom we serve.
- ✓ We discuss with new staff the importance of listening for, seeking out, and supporting people's choices and preferences, including their religious preferences.
- ✓ We provide staff with the training they need to do this effectively and with confidence.
- ✓ We ask about the spiritual needs, strengths, and connections of people with disabilities when they first begin receiving our services and supports.

- ✓ We revisit these conversations periodically to make sure we are continuing to meet their needs.
- ✓ We orient people with disabilities and their families/advocates to the types of supports we make available for individuals interested in being involved in a faith community.
- ✓ We provide the opportunities, space, and support people need to explore and express their spirituality at home, within a congregation, or elsewhere, if they so choose.
- ✓ We periodically assess and seek to remove potential barriers that hinder us from addressing the spiritual and religious needs of people with disabilities.
- ✓ It is clear the people whom we serve are involved in the faith community of their choice.
- ✓ Participation in community activities, including attending congregational activities, is not used to reinforce good behavior or punish inappropriate behavior.
- ✓ We have established relationships with local congregations and faith-based organizations as partners in this work.
- ✓ We recognize and affirm the sense of calling and vocation held by our staff providing direct support to people with disabilities.

Reflection Tool for Agencies

It can be valuable to reflect on the extent to which your agency views spirituality and religion as being important to people with disabilities and takes intentional steps to support this aspect of people's lives. The following indicators can help prompt discussion among staff about this area of your services and supports.

Indicators	How well does this describe our agency?			What steps can we take to improve in this area?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
Our mission statement reflects a commitment to support the choices of people with disabilities, including those related to spiritual exploration and religious expression.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
Our written policies explain the importance of supporting people's religious preferences, as well as point to practical strategies for doing this well.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
Our staff <i>and</i> the people with disabilities whom we serve are aware of and familiar with these policies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
We can identify someone (e.g., staff person, board member, advocate) who is responsible for ensuring that spiritual supports are addressed and that our policies are evidenced in practice.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
We understand the different ways that we should be addressing the spiritual and religious needs of the people whom we serve.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
We discuss with new staff the importance of listening for, seeking out, and supporting people's choices and preferences, including their religious preferences.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
We provide staff with the training they need to do this effectively and with confidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
We ask about the spiritual needs, strengths, and connections of people with disabilities when they first begin receiving our services and supports.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	

Indicators	How well does this describe our agency?			What steps can we take to improve in this area?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
We revisit these conversations periodically to make sure we are continuing to meet their needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
We orient people with disabilities and their families/advocates to the types of supports we make available for individuals interested in being involved in a faith community.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
We provide the opportunities, space, and support people need to explore and express their spirituality at home, within a congregation, or elsewhere, if they so choose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
We periodically assess and seek to remove potential barriers that hinder us from addressing the spiritual and religious needs of people with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
It is clear that the people whom we serve are involved in the faith community <i>of their choice</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
Participation in community activities, including attending congregational activities, is not used to reinforce good behavior or punish inappropriate behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
We have established relationships with local congregations and faith-based organizations as partners in this work.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
We recognize and affirm the sense of calling and vocation held by our staff providing direct support to people with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
We respect the religious values of our staff and strive to define support roles and responsibilities that align with those values.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely	
Other:				
Other:				

Adapted from Carter, E. W. (2007). *Including people with disabilities in faith communities: A guide for service providers, congregations, and families*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.



CONGREGATIONS

- What are the prevailing **postures** and **practices** of your congregation?
- What **opportunities** and **supports** should be expanded or developed?
- What needs are you **hearing** from members or **seeing** in your community?
- How are you **seeking input** from local service providers on your widening your welcome?



EXAMPLE REFLECTION APPROACHES

TOOL	DESCRIPTION
Accessibility Checklists	Addresses the physical, programmatic, and communication accessibility of the areas (e.g., sanctuaries, classrooms, bathrooms, offices) and activities in which congregation members gather
<i>The Five Stages</i>	Addresses behaviors and perspectives that suggest a progressing posture of ignorance about, pity toward, care for, friendship with, and co-laboring alongside individuals with disabilities
<i>Indicators of Welcome</i>	Addresses specific ways in which congregations can demonstrate hospitality and inclusion in the areas of worship services, religious education, service, outreach, fellowship, family supports, general awareness, community partnerships, and accessibility
<i>Journey of a Congregation</i>	Addresses 14 aspects of a congregation's response related to: awareness, internal advocacy, discussions, plans, accommodations, welcoming environment, hurdles, inclusion, local outreach, leadership, new consciousness, transformation, external advocacy, and outreach
<i>Dimensions of Belonging</i>	Addresses the extent to which individuals with disabilities and their families are invited, present, welcomed, known, accepted, supported, cared for, befriended, needed, and loved within their faith community in ways that lead to belonging
<i>Community Conversations</i>	Reflection events involving a cross-section of congregational and community members to collaboratively respond to key questions: <i>What could we do to include people with disabilities and their families well in the life of their faith community? What could we do to come alongside them in other areas of their lives? How might we partner with others in these areas?</i>

EXAMPLE REFLECTION APPROACHES

- Individual conversations
- Group-based discussions
- Congregational surveys
- And many others

Congregational Outreach Survey

Our congregation is called to have an impact on our community. We desire to be an inviting congregation that is intentional about finding ways to worship among, mutually support, and serve alongside people with disabilities and their families in fellowship. We invite you to help us realize this vision. Do you know people with disabilities who might want to attend our congregation? Are there needs we can help meet or support we could provide? Would you like to help welcome people with disabilities and their families into our faith community? Your answers to this brief questionnaire will help us identify steps we can take to become a congregation known for our hospitality.

1. How would you describe yourself? Check all that apply.

I have a disability.
 I have a child with a disability.
 I have a sibling or relative with a disability.
 I have a friend or neighbor with a disability.
 I interact with people with disabilities at my workplace.
 I do not know anyone with a disability.
 Other: _____

2. If you or a family member has a disability, which of the following supports might help you participate more fully in congregational life or meet a personal need? Check all that apply.

Transportation:
 To worship services
 To other congregational activities throughout the week
 To other events in the community
 Additional support to participate in:
 Worship services
 Children's programs
 Youth programs
 Adult programs
 Respite care (e.g., offering a periodic break to parents of children with disabilities)
 To attend worship services
 To participate in other congregational activities
 At other times throughout the week
 Support group for parents, siblings, and other caregivers of people with disabilities
 Pastoral counseling
 Financial or other material assistance: _____
 Accessible scriptural or other study materials
 Support in advocating for your needs among agencies, organizations, and schools
 Information about faith-based services and programs within our community and state

In the space below, we encourage you to share with us other needs not already listed: _____

Consider new ways of welcoming people with developmental and other disabilities into our congregation, would you be interested in learning more about a might serve in any of the following ways?

Ideally giving someone a ride to services or other congregational rites
 Being a companion or partner during congregational activities
 Inviting someone with disabilities to sit with you during worship services
 Inviting someone over for a meal and fellowship periodically
 Being a ministry team to improve our welcome to people with disabilities
 Being a children's or youth program teacher
 Being a helper or buddy to a person with disabilities during children's and youth programs
 Hearing to help us provide respite care activities
 Attending an informational workshop about disabilities and our congregation's response
 Being on the team that reviews and acts on the responses to this survey
 If: _____

_____ often have gifts that they never thought of using to welcome and support people with developmental disabilities—as an outgoing personality, a specific hobby or talent, or a knack for making connections among people. Perhaps there are things you care deeply about. List one or two things that you are really good at doing.

_____ we commit to inviting your friends and neighbors with disabilities to services and activities within our congregation?

_____ we like to learn more about how to do this

_____ would like to talk further about the information you provided on this survey. Please let us know your name and the best way to contact you!

Name: _____
 Address: _____

_____ If you have any questions, concerns, or comments you would like to share with us, please return to _____ by _____

3

INVITING

SERVICE SYSTEMS

- In what ways are you inviting local faith communities **to learn about** your organization's mission and work?
- In what ways are you inviting them **to share about** the opportunities and supports they provide?



<https://www.thearda.com/us-religion/maps/us-county-maps>





CONGREGATIONS

- How does your **website** and **social media** communicate your commitment to welcoming people with disabilities and their families?
- What are the avenues through which you **announce** your welcome throughout your city and disability communities?
- What are the avenues through which you are **inviting** throughout your city and disability communities?



<https://data.census.gov/cedsci>



Disability Ministry

GET INVOLVED

VIDEOS & LINKS

It's about Jesus for all people.

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS A PLACE WHERE



EQUIPPING AND SERVING THE SPECIAL NEEDS COMMUNITY



Special Needs



Bridge Disability Ministries

Bridge desires to see each person and family integrated in
 Calvary life in order to build a strong community in their faith.

LAFAYETTE FEDERATED CHURCH

ONE BODY MANY PARTS

MINISTERING TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES IMPACTED BY DISABILITIES

At Lafayette Federated Church we believe God makes each of us according to his will and purposes. Those with special needs often have special talents and giftings as well. The entire body thrives when each member can participate to the fullest. Our disabilities ministry focuses not only on helping those with special needs, but also on developing their gifts and integrating them into the body of Christ as contributing members in God's kingdom. We seek to provide individuals and families with special needs the support they require to enable them to minister in the unique ways God has called them. For questions, please reach out to us at onebodymanyparts@lfc.org.



Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ... In fact, God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

1 Corinthians 12:12,18

SUPPORTING THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- **Sensory-Friendly Worship Room**

A place for families with special needs children to worship together during our Sunday service. This room provides a calming atmosphere for children whose needs can make worship with the whole congregation difficult.

- **Caregivers Caring for Challenging Children (CCCC)**

4

PLANNING

SERVICE SYSTEMS

- What **questions** are you asking of the individuals and families you serve?
- How do your **planning tools** address and capture this information?
- Is your planning always **individualized** and **contextualized**?
- Are you **inviting insights** from congregation members who already know the individuals and families well?



SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

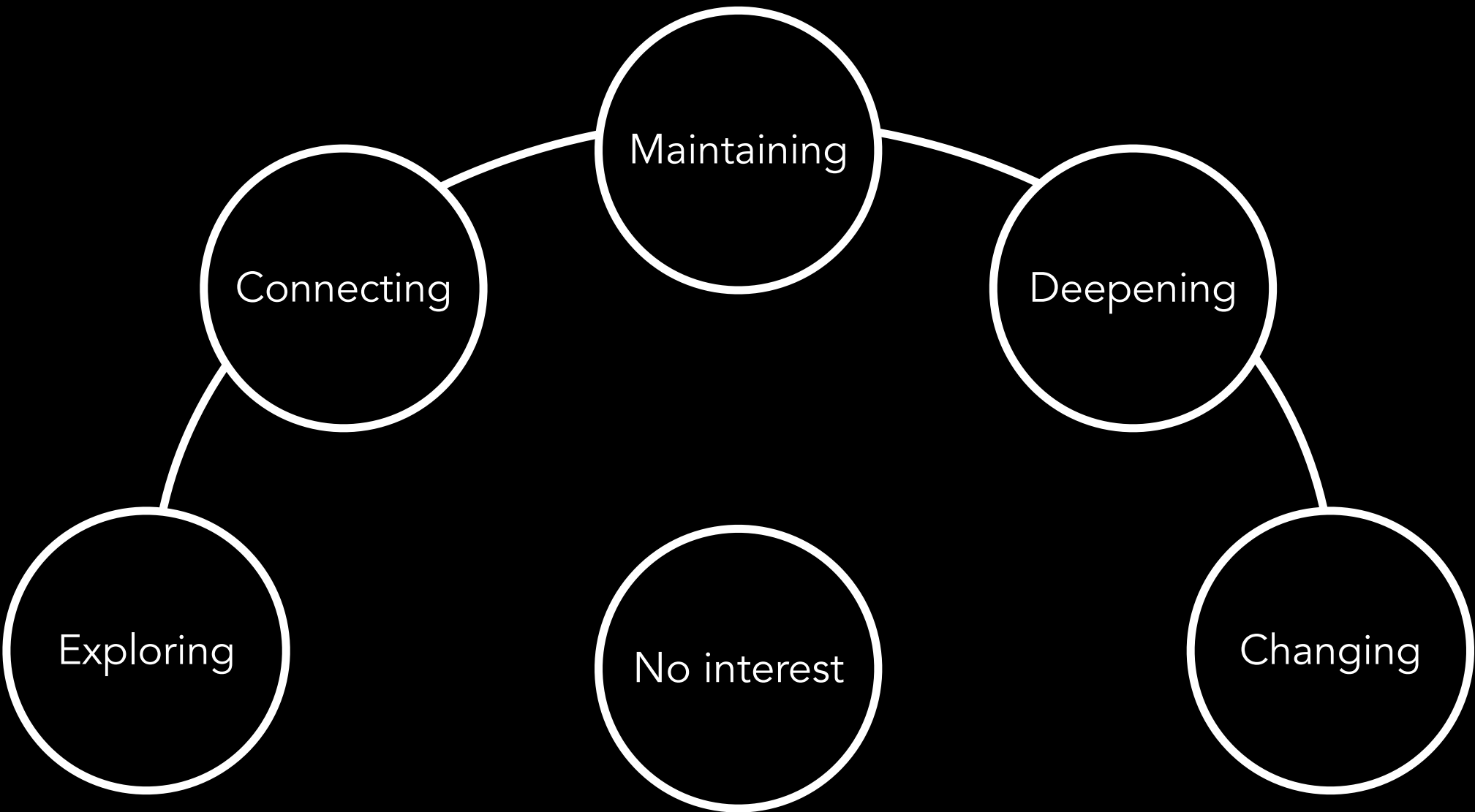
- What are some things that give you joy or happiness? What brings meaning to your life?
- Do you have religious or spiritual beliefs that are important to you? What are those beliefs?
- What are some of the ways that you express your faith or spirituality?
- What traditions, rituals, or practices are especially important to you?
- Are there holy days, festivals, or other special events that you observe?
- What gives you strength?
- How do you cope when going through difficult times? To whom do you turn?
- What would you say are your gifts? What do people compliment you on?
- Have you experienced a sense of calling in your life?
- What else is important for us know about your religious and spiritual beliefs?

CONGREGATIONAL PARTICIPATION

- Do you currently attend a congregation (e.g., church, mosque, synagogue, temple)?
- Tell me about it.
- Who do you go with?
- What do you do there? How do you participate in services and activities?
- How often do you go?
- What do you like most about it? What do you wish was different?
- How is being part of this congregation important in your life?
- In what ways would you like to be more involved? Less involved?
- If you could try out any new class, program, or activity, what would it be?
- Is your congregation supportive for you? How so?
- Are there particular people who are especially friendly or helpful?
- What keeps you from being involved in the ways that you would like?
- Were you involved in a congregation when you were younger? Was this an important part of family life?

SUPPORT NEEDS

- What supports will you need to be involved in your congregation in the ways you would like?
- Which of these supports can we provide? Which would you prefer to come from someone else?
- Would you like help finding a congregational home?
- Do you have the spiritual supports, relationships, and connections that you would like?
- Are there religious practices or restrictions we should keep in mind as we support you?
- Would you like us to help you address your spiritual needs? If so, how?
- Would you like help learning more about your faith?
- How well are we doing at helping you meet your spiritual needs?
- Do you have any needs that are not being addressed?





CONGREGATIONS

- What questions are you asking of the **individuals** and **families** who attend your congregation?
- How are you intentional about planning for each person's **presence** and **participation**?
- Is your support always **individualized** and **contextualized**?
- How are you involving clergy, ministry leaders, and other members in **congregation-wide planning**?
- Are you inviting insights from **outside professionals** who know these individuals and families well?

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT PLANS

Inclusion Plan Describe plans and adaptations that will be used to include the person in congregational life.				
Activities	What did involvement look like?	What supports and adaptations were needed for participation?	Who carried out this part of the plan?	Are there changes to be made?
Small group activities				
Large group activities				
Worship services				
Rituals, Sacraments, or other community traditions				
Service, outreach, social opportunities				
Faith partner				
Other				

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PLAN FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

I. Overview
We are excited that your child will be involved in our programs! We would like to ask you to provide the following information so that we can ensure that our programs meet the needs of your child.

Date: _____ Date of birth: _____
 Name: _____ Parents/Caregiver: _____ E-mail: _____
 Address: _____ Telephone: _____
 If absolutely necessary, where can we find you during the time we are with your child?
 Main sanctuary _____ Classroom: _____ Other: _____
 What are some things that your child really enjoys doing?

In what ways does your child learn best? Are there teaching strategies that work particularly well?

How does your child communicate with others?

What types of assistance (if any) will your child need with eating, getting around, or using the restroom?

What behavioral challenges might we encounter when interacting with your child (if any)?
 • _____
 • _____
 • _____
 • _____

For each challenge, what are strategies for responding that s to work well?
 • _____
 • _____
 • _____
 • _____

How would you describe where your child is right now in his or her faith journey?

What are the most important goals and concepts that we should be focusing on?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

Other information:
 Describe any allergies that we should know about.

Is your child on medications that may impact his or her behavior? If so, describe.

Is your child at increased risk for getting sick from other children? How can we reduce this risk?

Are there other medical issues of which we should be aware? If so, how should we be prepared to respond to these issues?

Do you have any other specific concerns that we can try to address?

5

SUPPORTING

SERVICE SYSTEMS

- Are we **informing** individuals and families about available options?
- Is **transportation** provided to the congregation individuals actually want to attend?
- Are we **accompanying** individuals who need our assistance?
- What personalized **guidance** or **support strategies** are shared with the congregation?
- How often are these supports **revisited**?



For each of the following congregational and other religious activities, indicate the desired level of involvement, need for support, and provider of support.

	<i>What involvement would he or she like? If none, indicate this.</i>	<i>What supports are needed to make this happen meaningfully?</i>	<i>How will these supports be provided? Who will take primary responsibility?</i>
Worship services			
Sunday/Sabbath school or other religious education programs			
Small groups or Bible studies			
Fellowship, recreational, and other social activities			

For each of the following congregational and other religious activities, indicate the desired level of involvement, need for support, and provider of support.

	<i>What involvement would he or she like? If none, indicate this.</i>	<i>What supports are needed to make this happen meaningfully?</i>	<i>How will these supports be provided? Who will take primary responsibility?</i>
Worship services			
Sunday/Sabbath school or other religious education programs	Opportunities to serve within the congregation		
Small groups or Bible studies	Outreach, service, and ministry opportunities outside of the congregation		
Fellowship, recreational, and other social activities	Other activities:		

Will transportation need to be arranged or provided? No Yes

Back Up: _____

For each of the following congregational and other religious activities, indicate the desired level of involvement, need for support, and provider of support.

	<i>What involvement would he or she like? If none, indicate this.</i>	<i>What supports are needed to make this happen meaningfully?</i>	<i>How will these supports be provided? Who will take primary responsibility?</i>
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Worship services

	<i>What involvement would he or she like? If none, indicate this.</i>	<i>What supports are needed to make this happen meaningfully?</i>	<i>How will these supports be provided? Who will take primary responsibility?</i>
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Opportunities to serve within the congregation

Sunday/Sabbath school or other religious education programs

Outreach, service, and ministry opportunities outside of the congregation

Small groups or Bible studies

Other activities:

Fellowship, recreational, and other social activities

Will direct support from staff need to be provided? No Yes

Back Up: _____

Will a behavior support plan need to be developed? No Yes

Back Up: _____

Who has been a part of this conversation? (Name/Relationship)

Who else should we invite to be part of this conversation?

Will transportation need to be arranged or provided?

Back Up: _____

When will this plan be revisited to determine whether it is working or needs to be strengthened?

We will update this plan in ____ months. Due Date: _____

What future needs should be considered or might be anticipated when this plan is updated?

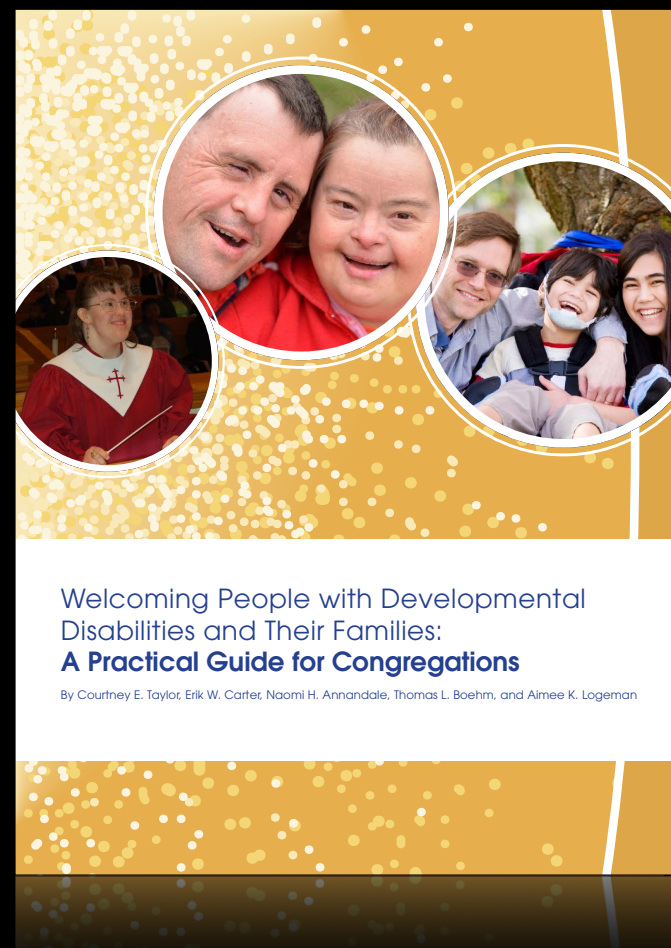


CONGREGATIONS

- Are the supports **already available** to anyone in the congregation also offered to individuals and their families?
- How well are people's support needs **anticipated** and **solicited**?
- Are we **aware** of potential ways of supporting individuals and their families?

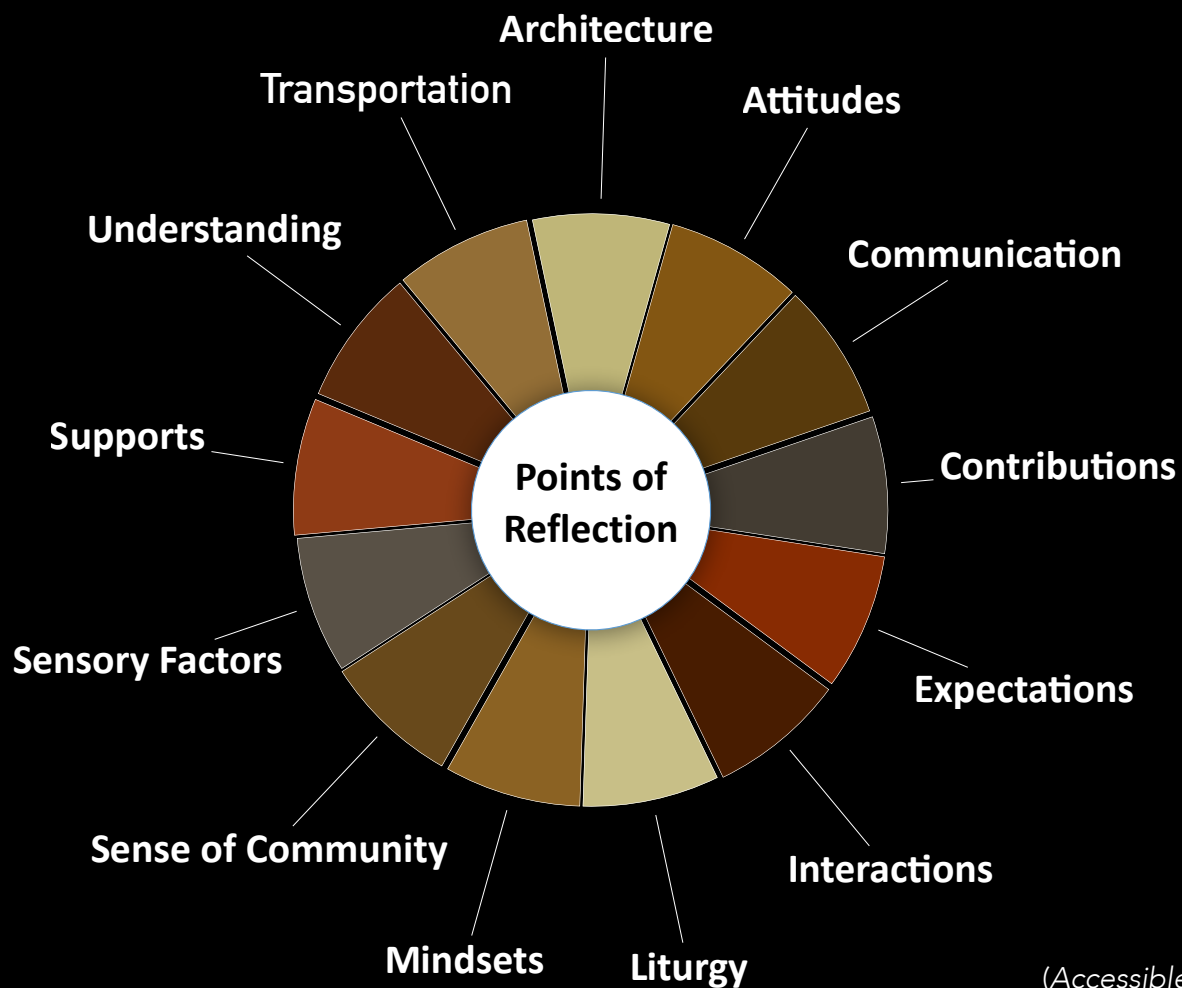
EXAMPLE SUPPORTS VALUED BY PARENTS

- Disability awareness initiatives
- Resources for families regarding disability and services
- Support groups for parents
- Congregational advocates
- Spiritual counseling from a congregation leader
- Respite
- A spiritual or religious education support plan
- Additional support from someone during religious education
- Additional support from someone during worship services
- Adapted worship services for people with disabilities
- Financial support from the congregation
- Transportation to congregational activities
- Additional investments toward physical accessibility.



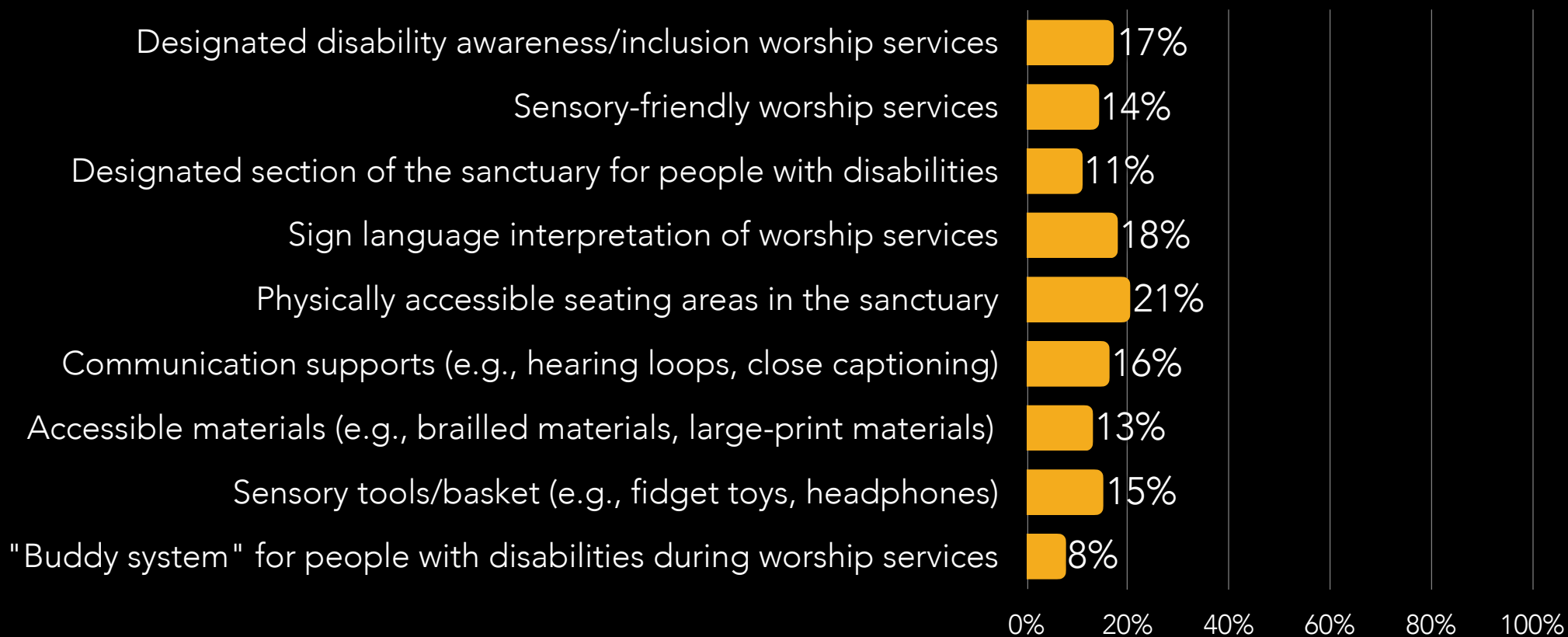
<https://vkc.vumc.org/assets/files/resources/CongregationPracticeGuide.pdf>

ASPECTS OF ACCESSIBLE WORSHIP



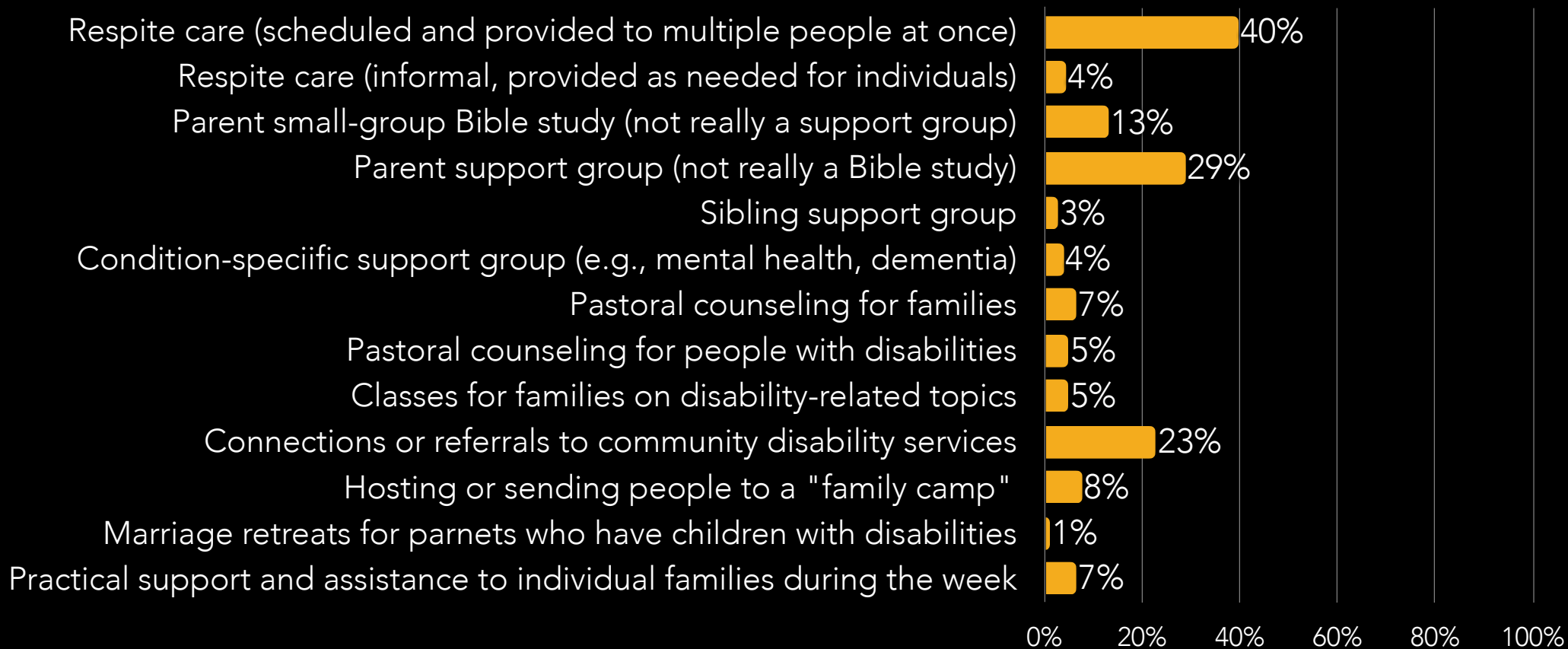
(Accessible Worship Project, Carter et al., 2022)

WORSHIP



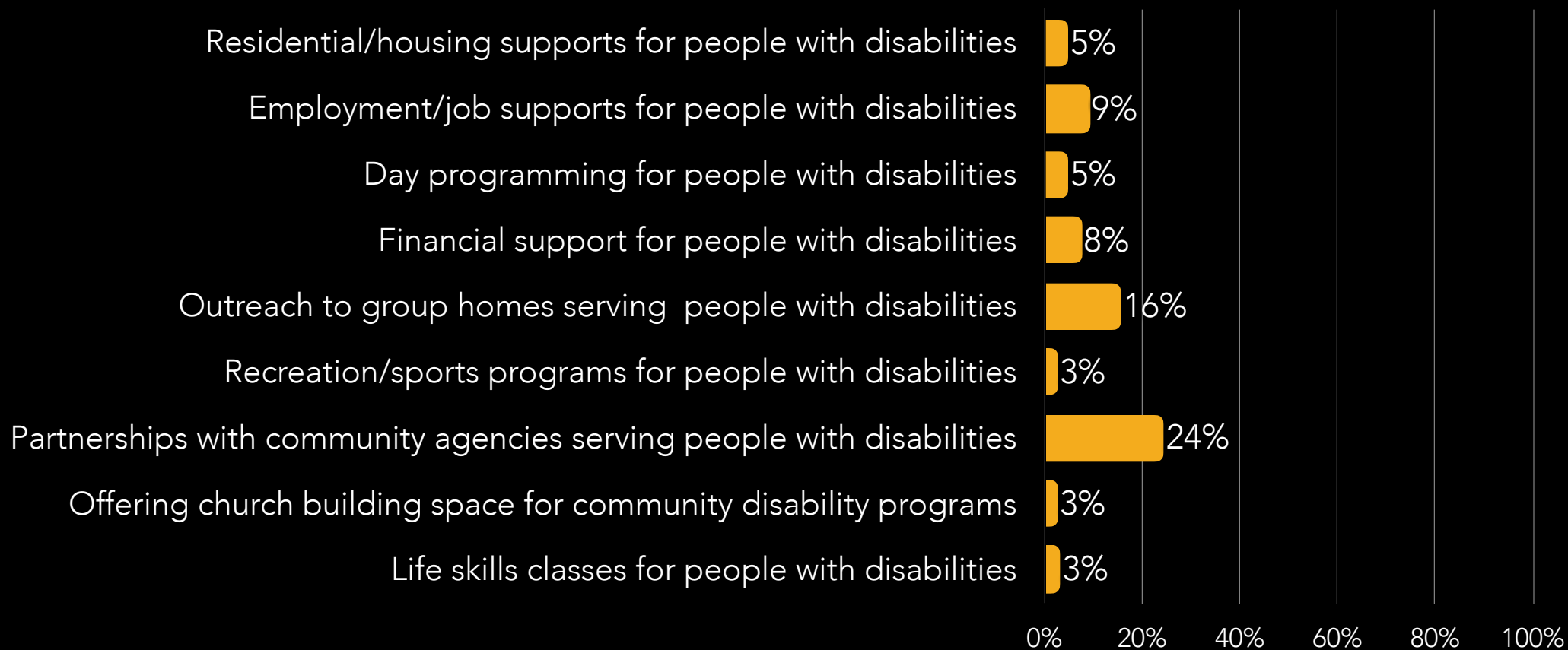
(National Study of Disability and Ministry)

FAMILY SUPPORTS



(National Study of Disability and Ministry)

THE OTHER SIX DAYS



(National Study of Disability and Ministry)



BEFRIENDING

SERVICE SYSTEMS

- What kinds of **introductions** are being made to others who attend or lead within the congregation?
- How are people **connected to others** who share interests or experiences in common?
- How do you support opportunities for people to **get together** between Sundays?





CONGREGATIONS

- How well do we support meaningful participation in **all aspects** of congregational life—worship, education, service, and outreach?
- How are we intentionally designing **fellowship opportunities** where people can meet one another?
- How are we encouraging **shared activities** around **common interests over time**?



PARTNERING

SERVICE SYSTEMS

- How might congregation members help with **employment**?
- How might congregation members help with **housing**?
- How might congregation members help with **transportation**?
- How might congregation members help with **relationship building**?
- How might congregation members help with **ordinary experiences**?



Putting Faith To Work:

A Guide for Congregations
and Communities

Connecting Job Seekers with Disabilities
to Meaningful Employment



www.puttingfaithtowork.org



CONGREGATIONS

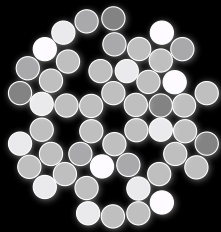
- How might we support people with disabilities with **employment**?
- How might we support people with disabilities with **housing**?
- How might we support people with disabilities with **transportation**?
- How might we support people with disabilities with **relationship building**?
- How might we support people with disabilities with **ordinary experiences**?
- How might we **advocate** for local change in these areas?



CELEBRATING

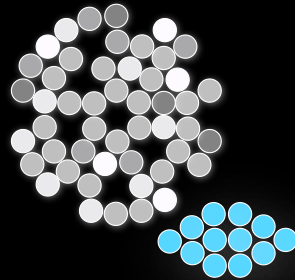
Which most closely resembles the congregations in your midst?
Which most closely describes the experiences of people you support?

Exclusion



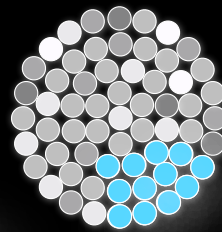
Ministry
Apart

Segregation



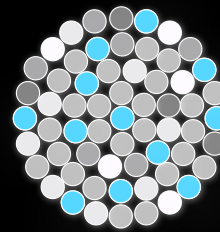
Ministry
To

Integration



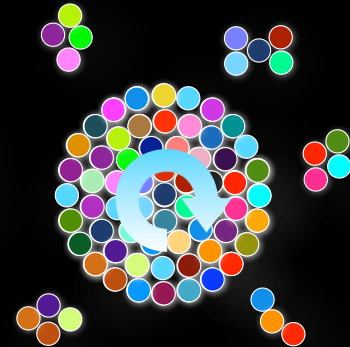
Ministry
Among

Inclusion



Ministry
With

Belonging



Ministry
By

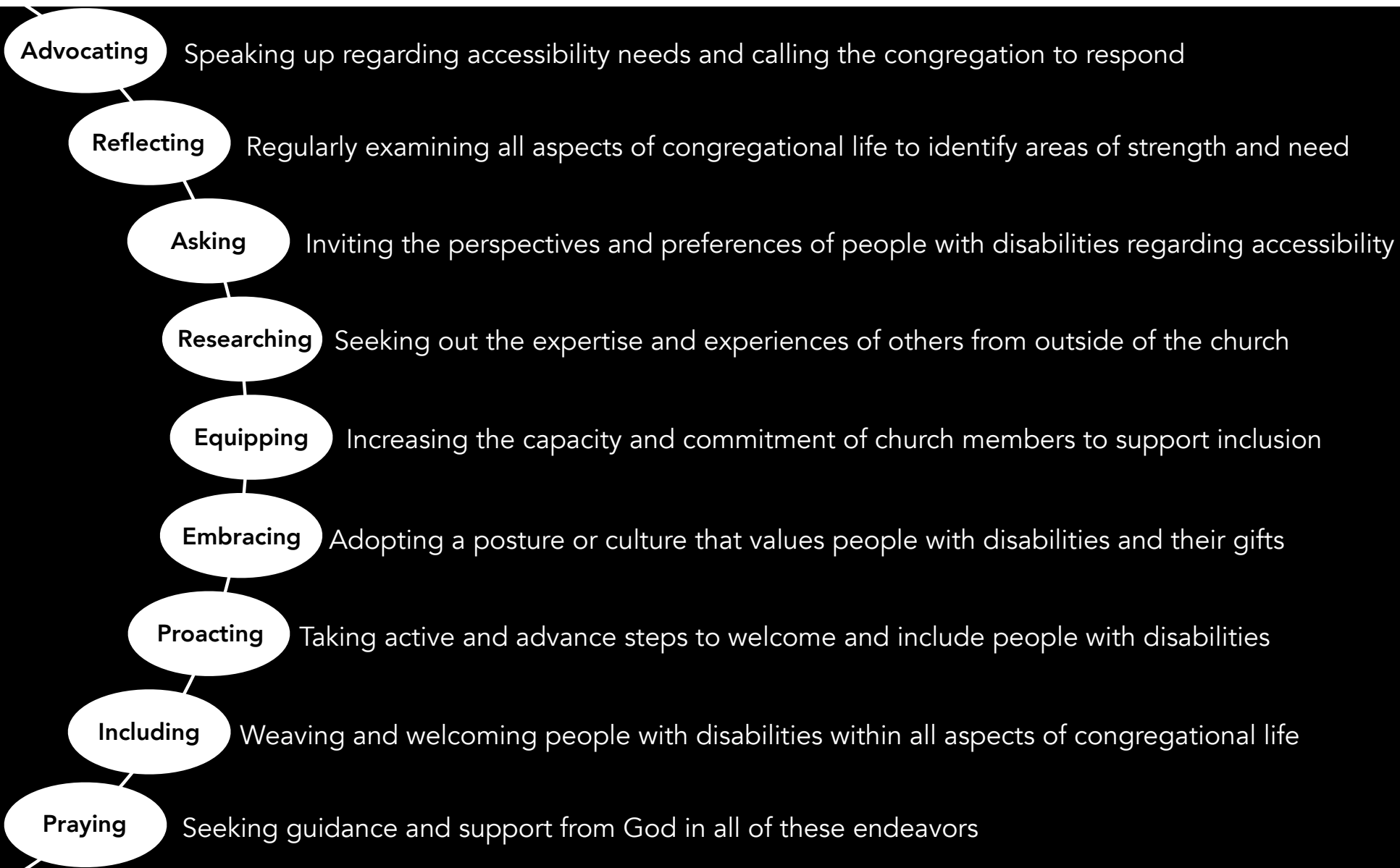
FROM EXCLUSION TO EMBRACE

SUPPORTING INCLUSION AND BELONGING
FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE DOORS

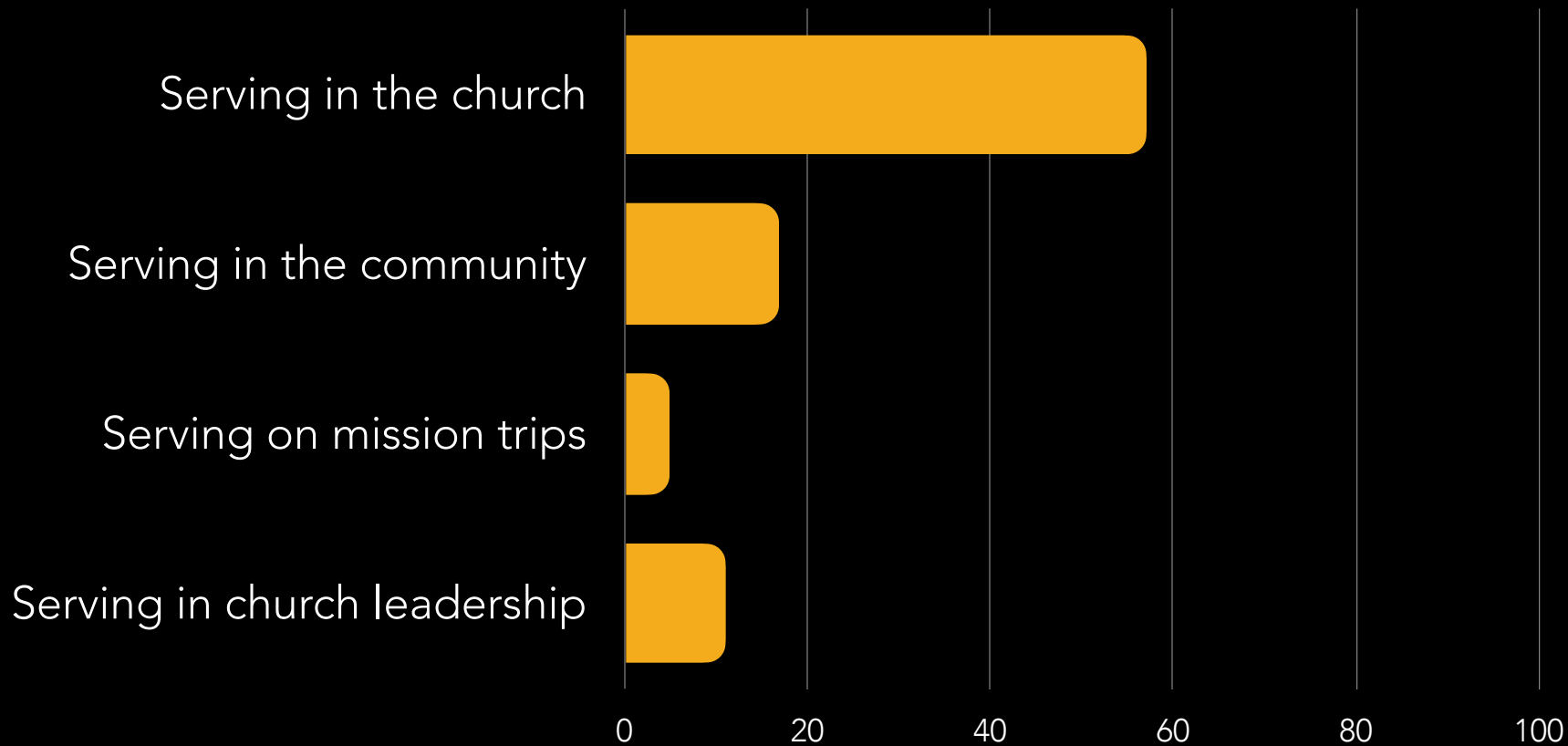
ERIK CARTER

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

WWW.ERIKWCARTER.COM/STONEBELT



SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



(National Study of Disability and Ministry)