**Advocate for Persons with Disabilities!**

**REACH OUT! CONNECT! SHARE!**
***Kentucky Council of Churches
Campus Ministry Modules*Advocate for Persons with Disabilities!**

**Module Flow**

1) Introduction

2) Guiding Question

3) Guiding Bible Passages

4) Bible Passages

5) Bible Study: Reflection and Activities

 1. Blessed with Giftedness.

6) Mission and Outreach with Community and Global Partners

7) Resources: KCC, WCC, TED, The Moth, Films, etc.

**Introduction**

Christ came to tear down the walls that separate us (Eph 2:14). Whenever we consider the ways in which we can advocate for those with a disability, it will be good to remember how easy it is to set up a wall. Disunity is so human, yet divisions violate Christ’s ministry of reconciliation; walls that shut people in or shut people out; walls that prevent people from meeting and growing in understanding of others. In the past, people with disabilities were hidden behind walls, inside institutions for the incompetent. Now we are all a part of mainstream society. It is estimated that about 600 million people are persons with disabilities. Yet people, especially persons with disabilities, still find themselves isolated. Now prejudice has created walls of hatred; walls of competition; walls of fear; walls of ignorance; walls of misunderstanding. The Church is called to be a community, which tears down the walls and reach out and advocate for those who suffer from such isolation

From KENTUCKY COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, Commission on Justice Ministries (Religion and Public Policy), INTERIM Policy Statement on Responding to Persons with Disability Concerns, Adopted by the Executive Board, December 3, 1991

“The Christian Church is a community of faith responding to God’s healing and empowering work in the Christ. This mission of Jesus meant good news for the poor, release for captives, recovering of sight for the blind, freedom

for the oppressed (Luke 4:18). As signs of his ministry, Jesus pointed to his gifts for persons who were blind, lame, or lepers, physically impaired, the deaf, and even the dead. Christ’s followers are called to continue the ministry of reconciliation that God carried out in him (II Cor. 5:18).

Christian faith has always recognized both the glory and frailty of human life. Our glory is that God has created us in the divine image and called us to be ministers. Our frailty is evident in our dependence in infancy and old age and in our vulnerability throughout all of life.

People with disabilities, like everyone else, have normal struggles and hopes. On top of these are added the special challenges of their own conditions. Therefore, their giftedness—having been created in the image of God—sometimes flows from their disabling condition, but sometimes flows from gifts that have nothing to do with that condition.”

**Guiding Question**

What do the Bible and Christian belief teach us about advocating for those with disabilities and recognizing their giftedness?

**Guiding Bible Passage**

Luke 14:12-14 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

12 He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

**Bible Passages**

Isa. 41:17;

Romans 2:11

Luke 12:33 and 14:12-14;

Phil. 3:21;

1 John 3:17

**Worship Center**

For the Worship Center you will need: Bibles, a candle for each participant. One piece of cardboard for every discussion group, glue and staples, string, adhesive tape, sticky tack etc. White paper, colored markers, crayons, pencils, and/or pens..

Place a white cloth on your Worship Center. Place a candle in a candleholder in the center of the table. Place small gift bags on the table. Put one of the Bible Passages listed above in each of the gift bags.

**Bible Study**

**Opening Prayer**

Gather around the Worship Center and pray the Lord’s Prayer.

**Bible Study**

Read Luke 14:12-14.

Most people with disabilities are isolated behind walls of shame and fear, walls of prejudice and cultural misunderstanding. We often do the exact thing that hurts without even noticing.

Appreciating that this situation contradicts the church's calling to be one body, a witness to the love and grace of God; we recognize that we must become more sensitive and aware. The Bible teaches us that all people are to be included in all spiritual, social, development and structural life of the church and society.

Ask: What do the disabled experience that leads to a feeling of isolation and prejudice?

Group one asks and notes on cardboard:

What is being done now in society that helps?

Group two asks and notes on cardboard:

What still needs to be done?

Unite both groups; display the two collection of notes. What can we do we need to learn in order to respond as Christians to the isolation and powerlessness of disabled people.

**Closing Prayer**

Gather around the Worship Center. Open up the gift bags. Read the scripture passages in them out loud and invite the participants to reflect on what they mean in terms of the giftedness that disabled persons bring to the Community. End by praying the Lord’s Prayer.

**Outreach with Community and Global Partners**

**Disability Mentoring Day**. Cf. AAPD at [www.aapd.com](http://www.aapd.com). The American Association of People with Disabilities.

Address disability concerns through a faith community. Cf. Interfaith Advocacy Coalition (IDAC); [www.aapd/idac](http://www.aapd/idac).

**Workshop material.**

www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/people-with-disabilities/reports/workshop-on-disability-discourse-for-theological-colleges-bangalore-india

**Workshop on Ministry with the Disabled. Bangalore, India.**

www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/people-with-disabilities/reports/workshop-on-disability-discourse-for-theological-colleges-bangalore-india

**TED Talks**

<https://www.ted.com/talks/caroline_casey_looking_past_limits>

<https://www.ted.com/talks> maysoon\_zayid\_i\_got\_99\_problems\_palsy\_is\_just\_one

Ecumenical Reflection on Caring for the Disabled.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/2016/the-gift-of-being>

A. Otieno, “Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Disability,” *Disability Studies Quarterly*, Vol 29. No. 4, 2009.

Become familiar with the World Health Organization (CBR) guidelines. Many disabled persons are economically trapped and extremely poor. We need to reflect and act upon efforts to create possibilities for them to contribute to society.