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connected

COMMUNITY

Promote your activities

Tell us about the activities your church provides, so we can join.

God invites everyone to his feast! People from every walk of life are welcome, including people with disabilities.

So much of what we do in churches is readily accessible to someone with a disability, but we found many people in the community don't know all the programs our churches are offering!

“When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed...”

Luke 14:13-14a, Holy Bible NIV



Dynamic churches actively engage and communicate with their community. They willingly include people who may not attend worship services into their activities. Many churches do a wonderful job of providing an array of inclusive programs that are open to all in the community, so let's share this information and promote it in our communities.

WHY CONNECT?

Aside from the obvious reason that God expects it, connecting with other groups and organisations promotes your church programs and enables your reach to extend deeper into your community. Churches always have worship services, access to prayer and study groups, but they have many other community activities, programs and services too. Knowing 'who is doing what' is a great help. Examples of local church initiatives include counselling services, self-care courses, cooking classes, food hampers, men's shed, women's groups, support for individuals released from prison, financial management support, art and craft groups, fitness, community gardens, sport and recreational activities, mentoring support, friendship groups, games nights, youth groups, social connection groups, drug and alcohol support groups, cafés, and more.

PROMOTE YOUR CHURCH ACTIVITIES

There are numerous ways to promote your church activities beyond the church newsletter. You can try the local library, shops, community centres, council, health and community services, and the local newspaper which is often happy to hear of events and activities. You can also provide suitable information to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Local Area Coordinators (LACs) who have the job of supporting people with disability and their families in your community.

NDIS Local Area Coordinators in South Australia

There are three NDIA regions in SA and each has a Local Area Coordinator. These are Mission Australia, Baptcare and Feros Care.

Mission Australia – Southern Adelaide, Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu, Limestone Coast, Murray and Mallee, Kangaroo Island and Eyre and Western/ Far North.
For more information: www.missionaustralia.com.au or 1800 931 543

Baptcare – Western Adelaide, Eastern Adelaide, Yorke and Mid North
For more information: baptcare.sa@ndis.gov.au or 1800 960 595

Feros Care – Northern Adelaide, Barossa, Light & Lower North
For more information: lacinfo@feroscare.com.au or 1300 986 970

Promote your church activities to:

- Local library
- Local council
- Local newspaper
- Local schools
- Local health/community services
- Local Area Coordinator for NDIS

Your NDIS Local Area Coordinator (LAC) will:

- Meet with individuals to learn about their current situation
- Help get a person started with the NDIS
- Assist individuals to access the best support services for their needs
- Help manage any issues faced in getting services and support
- Link people with disabilities to information and support within the community
- Host free community workshops to explain the NDIS and the role of LACs

Eddy's tips for sharing and promoting your disability-friendly and inclusive church programs.

- **Be proactive re social media:** I use Face Book and my friends use Twitter and Instagram. These are easy platforms for people with disabilities to access information. You can send invitations to events and start group chats.
- **Be web friendly:** Churches can provide access information on their website. For example, let me know the presence and location of accessible car parks. Also mention the availability of accessible toilets and building modifications such as hearing assistance. This sends a strong message of welcome. Some church websites are easy to read and tell me what I need to know. They use plain English, large fonts, contrasting colours and a simple access guide.
- **Try 'Meetup':** I recently told my pastor about 'Meetup'. It's an online forum to advertise church events to forum members.
- **Be personal:** I came to church because a friend invited me. Most people come to an activity by an invitation. It helps to write church promotions in the first person, like a personal invitation.
- **Be intentional:** Make sure your invitation and notices are written in age, language and communication styles that are easy to read and understand. (See Guide number 4)
- **Be welcoming:** If I go to an activity and I'm ignored and not acknowledged, I probably won't come back. I know I may be a 'stranger' to you, but I don't want to remain a stranger for too long. Please extend an authentic welcome and reaffirm that welcome regularly because it reassures me that I belong.
- **Be interesting:** If advertising material is boring, it won't appeal. Try to capture the essence of what you're offering in new and interesting ways. I want to know it is worth my time.
- **Be newsy:** I like knowing what is going on. An interesting newsletter keeps me informed, and I can check it regularly.
- **Expand your activities:** So much of what churches offer can easily be extended to welcome people living with disabilities. For example, if your church has a strong youth ministry, consider offering a Christian Camp for young people with disabilities during the school holidays. This provides children with fun activities and a chance to develop friendships, and

Eddy, has a mild cognitive disability due to treatment for a brain tumour in childhood. Eddy's strength is not numbers, but he is a computer whizz. For the past two years he has helped his church develop its online presence by starting a blog, taking photos and he finds really interesting content. He is supported to do this marketing work for the church by Nathan his church friend. Together they have generated great interest in their church and its programs.

gives families some much-needed respite. I know Baptist Care SA has a disability friendly campsite at Mylor, so you can ask them for more information. (08) 8388 5234, <https://baptistcaresa.org.au/service/adventure-services/mylor-adventure-camp>

- **Encourage volunteers:** Like many people, I love to serve. I feel engaged with my church when I participate in its activities. You can support my volunteering with mentoring and encouragement. I might surprise you in what I have to offer!
- **Be reflective:** It is important to ask people involved in church activities how things are going. Invite ideas for improvement. Ask me about welcome, inclusion, how easy it is to participate, what opportunities I want to contribute to, how things can be improved, what I like, enjoy, don't like. Please just ask me.
- **Use your NDIS LAC:** Promote your church via your LAC. They're always on the lookout for community activities, both social, recreational and skill development programs that people with disabilities can join.

RESOURCES

Find the NDIS LAC for your area: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/contact/locations>

Baptist Care SA's Mylor Disability-Friendly campsite: <https://baptistcaresa.org.au/service/adventure-services/mylor-adventure-camp>



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