

Mass for People with Special Needs

Overview

People with special needs resulting from physical, emotional, mental or cognitive conditions are all around us in society, at school, at work, and in our families. It can be challenging for these important members of our society to participate in liturgies due to physical and social barriers – or even family member anxiety. Celebrating a Mass for People with Special Needs can be the first of many steps toward integrating them into regular weekly or even daily Mass – and more deeply into all of the sacraments and other aspects of parish life. For Mass for Special Needs resources, visit www.kofc.org/mpsn.

Action Steps

1. Identify a program chairman to oversee all action steps and delegate tasks, as needed, confirm pastor approval with grand knight, and then set up subsequent parish ministry collaboration meetings.
2. Determine when this Mass would be most appropriate and schedule it for a certain date and time.
3. Determine who to invite by identifying people with special needs in the parish. Individuals and organizations who can help identify or invite attendees include:
 - Pastor, faith formation minister, other parish and civic leaders
 - Local Special Olympics, The Arc, special education teachers
 - Meals on Wheels, assisted-living facilities, group homes, senior citizen groups, disabled veterans organizations
 - Health advocacy groups for Down syndrome, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Lou Gehrig's disease, blindness or deafness
4. Build interest for the event and invite people with special needs to attend/RSVP. Promote the Mass for People with Special Needs in your parish through a variety of efforts:
 - Prominently display promotional posters
 - Bulletin announcements
 - Pulpit announcements
 - Posting on your council and parish website / social media pages
5. Determine if the parking areas/doors/church/restrooms/parish hall are accessible. If not, schedule the Mass at an alternative facility that is accessible.
6. Plan accordingly by assessing the need for hearing aids, a sign language interpreter, and signage in Braille, presence of guide dogs, etc.
7. Determine if some invitees may need transportation to/from Mass.
8. Consider how to accommodate people who may have opposite needs, such as louder or softer sound/music/lighting, etc.
9. Plan each part of the Mass and invite the choir, readers, ushers, altar servers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (if necessary), to assist in the Mass. In as many roles as possible, invite people with special needs to perform these functions at the Mass.



10. If possible, consider offering the sacrament of reconciliation before Mass. Also strongly consider offering the sacraments of initiation (baptism, first Communion, and confirmation) as part of the Mass if there are candidates who are eligible and prepared.
11. Be sure to make clear that those in attendance are not just welcome but wholeheartedly encouraged to attend Mass at the parish every Sunday.
12. Following Mass, provide refreshments that meet a variety of dietary needs.
13. Techniques learned should be incorporated year-round into Masses, the sacraments and other parish activities, so people with special needs will always feel welcome and able to participate.
14. To gain credit for your program, complete the associated reporting forms.
 - Immediately after your program is finished, complete the [Fraternal Programs Report Form](#) (#10784)
 - At the end of the fraternal year, complete the [Columbian Award Application](#) (#SP-7)

Resources

1. #10690- [Brochure](#)
2. #10688- [Vertical Poster](#)
3. #10689- [Horizontal Poster](#)
4. #10687- [News Release](#)

Program resources can be ordered by your grand knight, financial secretary and/or program director on Supplies Online via [Officers Online](#).

Link

www.kofc.org/mpsn