

Talent has no boundaries

Just as important as physical accommodation is an attitude that welcomes people with disabilities with open arms. When people with disabilities are recognized as participants, everyone benefits.

People with disabilities each have their own unique talents and abilities. They can sing in the choir, play musical instruments, participate in bible study, serve as ushers, and directly participate in services in many ways.

People with disabilities are often enthusiastic volunteers, willing to do their part for their congregation.

One of the greatest blessings churches are experiencing is the realization of how much is gained by having the talents of persons with disabilities present in their congregations.



Mission Statement

The Arc, Upper Valley promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

The Arc Thrift Stores

Your donations of good quality, gently used furniture, clothing and household items are necessary for The Arc to continue its work on behalf of people with disabilities in North Dakota.

The Arc, Upper Valley operates two thrift stores, located in Grand Forks, ND and Devils Lake, ND. We invite you to shop, donate or volunteer.

Shop Donate Volunteer



Locations

2500 DeMers Ave
Grand Forks, ND
701.772.3855

213 5th St NE
Devils Lake ND
701.662.2813

The Arc, Upper Valley
2500 DeMers Avenue
Grand Forks ND 58201
Phone: 701.772.6191
Fax: 701.772.2195
Website: www.thearcuppervalley.org



For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Achieve with us.

Faith Inclusion



Welcoming people with intellectual disabilities in your house of worship

The Arc, Upper Valley encourages you to welcome persons with disabilities into your congregation through affirmation, communication and accessibility.

One in five Americans has a disability, but you'd be surprised how many houses of worship are not equipped to welcome everyone.

The Arc, Upper Valley is dedicated to raising awareness about barriers to participation that exist in many faith communities for persons with physical, intellectual, emotional, or sensory differences.

There are many things that you, as an individual, can do to help people with disabilities feel welcome in your house of faith.



How you can make a difference in your congregation

- See the WHOLENESS OF SPIRIT beneath the surface of someone with a disability and overcome the tendency to turn away or ignore the person.
- Treat ALL people as PEOPLE FIRST - as you would like to be treated.
- SPEAK DIRECTLY to the person with a disability, not only to the nearby family member, companion, interpreter, or canine companion.
- Offer to SHAKE HANDS when introduced to a person with a disability.
- Place yourself at EYE LEVEL, in front, for easy conversation with a person in a wheelchair, with crutches, or with a walking frame.
- OFFER ASSISTANCE AND WAIT until the offer is accepted.
- Be PATIENT AND WAIT for the person with difficulty speaking, rather than speaking for the person. You may help by asking short questions that require short answers, a nod, or a shake of the head.
- TREAT ADULTS with developmental disabilities AS ADULTS, not as children. Use first names only when using the same familiarity for all persons.

How your place of worship can be inclusive

- Include children, youth and adults with disabilities in worship as cantors, ushers, musicians, altar servers, gift bearers, lectors, etc.
- Make a well-rounded committee on inclusion part of your congregation's governing council to increase meaningful participation for worshippers with disabilities.
- Educate the entire congregation about disability issues by periodically running pieces in your bulletin about hospitality and welcome.
- Train ushers and lay leaders as role models to include and welcome worshippers with disabilities and their families.
- Observe an annual Inclusion Awareness Day to celebrate how your congregation welcomes worshippers with disabilities.
- Understand that previous negative experiences may cause individuals with disabilities to initially decline your invitation to participate. Don't hesitate to extend additional invitations.
- List accessible features and supports available in a permanent "For your comfort and convenience..." section of the bulletin.