Leaflets in This Series
1. Special Needs Ministries
2. Intellectual Disability
3. Hearing Impairment
4. Hidden Disability
5. Mobility Disability

The church and the Gospel should be accessible to everyone. This series, "Keys to Special Needs Ministries," prepares you to support people with special needs and foster inclusion in all aspects of church life. The goal of special needs ministries is to unite people, both disabled and non-disabled, in the common bond of Christ's love.

In this booklet, you will find information on intellectual impairments and discover ways to meet the needs of people with such impairments, including:
• Providing multi-sensory worship experiences
• Giving concrete examples when presenting ideas
• Using peer tutors to assist during Sabbath school

An intellectual disability should never prevent someone from feeling welcomed into the church family. By teaching yourself and others how to reach out to people with this disability, you can help the church follow Christ's model of all-inclusive love.

6. Emotional and Psychiatric Disability
7. Communication Disorder
8. Blindness and Visual Impairment
Ministry is a privilege given by God for the modern-day Christian based on biblical principles, the life of Christ, and the love God shows to, for, and with all people. Ministering to, for, and with people with special needs is the extension of the love that Christ demonstrated while on earth. It allows Christians to replicate the Heavenly Father’s supreme sacrifice of service by giving His only begotten Son to an undeserving world.

This publication provides information that will assist congregations in developing Special Needs Ministries, specifically a ministry that focuses on children and adults with intellectual impairments or disabilities. Specific suggestions and strategies will be given so that the church can make the gospel accessible to all people, including those with an intellectual impairment.

Certain conditions may hamper efforts to embrace all men, women, and children into inclusive worship. People with special needs may not wish to self-identify as having a special need, or their family members may share the same reluctance to openly identify a special need. This resistance may be the result of personal issues, preference, and/or the cultural stigma related to disabilities. In addition, parishioners may not feel adequately prepared to participate in inclusion ministries, or may not be comfortable with children and adults with unique needs. Concern over the adequacy of church resources to meet identified needs may also be an issue. However, if the church can work around and eventually overcome these potential obstacles, it can create powerful ministries that address the needs of the one billion people in the world with a disability.
The Mission
The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel in the context of the Three Angels’ Messages of Revelation 14:6-12.

Special Needs Ministries, which coordinates its outreach under the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department, exists to teach and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to people with special needs. As the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department communicates the good news of Jesus Christ to men, women, and youth throughout the world, the Special Needs Ministries focuses on those with disabilities. Training and promotion materials are provided through AdventSource and the Adventist Book Center to support the mission of including people with special needs in all areas of church life.

A major goal of the ministry is to encourage church leaders worldwide to intentionally meet the needs of individuals with special needs and include them in all aspects of church life. Leaders are advised to develop programs for witnessing to people with special needs and to make facilities—and the gospel—accessible to all.

The mission of Special Needs Ministries is to encourage the inclusion of all members in the church. Unfortunately, this goal has not been fully met for many individuals with disabilities. To educate the church about the ways that people with special needs can contribute to the mission of the church, a worldwide Special Needs Ministries Awareness Sabbath can be a useful event. This program can take place at camp meetings, leadership training events, or any gathering in which these four goals can be emphasized: accessibility, education, encouragement, and accommodation.
In planning events and activities for the Special Needs Awareness Sabbath, set a goal for the day. One day is not enough to cover all the issues related to special needs, but positive contributions of individuals with special needs can be highlighted for the church or community.

As much as possible, be sure to invite individuals with special needs to plan and participate in the Special Needs Ministries Awareness Sabbath activities. If individuals with disabilities are to become fully included in the church, the congregation must see those with disabilities involved in all areas of church life. Special Needs Ministries Awareness Sabbath gives the opportunity for people with disabilities to use their gifts for God and at the same time increase the congregation’s awareness of individuals with special needs, their talents, and their needs.

Romans 12:3 states, “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” As Ellen G. White explained, “The only way to grow in grace is to be disinterestedly doing the very work which Christ has enjoined upon us—to engage, to the extent of our ability, in helping and blessing those who need the help we can give them.” This statement should guide both those serving in Special Needs Ministries and those being served. The Special Needs Ministries team encourages adults and children with disabilities to participate fully in the church and to grow in Christ; and, in turn, people with disabilities are able to help and be a blessing to others.

The mission of Special Needs Ministries is to bring all members into the work of Christ. To promote full inclusion of members with disabilities, it is important to focus on each person’s abilities, talents, and relationship with God. What can the church family do to encourage and support a member with a disability?
For an adult or child with a disability to be truly included in the church family, she or he needs access to the gospel message through the Bible, sermons, the worship service, Sabbath School programs and materials, Bible study guides, music, Pathfinders, education, and fellowship. Community-based activities such as Vacation Bible School, evangelistic meetings, and vegetarian cooking schools are a few other ways to provide meaningful support to those with special needs. Individuals with disabilities may not be aware of alternative resources that are available; therefore, a goal of Special Needs Ministries is to help people with disabilities access those resources and the support they require to feel fully included in the church.

**The Ministry**

Special Needs Ministries promotes the importance of specialized ministries to foster the spiritual wellbeing of persons with special needs.

The ministry:

- educates leaders, directing them to appropriate resources for ministering to persons who have a special need;
- fosters the inclusion of qualified persons with special needs in church committees, forums, volunteer service opportunities, and other ministries.
- ensures the development of resources for reaching and accommodating individuals with special needs; and
- encourages the training and employment of individuals with special needs throughout the church.

Therefore, Special Needs Ministries blends the services of those with a disability with those who do not have a disability. They unite in a bond of ministry, each returning to God the talents and gifts He has bestowed.
As a community of believers who share the gospel with all, Christ is our example. Of Jesus’ 35 recorded miracles, 27 touched people with special needs. He healed the boy who was “unable to speak” (Mark 9:17, NRSV), a man who was paralyzed (Luke 5:18-26), and a deaf man (Mark 7:32-35). Jesus gives clear evidence that the worldwide church is to be involved in Special Needs Ministries.

In *Steps to Christ*, Ellen White wrote, “This was [Jesus’] work. He went about doing good and healing all. . . . There were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house, for He had passed through them and healed all their sick. His work gave evidence of His divine anointing.”

One particularly powerful statement comes from White’s *Testimonies for the Church*: “I saw that it is in the providence of God that widows and orphans, the blind, the deaf, the lame, and persons afflicted in a variety of ways, have been placed in close Christian relationship to His church; it is to prove His people and develop their true character. Angels of God are watching to see how we treat these persons who need our sympathy, love, and disinterested benevolence. *This is God’s test of our character.* If we have the true religion of the Bible we shall feel that a debt of love, kindness, and interest is due to Christ in behalf of His brethren; and we can do no less than to show our gratitude for His immeasurable love to us while we were sinners unworthy of His grace, by having a deep interest and unselfish love for those who are our brethren and who are less fortunate than ourselves.”

Describing His earthly mission, Jesus said, “‘The Spirit of the Lord . . . has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed’” (Luke 4:18).
Often Jesus would ask the person He had healed not to tell anyone. Confidentiality is extremely important in this ministry; no information about a person with a special need should be shared with anyone else without written permission.

It is important that each congregation develop an awareness of the range of disability needs their ministry must address. As successful strategies for inclusion are identified, it may be helpful to share those strategies as members move into other roles or divisions in the church. However, it is important that any information about individuals and their needs be considered highly confidential, and that personal information should not be shared without specific permission from the individuals and/or their families.

**Intellectual Disability**

In general, a person with an intellectual impairment is regarded as having a permanent condition that significantly impacts his or her ability to learn and process information. They may also experience difficulty with the development of adaptive skills. Adaptive skills are age-appropriate behaviors necessary for independent and safe functioning in daily life, such as grooming, dressing, safe food handling, holding a job, money management, cleaning, making and sustaining friendships, and personal responsibility. Children and adults with intellectual impairments may have difficulty comprehending what is seen or heard and inferring information from social cues and body language. They may require repeated opportunities to master new information, and they often benefit from having new information presented in a variety of formats; using auditory, visual, physical, or multisensory methods can be helpful. Key spiritual concepts must be presented in a manner simple enough to be understood and accepted, yet deep enough to impart a personal, meaningful understanding of the gospel.
In some cases the individual was born with a congenital condition that includes a component of intellectual disability, such as chromosomal defects like Down Syndrome. The impairment may also have occurred because of brain damage while in the womb or at or near birth due to some type of trauma or incident. In addition, some older children or adults are diagnosed with an intellectual impairment after a traumatic event, such as an acute illness affecting the neurological system and brain, severe stroke, or a significant traumatic brain injury. In other cases, impaired intellectual functioning is present without any identifiable cause.

It is typically not possible to tell from looking at a person the extent of his or her intellectual impairment, and attempting to make such an assessment based upon physical characteristics must be avoided.

This type of special need can impact all ages and may occur at any point in the lifespan. In some cases the individual does not comprehend his or her limitations. In other cases, especially with an intellectual impairment that developed later in life, the individual may be aware of the fact that he or she functions differently from how they did in the past. Such can be the case with an elderly person who is impacted by intellectual disabilities following a stroke or other neurological diagnoses later in life. Individuals who have difficulty coping with this change may experience sadness, frustration, anger, or embarrassment.

In addition to the impact on learning and adaptive skill development, adults and children with intellectual impairments may have co-existing conditions that impact communication, social-emotional functioning, and physical development. It is most often impossible to determine the extent to which the individual has challenges in these areas, and care must be taken not to assume that the individual is affected by these issues.
In a church setting, the determination of a special need is typically based upon self-reporting or the report of family members or caregivers. Most importantly, church members must avoid pre-determining the scope or range of disability in a person with physically obvious needs. In some cultures, identifying and acknowledging an intellectual impairment or disability is not acceptable. So, instead of inquiring about details regarding the special need and its cause, it is often more helpful to approach these individuals by asking, “How may we help?” Asking how to help is productive, considerate, and acceptable—and it avoids labeling the individual. In addition, offering assistance can foster a positive relationship based on Christian care and concern.

Four Goals of Special Needs Ministries and Intellectually Impaired Populations

The first booklet in this series, Special Needs Ministries: Creating Inclusive Opportunities in Ministry, produced by the General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department, identified four goals of Special Needs Ministries. Now, in this booklet, specific strategies related to these goals will be explored, with worshipers who have intellectual impairments as the focus.

1. Accessibility. Special Needs Ministries assists church leaders in learning how to make all structures, buildings, and programs available to all. The point of this goal is to provide an environment in which everyone feels welcome and has access to all areas of church life, regardless of her or his physical or mental condition.

First, architectural and physical barriers must be addressed and eliminated. For worshipers with intellectual disabilities who use a wheelchair, physical elements to consider include accessible parking lots, ramps for wheelchair access, and halls and bathrooms that allow for wheelchairs. If the individual has severe intellectual impairments paired with significant sensory impairments, a
quiet room would offer valuable support. Those experiencing sensory overload can take a short break in this space, regulate their emotions, and then rejoin the activity with others. As emotional regulation is regained, sensory behaviors that may be distracting to other worshipers often decrease or cease. During Sabbath School, the room designated for childcare could meet this need. Additionally, because some people with intellectual impairments have difficulty with memory processing, it will be helpful to have their meeting location be as consistent as possible. It is likely that it will take multiple visits to their room before they will easily remember the location independently. Additionally, signage directing them to their Sabbath School room that incorporates both the written name of the division and a picture symbol to identify the division, room number, and location will be helpful.

Next, attitudinal barriers that may prevent a person with a special need from feeling welcome must be eliminated. Education, training, and modeling appropriate attitudes toward those who are disabled will help increase sensitivity throughout the congregation. Every member of the church can welcome each worshiper with genuine kindness and a spirit of inclusive worship. The warmth and caring that each church member bestows on another is a powerful tool that demonstrates a willingness to worship together inclusively. Such a genuine expression of good will certainly follows Christ’s example of interacting with others as well. Care must be taken to focus on an inclusive approach, not an approach in which those with special needs are welcomed to church and then directed to segregated programs.

Finally, the gospel must also be accessible. To enhance the understanding of the gospel in adult Sabbath School divisions, the church’s Special Needs Ministries team can:

- Break down the lesson into smaller, manageable amounts of information, with a review of key concepts during the lesson study period.
• Provide a multi-sensory experience, incorporating written, visual, and auditory methods. This approach will assist worshipers who have limited abilities for processing and retaining verbal information. Utilize a handout or screen presentation with key words and pictures to enhance the understanding of spiritual concepts.

• Order or print copies of the Easy Reading version of the quarterly (http://www.absg.adventist.org/Archives.htm) in addition to the standard Sabbath School Bible study guide. This version teaches the same concepts found in the lesson but with more easily read and understood text. The Easy Reading lessons may also guide the Sabbath School teacher to use different vocabulary in written handouts or screen presentations so as to benefit those who have an intellectual impairment.

• Use visual representations when possible. Because learners with intellectual impairments often struggle with abstract concepts, concrete and visual examples of the main ideas of the lesson can enhance understanding.

• Provide visual cues and prompts during the Sabbath School program to assist all worshipers as they follow along. Some worshipers require more lead time to prepare for prayer or other parts of the service, which are missed if they only appear in written form in the bulletin and the worshiper cannot read. Projecting on the screen a visual of a person praying, for example, can show the worshiper to prepare for prayer.

• Encourage active participation by watching for ways to build on individual strengths instead of focusing on a person’s challenges. For example, someone
with a warm and welcoming demeanor may be able to be a Sabbath School division greeter. A senior church member who has developed a cognitive impairment later in life, but who was a deacon previously, may be quite capable of collecting the Sabbath School offering.

To enhance the understanding of the gospel in children and youth Sabbath School divisions, the church’s Special Needs Ministries team can:

- Break concepts and lessons down into smaller pieces of information, with a review of key concepts during the lesson study period. For someone with an intellectual disability, directions given one at a time are easier to understand and process than a long multi-step series of directions.

- Use peer tutors to assist during Sabbath School. A peer tutor or buddy program can positively impact the sensitivity of all participants. When the entire group is split into buddy groups for parts of the Sabbath School period, the child or youth with a special need is not singled out as needing assistance. However, it is likely that at times, such as during new activities or activities of greater cognitive demand (for example, memorization or sequencing a Bible story), they may be more willing to participate with a buddy instead of individually or with the entire Sabbath School group.

- Use a variety of aids to ensure the understanding and gradual memorization of important spiritual concepts. For learning and memorizing concepts, children and youth with intellectual disabilities will benefit from repetition and practice. Direct the group to act out the lesson or Bible story, more than once when possible. Teach songs that incorporate biblical concepts, as concepts are often learned more readily in musical format than when spoken. If
available, provide memory verse take-home cards to provide a visual reminder as a verse or Bible story is learned over time. These visual and auditory cues and can be of great assistance for children with intellectual impairments.⁴

- Provide concrete examples of the main ideas of the lesson to enhance understanding. In addition, avoid wording that may unsettle children who understand things in a concrete manner. For example, although the concept of “dying daily” is biblical, it may be perceived literally by someone with an intellectual disability, and thus be disturbing.

- Make directions clear and deliberate so as to prevent embarrassment to those who are intellectually impaired.

- Use a combination of visual, auditory,⁵ and multi-sensory approaches to teach concepts. For participants who cannot read, the lesson can be audio recorded so that they can listen to it repeatedly to build understanding. Consider providing the recorded lesson prior to its presentation in Sabbath School. Kindergarten and Primary Sabbath School lessons are provided in audio-video format along with extension activities.⁶ In addition, for learners who cannot process auditory information, make the lesson and program as visual and hands-on as possible. A visual schedule (showing a picture for each part of the program, such as song service, prayer, offering, and so forth) posted at the front of the class can be extremely effective. The use of felt-board and sand-table manipulative figures can also aid in the understanding of Bible stories.

- Model expectations, then have the entire Sabbath School group demonstrate knowledge of the
expectations. It will then be more likely that a child with an intellectual impairment will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the same expectation. As the teachers model, then the whole group can do the activity or behavior (prayer, for example). This approach of the teacher modeling, then the class doing the same behavior, can lead the individual child to learn how to do the activity independently.

- Explain vocabulary in the lesson study in an understandable way for the benefit of all participants. Remember that many children with intellectual impairments will often need to hear the simpler, alternative definitions repeatedly to grasp the concept being presented.

- Check for understanding throughout the lesson. Most children, especially those with an intellectual impairment, will benefit from repeating key concepts themselves, instead of passively sitting in Sabbath School and listening to the lesson. For some children, being able to repeat very basic spiritual words or concepts with underlying understanding is a meaningful success. Even a phrase as simple as “Jesus loves me,” when stated and understood (even in place of a longer memory verse for the entire class), may reflect a deeply significant spiritual understanding in a child with limited cognitive and verbal abilities, and must be celebrated!

- Be patient. Children and youth with intellectual disabilities will likely require considerable repetition of complex Bible truths to master an understanding of the concepts. As the Sabbath School teacher incorporates review in the form of games and group activities, the learning of every student present can be enhanced.
• Watch for ways to build on the learner’s strengths instead of focusing on her or his challenges. Most children will benefit from being asked to contribute and having a “job” in Sabbath School. For example, a child with a warm and welcoming demeanor may want to be the Sabbath School division greeter, while a child who has mastered the ability to pray aloud in public may delight in offering the prayer in Sabbath School. Encouraging all to participate will create fully inclusive Sabbath School opportunities.

To ensure inclusive worship during the church service, the Special Needs Ministries team of the church can:

• Produce church bulletins that include not only a written guide to the service, but visual cues to explain the different parts of the service. Bulletins created with visual supports would benefit not only those with intellectual impairment, but nonreaders (children and adults alike) and individuals with significant language impairments.

• Provide visual cues via projected images or large-print images to denote what is happening in the service (such as an image of a person kneeling in prayer projected at the time of morning prayer or an image of a congregation holding hymnals just prior to a hymn).

• Provide assistance from a deacon or deaconess to find seating.

• See if your church provides written sermon notes or guides; if so, ensure the provision of a version that is appropriate for those requiring a more straightforward guide to the sermon. Likewise, if your church provides a sermon or service guide to children in the church, ensure that the materials benefit all children worshipping, so that all are engaged in learning more about Jesus and the gospel.
• Arrange for a worship partner to help model expectations and guide the person in understanding and participating in the service.

• Brainstorm ways to include someone with an intellectual impairment in the church service. An intellectual impairment does not prohibit someone from distributing handouts or bulletins or, in some cases, offering the welcome or opening prayer in church.

Consider special events in church services and how to include all worshipers. Ask the Special Needs Ministries team the following questions:

• Do new members need the opportunity to review church beliefs in a simplified, more understandable manner? Do they understand what will happen during their baptism? Are they in need of anything specific during their baptism?

• How can you explain the communion service ahead of time to those with intellectual impairments to ensure meaningful participation?

• Can you create visuals to help all worshipers understand the meaning of the footwashing service and know how to participate? Will some participants benefit from a worship assistant to help them through the process?

If your church finds that some members benefit from specific strategies, carry those strategies over into all outreach ministries, such as prayer meetings, evangelistic meetings, cooking schools, and Pathfinders. For example, if the worshiper requires transportation to church because he or she cannot drive, is transportation to meetings or classes offered? For worshipers requiring visual cues for full
participation, are those cues prepared and provided for all church activities? In this way, you can reach all who wish to join your congregation in all aspects of church life.

2. **Education.** The goal is to train people without special needs and those with special needs to work collaboratively in building God’s kingdom. Resources should be continually developed for and made available to church members. These resources will provide guidance for the inclusion of individuals with special needs throughout the church structure.

Consider using multiple methods of communication to spread awareness of resources and events within the church community. In some cultures social media has become quite prominent, but for people with an intellectual impairment, accessing and using technology may be a challenge. Printed handouts may be necessary to help all participants feel welcome. Contact prior to church events can also assist in ensuring full participation.

3. **Encouragement.** The focus of this goal is to promote participation in all aspects of church life. Providing a safe, loving environment within all levels of the church for all people is the privilege of every Christian.

When all worshipers are welcomed, nurtured, and given opportunities to engage meaningfully in all activities of church life, the result is inclusive worship and fellowship that encourages participation. As you welcome everyone, including those with special needs, into your congregation, and involve them *meaningfully* and *intentionally* in all aspects of church life, they will be encouraged. It is important that the church focus on encouraging each person to be an active member of the church community as a whole, and not segregated from the larger church body into “special” classes and activities. As ministry leaders and members continue to find opportunities for meaningful participation, all members will be encouraged and will benefit from truly inclusive worship.
It is important to remember the needs of the caregiver(s) of people with intellectual impairment as well. In this area church members can have a profound and positive effect. Whether caring for a child, teen, young adult, or an older adult, the task can be overwhelming and tiring. Some individuals require diligent care and attention to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Such care, even when based in a loving relationship, can be exhausting. The church could consider ways to provide the caregiver with tangible support and encouragement to support their spiritual needs. Providing respite care so a caregiving mother can attend a women’s ministry meeting or setting up a caregiver support group could be especially beneficial to the spiritual encouragement of a caregiver. Likewise, activities to support caregivers of people who have had a stroke could be helpful in a congregation with a large elderly population.

4. Accommodation. The goal is to help God’s family be inclusive in principle and practice. Special Needs Ministries promotes the inclusion of qualified persons with special needs in church committees, forums, volunteer service opportunities, and other ministries. These activities should be planned with accommodations in mind. Since many individuals with intellectual impairments are unable to drive themselves to church activities, transportation assistance is one way to provide much-needed support.

As the church makes and puts into action a plan to include every person in meaningful participation, the needs of every worshiper will be considered and accommodated. See Goal #1 above for additional ideas on how to help people with intellectual disabilities fully participate in the activities of your church.

Attaining these four goals gives the church a wonderful opportunity for evangelism, discipleship, and inclusion. Special Needs Ministries should educate the church about intellectual disabilities, develop resources for people with these disabilities, enhance their worship experiences, and
emphasize their intentional and meaningful inclusion into the larger church body. Finally, although employment is not included as one of the primary goals of this ministry, leaders in this ministry can develop and maintain a database that includes job skills of members with special needs. Assisting with the tangible need of employment is an invaluable service.

**People With Multiple Special Needs**

Often individuals with intellectual impairments have additional areas of need as well. In some cases the intellectual impairment may impact other areas of development, such as a congenital issue in which intellectual impairment impacts the ability to understand and process language. In other cases, the cause of the intellectual disability creates other issues. For example, an elderly member who has had a significant stroke may have not only an intellectual impairment, but mobility issues as well.

Because of the potential for an overlap of issues, it is important for Special Needs Ministries groups to consider and address multiple areas of need. Additional guidance on the following topics is provided in other leaflets in this series:

- deafness/hearing impairment
- hidden disability
- mobility and physical disability
- emotional and psychiatric disability
- communication disorder
- blindness/visual impairment

As in many areas of church life, sensitivity to the culture(s) of others is critical. Offensive language, even when used unintentionally, can significantly hinder the goals of this ministry. When training individuals to work in Special Needs Ministries, be sure to avoid words that are not appropriate.
Although some of these words may be found in the Bible and other spiritual writings, their usage has evolved and they now carry negative connotations. The following table shows examples of words to use and words to avoid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use this . . .</th>
<th>Instead of this . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person with a disability or person with a special need</td>
<td>Handicapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a disability or special need</td>
<td>Afflicted, unfortunate, less fortunate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with an intellectual disability or impairment</td>
<td>Retarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who cannot speak</td>
<td>Stupid, imbecile, mute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who had a stroke</td>
<td>Stroke victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the hospital or at home</td>
<td>Sick and shut in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses a wheelchair</td>
<td>Wheelchair bound</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**How to Prepare for Training Others**

In the introductory leaflet of this series, *Special Needs Ministries: Creating Inclusive Opportunities in Ministry*, you will find information on training church members to provide a ministry inclusive of all people, including those with an intellectual impairment. The essential training elements of prayer, action, study, and planning are described. Scriptural references are also provided to guide ministry leadership groups in sound, Bible-based planning and interventions.

**Conclusion**

Living with an intellectual disability or impairment is challenging. Multiple factors, including individual temperament, the degree of cultural acceptance of the impairment, and the degree of family and church support, impact an individual’s interest in and involvement with the church. Further, these factors can impact how a person
with an intellectual impairment can gain access to an understanding of the gospel. Certainly, then, the church must respond to the needs of people who have intellectual disabilities. We have been called to conquer barriers, to make inclusive communities, and to welcome all people into the family of God.

References


Endnotes
1 Steps to Christ, p. 80.
2 Ibid., p. 11.
3 Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 511, emphasis supplied.
4 www.youtube.com/sabbathschool; www.vimeo.com/sabbathschool; www.gracelink.net
5 www.sabbathschoolu.org
6 http://www.gracelink.net/article/3/kindergarten#.VEW0gMnk0p8; http://www.gracelink.net/article/4/primary#.VEW0yMnk0p8)
7 www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/specialneedsleaflet