

# Information-gathering for Ministry Inclusion Plan

## Step 1. Book in time for a conversation with the family

The first step in putting together a ministry inclusion plan for a child/young person with a disability is to have a conversation with them and their family. Conversations between the children's/youth minister/leader and the family are better than simply filling in forms. It is good to give the family the list of questions in advance, and then arrange a time to meet to talk through the answers.

## Step 2. Use information gathered to create a ministry inclusion plan

Once you meet with the family, you can use the information you have gathered to create a ministry inclusion plan. This will outline what measures you will put in place to support the child and facilitate their inclusion and participation. You can find a sample plan at [cbm.org.au/luke14](http://cbm.org.au/luke14).

## Step 3. Finalise the plan and put it into action

Once you have created a draft of the inclusion plan, confirm the details with the family, and the family and a ministry leader can sign the document. This plan should be updated before the commencement of each new year and whenever it is required due to changes in circumstances or needs.

## Before you start

- Ensure you advise the family that this information will only be shared with those responsible for care of their child/young person.
- Thank them for taking the time to share about their child/young person! Not all questions are going to be relevant to every family/child/young person, but they serve as important conversation starters.
- Encourage an open, ongoing conversation, letting the family know they are welcome to share more as they feel comfortable.
- It will be up to the individual family whether the child/young person attends the meeting.

# Discussion questions

Date:

People present:

## 1. Getting to know the child/young person

- **Personal details – name, age, date of birth, address and contact details during session, parents and siblings, school and year level**
- **Can you share a bit about your family's story?**
- **What are the child/young person's likes and dislikes, interests, abilities and strengths? What are they good at? What foods do they like?**
- **What is the child/young person's level of communication skills? Eg. speech, reading, writing, sign language.**
- **Level of self-care support needed – bathroom, eating, dressing**
- **Does the child/young person have any particular challenges, for example, behaviours of concern, repetitive behaviours, etc?**
- **What systems/methods work at home or at school to help manage these?**
- **Does the child/young person have any fears or aversions?**
- **Does the child/young person have any particular triggers? For example, does the child might become upset if he/she hears loud, unexpected noises?**
- **What is the best way to support the child/young person if they have been triggered or become distressed?**
- **Are there any medications and medical requirements that might be important for the church to know about?**
- **Any allergies/intolerances/aversions to foods or other allergies (e.g., bee stings)?**
- **Does the child/young person have any diagnoses?**

## 2. Preferences for Participation and Support

- **What kind of church activities would the child/young person enjoy or be able to participate in?** *(This could include youth groups, kids church, playgroup after school kids' club, Bible study group or other events relevant to your church's context and the child's age).*

- **Is there a preferred way for the child to communicate with others?** *(Some children may prefer visual supports, while others use devices or sign language.)*
- **Would the child/young person benefit from having a buddy or helper?** *(For example, an assigned volunteer during kids' church/youth program).*
- **Would it be helpful for you to attend a couple of sessions to show leaders and volunteers some techniques for supporting your child/young person?**
- **How would you like the disability explained or described to the other children/young people if at all?** *(e.g., what language would you prefer if it is discussed, such as "he is autistic" or "she has autism" etc.)*

### 3. Physical and Environmental Accommodations

- **What equipment and/or accommodations are used at home/at school that we might be able to use at church?** *(including physical environment considerations, advice about adapted equipment such as scissors, craft activities, games etc.)*
- **Does the child/young person use any support items such as fidget toys? Would they benefit from the use of a low-stimulation quiet area if they became distressed?**
- **Are there any specific safety considerations we should be aware of?** *(Medical issues, etc.).*

### 4. Communication and Check-Ins

- **Who would be the best person to reach out to if any questions come up?** *(This could be one parent, both, or an assigned liaison if they prefer).*
- **At what point would you like leaders to contact you if your child becomes distressed during the program?**
- **If we can't catch you to chat straight after church, would you prefer us to contact you via phone, email, or another format.**

### 5. Supporting the Family's Involvement

- **How can we help make church activities accessible for your whole family?** *(Consider childcare or support options that allow parents to participate).*
- **Does your family need specific seating arrangements?** *(For example, in an accessible area or a quieter space during the church service).*
- **Would your child/young person benefit from a busy bag in church?** *(Either in place of attending children's/youth program or before they head out to the children's/youth program. A busy bag is a bag of quiet activities to keep a child busy such as a quiet fidget toy, colouring in, noise-cancelling headphones, etc).*