

# Congregational Awareness

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Keeping your ministry “in front” of your congregation is critically important for ongoing growth, sustainability, and success. Through using all available channels of communication, you can ensure that visitors are aware of your church’s commitment to serving individuals and families with disabilities, recruit volunteers, and equip your members to “spread the word” about your ministry to families in your community with need.

Some key strategies for enhancing congregational awareness will be discussed here. These strategies include:

- Designating a “Special Needs Sunday” in which the work of your ministry is highlighted during worship and the focus of the preaching.
- Using your church bulletin, program, publications and other promotional materials to heighten awareness of your ministry.
- Using pulpit time to “tell the stories” of God at work in the lives of those served by your ministry.
- Capitalize on social media outlets! Post pictures (with permission), stories and video that share the successes of your ministry.
- Consider using short video segments during worship service announcements to highlight your ministry’s events and impact. Also consider hosting these videos on your church’s website.

## **Bulletins, Websites, Social Networks, & Publications**

Your church bulletin and other resources published by your church afford opportunities to keep your ministry on the “radar screen” of your congregation. The bulletin may be used as a way of making newcomers aware of your ministry, as well as alerting your membership to ministry activities and needs for volunteers.

Most churches today have websites and even Facebook groups. These online tools help families to have up-to-the-minute information on the church’s schedule of events. Online resources can also highlight your ministry’s successes and needs. If your pastor or ministry directors have blogs, those can also point potential volunteers and families to your work.

If your church publishes a newspaper or newsletter, you may consider interviews or articles with families positively impacted by your ministry. Presenting your ministry in these ways helps reinforce that successful ministry to families of children with disabilities comes about when a church provides services to individuals and families in response to the guidance and direction of God to meet specific needs. “Success stories”, encapsulating how God is at work through your church’s ministry help in recruiting new volunteers and serving as a source of encouragement to your ministry’s team.

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Also consider including interviews with volunteers who have been impacted by serving in your ministry area. Make the connection that there are spaces available on the team for others to be a part.

Church publications are helpful in calling attention to support groups associated with your ministry, along with special events you might sponsor. Book studies that highlight issues of faith or spiritual development relevant to those with disabilities may also be publicized through your church.

Many churches with ministries to children with disabilities produce an information packet or brochures describing the services they provide. Having such information prominently displayed in areas of the church populated by guests or newcomers (including welcome tables or centers) enhances the likelihood they will inquire about your ministry.

Keep in mind that any item that appears regularly in the same place and format becomes invisible. Try to change either the look or location of information presented in church publications, including regular updates or newsletters produced by your ministry.

Always keep your ministry's information updated and highlighted on the church website.