



Reaching New and Expectant Parents through Faith-Based Organizations

Why Faith-Based Outreach Matters



Faith communities are trusted sources of guidance in many communities, especially among POC.



Many new and expectant parents turn to their church or pastor first when receiving unexpected news.



Faith-based organizations provide:

Social support

Access to networks and events

A sense of belonging and hope

Goals of Faith-Based Outreach

- Share accurate, up-to-date resources about Down syndrome.
- Reduce stigma and increase acceptance within faith communities.
- Connect new and expectant parents with local and national support networks.
- Build long-term partnerships with trusted leaders.



Principles for Success

Start by	Relationship first: Start by listening to pastors, priests, and lay leaders.
Integrate	Into existing disability ministries and programs. Find those leaders.
Highlight	Representation: Diversify among faiths and demographics
Commit	Consistency: Commit to being present beyond one-time events.

Practical Approaches

Attend church and interfaith events, health fairs, and community gatherings.

- Disability ministry conferences
- Ecumenical Thanksgiving

Recruit volunteers from churches

Co-create resources with faith leaders that align with their values.

Host support groups or family workshops at churches.

Collaborate on family events and service opportunities.

Advertise your events in church bulletins. Compile an email list.

Partner with church health ministries to distribute educational materials.

Provide materials translated into Spanish

Ask members of your org to be ambassadors for your org to their churches

Examples of Outreach Activities

- Baby Showers / New Parent Blessings: Provide resource packets.
- Faith Leader Training: Equip leaders with accurate information on Down syndrome.
- Youth Ministry Inclusion: Teach church leaders about disability inclusion and transition.
- Partner with other disability advocacy organizations in your area to share resources with local churches or host an interfaith panel featuring people with different disabilities
- Local orgs can host a panel of leaders from different churches about how they accommodate/include people with disabilities in their congregations

National Faith & Disability Resources

- Bill Gaventa (bill.gaventa@gmail.com)
- Amy Julia Becker
- Erik Carter
- Special Needs Ministry Leadership Forum
- [Disability Ministry Network](#)
- Key Ministry:
 - <https://www.specialneedsministryresources.com/blog/2025-disability-ministry-conferences>
- [MUHCEN](#)
- [National Catholic Partnership on Disability \(NCPD\)](#)
- [Center on Faith and Disability at Baylor](#)
- [Faith Inclusion Network](#)
- [Disability Belongs](#)
- [WITH Ministries](#)
- [Collaborative on Faith & Disability](#)
 - [Institute on Theology and Disability](#)
- [JCC Association of North America: Sierra Weiss](#)
- [Union for Reform Judaism – Disabilities Inclusion](#)
- [Joni & Friends](#)
- [AAIDD Religion & Spirituality Division](#)

Local Action Plan



1. Identify top 3–5 local churches/parishes with from diverse faith, race, and cultural backgrounds.



2. Reach out to faith leaders to listen and learn their needs.



3. Offer to co-host one event in the next 6 months.



4. Train at least 5 congregation leaders on Down syndrome resources.



5. Develop a resource packet (bilingual if needed) tailored for faith settings.