

Leader's Guide

Chapter 1 Disability Curatives

The First Week of Lent

Assignments for Week 1:

- Read Understanding Ableism Part 1 (Handout)
- Read Chapter 1 Disability Curatives from [My Body is Not a Prayer Request](#)

Scripture Reading: Mark 10: 46-52 Blind Bartimaeus Receives His Sight

Video: Will Thames – Interview

Using the handout on **Understanding Ableism**, read aloud, *Ableism in the Bible*.

Discussion Questions:

1. What did the disciples and others in the crowd do that would be considered ableism?
 - They tried to get Bartimaeus to be quiet and not talk to Jesus.
 - They deemed him unworthy of Jesus' attention.
 - They don't offer to help guide him to Jesus once Jesus calls him.
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2. How did Jesus respond?
 - Jesus sees him as a whole person who can speak for himself.
 - Jesus offers healing and a return to the community.
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Using the handout on **Understanding Ableism**, read aloud, *What is ableism?*

- Take a few minutes to discuss what ableism means to you.
3. What does "able privilege" mean to you?
 - Unearned advantages.
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Using the handout on **Understanding Ableism**, read aloud, *What does ableism in the church look like?*

- Take a few minutes to discuss what ableism in the church looks like to you.
4. Can you identify ableism at MUMC?
 - No wheelchair access to the pulpit.
 - Not always being welcoming to those with disabilities.
 - Sometimes the automatic doors do not work.

- Tables and furniture are not always accessible for wheelchairs.
- No large print Bibles or accessible materials for the visually impaired.
- Sunday school classrooms and alternative spaces are not always set up to accommodate persons with disabilities.
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Using the handout on **Understanding Ableism**, read aloud *How can we dismantle ableism?*

5. What do you think we should do, as a church, to address our ableism and to better serve people with different abilities and disabilities?
 - Educate our church about disabilities and teach them how to create a warm, inviting and anti-ableist environment.
 - Do a survey to find out where we need to add accommodations and to create accessibility in our church.
 - Involve people with disabilities in decision making processes within the church.

Use the book for the following discussion questions:

6. In Chapter 1, *Disability Curatives*, Amy Kenny defines **Ableism** as the belief that disabled people are less valuable or less human than our nondisabled counterparts. Have you ever found yourself valuing people based on their abilities? Do you see bodies in a hierarchy?

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7. Do you agree with the assumption that “disability needs fixing” is dehumanizing? Why or why not?
 - Yes I agree it is dehumanizing. We all bear the image of God. We were made in his likeness. We need to look at the whole person, not just the disability. Value the person for who they are and what they have to contribute.

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**Scripture Reading: John 9: 2-3 Jesus heals a man born blind
John 9: 28-29,34**

8. At first glance this chapter focuses on the healing of the blind man. If it were just about the physical cure, the story would end at verse 7, when he comes out of the pool able to see. But the next 35 verses focus on how the neighbors retort and deport the man. Do you think that this passage

perpetuates the notion that disabled people require physical modifications to be complete? Why or Why not?

- Jesus' ministry is not all about physical "cure" but about holistic "healing".
 - When the man emerges from the pool he is physically cured. But, he is not healed until he truly understands who Jesus is and that he can now worship him anywhere. He was healed when he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.
9. The blind man did receive a physical cure, but the real healing occurs later in the chapter when he declares "Lord I believe" and worships Jesus (9:38). What is your takeaway from this passage?
- The man accepts Jesus as Lord and now he is saved and can worship when and wherever he wants to worship.
10. Look on page 19 and read the Top Ten Recommended Remedies. Discuss your thoughts about the Top Ten.
- These are horrible. You can't fix or cure her illness. Stop trying to cure her and just value her as a person who has things to contribute to the community.
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Additional Activities:

Take the Harvard Implicit Association Test for disability (page 18)

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/Study?tid=-1>

prior to the next Sunday School Class.

After clicking on the link, Scroll down to the disability study.

Reflect on your result and if comfortable share with the group.

Additional Reflections and Responses on page 17 & 18.

Terms:

Microaggression - A statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority.

Able Privilege - Clearly stated, able-bodied privilege is the term for the fact that people without disabilities have advantages over those that do.

Curing - A physical process: it's individual, usually rapid and concentrates on eliminating disease.

Healing - Focuses on interpersonal, social and spiritual dimensions. It is a lengthy and ongoing process for restoring wholeness.

Closing Prayer

A PRAYER FOR INCLUSION By Rabbi Edie Menscher and Rabbi Rick Jacobs

*Holy One, we know you by many names, but still we are part of one human family,
Your family.*

*Open our hearts and minds so that we see Your reflection in the face of every
person on this earth.*

Help us to forge bonds of compassion, dignity, and respect with every person.

*Guide us to fully grasp that disability and difference never lessen a person's need
for love, friendship, belonging, respect, and for the opportunity to work, contribute,
and lead.*

*Let prejudice, stigma, fear, and presumptions never interfere with our ceaseless
efforts to assure that each and every person is able to feel the embrace of family,
community, and of God*