

## Leader's Guide

### Chapter 2 Disability Discrimination

### The Second Week of Lent

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#### Assignments for Week 2:

- Read Chapter 2 Disability Discrimination from [My Body is Not a Prayer Request](#)
- Read Part 2 of Understanding Ableism (Handout)

#### Scripture Reading:

#### Matthew 25:40-45 Serve the Least of These

#### Video: To Be Determined

Using the handout on **Understanding Ableism**, read aloud Part 2: Ableism - going deeper, *Types of Ableism*

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What is the difference between **explicit ableism** and **implicit bias**?
  - Explicit ableism is where the perpetrators know exactly what they are doing.
  - Implicit bias is a negative attitude, of which one is not consciously aware, against people with disabilities or specific social groups.
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2. According to some studies, implicit bias against persons with disabilities is more prevalent than that against persons of other races or ethnicities. When you consider this can you think of ways that you have demonstrated implicit biases toward individuals with disabilities?
  - Talking to the parent or others instead of talking directly to the person with the disability.
  - Assuming that people with a physical disability have intellectual impairment.
  - Jumping in to help a person, assuming that they can't complete the task, instead of asking them if they need help.
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#### Use the book for the following discussion questions:

1. On page 25, Amy Kenny states that "Ableism is a system that places value on people's bodies and minds based on socially constructed ideas of normalcy, intelligence, excellence, and productivity." It claims that some

bodies are better than others. It values people only for what they produce. Based on this definition, do you think "Ableism" can be selected or rejected by people in the community?

- Yes, people can choose to stop upholding ableisms harmful ideas and practices

Also on page 25 it states:

"Ableism is not a character trait, an identity, or an illness. It is a system that starts with a philosophy. The Western philosophy of Aristotle, to be precise. Aristotle claimed that disabled people lacked reason and therefore were subhuman. His hierarchy of humanity has been used as the basis for racist, sexist, and ableist philosophies that are still pervasive today"

*So in today's time we know disabled people can in fact **not** lack reason. Many disabled people are very intelligent and just suffer from bodies not functioning. This would prove Aristotle's theory wrong.*

- Take a few minutes to discuss the above statement.
2. Churches and religious entities are excluded from ADA based on the First Amendment to the Constitution, which limits government interference with the free exercise of religion. It is left up to the church to decide how to implement ADA or care for the people in their community. Why do you think many churches have not complied with ADA recommendations?
    - Too costly to implement.
    - Don't feel it necessary to make accommodations, especially if there are no people with disabilities attending their church.
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  3. Do you think MUMC has made appropriate accommodations like, wheelchair ramps, accessible bathrooms, interpreters for the deaf community, or do we have more work to be done?
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  4. How are people with disabilities depicted in our sermons or in the songs that our congregation sings?
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  5. Read **Matthew 25:40-45**  
In this passage, Jesus gives us a model for how we should treat people with disabilities. What does this look like?
    - Jesus commands us to care for the least of these.
    - Jesus knows what it is like to be poor and marginalized. He suffered at the hands of a powerful empire. Everyone deserves to be treated equally, with dignity and respect. We were all made in the image of God.

6. Are you able bodied or temporarily nondisabled?
  - If we live long enough our body will experience some form of disability.
  - Everyone's ability is a temporary condition
  
7. If you become disabled, are you any less worthy of dignity and respect in those moments when your body and/or mind functions differently than it once did? How can you show dignity and respect to others with disabilities?
  - Absolutely not! You are still the same person whom God created in his image.
  - When you ask a person with a disability a question, and their speech is not always clear, instead of asking their caregiver or parent what they said, ask them to repeat their answer or say it a different way. Make sure you give them enough time to respond.
  - Many times people with disabilities need extra processing time. Make sure you allow them enough time to process information before they respond.
  - For someone with a physical disability, make sure you ask them if they need help before you jump in to assist and automatically assume they need help.

### **Additional Activities:**

Read the Top Ten "At Leasts" on page 37. What do they mean to you?

### **Terms:**

**Ableism** - A system that places value on people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, intelligence, excellence, and productivity.

### **Closing Prayer**

*Almighty and creating God, we confess and come before you today as people who are separated from one another by fear, prejudice, and ignorance. By our language, actions, and facilities we declare insiders and outsiders in our lives and in our church. Forgive us and create in us the vision of opening our hearts, minds, and doors as wide as the love of God, so that no one is left outside. Help us to reach beyond ourselves to discover the joy of community. Give us the patience to discover that all people have gifts and abilities to share with our community of faith. We pray in Jesus name. Amen!*

*Adapted from Southeastern United Methodist Agency for Rehabilitation (SEMAR) 2004*