

Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities

Reflection Guide

Statistics:

- 13.6% of Michigan's population is living with a disability, 5.1% of which being a cognitive disability (Research on Disability)
 - Do these numbers surprise you? Why or why not?
- In 2010, 27.3% of people with disabilities between 18 & 64 were living in poverty, compared to the national 12.8% poverty rate for individuals without disabilities (Research on Disability)
 - The poverty rate for persons with disabilities is more than twice as high as for those without disabilities. Why do you think this might be? What does this tell us about the way our economy is structured?
 - Michigan's poverty rate for those with disabilities is 30.2%. What measures could we take at our local level to address this?
- In Michigan, those with disabilities earn an average of \$11,144 less per year than those without disabilities

Resources:

- Disability rights leader Fred Fay once said that curbs were "Berlin Walls" between him and the places he had every right to go. What do you think of this quotation?
- Wal-Mart to Pay \$275,000 to Former Employee Fired after Cancer Surgery
 - <http://www1.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/12-16-11b.cfm>
 - Disabilities need not be permanent. Have you ever been injured for a period of time (broken bone, surgery) and felt like you were treated differently because of your temporary impairment?
- American Apparel Agrees to Settle EEOC Disability Bias Suit for \$60,000
 - <http://www1.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/12-19-11.cfm>
 - Do any of you own any American Apparel clothing? How does this story make you feel about the company?
 - Do you think the ruling was fair, or did it place undue requirements upon American Apparel?
 - How many other companies do you think could be found guilty of the same actions?
- Children with Disabilities Communicate on iPads- ABC Chicago
 - http://abclocal.go.com/wls/story?section=news/disability_issues&id=8154146
 - What do you think about the potential for technology to increase inclusion of persons with disabilities? What are the limitations?

- What about the journalist who delivered the story? Were you frustrated with her speech? What were your initial thoughts when she started speaking? Reflect upon your initial reactions and assumptions when she started the story. Do these reflect a bias in your own life?
- Love is Blind- CBS News
 - <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=5422743n>
 - What do you think about the statement made about someone with Pandu's condition, that "nobody wants that"? As Christians, how are we to respond to such a statement?
- All God's Children Have Gifts: Disability and Worship- Calvin Institute of Christian Worship
 - <http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/all-god-s-children-have-gifts-disability-and-worship/>
 - What did you think about the "Apart, For, With, By" progression of church's and their responses to persons with disabilities? Is it helpful or too limited?
- Beatitudes for Disabled People....by Marjorie Chappell.

Blessed are you that never bids us "hurry up" and more blessed are you that do not snatch our tasks from our hands to do them for us, for often we need time rather than help.

Blessed are you who take time to listen to defective speech, for you help us to know that if we persevere, we can be understood.

Blessed are you who walk with us in public places and ignore the stares of strangers, for in your companionship we find havens of relaxation.

Blessed are you who stand beside us as we enter new ventures, for our failures will be outweighed by times we surprise ourselves and you.

Blessed are you who ask for our help, for our greatest need is to be needed.

Blessed are you when by all these things you assure us that the thing that makes us individuals is not our peculiar muscles, nor our wounded nervous system,

but is the God-given self that no infirmity can confine.

Blessed are those who realize that I am human and don't expect me to be saintly just because I am disabled.

Blessed are those who pick things up without being asked.

Blessed are those who understand that sometimes I am weak and not just lazy.

Blessed are those who forget my disability of the body and see the shape of my soul.

Blessed are those who see me as a whole person, unique and complete, and not as a "half" and one of God's mistakes.

Blessed are those who love me just as I am without wondering what I might have been like.

Blessed are my friends on whom I depend, for they are the substance and joy of my life!!!!

- How can we seek to be “blessed” in these ways in our own lives?
- What do you think of the author’s use of the framework of the Beatitudes?
- It’s been argued that the Beatitudes are not a list of what to do, but a picture of who God is. How do these Beatitudes reflect God’s character and the character of his Kingdom?

What Now: Resources for Further Engagement

- 2011 Disability Compendium (<http://disabilitycompendium.org/>)
 - Statistics about persons with disabilities
 - Alternative Pathways (<http://www.alternativepathways.org/>)
 - Strives to provide independent home ownership opportunities for adults with disabilities (ask the Service-Learning Center about volunteer opportunities!)
- American Association of Persons with Disabilities (<http://www.aapd.com/>)
 - Opportunities for further involvement (“Take Action” link)
- Calvin College Academic Services (<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/services/disability/>)

- Statement on academic accommodation for those with disabilities (check out the FAQ link for more in-depth information)
- Calvin College Service-Learning Center (<http://www.calvin.edu/admin/slc/>)
 - Get connected and volunteer with local agencies working with persons with disabilities
- Disability Advocates of Kent County (<http://www.disabilityadvocates.us/>)
 - Resource for advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities
- Horizons Developmental Resource Center (<http://www.horizonsdrc.com/programs-services/horizons-academy>)
 - Resource center for parents with children with disabilities (ask the Service-Learning Center about volunteer opportunities!)

If you have any suggestions or comments on what we can improve, please contact us at slc@calvin.edu or 616-526-6455.



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