

## PARISH NAME -Open Heart Hospitality

Thank you for volunteering to be a Hospitality Minister. Your role is incredibly important. You are often the first impression of our church and a reflection of God incarnate. Thank you for conveying to all in attendance they are valued, loved, and welcomed here.

### Tips Before Mass

- Position greeters to open heavy doors but do not stand in the door frame.
- Reserve seating close to the altar and back East corners for those who can't hear well. Hearing devices are located in left-hand drawer on the west wall of the sacristy.
- Make sure all hospitality members are apprised of our wheelchair accessible seating areas.
- Familiarize yourself with the walkway to the St. Michael's chapel. There are two folding chairs placed in this annex for families who wish to have privacy. We don't want families to feel they are banished to the "cry room" if their loved one makes noises, stems, or needs a feeding tube changed.
- Be cognizant of your social spacing and allow those with disabilities to breath figuratively and literally.
- Acknowledge and greet all members just as you wish to be welcomed.
- If you identify someone has a disability, see the person not the disability. Speak directly to the person, not the caregiver accompanying them.
- Be patient with late arrivals. The family is here seeking love not judgement.

### Conversation Etiquette

- Ask questions about their day, the weather, or use other general conversation starters (Are you enjoying this weather? What did you do today? What did you think of the big game? How's school going?)
- Don't make condescending jokes such as "No fair, I wish I had wheels like that!"
- If someone is blind it's okay to say "It's nice to see you." Genuine kindness speaks louder than fear.
- If the individual has a hearing impairment, face the person you are speaking to. Do not shout!
- After you have become acquainted, ask if the individual if they need help and LISTEN to their wishes.

### If Someone Needs Assistance

- Humble yourself. Most of us don't like asking for help.
- Don't "Help" without asking. Never grab someone's wheelchair or someone who is blind by the arm.
- Make sure the person is facing you
- Stemming-If a person starts to make noises in church (i.e. clapping, vocalizing, rocking) respect the family and offer up a prayer. Assume the parent knows what is best for their child, not you.
- If the family leaves the worship space, you can ask if they want to be shown our St. Michael's annex as it is quieter and separate from our young families.
- If someone is changing a feeding tube and needs help, offer to grab some paper towels and a trash can.

Appropriate Language "Language, A Powerful Tool for Hospitality. NCPD, 1996 ncpd.org and Diocese of Toledo Equal Access Ministries and thank you OLIH Special Needs Ministry/Parish for sharing the original document with us.



## During Mass

- Be patient with delayed responses (i.e. collection baskets and communion procession). Just because the person doesn't move right away doesn't mean they didn't hear you.
- Inform Eucharistic Ministers of any individuals that are in need of low gluten hosts or need to be served at their pew. Never assume, simply ask.

## Acceptable Ways to be descriptive and respectful

- Person with a disability
- Mother who is blind
- Student with vision loss
- Parishioner who is hard-of hearing
- Eucharistic minister who is deaf
- Teacher with a seizure disorder
- Lector with paraplegia
- Catechist with cerebral palsy
- Server with a learning disability
- Neighbor with mental illness
- Teenager with a brain disorder
- Usher with an intellectual disability
- Greeter who uses a wheelchair
- Priest with a mobility impairment

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Diocese of Des Moines Disability Ministry, 515-237-5073, [www.dmdiocese.org/disabilityministry](http://www.dmdiocese.org/disabilityministry)

