



All Are Welcome

How to Be a Church of Open Doors

What do I do to make the Church a community where everyone feels welcomed and understood, everyone feels the mercy and love of God who renews life?

—Pope Francis, General Audience, May 29, 2013

Each of us can make our parish a more welcoming place to newcomers, persons with disabilities, and persons with special needs. Here are a few ideas:

- ▶ If you see a parent struggling with a child’s behavior, offer a friendly smile, a sympathetic nod, or a helping hand.
- ▶ If you see a person physically struggling to get in, hold open a door, scoot down in the pew, or offer to carry something.
- ▶ If you see a person exhibiting unusual behavior, understand that it might be a sign of a disability. Embrace the person as a child of God and understand that each of us has different ways of receiving and communicating God’s love.
- ▶ If you see someone who is disheveled or out of sorts, consider that he or she might be in dire straits. Act with compassion.
- ▶ Some people may struggle to get to or sit through the Mass. Offer a ride, an open door, or simply acceptance and understanding.
- ▶ A warm smile, a nod, or a small kindness can make all the difference.

“Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”

—Matthew 25:40

For resources and information on welcoming, please visit www.loyolapress.com/special-needs.

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