

THE GOSPEL CALL (REVISED*)



DISCUSSION BOOKLET

Perth, Western Australia

* The original version of this booklet was issued in 1980 to accompany the Pastoral Statement by Archbishop Goody. It has been revised in 2018 to reflect present terminology.

Preface

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons.

The Most Reverend L.J. Goody, Archbishop of Perth, says:

"The International Year of Disabled Persons is a year for the whole church, every parish, every school, every individual, to become involved, aware and responsible. Christ demands a positive response from all of us."

(The Gospel Call: Break Down The Barriers, page 13).

This Parish and School discussion booklet will help you:

- ★ to provide an opportunity for you, the reader, to become aware of and become sensitive to the needs of people with disability.
- ★ to hear the Christian call to respond.
- ★ to look at practical ways to meet the needs of people with disability on a local level.

In order to derive the greatest benefit from this programme, participants need to meet regularly, study the passages from the Pastoral Statement, "The Gospel Call: Break Down The Barriers" and formulate either mentally or in writing their answers to the questions raised, or which they themselves think should be raised. They then share these answers and opinions with the aim of helping themselves and the person with disability to respond to the challenge of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

DISCUSSION 1

THE MINISTRY OF JESUS TO THE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Christ laid claim to a special care for the people with disability as a sign of genuine ministry—"The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the poor have the gospel preached to them". (Luke 7:22)



1. Do you really believe that it is possible for the blind to see, the lame to walk, the lepers to be cleansed, the deaf to hear and the poor to have the gospel preached to them?
2. How do you see the Ministry of Jesus at work today? Do you know the various organisations that work with people with disability? Are there any Catholic groups amongst them?
3. What is the difference between disabled, handicap and impairment?
4. What are your own handicaps? How do you deal with them? What bearing do these have on our relationships with others?

DISCUSSION 2

THE SITUATION OF PARENTS AND FAMILY

"I remember sitting down on the lounge and crying and saying my thoughts aloud and then I started talking (still out loud to God):

*'O God what am I going to do?
How am I ever going to manage?
What will happen to my child, if
something happens to me? (The
Gospel call page 3)*



Invite parents of a child with disability to your meeting.

1. What are some of the problems they have encountered?
2. How were they made to feel—accepted in the parish? How were they made to feel—unaccepted in the parish?
3. What contribution to your own life do you see in the dedicated witness of parents of a child with disability?
4. In what ways can you, as a Christian community assist the parents of children with disability in your parish? e.g. seating for people with disability, providing religious education etc.

DISCUSSION 3

THE CALL OF THE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY TO PERSONHOOD

Strong feelings of inferiority are often coupled with inordinate self-interest. People with disability frequently come to believe that "difference" is not acceptable, not encouraged and not respected. When the person with disability feels that his/her contribution is needed and appreciated, a higher degree of self worth is established.

1. Invite several people with disability to your meeting to share with your group what their impairment has meant to them. (It may be necessary to include parents because of some difficulties in communication e.g. deaf). (The Gospel call page 7)
2. As a group, examine your own reactions to first encounters with people with disability.
3. What does the person with disability require to be challenged to full personhood and to take his/her rightful place in the Church?
4. In what ways can you in the wider community, in work and social situations, continue the task of integrating the person with disability into society.



DISCUSSION 4

THE CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH COMMUNITY

The teaching of the Church must not be confined to principles only. The International Year of Disabled Persons is a great opportunity for the Church to become more truly itself by becoming more truly the Body of Christ in the world. People with disability, as part of the Body of Christ must be encouraged to take their proper place by making their own unique contribution. (The Gospel call page 10)



1. How many people with disability live in your parish? How does one discover this?
2. In what ways can your parish provide a "full, active, conscious" participation of the person with disability in the parish liturgy, e.g. for the person who is deaf, blind, and others who have different abilities.
3. What can be done in your parish to encourage people with disability to give their talents, time and gifts in service for others.
4. What will the International Year of the Disabled Person mean to you and your parish in 1982? Have you widened the doors? Made use of visual and audio aids etc.?

WHILE DIRECT INTERACTION WITH PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT ABILITIES IS MOST DESIREABLE, THE FOLLOWING VIDEOS AND YOUTUBES CAN PROVIDE A FOCUS FOR DISCUSSION.

WHO ARE THE DE BOLTS? AND WHERE DID THEY GET 19

KIDS? Award winning documentary focuses upon a California couple with 6 children of their own and 13 adoptees and/or legal wards. Many of these children are physically challenged.

Part 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOxLxHYW6To>

Part 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wy_D4HJANXQ

Part 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5yae-ayWmM>

Part 4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OmVUjMW_bo

THE DREAMHOUSE. In this six part series, three young adults with intellectual disabilities fly the nest and move into a new home for ten weeks. Experiencing living away from parents and learning to live independently is a dream for all of them.

<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/programs/dreamhouse/>

OUR VOICES, OUR JOURNEYS. What is a disability? What information do I need? Who can I talk to? What supports and services are available to me? Will my culture and language be respected? What do I do if I need an interpreter? How can a person with a disability get involved in community activities? On this DVD people with disabilities, their families and carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds share their experiences and how they have answered these questions. Western Australian agencies and organizations show how they work with families and each other to provide supports and services in culturally appropriate ways. Available from the Catholic Library, 33 Williamstown Rd, Doubleview WA 6018. (08) 9241 5260

NICK VUJICIC'S STORY LIFE WITHOUT LIMBS SERIES Nick tells the story of his physical disabilities and the emotional battle he endured trying to deal with them as a child, a teen, and a young adult. "For the longest, loneliest time, I wondered if there was anyone on earth like me, and whether there was any purpose to my life other than pain and humiliation." He shares how his faith in God has been his central source of strength and explains that once he found his own sense of purpose—inspiring others to make their lives and the world better—he found the confidence to build a rewarding and productive life without limits. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jib1FnWrUI>