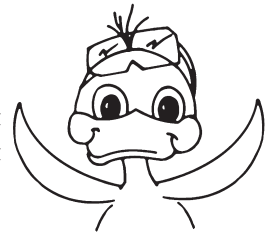


20 Days of Awareness

These activities will help you think about people with disabilities in new ways. You'll find that people with disabilities are just like you and me — they do the same things you and I do. But they do those things in different, sometimes amazing ways.



1

What color is your hair? What if people thought you were not very smart because of the color of your hair? Would that be true? There are people who think that someone who has a physical disability is not very smart simply because that person has a physical disability. What do you think when you see someone who has a physical disability?

Follow the directions and put together your Mosaic gift bank. One way to help people with disabilities is to give money to the places that work with people who have disabilities. Put a coin or two in your gift bank every day you do this activity as a way of showing you want to help.

2

Have you ever seen a person who is blind walk with a cane? How do they know when it is safe to cross the street if they cannot look for oncoming cars? There are ways people know things other than by seeing them. What are those ways?

Close your eyes for several minutes and just listen to the noises around you. Don't try walking or doing any other activity. Just listen. What kind of noises do you hear?

3

Some people with disabilities who cannot use their arms receive help from others who cut their food and put it in their mouths. If you saw that happening, what would you think? Do you think they enjoy eating? Do you think the food tastes any different to that person than it does to you? Probably not. They just have someone help them. Do you? Do you always cook your own food? If someone cooks your food and prepares it for you, you have help eating too, right? It is just a different type of help.

Everybody needs help with something. Look for an opportunity today to help someone with something. Ask him or her, "May I help you?" It is nice to have someone offer to help us.

4

Have you ever had hurt feelings or been embarrassed? What did it feel like? Did you want people to laugh at you or think you were odd because of it? Sometimes people treat people with disabilities like they're odd. Do you think that hurts their feelings?

Pick someone to say something nice to today. Maybe tell your parents or grandparents you love them. Surprise your mom and tell her she looks nice. It is fun to make someone feel good!

(Are you remembering to put a coin or two in the Mosaic gift bank every day?)

5

Some people with disabilities use a wheelchair to get around. If you used a wheelchair to get everywhere you wanted to go, would you be able to live in the house you do now? How many places that you visit each day would you be unable to visit if you used a wheelchair?

Is there a toy car around your house somewhere? Run it across a surface that is not level and see what happens. Run it up against a step and see what happens. Even on your bicycle you can't go up or down steps (don't try to!). Those are obstacles people who use wheelchairs face.

6 Do you know someone who has a disability? Have you talked with him or her? You'll find that he or she likes a lot of the same things you do, and likes to do a lot of the same things you like to do. Is he or she really that different from you? Do you treat him or her differently?

Make a list of things you like. Ask your friends what they like. Make a list of their items. If you know someone who has a disability, ask what he or she likes. Compare the lists and find out how much alike instead of different all of you are.

7 Some people have developmental disabilities and need to concentrate more than others to do things like reading or writing. Does this make them less smart than other people? Do you ever have trouble concentrating? Does that make you less smart?

Hold a piece of paper against your forehead and carefully use a pencil to write your name on that piece of paper. Did it take more concentration for you than it normally does to write your name? Did it come out the way you wanted it to?

(How many coins have you put in your Mosaic gift bank by now?)

8 People who can't see still enjoy television, movies and sunrises and sunsets. They enjoy the same things you do. How do you think they are able to enjoy those things? What abilities do they use to enjoy those things that others enjoy by seeing?

Sit with your family when everyone is watching television. Keep your eyes closed and don't look at the television screen. Can you follow the story without seeing what is happening? You have to use your imagination a lot!

9 How would you dress yourself if you were not able to move your fingers and thumbs? Some people have disabilities that make it impossible for them to use their fingers and thumbs, yet they can dress themselves and do other things for themselves without help. Sometimes they use special equipment. What things might be helpful for your life if you couldn't move your fingers and thumbs? Do you think a disability would stop you from doing anything you want to do? Or do you think you would figure out a way to do everything you want to do?

Put a pair of socks over your hands so you cannot cheat. Try to button a shirt or put on a pair of shoes with the socks limiting the movement of your fingers. Can you do it? If you had to do it, I'm sure you'd learn how!

10 Some people with developmental disabilities have difficulty speaking clearly and they don't pronounce words in the same way as other people do. What would it feel like to have to tell someone something important and he or she couldn't understand you? Just because the other person could not understand you, does that mean you are not smart?

Sometimes people cannot speak as clearly because the muscles around their mouths, like other muscles, can be affected by disability. Try speaking to your parent without moving your lips and see if they can understand you. It is a challenge for both you and your parent!

11

People who cannot speak often learn a language called sign language. They are able to communicate in two languages! They learn the language people speak in the place they live (such as English) and they learn sign language. Do you know a second language? Would it be good to know a second language? Does knowing two languages make them smarter than you?

People who cannot speak also communicate with something called “fingerspelling,” using an alphabet in American Sign Language. Would you like to learn to spell your name or to say “hello” in sign language? Do a search on the Web for “American Sign Language” and you’ll find the alphabet. Learn something new!

12

Every person has things that they are good at and things that they’re not so good at. What are the things you’re really good at? What are the things that are harder for you to do? Are you different from other people? Do the things that are harder for you to do make you disabled?

A person with a developmental disability once said, “You’re only disabled if you don’t know how to ask for help.” We all sometimes need help with something. When was the last time you asked someone to help you with something?

13

Sometimes people will speak more loudly to someone who is blind, or talk more slowly to someone who uses a wheelchair. Have you ever done that? Why would someone do that? Does being blind make someone have difficulty hearing? Does using a wheelchair make someone have difficulty understanding?

Talk to your parent in loud, slow words (don’t yell!). How does he or she respond? Have your parent talk to you that way (again without yelling!). Does it make you feel like you’re not very smart?

14

Because some people have developmental disabilities, there are others who think they cannot make their own decisions. Would you want someone else to make every decision for you? How would that make you feel? Do you think a person with a developmental disability cannot make his or her own decisions?

Take a pencil and attach it to the front of a baseball cap with tape. Put the entire alphabet in big letters on a sheet of paper. Put the cap on and without speaking move your head and point to each letter to spell out the sentences you want to say. There are some people who communicate with special equipment that acts like this and then a computer speaks the sentence. Isn’t that amazing?

15

Do you think that a person who has a disability sometimes gets mad and upset at other people? Do you get mad and upset at other people? Do you think people with disabilities have all the same feelings that you do?

Listen to a person with a disability. Maybe it is someone in your class, your neighborhood or your church. He or she can be young or old; it doesn’t matter. Ask questions about daily life, not about the person’s disability. How do others treat the person? Find out. What are the joys and struggles of that person’s life? Are those joys and struggles associated with the person’s disability or with life in general? How does their life compare with yours?

16

What color are your eyes? What if someone was afraid to talk to you because of the color of your eyes? Do you think people are sometimes afraid to talk to someone with a physical or developmental disability? Why? Should they be afraid of a person's disability anymore than they should be afraid of your eye color?

Try NOT doing something. You should have become a little more aware by now of places that are accessible for people with disabilities. If you find a place not accessible, don't go there. Does it affect your life?

17

You have probably seen the blue sign that has a white wheelchair depicted on it. What does that sign stand for? When you see that sign, what do you think? Where have you seen it? Why do you think it is placed where it is?

Count how many times today you see that familiar blue sign with the white wheelchair. It is probably going to be a lot! You'll see it at church, at school, at the shopping center, at the grocery store. Is there someplace you don't see it? Why not?

18

Have you heard the word "handicap?" Do you know that a handicap is something that makes it more difficult for you to do something? A person who uses a wheelchair is not handicapped. He or she has a disability. A person who uses a wheelchair and needs to get up some steps where there is no ramp faces a handicap because there is no ramp. Do you face handicaps that make your life more challenging at times?

Do this with your parent. Have a belt tied loosely around your knees, keeping them together. Now try to do your regular activities. Can you? Or does something now handicap you from doing what you want to do?

19

There are people who work at jobs that help people with different types of disabilities. They help them overcome the handicaps that they face. Would you like to do a job like that if you could when you grow up? Why?

Ask your parent if you both can visit some place that people with disabilities work or live and see how people work to help them. Try to talk with someone who has a disability. Maybe you'll make a new friend.

20

Do you ever ask people to help you? Why do you ask for help? Is it OK to ask for help? What if someone tries to do something for you when you don't want help? How does that make you feel? Sometimes we think we're being nice by doing something for someone who has a disability. But sometimes that person would rather do it for himself or herself. How do you know if someone wants help? It is OK to ask, "May I help you?"

Ask someone today if you can help them with anything. If the first person says no, ask someone else. People like to be asked if they would like help and you'll find it is fun to be able to help someone!



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