



BUILDING THE BRIDGE MINISTRIES



ABLE MINISTRY

SUPPORTING THOSE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Sophia Gordon
BTB ABLE Ministry Liaison



About ABLE Ministry

Accept . Believe . Love . Embrace

ABLE is a program under the Ladies Ministry Division of the UPCI.

ABLE provides support to individuals and families impacted by disability, while also offering training for pastors, leaders, and congregations.

Purpose of ABLE Ministry

ABLE's goal is to **raise awareness about disabilities and people with special needs within the church, the community, and the world.** The ultimate desire is that churches will understand the need to incorporate people of all abilities into their congregations.

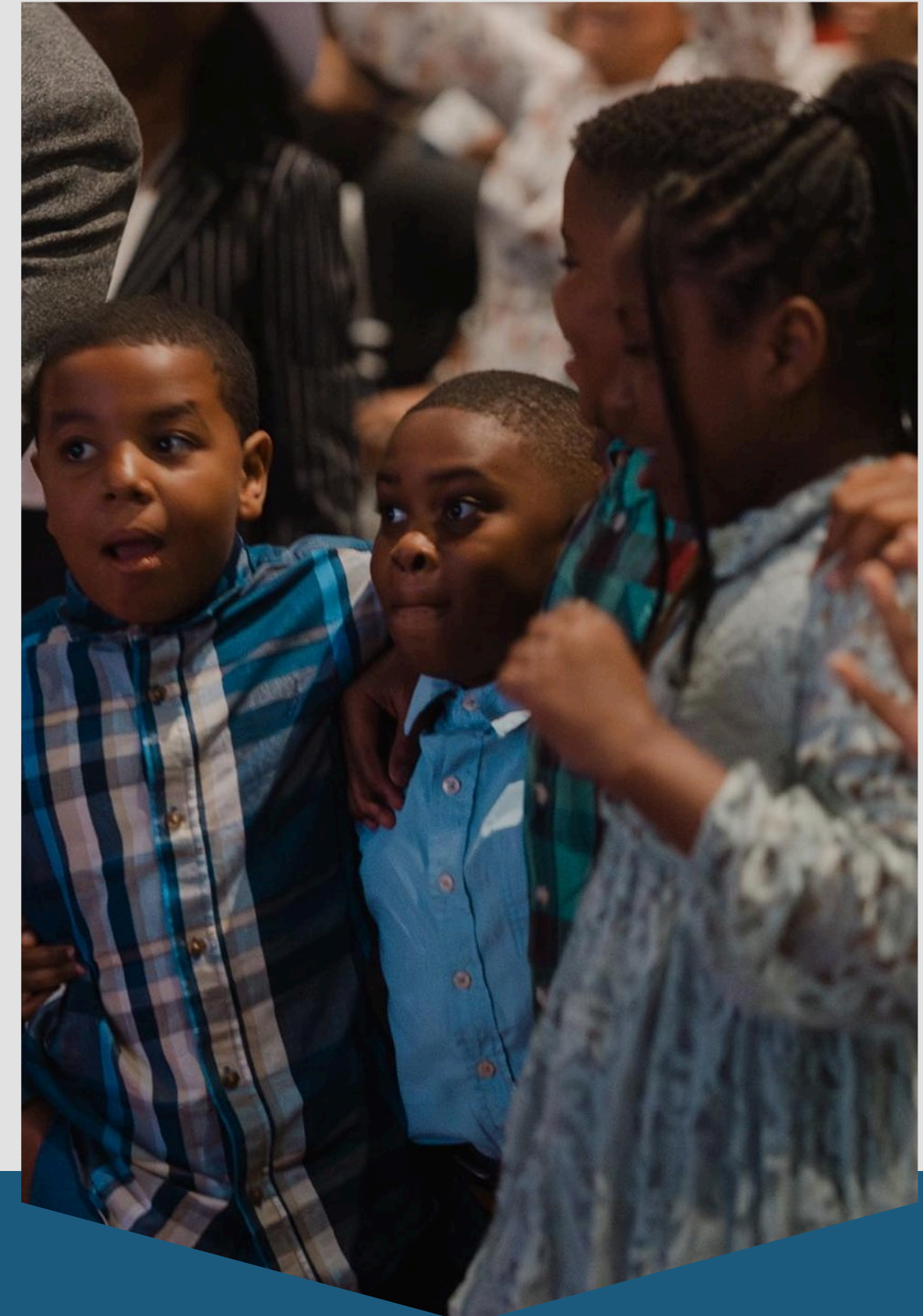


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Why It Matters

- An estimated **1 in 4 adults in the US** are living with a disability
- People with special needs are one of the **largest under-reached people groups** in the world for the Gospel
- An estimated **85% of churches do not have a special needs ministry** for individuals and families living with disability
- Almost **1/3 of families** surveyed who are part of the faith communities said they **left their church** because their child was not welcomed
- African-American/Black children are often underdiagnosis or misdiagnosis, receive delayed diagnosis & have limited advocacy and support
- Many **Black families turn to faith-based communities for support and guidance** on disability-related challenges



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Source: APA.org

THE CHURCH SHOULD...

Be ABLE – Accept, Believe, Love, and Embrace those with disabilities

Have a disability ministry

- The ministry should be led by someone passionate about reaching the disabled community

Conduct a Church Accessibility Audit

- **Physical Accessibility:** Ensure buildings and facilities are accessible to people with diverse physical needs
- **Programmatic Accessibility:** Assess worship services, Bible studies, and other programs to identify and remove barriers
- **Communication Accessibility:** Use tools like captioning, ASL interpretation, and braille materials to support diverse needs





THE CHURCH SHOULD...

Provide whole church training on being disability friendly at least bi-annually

- Can be provided by an ABLE representative or someone familiar with disability resources
- Training for those working with kids should occur more frequently

Be intentional about incorporating those with disabilities to serve in ministry

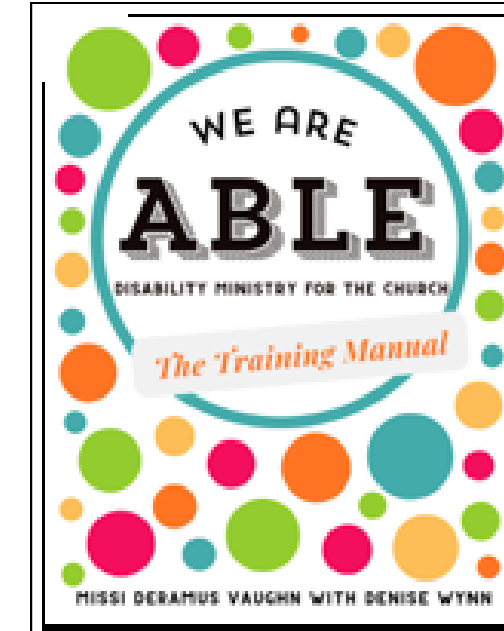
Understand that people with disabilities can and do get saved

- ABLE Youtube video: "Praying with Kids Who Are Anxious"

Provide accommodations wherever possible (ex. sensory rooms, headsets, etc.)

ABLE RESOURCES

- “We Are ABLE: Disability Ministry for the Church Training Manual” available on Amazon
- Monthly Podcasts, virtual support groups, and YouTube informational videos
- FREE Disability Resource pages
- Modified Sunday School curriculum
- Spiritual IEP form to understand the needs of those in your congregation with disabilities



ABLE Certification

- Individual certification provided through www.ministrycentral.com
- Church certification can be provided virtually or in-person. Contact Sophia Gordon, BTB ABLE Liaison, for more information

NON-PROFIT RESOURCES

AbilityMinistry.com

- Free one-page guides regarding various aspects of disability ministry



Buddybreak.org

- Free Parents' Day Out/respice program where kids with special needs have FUN while their parents get a BREAK.
- Teaches churches how to start a similar program



Soarspecialneeds.org

- Provides respite, social clubs, summer day camps, caregiver support groups, and church resources.



For assistance in starting an ABE Ministry in your church or to gain additional info, contact:

Sophia Gordon

BTB ABE Ministry Liaison

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