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DISABILITY AWARENESS: ACCOMMODATIONS

Disability Awareness Seminar for Students: The Importance of Accommodations

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A Capstone project for the Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies

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Introduction

Many school age children have not yet learned about disabilities. Without an awareness of disabilities, children may inadvertently insult or misunderstand their peers with disabilities. With disability awareness education, these kids can be more accepting and welcoming to their peers with disabilities. To address this issue, I have created a one-day lesson to teach disability awareness to first to fourth graders from the migrant after school program, at Santa Rita Elementary School in Salinas, California.

Needs Statement

Disability awareness is noticeably absent from middle school and high school curricula. When students do not receive direct instruction in this area, they will often display actions of intolerance and insensitivity towards their peers with disabilities. This may include rude comments and exclusionary behavior, which not only negatively impact the students at whom they are directed, but can also affect the school environment as a whole. Consistent bullying and lack of acceptance can create the feeling that school is not a safe place for students to learn. The goal of an educator should be to create a safe learning environment, where every student feels understood and accepted. Teaching disability awareness is a critical component in this educational process.

Research suggests that people with disabilities often struggle to make connections with their peers, which can lead to feelings of depression. For example, a 2018 study conducted in Canada found that there was a correlation between not having a sense of belonging in one's community and a low life satisfaction. (Daley, et al 2018) Students with disabilities struggle to connect with their peer group as a result of the exclusion and discrimination they often experience. Unfortunately, within our schools we see many examples of discrimination toward

people with disabilities. In an article by Carlyn O. Mueller, one student recalls being told by a teacher, “You’re not [a slur], don’t associate with those people [other students with intellectual disabilities]” (Mueller, 2021, p. 8). Incorporation of disability awareness education into the curriculum will increase the quality of life for those with disabilities because it will aid in preventing discriminatory behavior. This in turn may make it easier for these students to make connections with their peers.

While some may doubt that an awareness program can have such an impact, studies show that these programs greatly benefit typically abled students. It is important for students to learn how to interact with people who are different from themselves, and these educational experiences will give them the necessary skills to do so. According to a study conducted by Sehan University, students who were a part of a disability awareness program demonstrated improvement in their attitudes toward people with disabilities. The article states “Students who have taken lectures are likely to feel able to be friends with people with disabilities, to work together, or to spend time together. In conclusion, it is necessary to provide a disability awareness educational program” (Park & Kim, 2018). Research conducted at a New South Wales primary school has also demonstrated that when children are educated about disability awareness, they are kinder to and more accepting of those individuals with disabilities long term, even after a short lesson (Lloyd, et al. 2018).

This curriculum would benefit students with disabilities through the provision of representation and positive role models. As stated in the Mueller article “One participant remembered wishing for ‘someone who was just really similar to me, who could tell me ‘Hey, this is what’s going to happen and you need to deal with it now while you have the chance.’”

(Mueller, 2021, p. 9). Having role models who have accomplished their goals in spite of their struggles will show the students that what they dream of can be a possibility.

Overall it is clear that disability awareness education is highly beneficial to both students with disabilities and typically abled students. This information will break down the social barriers these two groups have allowed connections to be made. This will help typically abled students become more inclusive and understanding of those who are different from them. These programs will benefit students with disabilities by providing positive role models and helping them build connections with their peers. Therefore, my capstone project will be a presentation focusing on the importance of accommodations for those with disabilities.

References

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- Lloyd, A., Smith, M., Dempsey, I., Fischetti, J., & Amos, K. (2018). Short- and medium-term impacts of the *just like you* disability awareness program: A quasi-experimental comparison of alternative forms of program delivery in New South Wales' Primary Schools. *Australian Journal of Education*, 61(3), 288–304. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0004944117730649>
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Theory

According to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, children learn and develop through different groups within their community. A child's development is impacted by different systems. Each system represents a different layer of the child's environment. For example, a child's microsystem includes the community that they are the most familiar with and contains the people that they interact with on a regular basis, such as classmates or family. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, it is through these individuals that the child will develop knowledge of social norms and moral values. When a child is exposed to a new idea they are able to expand their system and grow as an individual. With this in mind it would be ideal to support children during this time by exposing them to the perspective of different individuals with whom they may not be familiar with. This will enable them to be more accepting and kinder individuals.

Consideration of Diversity

My project will be conducted at St, Ansgar's Lutheran Church's youth group meeting in Salinas, California. The youth group is composed of around thirty students ranging from ages 11 to 18. The students in this group come from a variety of different racial backgrounds; however, from my observation, a majority of the students are White or Hispanic. I have noticed that the group also varies in terms of economic background. In terms of education, this church has a large homeschool population, and I would expect the youth group to reflect the same, with a majority of the students being homeschooled. Because this lesson is being conducted in a church setting, I would expect all the participants to be Christian. Those who do not come from a religious background are not likely to be present. In order to participate in the presentation the students must be fluent in English. This lesson is designed specifically for this age group and would not

be beneficial for those who are younger. This lesson contains some high level vocabulary that a younger age group may struggle to understand.

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the project, participants will be able to

1. Identify two examples of disability accommodations at their church site
2. Identify one example where and accommodation is needed at their church site
3. Describe at least one act of inclusion that they promise to perform in the future

Method

I created a one-day lesson plan on disability awareness for the middle and high school youth group at St Ansgar's Church in Salinas, California. I presented this lesson on April 12th during the youth group meeting. The focus of this lesson was to show the students the importance of disability accommodations and the importance of creating these in the environments they are a part of.

Segment 1

To start things off I greeted the students and explained a little bit about what Capestone was and the topic of my lesson started with a game. The 20 students were split up into two teams. The game was called Bible scramble and it was one that the students had played before. Each team was provided with an envelope which contained small cards with letters written on them. They then had to unscramble the letters to create the answer to the provided question. See Appendix A for powerpoint with the questions. However, Team 2 letters were written in invisible ink. Once the game started I ignored any student who tried to bring the issue to my attention, instead telling them to try harder. After 2 rounds which lasted about 15 minutes, I stopped the game and provided Team 2 with their “accommodation”. We then proceed with 2 more rounds of

the game in which Team 2 greatly improved. Following the activities, I led a discussion about the participants' thoughts on the activity. We discussed their feelings towards the unfair game and how they felt about being ignored. I recorded their responses on the whiteboard. See Appendix B for pictures.

Segment 2

Following the group discussion I gave a powerpoint presentation on the importance of accommodations. See Appendix A for powerpoint. The presentation discussed the different types of accommodation and the different ways the students can work to be more accommodating to those with disabilities.

Segment 3

Following the presentation I had the students get into 4 groups. To test their knowledge on what they had learned I had them search around the building to find 2 examples of accommodations and one place where an accommodation was needed. Once they had found these the students would take a picture by their example and send it to me. See Appendix X for pictures.

Results

Learning outcome 1 stated that the participants would be able to identify two examples of disability accommodations at their church site. I feel that this learning outcome was met. In order to test this learning outcome, I divided the students up into four groups. The students went around the building to look for examples of accommodations. I conducted the presentation at an ADA accessible building, so there were plenty of examples to choose from. I had the groups take a photo near the accommodation that they found, such as handicap parking spots or ramps. See Appendix X for photos. Following this task, the students texted me the photo and I reviewed it.

See Table 1 for detail. In total, four out of the four groups were able to identify two correct examples. Therefore, I feel the learning outcome was met.

Learning outcome 2 stated that the participants would be able to identify one example where an accommodation is needed at their church site. I feel that this learning outcome was met. Similar to the previous tasks, the students completed this task in their groups. The students went around the building to look for examples of places where accommodations were needed. See Appendix X for photos. When they would find a part of the church they felt was not accessible for people with disabilities, they texted me the photo and I reviewed it. See Table 2 for detail. In total, three out of the four groups were able to identify one correct example. The one group chose to take a picture near the stairs, stating that they were not accommodating to those with disabilities. While this was correct and many other groups used other stairs in the buildings as examples, this particular set of stairs was located right next to the ramp that they had referenced earlier. However, I feel the learning outcome was met because a majority of the groups were able to identify one correct example and the group that did not partially did.

Learning outcome 3 stated that the participants would be able to describe at least one act of inclusion that they promise to perform in the future. I feel that this learning outcome was met. I gave each student a piece of paper and asked them to describe what they would do to be more inclusive. Most of the students choose to create possible accommodations within their sports and hobbies. See Appendix X for photos. While this was a different answer than I was expecting, I felt it still met the learning outcome as it showed that they understood the importance of accommodations and had a desire to implement them into our society. Of the ten papers collected, eight of the students were able to meet the learning outcome. The other responses that did not meet the learning outcome failed to do so because the students did not take the lesson

seriously and chose to add a response they deemed humorous. Overall, I feel that the learning outcome was met.

Discussion

Was this project successful: Overall I feel that my project was successful because all three of the learning outcomes were met. The students appeared to be intrigued by the lesson and inspired to learn more about creating disability accommodations. Following the lesson I had many students come up to me with more questions. I also had several parents contact me after, telling me they were excited about the information their students had learned. This will add to the students' microsystem because it will give them the necessary skills to connect with individuals with disabilities. This addition will cause them to be more inclusive of others. One of the ways however, that I could have made my audience more diverse was by opening my talk up to the public. The audience that I had only consisted of individuals that were connected to the church I presented at. If I was given the opportunity to conduct this lesson again I would like to add the perspective of those who have disabilities. Through the summer camps that I have worked for and my service learning opportunities I have been able to make many connections with people who could come in and speak to the kids about their experiences. In the end however, I am grateful to have had the chance to conduct this project. I myself have learned a lot and I hope those I taught are able to use this information to make the world a more inclusive and accepting place. I look forward to seeing what they do.

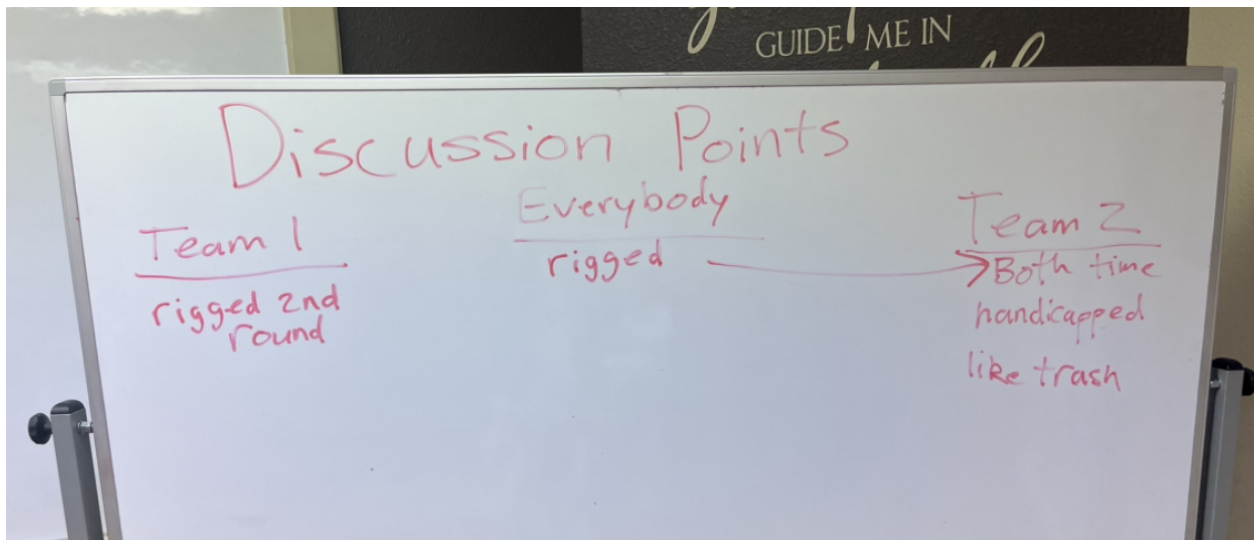
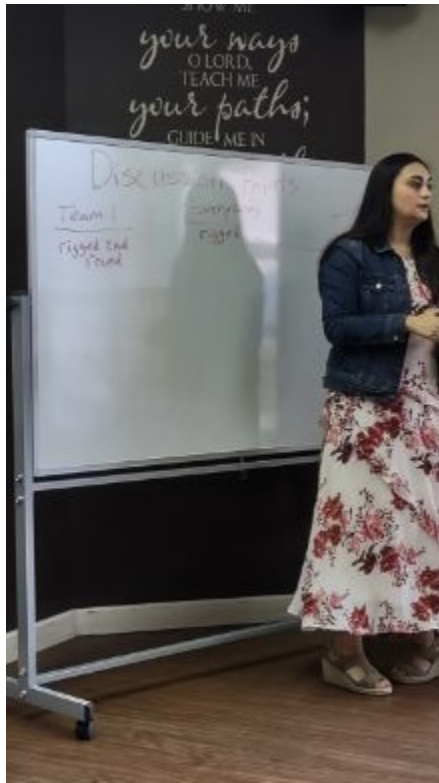
Table 1: Examples of Accommodations Students Identified

Group #	Accommodation Example 1	Accommodation Example 2
Group 1	Ramp ✓	Handicap Parking Spot ✓
Group 2	Handicap Parking Spot ✓	Wide Double Doors ✓
Group 3	Handicap Bathroom Stall ✓	Wheelchair Space in Pew ✓
Group 4	Handicap Parking Spot ✓	Ramp ✓

Table 2: Place Where Students Identified an Accommodation Was Needed

Group #	Place Where Accommodation Was Needed
Group 1	Stairs in front of the church ✖
Group 2	Gaga Ball Court ✔
Group 3	Choir loft stairs ✔
Group 4	Stage Steps ✔

Appendix B: Group Discussion Pictures

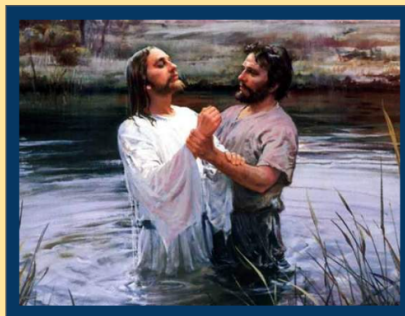


Appendix A: PowerPoint Presentation & Game Questions

Bible Scramble



Question 1: Who Baptized Jesus?



Question 2: Where was Jesus Born?



Question 3: No good can come from...



\

Question 4: The women at the well was from...



Let's discuss!

- 1st round vs 2nd round
- Was it fair?
- How did it make you feel when you voiced your concerns?
- Did you improve when you had the right tools?
- Other Team: How did you feel? What did you notice?

Disability Awareness



What is a Disability?

- A disability is any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities and interact with the world around them.

Accommodations

- an alteration of environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content and/or complete assigned tasks.

Examples

1. Physical changes
2. Accessible and assistive technologies
3. Accessible communications
4. Policy enhancements



Creating Accommodations for Others

- Allow everyone of all abilities to participate
- Help develop new connections with different people
- Overall become kinder



Final Question

Describe at least one act of inclusion that you want to perform in the future.

Game Time!!

Pair up in groups of two (**One person in the group must have a phone**)

- Identify two examples of disability accommodations here at the church
- Identify one example where and accommodation is needed here

When you find these places take a picture next to it (**Everyone in your group must be in the picture**)

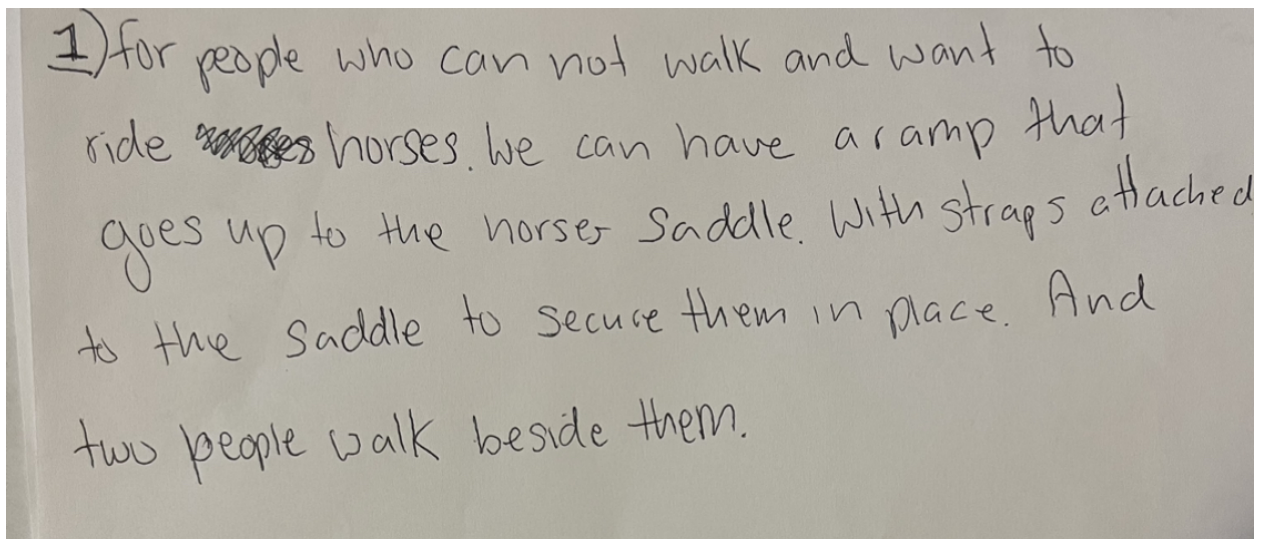
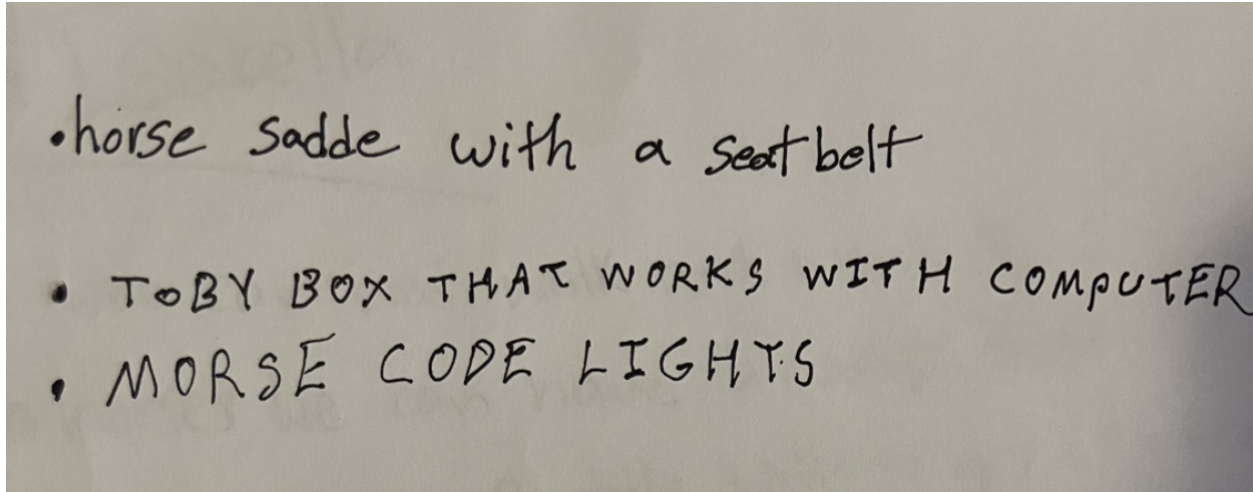
When your group comes back, text me the pictures

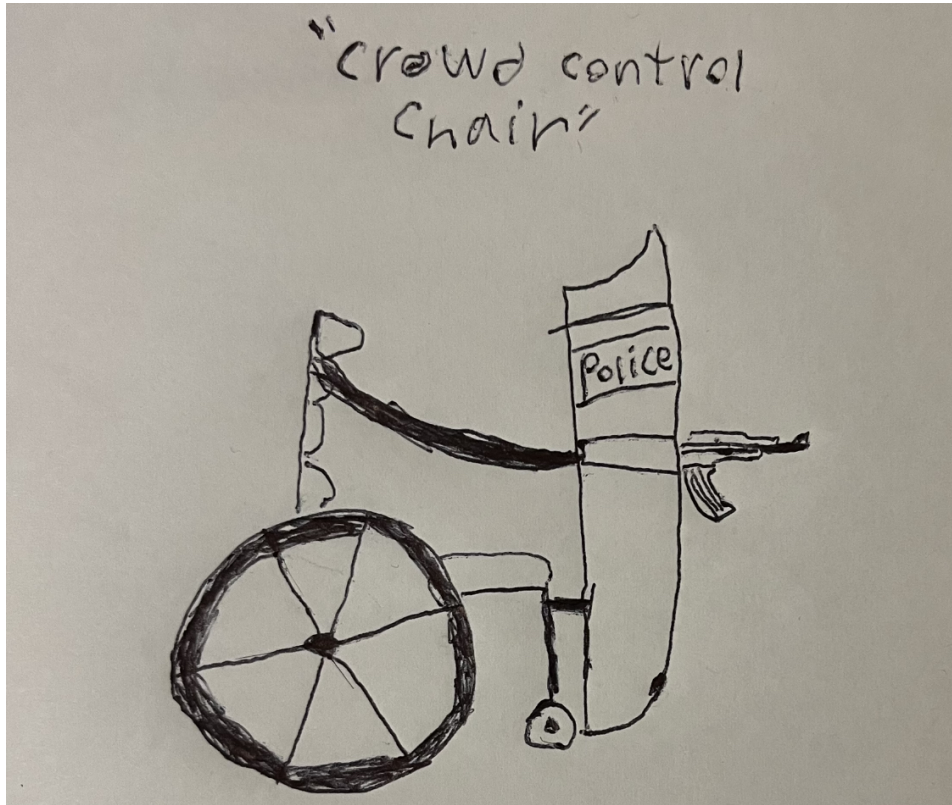
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Accommodations. DOL. (n.d.). Retrieved April 12, 2023, from <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/accommodations>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, September 16). *Disability and health overview*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved April 12, 2023, from [https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html#:~:text=What%20is%20disability%3F,around%20them%20\(participation%20restrictions\)](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html#:~:text=What%20is%20disability%3F,around%20them%20(participation%20restrictions)).

What is the difference between accommodation and modification for a student with a disability? What is the difference between accommodation and modification for a student with a disability? | DO-IT. (n.d.). Retrieved April 12, 2023, from <https://www.washington.edu/doit/what-difference-between-accommodation-and-modification-student-disability#:~:text=05%2F24%2F22,and%2For%20complete%20assigned%20tasks>.

Appendix X: Student Pictures**Results For: Describe at least one act of inclusion that you want to perform in the future.**



- Help include people who are out of the circle
 - ~~Be slightly kinder to~~
 - ~~out stupid president~~
 - ~~am~~ to make the ^{world} ~~environment~~ obesity friendly.
 - wider airline seats
 - less distance between shops
 - Free/cheaper electric wheel chairs.
 - cheaper fast food
 - More elevators.
 - less stairs.
- 4



help pepole who are autistic to meet/introduce to frends
instal handralls

- Learn how to say rules and FAQ to something everyone is playing in sign language

for golf we could invent a special wheel chair that ~~can~~ can hold golf clubs and raise and lower it self ~~to~~ to help the person hit the Ball better.

help pepole who are autistic to meet/introduce to frends
instal handralls

- Learn how to say rules and FAQ to something everyone is playing in sign language

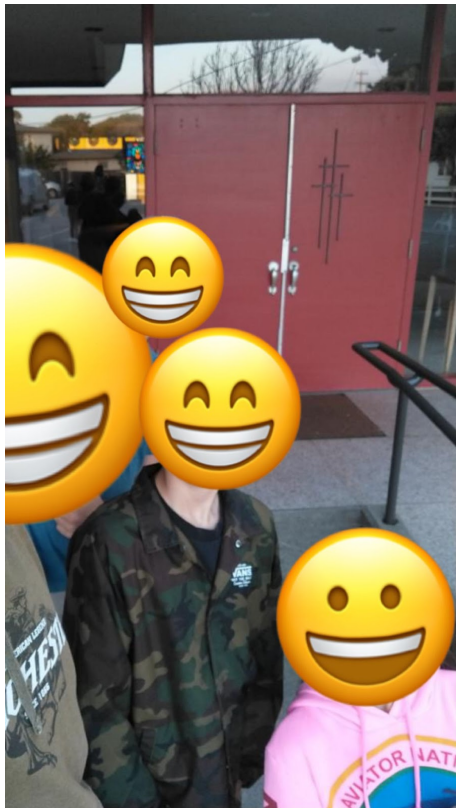
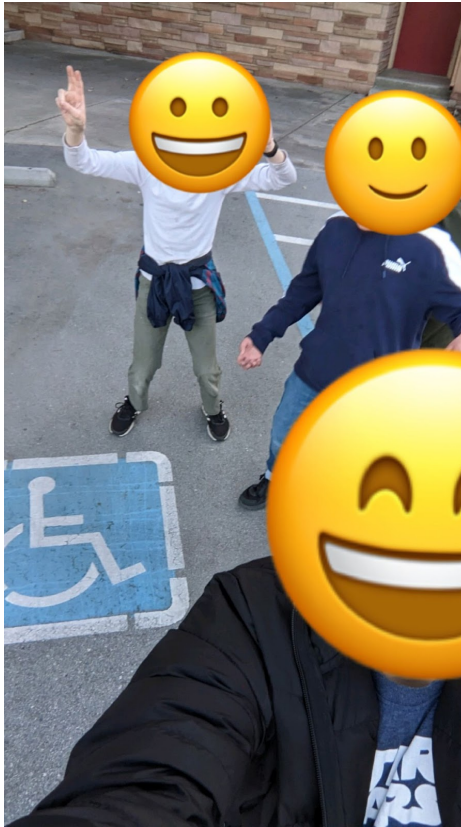
Team up with John Deere, and make a lift system
So Disabled people can farm and enjoy Driving a tractor.
This would also help elderly people, Because it is very
hard and Difficult to climb into a full sized tractor.

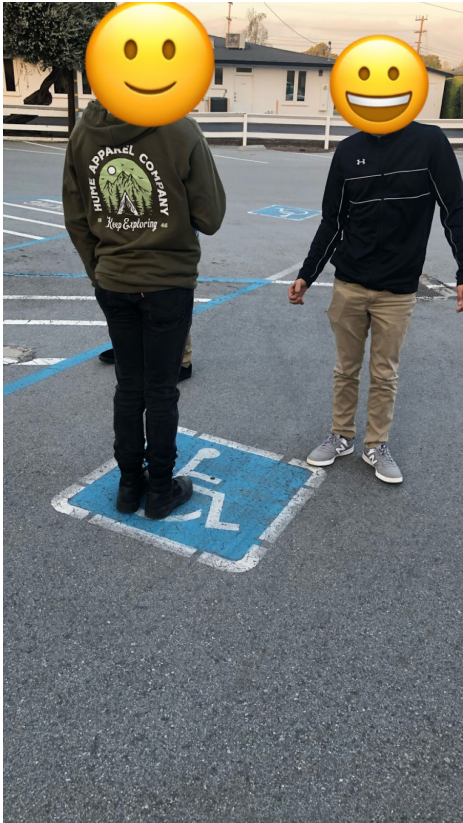
Allow people with mental disabilities to come
spend time with my horses. They could
brush them and pet them and sit on them.

Appendix X, Results for: Identify two examples of disability accommodations here at the



church





Appendix X, Results for: Identify one example where and accommodation is needed here



Capstone Presentation

Disability Awareness

The Importance of Accommodations



Claire Mena

Needs Statement

Disability awareness is absent from school curricula

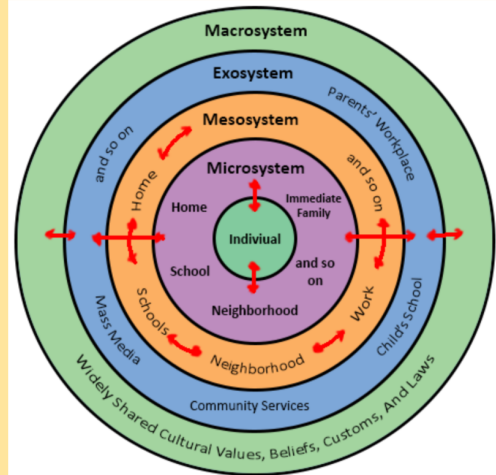
- Actions of exclusion/bullying
- Creates an unsafe learning environment

Teaching disability awareness is essential

- Provides a sense of community
- Student are kinder and more accepting
- positive role models

Theory

- Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory
- Microsystem
- exposed to a new idea
- expand their system and grow as an individual



Audience

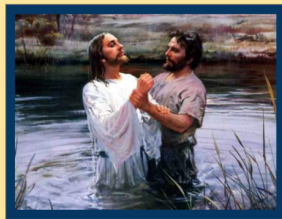
- Lesson was presented at my local church youth group
- Christian
- Homeschooled
- Familiar with me



Method

- Game: Bible scramble
- Questions and game they were familiar with

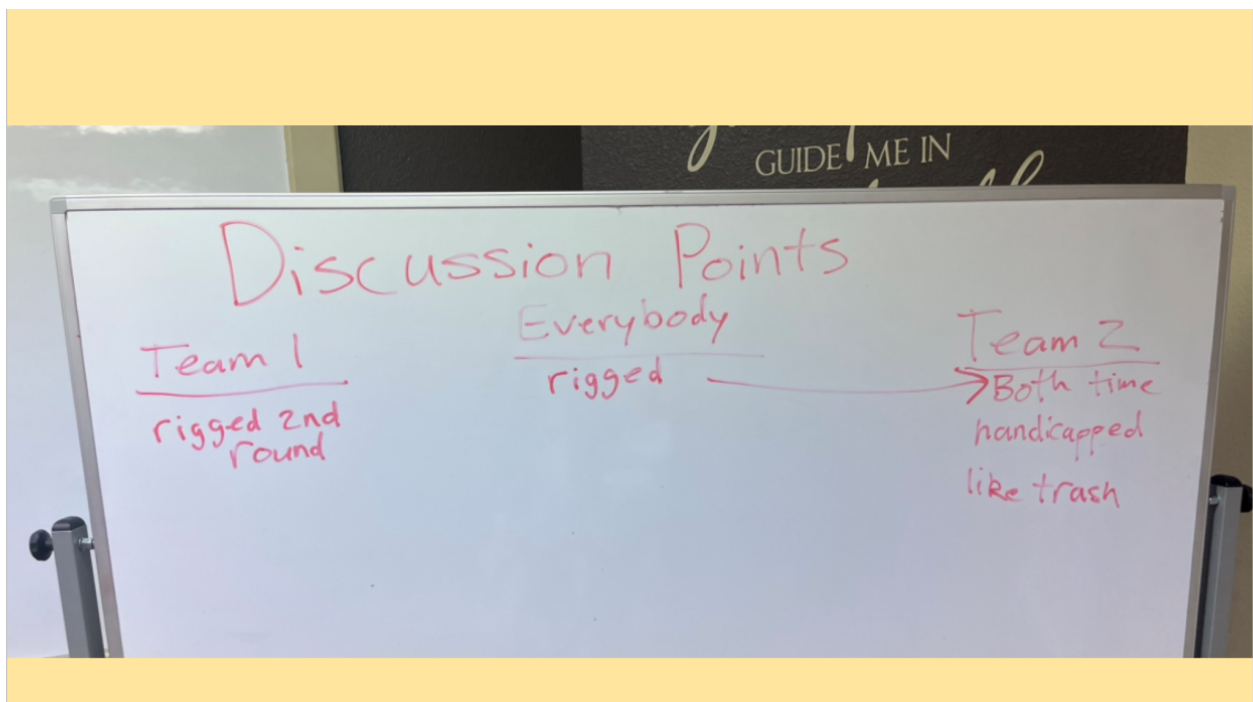
Question 1: Who Baptized Jesus? **Question 4: The women at the well was from...**



- Two teams
- Team 1 received normal materials
- Team 2 materials were invisible
- Simulated what it was like to have a disability
- Following round one an “accommodation” the UV light was given

Let's discuss!

- 1st round vs 2nd round
- Was it fair?
- How did it make you feel when you voiced your concerns?
- Did you improve when you had the right tools?
- Other Team: How did you feel? What did you notice?



- **Slideshow presentation**
 - a. What is a Disability?
 - b. What is an accommodation?
 - c. How to create those for others

Examples

1. Physical changes
2. Accessible and assistive technologies
3. Accessible communications
4. Policy enhancements



Learning Outcomes

1. Identify two examples of disability accommodations at their church site.
2. Identify one example where an accommodation is needed at their church site.
3. Describe at least one act of inclusion that they promise to perform in the future.

Learning Outcome 1

- By the end of the lesson students would be able to identify two examples of disability accommodations at their church site.



Results

- Learning outcome was met

Group #	Accommodation Example 1	Accommodation Example 2
Group 1	Ramp ✓	Handicap Parking Spot ✓
Group 2	Handicap Parking Spot ✓	Wide Double Doors ✓
Group 3	Handicap Bathroom Stall ✓	Wheelchair Space in Pew ✓
Group 4	Handicap Parking Spot ✓	Ramp ✓

Learning Outcome 2

- By the end of the lesson students would be able to identify one example where an accommodation is needed at their church site.



Results

- Learning outcome was met

Group #	Place Where Accommodation Was Needed
Group 1	Stairs in front of the church ✗
Group 2	Gaga Ball Court ✔
Group 3	Choir loft stairs ✔
Group 4	Stage Steps ✔

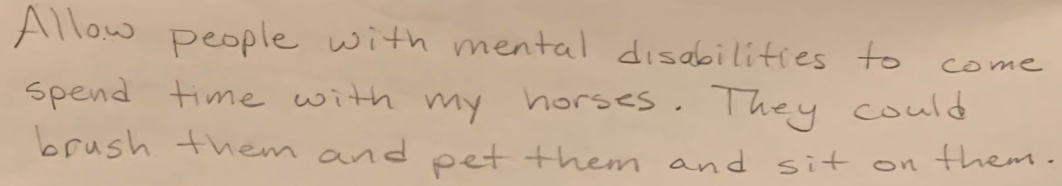
Learning Outcome 3

- By the end of the lesson students would be able to describe at least one act of inclusion that they promise to perform in the future.

1) for people who can not walk and want to ride ~~walk~~ horses. we can have a ramp that goes up to the horse saddle. With straps attached to the saddle to secure them in place. And two people walk beside them.

Results

- Learning outcome was met



Allow people with mental disabilities to come spend time with my horses. They could brush them and pet them and sit on them.

Results Of Project

- Project was successful
- All 3 learning outcomes were met
- Students left with a desire to be more inclusive and accommodating to those with disabilities

Differently

- Opened up to more students
- Personal perspective from those who have a disability

Thank you!

Are there any questions?