

## Autism Spectrum Disorder and Your Church

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### God's View

God's Pattern of **Green** and **Pink** - Psalm 139:13-14

God's giant body puzzle - 1 Corinthians 12:18

Each person, then, is a gift to be opened and cherished

### Labels, Initials and Designations

#### Differences in Individuals with ASD

- Social
- Language
- Repetitive Themes and Behaviors
- Desire for Routine
- Perspective-Taking Ability
- Sensory Responses



#### Consider Sensory Responses...

#### Ideas for Churches:

- Appoint Someone to be in Charge
  - A Special Needs Coordinator is very important.
- Get to know the individual
  - Unwrap the package!
- Think along with that individual
- Make a plan
- Remember the Puzzle Piece perspective
  - Spend more time on green areas than pink
  - If I didn't \_\_\_\_\_ it, you didn't \_\_\_\_ it.

#### Thinking through the areas of difference:

- Repetitive Themes and Behaviors
  - Difference between OCD and ASD
  - Use the areas of interest
    - Interview the expert
    - Pairing with non-preferred task
  - Putting boundaries around a topic
    - The power of sticky notes
    - A box in the closet
- Desire for Sameness
  - Visual schedules for individuals

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- Frist...Then
- Real Object schedule
- Binder schedule
- Making changes to the schedule
  - Give advanced preparation and warning
    - Preview of the church
    - Church Welcome Story
    - Time Timer
    - Create Transition Routines
    - Carry an object
- Language
  - Watch your language
  - Wall Wording
  - Tips on wording
    - Use an “interpreter” and create a “dictionary”
    - Say what you WANT the individual to DO, avoid the negatives
    - Give directions one step at a time
    - Pair visuals with words
    - Great reading does NOT always mean great comprehension
    - Jokes, sarcasm, multiple-meaning words can leave individuals “in the dust”
- Sensory Differences
  - A brief explanation
  - Provide multisensory options
  - Get to know that individual and jump into that person’s shoes
  - Hearing
    - Provide sound blockers
    - Adjust the decibels
    - Provide a choice to leave
    - Change or alter noise
    - Turn an unexpected noise into an expected noise
  - Vision
    - Classroom tent
    - Tablecloth over a table
    - Un-decorate
    - Don’t always insist on eye contact
  - Proprioceptive
    - Weighted objects
    - Trampoline
    - Lotion
    - Brushing
    - Animal walks
    - Heavy box of books to the office or library

- Other ideas
  - Provide a fragrance-free area
  - Provide an “out” at greeting time
    - Deliver an object to someone
    - A job to do
  - Involve the individual in some way
    - Sound or set-up crew
    - Usher or bulletin distributor
  - Tips
    - Catch in individual before crossing the line
    - Break tickets
- Social/ Perspective-Taking Ability
  - Two sides of the same page
  - Teach behavior
    - Talking traffic lights
    - Remote controls
    - Digital cameras
  - Visiting a new environment
    - Steps toward full involvement
  - A plan for the individual
    - Use books and videos
    - Role play
    - Play detective
    - Social/informational stories
    - Information is critical
    - G.L.U.E. team
    - Emotions may not match the face!
  - A plan for the congregation
  - A plan for the leaders

**Are you including an individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder in your church?**

**Do you have questions about a child's development and are unsure how to approach the child's parents?**

**Is there a family needing support where one of the members has a disability?**

We are ready to help support your church community. CLC Network offers phone consulting as part of our Church Services. The first 15 minutes of the conversation is free of charge. Additional time is offered for a reasonable fee.

Call 616-245-8388 or e-mail [info@clcnetwork.org](mailto:info@clcnetwork.org) to begin finding answers to your questions.

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