

Closing Prayer

Dear Loving Father,

Thank You for our time together as we studied Your Word.

Bless us with insight and understanding for those who may seem different from us.

Help us know we are all created by You and that You intended for us to be just as we are—blessed for life and loved the same.

Remind us that we are a much-needed part of Your family and that we all have gifts to share with Your people.

Help us lead by example and be good mentors and friends.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

Psalms 139:14

But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

1 Corinthians 12:18

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

John 10:10



To dig deeper, check out “Understanding and Communicating with People with Disabilities” at lutheransforlife.org.

To continue the conversation, see the Thumbprint of God series, available at cph.org, including:
Congregational Support for People with Disabilities, LFL145T
Supporting Families NEW to Disabilities, LFL148T

“It is our calling to see all people just as they are—blessed for life by our loving Creator, Father God.”



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Thumbprint of God Series



Disability Awareness

*A Bible Study
for
Church
and
Community
Leaders*



Uniquely and intricately designed by God in order to bring Him glory. He claims us as His own. We are His.

“I have called you by name. You are mine.”
(Isaiah 43:1b)

Who Are We?

As professional church workers and volunteers, we need to see people with disabilities through their eyes and recognize each person's uniqueness and desire to live a full life. It is our calling to see all people just as they are—blessed for life by our loving Creator, Father God.

We are ALL the Thumbprint of God!

This brochure is intended to support leaders who are introducing or reaffirming disability ministry in their church or community. It can be easily adapted for both youth and adult audiences.

Key Bible Verses

- Psalm 139:13-14
- 1 Corinthians 12:18
- John 10:10

Opening Activity

Materials Needed:

- Magnifying glasses (optional)
- Sticky notes
- Washable stamp pads
- Wipes or wet paper towels
- Activity sheet and thumbprint information sheet (lutheransforlife.org/free-resources)

1. Have each participant use a watercolor stamp pad to put their thumbprint on the activity sheet.

2. Call attention to the statement: *This is my thumbprint; it is mine alone. No one has a thumbprint exactly like me. I am unique and one of a kind! God knows my name, and God knows my thumbprint. It's no wonder; He put it there!*
3. Use wipes to remove ink from thumbs.
4. Give each participant a magnifying glass and some time to examine their thumbprint. Use the thumbprint information sheet for reference.
5. Have participants be creative and write down three things they see in their thumbprint on the activity sheet.
6. Cover the participant's answers with a sticky note.
7. Switch papers around and have participants, again, be creative and write down three things they see in the thumbprint in front of them.
8. Return the activity sheets to the owners and give time for comparison of answers.
9. Read the poem "The Thumbprint of Me" to the group.

The Thumbprint of Me

I see
a tsunami with massive waves,
a tornado whirling, wet and wild;
wild because it is free.
Wild and free—just like me.
I see
a funny face with a big swirly smile,
laughing and joking;
yet there is a question mark in the middle.
Silly, but unsure—just like me.
I see
music running all over the page,
a song and a masterpiece in the making.
A hope and a future—just like me.

Discussion

Divide into discussion groups of four or five.

1. When staring at her fingerprint, the poet sees more than just lines and loops. Is there anything about her interpretation you find interesting?
2. Do you think her knowledge of herself influenced what she sees in her thumbprint?
3. When looking at your thumbprint, is your list and your neighbor's list exactly the same?
4. Was the list you wrote about yourself influenced by more than just lines and loops?
5. What about your neighbor's thumbprint? Were you influenced in some way when describing their thumbprint?
6. One thumbprint, two people, four eyes, all seeing differently. How can that be?
7. Have you ever found yourself making assumptions about a person based on what you see?
8. Have you ever been wrong about that assumption?
9. Who or what changed your mind about what you originally thought?
10. Did you treat this person differently once your mind was changed?

Return to large group.

Read the story of Mephibosheth.

2 Samuel 4:4 – Mephibosheth's injury

2 Samuel 9:1-12 – David welcomes Mephibosheth into his home

Continue discussion.

1. Why was David looking for Mephibosheth?
2. In 2 Samuel 9:3, what did the servant say about Mephibosheth?
3. How does King David reply in v.4? (Note: There is no response or reference to disability.)
4. Notice that Mephibosheth is an adult with a family. He is hiding out in a land with no pasture. He is an outcast, and he is afraid. What does King David say to him in v.7?
5. King David shows kindness by offering a covenant of love for Mephibosheth and his family. He restores his land and welcomes him to his table as family. He also, once again, does not respond to or reference the disability. What do you think this means?
6. How many times in this passage is the promise of "eating at the king's table" mentioned?
7. King David has set precedent. In v.10 he tells the servant to serve his master's grandson. He tells the servant that Mephibosheth is always welcome at his table. King David leads by example, and the people are expected to follow his lead. How do you think Mephibosheth felt at this moment?
8. Is there someone in your life who leads by example?
9. If so, what impresses you about this person?
10. When it comes to disability ministry, how can you lead by example? (If time permits, write answers down for all to see and discuss further.)