

JESUS CARES MINISTRIES
A MINISTRY OF THE LUTHERAN
HOME ASSOCIATION

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JCM HANDBOOK

PROGRAM PLANNING GUIDE

HANDBOOK
2020



WELCOME

We're so glad you're a part of Jesus Cares Ministries (JCM)! We appreciate your commitment to sharing God's Word by reaching out to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in your community.

Very often we take Jesus' words "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) to mean we should try to reach as many nations as possible with the Gospel. While this is true, there is also much more to those words. "All nations" not only means all nationalities, but also all people of all abilities, including those who might be differently abled.

More than 30 years ago, a group of parents began JCM not only to serve their children with special needs, but also to make Gospel-based resources available to other families in the same situation.

The Lutheran Home Association welcomed JCM into its ministry family in 1998. Since then, God has blessed this work with opportunities to share the Gospel with thousands of people with special needs not only across the U.S., but also all around the world.

This handbook has 4 main sections:

- 1) JCM programs and process
- 2) JCM outreach work plan which includes ideas and tools to implement your program
- 3) Program evaluation and metrics
- 4) Toolkit resources

We pray this handbook will serve you and your JCM program as we work to share the Gospel with God's people with special needs.

In Christ,

Pastor Joel Gaertner



Ask Ryan what he has learned in Jesus Cares Ministries, and he doesn't hesitate: *"Everyone is like a gemstone — maybe rough around the edges, but beautiful when polished with forgiveness and grace. It's OK if I mess up. I'm already forgiven by God."*

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PROGRAMS



There are 3 JCM programs:

1

Worship at the Cross.

This is a simplified or adaptive worship exclusively designed for individuals with special needs.

2

Bible Class.

This is a simplified Sunday school type of approach for teaching Bible lessons.

3

New Friends.

This is a fellowship program giving high school and college students an opportunity to be true and genuine peer friends to those with special needs.

We encourage congregations to select ONE program before considering the addition of another program.

Worship at the Cross (WATC)

WATC is a simplified or adaptive worship service exclusively designed for individuals with special needs, following the basic pattern of Christian worship. The service shares the Gospel at the level of many of those with special needs.

The format of the service is a PowerPoint presentation, which eliminates the challenges of having to hold a folder, hymnal or other service book. Five picture symbols give the participants a visual guide through the service. The PowerPoint template and a collection of ready-to-use services are provided by JCM.

Participants are invited to use a rhythm instrument (e.g., a maraca or similar instrument) to participate, this is especially helpful if they are unable to sing.

Jesus Cares Ministries gives God's people of all ages the opportunity to serve their Savior and people with special needs.

A video of the Worship at the Cross service is available for those who would like to see how the service goes. Visit tlha.org to view a full collection of resources.



Contact your JCM consultant to help brainstorm Bible class ideas, outreach planning and more!

RESOURCES FOR WATC

- WATC PowerPoint
- Service bell [this bell is rung by a participant to start and end the service]
- Candle
- Rhythm instruments for audience [rule of thumb: 3:1 ratio to have enough instruments for congregation to join in the fun!]

We recommend the following instruments for your WATC service:

- [Cluster or multi-bells](#) [RB838]
- [Wrist or loop bells](#) [RB839]
- [Plastic maracas](#) [RB1206, RB1204 and RB1208]
- [Tambourines](#) [RB525XNH and RB525NH]



Check out rhythmband.com to purchase instruments for the audience. We've noted their SKU number in the brackets above.



JCM Bible Class

The JCM Bible class allows volunteers to teach Bible stories in an in-depth way, but at a level that suits the cognitive level of the students who attend.

Jesus Cares Ministries offers a complete 110 lesson curriculum for JCM Bible Classes entitled “Dear Christian Friend” (DCF). This curriculum offers a wide variety of Old and New Testament lessons, which include student lessons, a detailed teacher’s guide, review activities, crafts, sheet music and more.

Teachers are encouraged to use visual resources in teaching the lessons. We recommend the Betty Luken felt board. This visual means of teaching not only engages the students, but also gives them an opportunity to be involved in the teaching of the lesson by placing the felt characters on the board.

For your preparation, we have provided a number of resources in the JCM toolkit, which give suggested time frames for the various parts of a lesson. The toolkit is available at tlha.org. The toolkit is outlined later in this handbook.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR BIBLE CLASS

- Dear Christian Friend curriculum + corresponding Bible videos [available for purchase at tlha.org]
- Betty Luken felt board with characters [available for purchase at tlha.org]
- Crafts and coloring sheets [check out the [JCM Pinterest page](#) for additional ideas!]
- Snacks and beverages

Activity Ideas

- Music is a favorite activity for many of our friends with special needs.
- In addition to the simple songs, sheet music is included in the “Dear Christian Friend” curriculum. Many of our JCM programs have found participants enjoy playing handbells/desk bells.
- Crafts are also a favorite activity and part of many programs. There are craft options for each lesson of the “Dear Christian Friend” curriculum. For those who are looking for more options for crafts, visit our [JCM Pinterest page](#).

Visit tlha.org to view a full collection of programs materials, felt boards, desk bell sets, bell sheet music and more.



New Friends

New Friends connects teens and young adults in high school and college with special needs children and their families. The purpose of New Friends is to build relationships by focusing on our abilities, not disabilities, while creating a fun-filled atmosphere where the entire family feels safe, relaxed and happy!

While there is a very structured outline for Worship at the Cross and the JCM Bible Class, New Friends is an unstructured event that allows each participating group to organize it in the way they like. Sharing God's Word with participants is the consistent part of each New Friends program. Usually, New Friends programs are 2 hours long.

Volunteers are students with a teacher acting as the program leader. Most New Friends programs take place on school grounds utilizing the gym and/or outside play area.

Participants consist of high school and college volunteers from surrounding communities, and special needs children/teens, along with their families/mentors. Participants' favorite activities include karaoke, coloring, board games and games in a gym if balls are available.

Several New Friends programs have also held a special needs prom, with some taking part in the Tim Tebow Foundation's "Night to Shine."

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR NEW FRIENDS

- Devotions [check Dear Christian Friends curriculum or use other simple devotion resources]
- Variety of games [e.g. basketballs, dodgeballs, Candyland, etc.]
- Crafts and coloring sheets [check out the [JCM Pinterest page](#) for ideas!]
- Snacks and beverages

Activity Ideas



- Share devotion
- Play games
- Invite local emergency organizations [ride a fire truck, check out a police car, etc.]
- Partner with local K9 unit
- Make a craft [check out the [JCM Pinterest page](#) for ideas!]

JCM PROCESS



1 RECOGNITION

A congregation or group sees a need to minister to people with special needs, contacts JCM to learn more and start the process. The need could be inside a church or out in the community.

ACTION ITEMS

- Research programs [Worship at the Cross, Bible class and New Friends] at tlha.org.
- Contact JCM at jcm@tlha.org or 888-600-TLHA to learn more.

2 CONGREGATION INTRODUCTION

JCM is introduced to the congregation by modeling Worship at the Cross, a simplified service. The congregation is introduced to the opportunity and need for a Gospel ministry for people with special needs. People will participate in the service, learn how the special service is tailored to individuals with special needs and how the service engages them. At the end, people are encouraged to sign up to volunteer in the JCM program.

ACTION ITEMS

- Schedule JCM Sunday with JCM consultant.
- Facilitate conversation with congregation members on starting and maintaining programming.

3 TRAINING

A JCM consultant will train volunteers interested in serving in the congregation's ministry for people with special needs. Training learning objectives include:

- understanding how to work with people with special needs
- discussing proper terminology and procedures

The group determines which JCM program [Worship at the Cross, Bible Class or New Friends] is best for the congregation and the needs of the community. The consultant answers questions and provides resources based on the programming.

ACTION ITEM

- Schedule 90-minute training session with JCM consultant and volunteers.

4 PLANNING

Before the start of the first program it is important to plan. The JCM consultant is a valuable resource to help you map out the program content, identify groups to target for participation, develop marketing materials to get the word out and more.

ACTION ITEMS

- Create outreach plan. [Utilizing our outreach template is a key to success; this step allows you to identify goals, plan, and be accountable. Visit the outreach planning section in this handbook].
- Download marketing templates at tlha.org.
- Visit [JCM Pinterest page](#) for craft ideas.

5 PROGRAM START

Congratulations! The date has finally arrived for the program to start.

ACTION ITEMS

- Market the event on your website, social media platforms, bulletin boards, bulletin insert, etc.
- Let your JCM consultant know details of your program start. [The JCM consultant can help out, answer questions and give feedback.]

6 PROGRAM CONTINUES

Once a program is launched, the program continues to minister to individuals with special needs. It is important to continue to recruit volunteers and reach out to the community to invite participants to the event. Program participation will vary.

ACTION ITEM

- Schedule regular meetings to map out program, market, recruit volunteers and participants, etc.

7 EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT

We encourage congregations to evaluate their programs annually and develop an outreach plan to share the Gospel with as many people as possible. Tools for evaluation are available within this handbook. The JCM consultant is also a valuable resource and is available by phone or in person.

ACTION ITEM

- Schedule annual evaluation and follow-up plan meeting with JCM Consultant.

TRAINING



The JCM staff provides training opportunities for JCM volunteers and programs. Contact jcm@tlha.org for personalized training.

1 Volunteer and program training

Our JCM consultants will provide training to volunteers. This can be done at the START of a new program or MID-PROGRAM if there is volunteer turnover. We want to make sure your program is set up to succeed and that means equipping your volunteers with knowledge and resources to best serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD.)

Learning objectives include:

- Understand intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and IDD terminology
- Identify ways to engage a person with IDD
- Know the various parts of a JCM program and resources available and other available resources
- Appreciate the national JCM program and how your individual program fits into the JCM family

2 Ongoing training

Programs are continually evolving to meet the needs of their community. We are no different. We recognize the importance of training and collaborating. We provide various training throughout the year through multiple platforms.

All training can be accessed through tlha.org. Training includes new resources, program highlights, best practices and outreach ideas and tools.

Monthly eNewsletter

Sign up for our JCM Connect eNewsletter. This monthly publication comes directly to your inbox filled with program news, craft ideas, stories and more! Sign up by emailing jcm@tlha.org.



JCM Pinterest

Want more ideas at your fingertips? JCM is on Pinterest. Check out ideas for Bible class, craft ideas and more! Visit pinterest.com/TLHA_JCM.

OUTREACH PLANNING





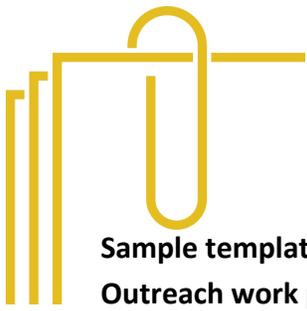
It's a good idea to establish an outreach plan to structure and evaluate efforts. Volunteers can use the plan as a tool to ensure they are staying focused and on target. There are different ways to develop an outreach plan and people often use different terminologies to describe their plan.

Before getting started it's important to answer some questions.

- 1) What goals are we trying to achieve?
- 2) What is our budget for the program?
- 3) What strategies will we use to achieve our goals?
- 4) What activities and tasks do we need to perform to succeed?
- 5) Who will be responsible for executing each activity?
- 6) What specific outcomes do we expect to see from each activity?
- 7) How will we measure success when evaluating each activity?
- 8) What is our timeline for each activity?
- 9) What process will we implement to track our progress?

Checklist for success

- Establish an "outreach plan" including activities related to program outreach work. Make sure to assign tasks to a specific person as an action item with a due date.
.....
- Define goals, strategies and activities based on your target audience. Always keep your audience in mind when designing your strategies and crafting your message. Program Coordinators are encouraged to include in the development of the work plan. It's important they feel invested in the outreach plan's success. This will also help clarify roles and responsibilities.
.....
- Apply the SMART framework to develop your goals and activities: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.
.....
- Detail your activities as much as possible. For example, include potential partner organizations, how you will contact families or group homes, how you will work with others in your community and which kinds of materials are needed.
.....
- Specify indicators that measure both process and outcome results. For example, the number of outreach activities (process) and the number of participants attending the program (outcome).
.....
- Update your work plan to reflect whether an activity is complete, incomplete or in progress. This will help ensure you are focused and on target. Also, update your outreach work plan to reflect any modifications you make based on your monitoring and evaluation.



Sample template

Outreach work plan for: list your program name

Work plan period: list the dates for the work plan. We recommend planning annually.

Goals:

Insert goal #1

Insert goal #2

Insert goal #3

Insert goal #4

Goal/ Objective	Strategy/ Tactic	Assigned to	Cost	Timeline	Status/ comments	Frequency
List goals or objective your program wishes to accomplish. Note: you may have multiple tactics for each goal.	List tasks needed to perform to meet goal.	List who will be responsible for the strategy/ tactic.	Initially estimate the cost to budget but put in actual once completed. This will help budget in the future.	Specify the timeline for completing the tactic	Note if the activity is complete, incomplete or in progress.	Specify if this is a one-time activity or ongoing.



Download an excel spreadsheet template at taha.org.

Measure of effectiveness of your outreach plan

Before you implement the outreach plan, identify how to evaluate it. There are different ways to measure success and no need to get complex. This guide is intended to help you establish a simple evaluation process to help organize information, use resources effectively and ensure the program is on track to achieve your goals.

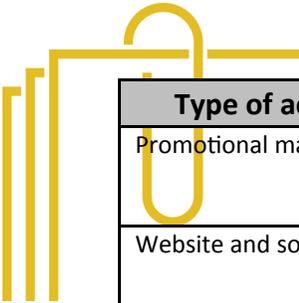
Ask:

- How will I know if the strategy is working?
- What baseline information is needed before implementation?
- What outcomes should be measured?
- What indicators should be used to assess the intended outcome?

.....

Strategies to use to help:

- Keep a contact log of volunteer information
 - Contact information
 - Area of interest
 - Volunteer dates
- Keep a contact log of calls placed and received
 - Contact information
 - Date
 - Outcome of call
 - Next step/follow-up
- Keep a log of participant and guardian contact information
 - Address information including phone and email
 - Date of contact
 - Dates of attendance



Type of activity/method	Sample indicators to help measure efforts
Promotional materials distribution	Number of places distributed Location of materials (where participants saw materials) Number of: calls received, participants attending program
Website and social media presence	Number of views Number "interested" in event Number of engagements (comments, "likes," shares)
Program event	Number of participants each event Materials distributed at each event Number of events held
Bible study content materials	Completion of Bible study, arts & crafts, take away message for each



Download outreach plan templates at tlha.org.

SAMPLE PLAN



Before starting it is important to identify the program coordinator, this person is usually NOT the pastor, and would be the main contact person and help coordinate the entire program. This position is key and the leader for the program. *Keep in mind you can have multiple coordinators to share the role!* Below are descriptions of volunteer roles that typically help a JCM program function smoothly.

PROGRAM COORDINATOR: Serve as the primary contact for emails and phone calls from volunteers and/or group homes and make final decisions such as cancellations for bad weather. This can be done by a team of two.

GREETER: Welcome participants into the building and assist if needed with holding the door and hanging up coats.

BIBLE STORY TEACHER: It is nice to take turns teaching the lessons. This gives plenty of variety and keeps everyone interested. Lessons and suggestions on teaching are available in the teacher's manual of "Dear Christian Friend."

MUSIC LEADER: Someone with musical ability is great but not always available. If you do not have a pianist or someone to lead with his/her voice, many sing-along CDs are available with accompanying song books.

CRAFT LEADERS: Prepare the crafts ahead of time, purchase supplies and make a sample. Enlist other volunteers to help prepare. Craft suggestions and copy masters are available in the teacher's manual of "Dear Christian Friend".

FOOD/TREATS COORDINATOR: Depending on what the program looks like, there will be times some form of fellowship will take place. Light food and drinks need to be organized by one person or a small group of people.

EVENT LEADER: Lead special events outside of Bible class or worship.

PUBLICITY COORDINATOR: Ensure all who can be served know when and where your JCM program happens. This could include posting information in church announcements, local papers, website, social media, radio, etc.

FRIEND/HELPER: A ratio of 1:3 volunteer to participant is recommended. A helper can be anyone of any age who can sit with and be a friend to participants.



Volunteers can include: retired individuals, seniors, parents, congregation members, high school or college students, professional adults, etc.

Once a team is in place, set the program goals to identify action items or tactics for the team to use to plan and market the program.

Program goal examples

1. **Connect JCM program with congregation**
2. **Recruit congregation members for JCM volunteers**
3. **Develop relationships in local special needs community**
4. **Bring awareness to JCM in community**
5. **Establish an engaging program**



See how the goals correlate to tactics on the next page.

Outreach suggestions

Goal/Objective	Strategy/Tactic	Assigned to	Cost	Frequency
Connect JCM program with congregation	Host a JCM Sunday	Pastor and JCM consultant	0.00	bi-annual
Connect JCM program with congregation	Schedule JCM participants to sing at services	Coordinator	0.00	quarterly
Connect JCM program with congregation	Schedule JCM participants to serve fellowship quarterly	Pastor	0.00	quarterly
Connect JCM program with Lutheran school	Use WATC as chapel format at Lutheran school	Pastor	0.00	one time
Connect JCM program with Lutheran school	Schedule Lutheran classrooms to sing with JCM programs	Coordinator	0.00	quarterly
Connect JCM program with Lutheran school	Schedule Lutheran school children to volunteer at JCM program	Coordinator	0.00	quarterly
Recruit congregation members for JCM volunteers	Invite members to JCM Sunday	Pastor	0.00	ongoing
Recruit congregation members for JCM volunteers	Host volunteer training	JCM consultant	0.00	bi-annual
Recruit congregation members for JCM volunteers	Visit group homes and meet with activity director	Pastor and coordinator	0.00	bi-annual
Recruit congregation members for JCM volunteers	Insert "volunteers needed" into bulletin	Pastor and coordinator	25.00	quarterly
Develop relationships in local special needs community	Make homemade gifts with JCM info attached for group home staff	Coordinator and volunteers	100.00	bi-annual
Develop relationships in local special needs community	Drop off small homemade gifts with program info attached to group homes	Coordinator and volunteers	0.00	one time
Develop relationships in local special needs community	Invite group home residents to karaoke night	Coordinator	25.00	ongoing
Develop relationships in local special needs community	Meet with local Special Olympics to discuss partnership opportunities	Coordinator	0.00	bi-annual
Develop relationships in local special needs community	Schedule JCM volunteers to volunteer at local Special Olympics events	Volunteers	0.00	bi-annual
Develop relationships in local special needs community	Invite local Special Olympics leaders, participants, family members, etc. to JCM events	Volunteers	25.00	ongoing
Develop relationships in local special needs community	Meet with local coordinator of disability services to discuss partnership opportunities	Pastor	0.00	bi-annual
Develop relationships in local special needs community	Invite parents through disability services to JCM events	Volunteers	0.00	ongoing
Bring awareness to JCM in community	Create and print JCM program flyer for distribution at group homes, organizations, businesses, etc.	Pastor and coordinator	50.00	annual
Bring awareness to JCM in community	Write and distribute JCM press release to newspaper	Pastor and coordinator	0.00	annual

Goal/Objective	Strategy/Tactic	Assigned to	Cost	Frequency
Bring awareness to JCM in community	Participate in annual church picnic	JCM participants	25.00	annual
Bring awareness to JCM in community	Participate in live nativity at Christmas	JCM participants	25.00	annual
Bring awareness to JCM in community	Gear "Easter for kids" for individuals with special needs	Outreach committee	0.00	annual
Bring awareness to JCM in community	Meet with special ed director at schools + determine events JCM can provide	Pastor and coordinator	0.00	bi-annual
Bring awareness to JCM in community	Host family support day with speakers, related topics, services and products	Pastor, coordinator and volunteers	500.00	annual
Bring awareness to JCM in community	Mail postcard at Christmas and Easter highlighting JCM holiday programming	Pastor and coordinator	200.00	bi-annual
Bring awareness to JCM in community	List JCM programming on website	Pastor and coordinator	25.00	annual
Bring awareness to JCM in community	Share JCM programming and event pictures on social media	Pastor and coordinator	0.00	monthly
Bring awareness to JCM in community	Promote information on baptism, confirmation, marriage and other support with IDD	Pastor, coordinator and volunteers	0.00	monthly
Establish an engaging program	Meet with local disability services and Special Olympics to engage their groups	Pastor, coordinator and volunteers	0.00	bi-annual
Establish an engaging program	Schedule recurring monthly JCM Bible class	Pastor, coordinator and volunteers	0.00	annual
Establish an engaging program	Evaluate current volunteers and their role	Pastor, coordinator and volunteers	0.00	annual
Establish an engaging program	Identify volunteer roles not filled	Pastor, coordinator and volunteers	0.00	annual
Establish an engaging program	Recruit volunteers for unfilled positions; post signs and send emails to members	Pastor, coordinator and volunteers	25.00	ongoing
Establish an engaging program	Train teachers and volunteers	Coordinator and JCM consultant	0.00	ongoing
Establish an engaging program	Verify flannel board has all necessary pieces; purchase pieces if necessary	Coordinator	50.00	annual
Establish an engaging program	Purchase "Dear Christian Friend" (DCF) curriculum + corresponding videos	Coordinator	120.00	one time
Establish an engaging program	Plan out school year plan using DCF and Pinterest for craft ideas	Pastor, coordinator and volunteers	400.00	annual
Establish an engaging program	Coordinate generation of supplies needed each week	Coordinator and volunteers	100.00	ongoing
Establish an engaging program	Host a special "JCM Funday" for congregational awareness. [March is Disability Awareness Month]	Pastor, coordinator and volunteers	100.00	annual
Establish an engaging program	Host annual summer day camp and family picnic	Pastor, coordinator and volunteers	200.00	annual

EVALUATION



To maintain the strength and vitality of a JCM program it is essential to have an ongoing process to evaluate the program and a plan to reach out with the Gospel to as many as possible in their area with special needs.

We see 4 key indicators for a strong JCM program.

1 CONGREGATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

While the majority of the work can be done by a finite group of volunteers, it is best when the JCM program is considered a vital part of the local congregation's ministry and is supported on the same level as the other arms of ministry of the local congregation.

Below are some ways congregation members can support their JCM program:

- A mindset that participants in the JCM program and their families are recognized as a part of the body of Christ. As the congregation reaches out to school families, those on the prospect list and those in the community, the congregation also seeks to reach out to families that have an individual with special needs and to local group homes. See box on next page for ideas.
- Budgetary support for the JCM program.
- During a regular Sunday service, the JCM program is highlighted and congregation members are encouraged to attend.
- Congregational publications and other ministry promotions highlight and feature the JCM program.
- Inclusion of the JCM program in congregational events (e.g., church picnics, Christmas events, Easter events, parades, Vacation Bible School (VBS) and community celebrations.)
- Incorporate elementary students in the local JCM program. (e.g., singing, playing piano, volunteering, or making crafts or musical instruments for the program.)
- Recognition of the JCM program as a part of a wider national program and understand the support the local program receives from the JCM National program and the JCM consultant who works with the program. There are a number of ways in which the local congregation might support JCM national: a regular congregational budget commitment; an annual door offering for JCM national; or support from other groups within the congregation (Ladies' Aid, School mission offering, etc.)

Eighty percent of individuals with special needs live with their family or loved ones. Below are some ideas to connect with this group.



- Share information through organizations that support families and their loved one with special needs. i.e. county service agency, local parent support groups, day treatment centers, and other organizations.
- Extend an invitation through the local Special Olympics program. Together the organizations can identify ways to engage populations, plan the timing of events, share access to contact lists, and more.
- Connect with the special education programs in the school district, especially the individual who works with community experience and transition programs.

2 STRONG VOLUNTEER CORPS

A strong volunteer base allows the program to thrive, sustain and grow. It is important to continually engage new volunteers. Below are some ideas.

- Review the program bi-annually as a part of the congregation's overall ministry, make sure it has the right leadership and the manpower needed to grow.
- Show volunteers appreciation so they understand their service is valuable and appreciated. This can be done through congregational recognition or handwritten thank you notes. More ideas can be found through the JCM Connect eNewsletter, distributed monthly by the JCM national office.
- Train and equip volunteers 1-2x per year. This can be done with online training, accessing tools through the JCM national office and enlisting the help of the JCM consultant.

3 ACTIVE PASTORAL INVOLVEMENT

Realizing each pastor's skills, passions and schedules vary, we still encourage the local pastor to be involved in the local JCM program. He doesn't have to run the program, but his presence and involvement sends a strong message of support and is an encouragement to everyone. Below are some ideas for ways in which the pastor can be involved.

- Greet participants, caregivers and family members as they arrive, to build a relationship with them.
- Lead the opening devotion for the program.
- Teach a Bible lesson for the program. This could be during a holiday, once a quarter or more frequently depending on schedules.
- Find opportunities outside the JCM program to connect with the special needs community.
- Coordinate a volunteer appreciation event during Volunteer Appreciation Month (April).

4

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL SPECIAL NEEDS COMMUNITY

There is a temptation for a group only to serve those whom they have always been serving. Recognizing our Savior's command to reach out to "all nations," which might better be understood in this context as "all people of all abilities." There needs to be regular program assessment of how well the program is doing at reaching out to those with special needs in the local community.

While part of this involves connecting with and serving those who live in group homes or similar facilities, below are other questions to spur outreach.

- Is transportation an issue for group homes or facilities to get residents to the program? **Does it make sense to have the program at a local group home vs. a church?** We are seeing a growing trend of JCM programs being held onsite at group homes. Staff and leadership are welcoming JCM volunteers into the homes for Bible Class and WATC. The participants enjoy a sense of familiarity, while the staff resources aren't stretched to accommodate an outing if people wish to attend or stay behind.
- How else can the congregation and program serve the residents of the facility/group home?
- If the congregation has a Lutheran Elementary School (LES), can the students of the LES engage with the group home by making Christmas cards, Valentine's cards, Easter cards, or visiting the facility and engaging in some sort of activity with the participants? This could include a music program, art class and more.
- Can congregation pastors serve the residents or the staff of the facility? Several programs are experiencing inquiries from local groups, who regularly call the pastor of the JCM program and consider him the pastor for their facility. This could include 1:1 visits with residents, end of life support and more.
- Can the congregation include the residents of the local group homes in events or activities in their congregation? This could include church picnics, Christmas events, Easter events, parades, Vacation Bible Schools (VBS) and community celebrations.

"When I had Leah and knew she had limited understanding, I said 'Lord, you have got to help me. I want my children in Heaven and that's the most important thing to me,'" said Linda. "My heart was bursting on Leah's confirmation day, I was just so excited. I was just full of awe to see how God works."



Host a specific special needs Vacation Bible School for the community.

EVALUATION METRICS



Below is a way to measure and evaluate your program. We encourage you to use these tools in making your own assessment and determine areas that need to be improved or strengthened.

The scale is based on 1-4 stars depending on the engagement in each area. Following the evaluation, there should be a follow-up plan to address areas of opportunity.

Once the program is measured, we recommend celebrating successes and identifying areas of opportunity to grow. The areas of opportunity should be utilized in the next year's work plan to strengthen the program.



A JCM consultant is available to help measure and work with your program as you plan the following year's outreach plan.

Congregation evaluation metrics [1-4 stars based on engagement and involvement]



Supports local JCM program financially and gives to the national program.*
Recruits volunteers and has sufficient active volunteers.
Embraces JCM program as part of ministry.



Supports local JCM program financially.
Has active volunteers. [does not recruit volunteers]
Includes JCM as part of ministry. [somewhat in background; not widely known]



Supported local JCM program in the past but not regularly.
Has minimal or inconsistent volunteers. [does not recruit volunteers]
Treats JCM as peripheral work of the congregation.



Does not support local JCM program financially.
Provides programs inconsistently due to lack of volunteer commitment.
Does not acknowledge JCM as part of the ministry.

*Giving to JCM National program helps other churches begin programs much like the one in your congregation. Giving also supports our JCM consultants and funds resources development.

Volunteer evaluation metrics [1-4 stars based on engagement and involvement]

★★★★★ Has engaging teaching style.
Recruits and trains new volunteers.
Seeks more participants.
Engages congregation by keeping them informed and inviting participation.

.....

★★★★★ Has adequate teaching style.
Recruits and trains new volunteers.
Appreciates new participants. [does not actively seek them out]
Shares information with congregation.

.....

★★★ Lacks preparation and enthusiasm for teaching.
Lacks recruitment and training of volunteers.
Does not recruit new participants.
No engagement with congregation beyond occasional bulletin announcement.

.....

★ Goes through motions of teaching but lacks effort.
No volunteer commitment and sporadic attendance.
Lacks attention to participant levels. Sees no need to recruit.
Does not engage congregation.

Pastor evaluation metrics [1-4 stars based on engagement and involvement]

★★★★★ Attends 75% or more JCM events.
Participants and family know pastor by name and speak with him regularly.
Actively and regularly promotes JCM program at least monthly.

.....

★★★★★ Attends 50% of JCM events.
Participants and family are familiar with pastor and speak with him occasionally.
Promotes JCM program more than once a quarter.

.....

★★★ Attends 25% of JCM events.
Few participants and family know who pastor is.
Promotes JCM several times a year.

.....

★ Does not attend JCM events.
Participants and family do not know who the pastor is.
Does not promote JCM program. Congregation does not know they have a program.

■ **Participant evaluation metrics [facilities, families, supporting organizations]**

★★★★★ Communications and cooperation between participants and congregation is high.
Provides consistent transportation system and facility staffing.
Ministers to consistent number of active participants.

.....

★★★★ Does not make JCM a priority.
Provides transportation system and facility staffing ~75% of time.
Attendance levels vary with several consistent participants.

.....

★★★ Provides transportation system and facility staffing ~50% of time.
Low number of participants.

.....

★ Takes extreme effort to get participants to program.
Unreliable transportation system and staffing.
Attends events on occasion. [non-existent attendance]

ACTION ITEMS

- Schedule time with JCM Consultant to evaluate program
- Create follow-up plan to address areas of opportunity based on evaluation



TOOLKIT



We are continually adding resources for programs to use to start, sustain themselves and grow. These resources are available for download on tlha.org.

The resources include but are not limited to:

- Awareness materials (e.g., customizable flyer, JCM poster, New Friends flyer and more)
- Bell music
- Tool kit (e.g., participant registration, volunteer registration, press release template, sign-in sheets, lesson planner and more)
- Articles (e.g., white paper, tips for creating an inclusive organization and more)
- Other (e.g., camp registration forms, appreciation certificate, order forms and more)

If you would like to see something added to the toolkit, contact jcm@tlha.org.

FREE downloadable resources

LESSON PLANNER		JESUS CARES MINISTRIES A MINISTRY OF THE LUTHERAN HOME ASSOCIATION	
<i>Use this form as a guide to help you plan your Bible study. Understand that you may not include each of these elements each time you teach.</i>			
TASKS	SUGGESTED TIME (minutes)	WHO	
Dear Christian Friend Bible Lesson			
Hellos and welcomes	5		
Opening devotion	5		
1. Beginning the lesson/Intro and letter	5		
2. Sharing God's Word/Lesson and felt board	10		
3. Checking for understanding	5		
4. Applying God's Word	10		
5. Closing the lesson/Song and prayer	10		
Bible words to remember/Sign language	5		
ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED TIME (minutes)	WHO	
1. Letter writing	5		
2. Activity Sheet from copy master	5		
3. Craft project	10		
4. Song with familiar melody	5		
5. Application activity	5		
Desk Bell music if applicable	5		
Special prayer requests and the Lord's Prayer	5		
Goodbyes and God bless	5		

PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION		JESUS CARES MINISTRIES A MINISTRY OF THE LUTHERAN HOME ASSOCIATION	
<i>Welcome! We are excited for you to be involved in our Jesus Cares Ministries program. Please provide the following information so we can ensure our program meets your needs.</i>			
Name _____			BirthDay _____
Address _____	City _____	State _____	Zip _____
Home Phone _____	Cell Phone _____		
Email _____	Contact by _____	Phone _____	Text _____ Email _____
Describe any allergies or dietary restrictions _____			
Are there any medical issues of which we should be aware? If so, how should we be prepared to respond to these issues? _____			

Emergency contact I _____	Phone _____		
Emergency contact II _____	Phone _____		
PUBLICITY CONSENT			
I understand that my participation authorizes this local program, Jesus Cares Ministries and its parent organization, The Lutheran Home Association of Belle Plaine, Minnesota, to publish and share my, and/or my child's photograph, video image, and other public relations references, in any media outlet deemed necessary and appropriate. Including, but not limited to websites and other related digital formats. I understand that I may revoke my consent at any time.			
_____			_____
(Participant's Signature)			(Date)
_____			_____
(Parent/Guardian's Signature)			(Printed Name) _____ (Date) _____

VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION

JESUS CARES MINISTRIES
A MINISTRY OF THE LUTHERAN HOME ASSOCIATION

Welcome! We are excited for you to volunteer with us.

BASIC INFORMATION
Name _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home phone _____ Cell phone _____
Email _____ Driver's license # _____
Home congregation _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT
Person to contact in case of emergency _____
Relationship _____ Phone _____

PUBLICITY CONSENT
I give The Lutheran Home Association (TLHA) and its other programs, such as Jesus Cares Ministries (JCM) and facilities, permission to use my name, likeness, image, voice and/or appearance as such may be embodied in any pictures, photos, video recordings, audiotapes, digital images and the like, taken or made on behalf of TLHA or JCM or our facility activities. I acknowledge that I will not receive any compensation, etc for the use of such pictures, etc., and hereby release the TLHA and its agents and assigns from any and all claims which arise out of or are in any way connected with such use. ____ Yes ____ No

I hereby attest I have not been personally involved in any criminal activity, including incidents of child molestation, child abuse, sexual misconduct, exploitation or harassment in this or any other state in the past.
The information contained on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge. As a volunteer, I release any individual, congregation, school or other organization providing a Jesus Cares Ministries program or event, as well as Jesus Cares Ministries and The Lutheran Home Association, from any and all liability for damages of any kind or nature to me, my heirs or family. I have carefully read this release, and I sign it of my own free will.

(Signature) _____ (Date)

If the volunteer is a minor, I hereby give my consent to his/her participation in this JCM program, activity or event.

(Signature of volunteer's parent or legal guardian) _____ (Date)

PARTICIPANT SUPPORT PLAN

JESUS CARES MINISTRIES
A MINISTRY OF THE LUTHERAN HOME ASSOCIATION

Tell us a little more about yourself! We want to get to know you better.

What are some things you enjoy doing?

In what ways do you learn best?

Are there any teaching strategies that work well for you?

How do you communicate with others?

What type of assistance (if any) do you need with eating, getting around or using the restroom?



Download toolkit resources at tlha.org.

SIGN-IN

JESUS CARES MINISTRIES
A MINISTRY OF THE LUTHERAN HOME ASSOCIATION

Name	Address	Phone	Email

JESUS CARES MINISTRIES
A MINISTRY OF THE LUTHERAN HOME ASSOCIATION

GROUP HOME SURVEY

Use this form as a conversation guide for contacting area group home staff about their residents joining worship or Bible study.

Facility Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Briefly explain who you are, and that your church is considering starting a special needs Bible class or worship service for people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities. Explain that you are simply calling to seek information to help your church determine if there are people they could invite.

The person or staff you contact may provide you information, or they may not be willing to. They may tell you there is another person who may be better to talk to. That may be the administrator or the person who owns the home. If possible, get the name and phone number for that person. Thank them for their time.

When you discuss the day and time, **remember you are working to meet their needs, not yours.** Often they have other events they participate in, such as Special Olympics. You need to host the Bible class or worship service on a day and time that does not conflict with other things they do. You need to be flexible.

Our goal is to earn their confidence. If their residents are already church members, we are not looking to replace their attendance at church or "steal" them away. Rather, emphasize we are providing a Bible class or worship service designed to meet their residents' unique needs, help them grow in their knowledge of Jesus and have an active prayer and worship life.

If this person seems willing to help, here are some questions to ask:

1. Does your facility serve people with a disability?
2. If yes, how many? (If none, no further questions are necessary.)
3. Would they/you be interested in attending a special needs Bible class or worship service?
4. Do you have transportation?
5. If you were to attend our Bible class or worship service, what day would work best? What time would work best? (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights are typical, or Saturday morning.)

NOTES

PRESS RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS

- Below is a universal press release template for any new program.
- **Red text** is for information to be replaced based on location and program.
- **Green, blue and orange** text is program descriptions. Include **ONLY** the description of the program(s) starting.
- If you need assistance with drafting the press release or for distribution help, contact Dawn Roberts, director of marketing and communications with The Lutheran Home Association, at (952) 873-4748 or dmroberts@tlha.org.

Contact
[Name]
Tel: [phone]
email: [email]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Church or School name] To Start New Program for Individuals with Special Needs

[CITY, STATE], [date] – [Name of church/school] is excited to announce a new program starting on [start date]. The [name of program] program will provide individuals with special needs the opportunity to hear God's Word, participate in activities and engage in fellowship with family members, volunteers and community members.

The **Worship at the Cross** program is a simplified service that follows a format appropriate for people with a cognitive disability, including people with forms of dementia. Pictures and symbols lead participants through the parts of the service. Bible Study materials have been developed for the JCM program. A teacher's manual is provided for each lesson, which offers ideas for using flannel board pictures to accompany a story, special music and crafts. The **New Friends** program is a Christian-based friendship network connecting young adults in high school and college with families of children with special needs creating a fun-filled atmosphere where the entire family feels safe, relaxed and happy.

"We are very excited to share God's word to more individuals in [City]," said [name, title]. "Jesus Cares Ministries [program name] allows us to bring the Gospel to individuals with disabilities, their families and community members. It will truly be a unique program offering designed to inspire and impact." [or other quote from pastor, congregation member or JCM participant family]

The program is part of the Jesus Care Ministries (JCM) program offerings. JCM is a ministry of The Lutheran Home Association and provides Christian community outreach for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. JCM programs include various fellowship opportunities including Worship at the Cross, Bible Study and New Friends.

"We assist congregations in reaching out to share the Gospel with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities," said Pastor Joel Gaertner, vice president of ministry and director of Jesus Cares Ministries at The Lutheran Home Association. "Our programs inspire and positively impact individuals across the U.S. and in Malawi, Africa."

About [Name of church/school]
[insert church/school boilerplate]

About Jesus Cares Ministries
Jesus Cares Ministries (JCM) is a ministry of The Lutheran Home Association (TLHA). TLHA is a not-for-profit ministry dedicated to providing for the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of people in our care. We offer a wide variety of health care, housing and spiritual outreach services with campuses in several states and congregational programs serving seniors and individuals with intellectual developmental disabilities nationwide. Learn more at www.tlha.org, follow [@TLHAWord](https://twitter.com/TLHAWord) on Twitter and "Like" Jesus Cares Ministries on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com).



Connecting special needs parents through a small group mentor program

We are never meant to walk life's journey alone. Joys and challenges often come to us in unanticipated ways. Parents know how best said plans don't always happen as hoped. Parents of children with special needs likely know this best. These parents were not meant to walk alone.

According to Christian Council for Persons with Disabilities, 80 percent of families who have a loved one with special needs are unchurched. The leading factor is parents have not found a church where they feel welcomed or a church that is willing to create awareness for inclusive ministries for their loved one.

In his book, "Welcoming People with Developmental Disabilities and Their Families: a Practical Guide for Congregations", Dr. Erik W. Carter points out the 71 percent of the families with someone having special needs listed a parent mentor group as the most needed ministry a church could provide. Only 12 percent of the families surveyed had a church mentor group.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

80% of families are unchurched

JESUS CARES MINISTRIES
A MINISTRY OF THE LUTHERAN HOME ASSOCIATION



Download toolkit resources at tlha.org.

JCM Monthly E-Newsletter + Pinterest Page

JCM Connect
 JESUS CARES MINISTRIES
 A MINISTRY OF THE LUTHERAN HOME ASSOCIATION

Welcome to the family!

- Worship at the Cross at Chapel on Travis Air Force Base with [St. John's Lutheran Church](#) in Vacaville, CA.
- Worship at the Cross at [Good Shepherd Lutheran Church](#) in Novi, MI.
- Worship at the Cross at [Crown of Life Lutheran Church](#) in West St. Paul, MN.

"It was an exciting week for JCM to have three new programs starting. God is blessing us with opportunities to reach more individuals," said Pastor Joel Gaertner, National Director of JCM. "More than eight million people with special needs in our country don't have a church home or don't feel welcome in church. We are changing that."

[Find a program near you](#)

No wrapping paper needed
 After the decorations are packed away, we will still be sharing the Good News of Jesus. Your gift helps share Jesus' love all year long with individuals with developmental disabilities.

A generous donor has added another \$10,000 to the matching grant to help reach the \$285,000 year-end goal – and that means your gift today will still be DOUBLED!

So your generous gift today will go twice as far to share His love and show individuals with developmental disabilities how deeply valued and precious they are.

JCM participant Trele stamps a bookmark. She attends JCM at Zion Lutheran in Olivia, MN.

Read the monthly e-newsletter filled with recognition and program ideas!

Jesus will welcome you. Sometimes, stories that can be hard for people to fully understand.

For Melanie Weimer, the JCM coordinator at [Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mitchell, Minnesota](#), one of those toughest lessons focuses on heaven.

"We learned we do not have to fear death because of what Jesus has done for us in his perfect life," said Melanie. "Because he lives, we, too, will live with him in heaven."

Helen, a JCM participant at Christ Evangelical, always struggled to sleep. Helen had one question.

"Who will wake me up?"

"Jesus will wake you up!" Pastor Curt replied, TLHA's Director.

With pure joy and amazement, Helen understood. Since that time, her housemates have joined God in heaven.

The services were co-led by Pastor Joel Gaertner, Pastor Curt, and Pastor Gaertner.

Search for Business Casual

Jesus Cares Ministries (JCM)
 31 monthly viewers
 66 Follow

Nationwide
www.thla.org

JCM assists congregations in reaching out to people w/ special needs, their families & communities. JCM programs encourage Bible studies, worship & fellowship.

Overview **Boards** Pins Followers Following

2 Boards

Bible study activities
 31 Pins [Follow](#)

Bible study crafts
 74 Pins [Follow](#)

Program Resources

We have a variety of program resources available for free or at a small cost. Program materials are available for purchase at tlha.org.

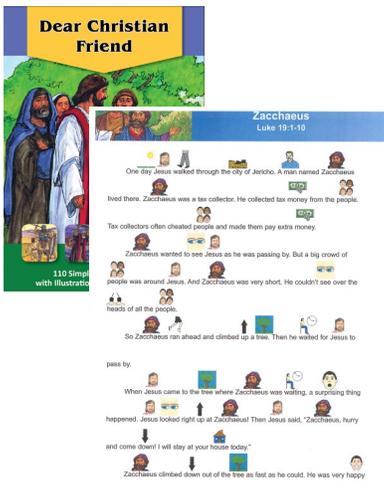
The resources include but are not limited to:

- Dear Christian Friend, a set of 110 Old and New Testament lessons
- Short Bible story videos
- Handbell/Deskbell + sheet music collection



[Worship at the Cross PowerPoint](#)

The “Worship at the Cross” service is designed to make each part of a worship service have special meaning, especially for people with cognitive impairments.



[Dear Christian Friend \(DCF\) Lessons](#)

Dear Christian Friend is a set of 110 chronological Old and New Testament lessons, complete with a devotion, student lesson, teacher’s guide and work sheets, which incorporates picture communication (Rebus) symbols. Also included in this all-in-one, multi-year curriculum are review lessons, audio files or sheet music for companion lesson songs and 11 versions of the widely popular "LOVED" Bible bingo game.



Program materials available for purchase at tlha.org.



Short videos corresponding with DCF

A variety of videos to correspond with Bible lessons. Each video is approximately 3 minutes.

- Prodigal Son
- Jesus Visits Zacchaeus
- Jesus as a Boy in the Temple
- Mary Honors Jesus
- Lazarus Rises from the Dead
- Jesus visits Mary and Martha



Handbell/Deskbell music

This music is appropriate for colored desktop bells such as the Rhythm Band Instruments Combined Handbells/Deskbells set. Includes 44 songs.

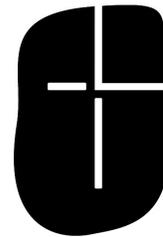


Handbell/Deskbell set

Handbell/Deskbell Set features bells with a special mechanism that allows push-button or hand ringing. The button on top of each handle has a label describing to the note. The 20-note set has a chromatic range from Low A to High E.



A Jesus Cares Ministries volunteer named Maria recently said, *“Through the wonderful students at Jesus Cares, God has shown me that everyone can have faith and believe in Him, even if they are non-verbal or have other disabilities.”*



JESUS CARES MINISTRIES
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HOME ASSOCIATION

Where the care of the soul is the soul of care.