



The Church of Scotland

## **Guidelines on dyslexia**

January 2020

These guidelines comprise 'Dyslexia-friendly churches - A guide to help churches include dyslexic adults' by Aurora Betony, available at <http://inclusivecommunication.scot/blog-dyslexia-friendly-churches-guide>.

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# Dyslexia-friendly churches

## - A guide to help churches include dyslexic adults

By Aurora Betony, December 2019



"The body of Christ is most effective when people work together, using their gifts and abilities to complement each other's ministry."<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Baird, Young and Dicken, p14

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## Accessing this guide

### Electronic version

This guide is available electronically, as a free download, in Word and pdf at <http://inclusivecommunication.scot/blog-dyslexia-friendly-churches-guide>

### Navigation

If you are accessing this guide electronically, you may find it helpful to use the navigation pane. You can display the navigation pane by doing the following.

- In **Word** go to the 'view' menu, then in the 'show' menu select 'navigation pane'.
- In **pdf** go to the 'view' menu, then select 'show / hide', then 'navigation panes', then 'show navigation pane'.

### Listening

You can listen to the text in this guide by using a text reader. I recommend a text reader called [WordTalk](#), which is cost-free and easy to use. It only works with Word documents, which is why I am publishing this guide in Microsoft Word (2010). I recommend using a quality computer voice along with Wordtalk (or any other text reader), for example [the Scottish Voice](#).

### Printing

I am also publishing this guide in pdf, so that anyone who wishes to can print a paper copy.

### Links

There are many hyperlinks embedded in this guide. In order to access these, hover your mouse over the underlined text - you might also have to hold down the control (Ctrl) key - and left click.

### Footnotes

The footnotes are all hyperlinked too. This means that (if you are using an electronic copy in Word format) you can read the footnotes without having to move your eyes to the foot of the page. Hover your mouse over the footnote number to make the footnote appear. To make the footnote disappear, take your mouse away from the number.

## Acknowledgements

In policy work the 'policy landscape' of a particular policy is all the other policies out of which it has grown. Although this guide is guidance rather than policy, the same applies to it: there is a landscape or environment out of which it has grown. For example, the work of various organisations, conversations and correspondence I've had, discussions at meetings I've been to, and books and other resources I've engaged with.

I acknowledge the following organisations as part of that environment.

[Accessibility by Design](#)

[British Dyslexia Association](#)

[CALL Scotland](#)

[Church of Scotland Law Department](#)

[Cross Party Group on Dyslexia at the Scottish Parliament](#)

[didlaw Ltd.](#)

[Dyslexia Scotland](#)

[Edinburgh and the Lothians Roofbreaker Network](#)

[Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland](#)

[Inclusive Church](#)

[Listen Think Draw](#)

[Livability](#)

[Openclipart.org](#)

[Quaker Disability Equality Group](#)

[Scotland's Inclusive Communication Hub](#)

[Scottish Churches Disability Group](#)

[Scripture Union UK](#)

[Self Management Network Scotland](#)

[South Ayrshire Council](#)'s 'Dyslexia Friendly Schools' Initiative

[Through the Roof](#)

[UK Bible Society](#)

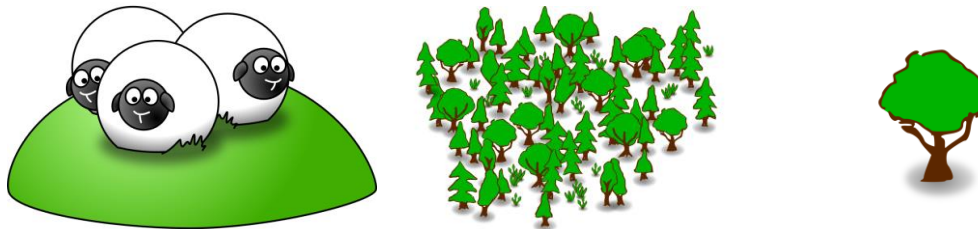
[UK Government Equalities Office](#)

I also acknowledge the individuals who have supported me in writing this guide.

## Image credits

All of the images in this guide are from the [Bonnington Symbol System](#), City of Edinburgh Council, with the following exceptions.

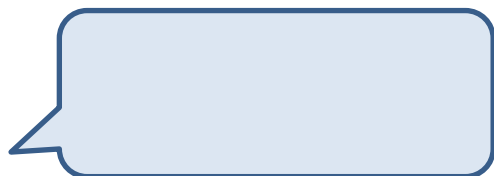
These sheep / forest / tree images are from [openclipart.org](#) (not currently available):



These 6 images are from the clipart menu in Microsoft Word 2010:



The 2 oblong speech bubbles like this one are from the 'Shapes' menu in Microsoft Word 2010:



The leaf images are my own.

## Introduction



### Who is this guide for?

Churches at all levels i.e.

- anyone who contributes to the *leadership* a church at a *national* level;
- anyone who *leads* church activities at a *local* level e.g. worship, Bible study groups; and
- *anyone else* in a local church, e.g. office bearers, members, adherents

It is written with churches in the UK in mind but may also be useful to churches elsewhere. It may also be useful for any other religious or non-religious organisations that run activities.

### What does this guide do?

- Describes dyslexia (chapter 1)
- Explains what 'adjustments' are, and why churches have to make them (chapter 2)
- Suggests adjustments churches can make to include dyslexic adults (chapters 3 - 7)
- Signposts to further information

### What sources were used to write this guide?

- Various books and web resources, all listed in the [bibliography](#)
- My own experience of attending various local churches within my national church as a dyslexic adult
- My knowledge of adult dyslexia, which I've gained through a range of channels including: Dyslexia Scotland's services; books and other media; my own lived experience; and the writing, public speaking and advocacy I have done on adult dyslexia (2013 - present)

### Who has written this guide?

I am a '[Roofbreaker](#)' based in Scotland. I play an active role in my church. I write in a variety of creative and non-fiction styles on adult dyslexia and other topics. I was identified with dyslexia in mid adulthood.

## Is this guide intended to complement other resources?

Yes:

- [All Welcome - a guide to including disabled people in the life of the church](#) by [Through the Roof](#); and
- [Guidelines for Inclusion - Dyslexia](#) by Quaker Disability Equality Group

## How comprehensive is this guide?



My hope is that this guide will give churches enough information to include dyslexic adults. You might find that you need to modify or refine adjustments suggested in this guide, to suit individual people. And some dyslexic adults might be able to suggest adjustments that work for them in other contexts.

There is plenty of white space in the body of the guide so you can add any notes you wish. There are also a few blank pages at the end of this guide so you can note your own ideas and observations.

## How is this guide meant to be read?

You can dip into this guide or read it through. There are visual summaries at the beginning of each chapter so you can see at a glance what is in them.

## Will this guide also help churches to include dyslexic young people?

Yes. Although this guide is on adult dyslexia, much of its content applies in principle to dyslexic young people too. For example, just as you should avoid putting dyslexic adults 'on the spot' in a meeting, you should also avoid doing this to dyslexic children in any group discussion in children's activities.

Appendix 7 offers a few suggestions of dyslexia adjustments you can make in children's activities. These are contributed by a qualified and practising primary teacher who leads children's activities in his local church in Scotland.

If you would like more guidance on how to include dyslexic young people in church activities, you could ask an organisation such as [Through the Roof](#) or your national church to provide this. There may be someone in your church who would be able to collate and share good practice.

## Glossary



Word	Meaning in the context of this guide
Adjustments	Changes that people make to accommodate disabled people. The term comes from the Equality Act 2010
A church	Depending on context, 'a church' might mean a church building that a congregation uses for its activities; or a national church; or a congregation (local church)
The church	The body of Christ, i.e. the Christian church in all its denominations
Church service	An act of corporate worship consisting of for example opening and closing responses, address, prayers, hymns / musical items, scripture reading, sermon, blessing
Congregation	An individual local church within a national church
Dyslexia inclusion / including dyslexic people	Doing things in such a way that lets dyslexic people take part. E.g. giving advance notice of the Bible reading(s) due to be read in a church service so dyslexic people can engage with these however they need to before the service
Dyslexia-friendly	Accessible to / inclusive of dyslexic people
Dyslexic person / people	<p>There are various terms that you can use to describe a dyslexic person e.g. 'dyslexic' (adjective), 'a dyslexic' (noun), 'a dyslexic person', 'a person with dyslexia'. It's a matter of personal preference which term you use.</p> <p>I prefer to describe myself as 'dyslexic' (adjective) or 'a dyslexic person' rather than as 'a dyslexic' (noun) or 'a person with dyslexia'. This is because dyslexia is an integral part of who I am as a person. It's not something separate from me - something that can be added or removed. It isn't all of who I am, but if I wasn't dyslexic I wouldn't be me.</p>

	<p>Similarly, I prefer to call other dyslexic people 'dyslexic people' or 'dyslexic' (adjective) rather than 'dyslexics' (noun) or 'people with dyslexia'.</p> <p>People are entitled to use whichever terms they wish.</p>
Lived experience	<p>In the context of disability, lived experience is someone's experience of life as a disabled person. It just means the disabled person having <i>first-hand</i> experience of being for example dyslexic, rather than imagining what it is like from <i>other people's</i> experience.</p>
A national church	<p>e.g. The Baptist Union of Scotland, The Church of England.</p>

## Part 1: What dyslexia is; making adjustments for dyslexic people



Chapter 1: What dyslexia is



Chapter 2: Making adjustments for dyslexic people

## Chapter 1: What is dyslexia?



Describing dyslexia is a bit like describing the view from a hill: the way you describe it depends on your point of view. For example, educationalists, psychologists and neurologists all describe it differently. So any definition of dyslexia that you come across is not authoritative - it's simply one of many.<sup>2</sup>

One of the definitions of dyslexia that I find most helpful is:

"A syndrome, or group, of difficulties that includes problems with literacy skills, memory, perception, sequencing and organisational skills".<sup>3</sup>

Here are 10 questions and answers I'd like to add to this definition.

### 1.1 Is dyslexia a life-long condition?

This depends on whether you have developmental or acquired dyslexia.

Developmental dyslexia (which a person has from birth or infancy), is a life-long condition. It's not a disease so there is no cure for it<sup>4</sup>. However, dyslexic people can learn to self-manage<sup>5</sup> their dyslexia so that its difficulties don't hold them back from achieving their potential.

It's also possible to acquire dyslexia at some point in your life, as a result of brain injury.<sup>6</sup> This type of dyslexia is called 'acquired dyslexia' or 'alexia'. In acquired dyslexia, the dyslexic 'symptoms' can reduce or even go away completely as the brain recovers.

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<sup>2</sup> See Passe 2015, Chapter 1; and Mortimore 2008, Chapter 3

<sup>3</sup> Moody 2006, page 3

<sup>4</sup> Scott 2004, p244

<sup>5</sup> Self-managing means different things to different people. To me, self-managing my dyslexia means doing everything I can to manage my dyslexia, including tell others how it affects me and asking them to make adjustments for me where I need them to. For a comprehensive explanation of self-management see [About self-management](#)

<sup>6</sup> Dyslexia Research Trust's '[About Dyslexia](#)' webpage; Goodwin and Thomson 2004, p136, subsection entitled 'Some brains don't work the same way'; and glottopedia's entry '[Acquired dyslexia](#)'

## 1.2 How does dyslexia affect a person?

In the simplest of terms, dyslexia affects a person's brain and this in turn affects their ability to do things.<sup>7</sup>

The effect that dyslexia has on a person varies according to which life stage they are at. For example, dyslexia will affect a learner's ability to learn and a worker's ability to work. So dyslexia is still the same condition across different life stages - it just presents itself differently.

## 1.3 How does dyslexia affect a person's thinking and learning?

Dyslexia is a different way of thinking and learning<sup>8</sup>. So a dyslexic person needs to approach learning in a way that addresses their difficulties<sup>9</sup> and uses their abilities<sup>10</sup>. (In this context, I mean 'learning' in a broad sense, including things like taking in the content of a sermon).

There are multifarious things that can help dyslexic people learn, e.g. presenting information in images *and* words rather than *just* words.<sup>11</sup>



## 1.4 How does dyslexia affect a person's processing (taking in or giving out)?

Dyslexia is sometimes described as an information processing difficulty<sup>12</sup>. This is because dyslexic people find it difficult to process information, whether they are taking it in (e.g. by listening or reading) or giving it out (e.g. by talking or writing).<sup>13</sup>

Dyslexic people can have a slower processing speed. This means they might need longer to take something in or give something out than other people.

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<sup>7</sup> For a clear explanation of these effects of dyslexia see Hammond and Hercules, 2003, pp 9-20. For specific ways that dyslexia can affect a person's ability to do things at different life stages, see Sylvia Moody's '[Checklists](#)'

<sup>8</sup> Hammond and Hercules 2003, p9

<sup>9</sup> Any book that describes the difficulties of adult dyslexia then suggests coping strategies makes this point implicitly e.g. McLoughlin and Leather 2013, Moody 2006

<sup>10</sup> McLoughlin and Leather 2013 pp116 - 122

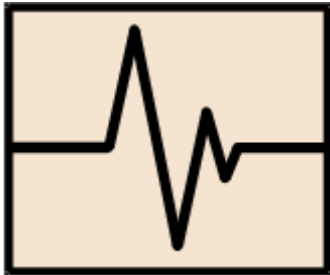
<sup>11</sup> For details of how you can do this see [5 ways to present information visually](#)

<sup>12</sup> McLoughlin and Leather 2013, p116

<sup>13</sup> Scott 2004, p184

### 1.5 Are there also strengths / abilities associated with dyslexia?

Yes.<sup>14</sup> There are many things that dyslexic people can excel in. As dyslexia is a different way of thinking, dyslexic people can be particularly good at certain types of thinking e.g. holistic thinking ('seeing the big picture')<sup>15</sup>, narrative thinking (thinking and conveying information in story form)<sup>16</sup> and visual thinking (thinking in images)<sup>17</sup>.



Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. In dyslexic people though, the discrepancy between strengths and weaknesses is much greater than in other people. This means that while dyslexic people may excel at some things, they may struggle to do other things well or even adequately.

### 1.6 Can dyslexia be managed?

Yes, but it needs to be managed *both* by the dyslexic individual *and* other people. For example, a dyslexic person might need questions in advance of a meeting in order to think and prepare their responses. If so, whoever is leading the meeting will need to give the dyslexic person the questions in advance.

### 1.7 Does everyone who has dyslexia experience it in the same way?

No - dyslexia is a label that you can use for convenience. But each dyslexic person experiences dyslexia uniquely. This means that dyslexia can be described at a general level, encompassing all the diversity within it; or at an individual level, referring to one person's dyslexia.

These images represent visually these levels and their relationship:



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<sup>14</sup> See Eide and Eide 2011 for an exploration of these

<sup>15</sup> Hammond and Hercules 2003, p18

<sup>16</sup> Eide and Eide 2011, Part V

<sup>17</sup> Hammond and Hercules 2003, p18

## 1.8 Are some people more dyslexic than others?

One view is that 'dyslexia varies in severity like arthritis - some people have arthritis in one knee, others in every joint: the same condition, different degree: the same disability, different quality of life'.<sup>18</sup>

Another view is that 'The notion of degrees of dyslexia is a misnomer, as the extent to which being dyslexic affects a person is the result of a complex interaction between cognitive, behavioural and affective characteristics, as well as cultural factors'.<sup>19</sup>

It's convenient to think of dyslexia on a sliding scale. However, my own lived experience and my knowledge of many other dyslexic adults' lived experience lead me to share the second view.

## 1.9 Is dyslexia linked to intelligence?

No. 'Dyslexia is independent of intelligence. [It] is spread normally over the full range of IQ levels and occurs at all levels of intellectual ability.'<sup>20</sup>

## 1.10 How many people are dyslexic?



1 in 10 people have some dyslexic difficulties. For 1 in 5 of those, the difficulties can be quite problematic<sup>21</sup>.

To compare that with other conditions, in Scotland 1 in 5.5 people have some degree of hearing loss<sup>22</sup>; 1 in 60 people [90,000 people] have dementia<sup>23</sup>; 1 in 200 [5.2 out of every 1,000] people have learning disabilities<sup>24</sup>; and 1 in about 1,000 people [4,382 people] are autistic<sup>24</sup>.

I hope you now have a sense of what adult dyslexia is. If you wish to find out more about adult dyslexia, please see the [further information](#) below.

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<sup>18</sup> Scott 2004, p18

<sup>19</sup> McLoughlin and Leather 2013, p33.

<sup>20</sup> Scott 2004, p24

<sup>21</sup> Goodwin and Thomson 2004, p140

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.scod.org.uk/faqs/statistics>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.alzscot.org/what-is-dementia/about-dementia>

<sup>24</sup> [Learning Disability Statistics Scotland 2018](#).

## Chapter 2: Making adjustments for dyslexic people



Dyslexic people are termed 'disabled' under the Equality Act. This means that they are legally entitled to 'adjustments'. Adjustments are changes that people make to accommodate disabled people. So certain people are required by law to make adjustments for disabled people, e.g. employers.

What about churches though? Do they too have to make adjustments for disabled people under the Equality Act? Yes, they do, with the exception of one type of church activity. I explain this fully in sections 2.6 and 2.10 below.

### 2.1 Why do dyslexic people need churches to make adjustments?

Imagine you wear 1 or 2 hearing aids and you go to a church where the hearing loop isn't working. You really struggle to follow what is being said. The odd word you do hear you struggle to take in because you don't have the context. You don't feel connected to God.

At the end of the service you feel excluded. You are left with the impression that this church maybe isn't going to work for you.

This is what it's like for dyslexic people to sit through a church service that is not dyslexia-friendly. Just as hearing aid users need hearing loops to access a church service, dyslexic people need a church to be dyslexia-inclusive in order to take part in its activities and to feel they belong.

### 2.2 Will the church as a whole benefit from dyslexia adjustments?

Yes, indeed everyone will benefit if you include dyslexic adults. Here are 4 reasons why:

2.2.1 Unaddressed dyslexia doesn't just affect dyslexic people but also the people around them. So if you are addressing dyslexia in your church (i.e. by making adjustments to accommodate it), this will help dyslexic people and everyone else i.e. everyone;

2.2.2 Much dyslexia-friendly practice is good practice for everyone else too<sup>25</sup>. This is because it caters for a variety of learning preferences (everyone has different learning preferences);

2.2.3 It will help dyslexic people to make a contribution to the church at all levels;

2.2.4 It will encourage other minority groups to attend your church<sup>26</sup>.

### **2.3 Do all congregations need to make adjustments for dyslexia?**

Yes, unless their practice is already dyslexia-friendly, because wherever you are it is likely that your congregation will have dyslexic people in it.

### **2.4 Do churches need to understand dyslexia in order to make adjustments?**

No - it helps if you understand dyslexia because it gives you conviction / a reason for doing things in a dyslexia-friendly way. But it's more important that you have dyslexia-friendly practice than understand what dyslexia is. For example, it helps dyslexic people when you speak at a steady pace. But you don't need to understand the reason for this in order to do it. You just need to know it helps and do it. I think of this as the good-practice or common-sense approach to dyslexia inclusion.

### **2.5 Are dyslexia adjustments costly and complicated?**



Many dyslexia adjustments cost little or nothing and are small and easy to make. For example, many church buildings have pew Bibles with maps at the back. If you are about to preach on one of Paul's missionary journeys, you can tell the congregation before you start that there is a map of Paul's route in the pew Bibles and give the page reference. This will let people follow it during your sermon.

### **2.6 Do churches have to make adjustments for dyslexic people?**

#### **Legally**

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<sup>25</sup> For more information on learning preferences, see [Learning styles and strategies](#)

<sup>26</sup> This is what a church in Manchester found, as explained in this [video](#)



There is a visual summary of the main point of this section on page 19 below.

If you don't wish to read the background to this point, skip to the box on page 18 below.

With support from other people, I researched whether the Equality Act 2010 requires churches to make adjustments for disabled people. There seemed to be wide agreement that, in almost all activities run by a church, the Equality Act applies i.e. churches need to make adjustments for disabled people.

The only disagreement is on whether acts or services of worship (e.g. a Sunday morning service in a church building involving prayers, singing, Bible readings and a sermon) are 'services' for the purposes of the Equality Act (and therefore subject to adjustments).<sup>27</sup>

One result of my research was to clarify what the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) means by the words 'religious service' and 'act of worship' in its guidance<sup>28</sup>. The EHRC explained this to me in the following words:

'[...] "acts of worship" - meaning things like the actual religious acts performed by priests / rabbis / imams etc. such as prayers used or rites performed - are not services. However the more congregational general service would fall under the scope of the Equality Act 2010 meaning that there would be a duty on religious organisations to provide, for example, large-print hymn books.'

Here is my understanding of this.

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<sup>27</sup> See [appendix 1](#)

<sup>28</sup> Entitled "What equality law means for your voluntary and community sector organisation (including charities and religion or belief organisations)" p21, under the heading 'Exceptions for religion or belief organisations', states: "'Services' in this context does not mean religious acts of worship (which are not covered by equality law at all) but something a person or organisation does for the public or a section of the public." This point is reiterated on page 23 (final paragraph): "This does not affect religious services and acts of worship because equality law does not cover these at all".

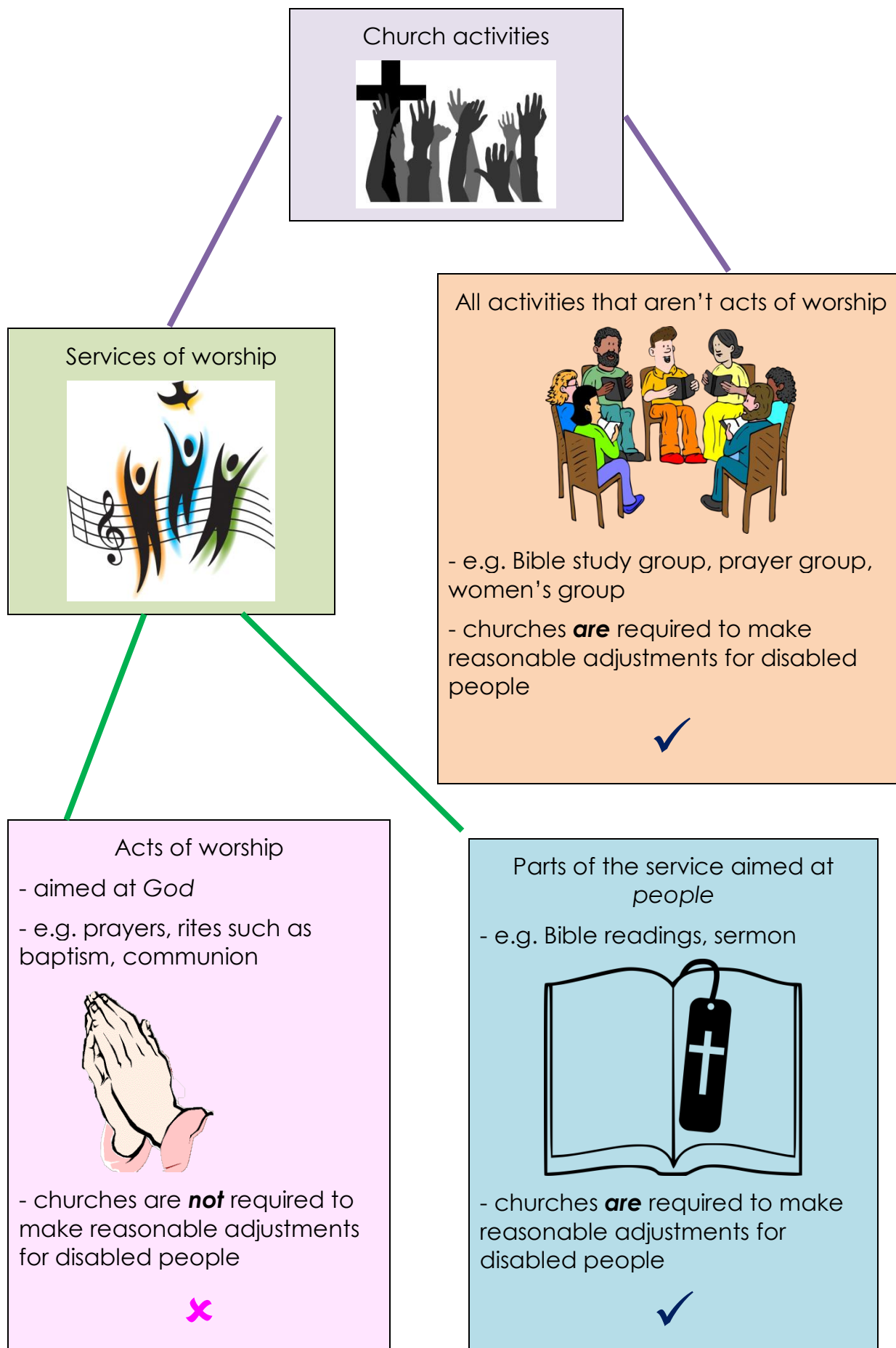
There is wide agreement that, in almost all activities run by a church, the Equality Act applies. In other words, **churches are legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people in their activities.**

**The only possible exception to this is** in what might be called 'acts of worship'.

A church service of worship can be thought of as including acts of worship that are aimed at **God, e.g. prayers or rites** such as baptism or communion / Eucharist / mass; and other parts of the service that are aimed at the **congregation** (i.e. the people at the church service), **e.g. Bible readings or sermons.**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's view is that a church is **not** legally required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people in the acts of worship that are aimed at **God** e.g. a prayer, or a rite such as baptism or communion. However, a church **is** legally obliged make reasonable adjustments for disabled people in acts of worship that are aimed at the **congregation / people** e.g. a Bible reading or sermon.

Here is a diagram to show all of this visually:



## Theologically



"It is a fundamental principle [of a church] to be fully inclusive of all people, whatever their disability, in all aspects of church life"<sup>29</sup>

"The body of Christ [i.e. the church] is most effective when people work together, using their gifts and abilities to complement each other's ministry".<sup>30</sup>

In other words, **regardless of what the law requires, churches have to make adjustments for dyslexic people** if they aren't already in place. This is so that dyslexic people can take part, and so that the church can work as a whole.<sup>31</sup>

### 2.7 Should congregations make adjustments in anticipation of dyslexic people attending their activities (rather than wait for a dyslexic person to attend that congregation or request adjustments)?

Yes. Here are 5 reasons why.

2.7.1 It's highly likely that dyslexic people will *already* be attending a congregation and / or that new dyslexic people will come along. So a congregation should make their activities accessible for dyslexic people, just as they do for other groups such as wheelchair users and people with hearing loss.

2.7.2 Many dyslexic people don't realise they are dyslexic<sup>32</sup>. Even if they do, they don't necessarily know what adjustments will help them. If you break your ankle you don't automatically know how to deal with it. It's the same with dyslexia: dyslexic people don't suddenly know how to manage their dyslexia when they discover it - they have to find this out.

2.7.3 Finding out about dyslexia and understanding how it affects you involves taking in information. Some of the dyslexia literature is only available in written form e.g. traditional print books, and is not

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<sup>29</sup> Baird, Young and Dicken, page 15

<sup>30</sup> Baird, Young and Dicken, page 14

<sup>31</sup> See [1 Corinthians chapter 12 verses 12-26](#)

<sup>32</sup> For further discussion of this point please see sections 7.1.1 - 7.1.3 below

very accessible. Taking in written information can be difficult for many dyslexic people. It can therefore be difficult for dyslexic people to find out what will help them. They may not be aware of other sources of support (e.g. Dyslexia Scotland's services) or be able to access them.

Even if dyslexic people *do* know what will help them, they might struggle to communicate this to someone clearly<sup>33</sup>, e.g. their worship leader or office bearer. They might also lack the self-confidence / assertiveness to ask for adjustments. However, there is wide variation in this - some dyslexic individuals may be able to self-advocate better than others.



- 2.7.4 Even if hypothetically all dyslexic adults were able to articulate their needs perfectly and congregations were able to respond by meeting these, it still makes sense for congregations to make anticipatory adjustments for dyslexia.

This is because congregations and dyslexic people may not have the time or skills to identify what adjustments a dyslexic individual needs. By contrast, if a congregation has dyslexia-friendly practice in place, congregations don't need to work this out.

In other words, by putting a set of anticipatory adjustments in place, churches would only subsequently need to add to or modify these, rather than work out what changes to make and make them.

- 2.7.5 Some people might come to church once a year e.g. at Christmas or for a baptism. If they can't follow the service, maybe they will not return, whereas if they can follow it then maybe they will.

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<sup>33</sup> Scott 2004, p23

## 2.8 How can congregations anticipate a set of adjustments for dyslexic people?

Each person's dyslexia is unique to them. So there will be variation between what one dyslexic person and another needs by way of adjustments. However, as I've acknowledged in chapter 1 above, dyslexia is a syndrome (group) of characteristics. So by making adjustments to accommodate this group of characteristics, you will be including dyslexic people in general.

A set of adjustments for dyslexic people in general probably won't meet every dyslexic individual's every need. But it will at least meet some of them, and act as a strong starting point for meeting individual people's needs. In other words, making anticipatory adjustments for dyslexia will mean you are well on the way to including dyslexic individuals.

## 2.9 Will a dyslexia-friendly approach to learning help or hinder others?

A dyslexia-friendly approach to learning may in a few instances hinder other (non-dyslexic) people. For example, some people prefer the King James Version (KJV), whereas dyslexic people might prefer a more accessible version such as the CEV<sup>34</sup>. So if my congregation only ever used the CEV, people who prefer the KJV would miss out in church.<sup>35</sup>



Also, some people (who don't have a print disability<sup>36</sup>) prefer taking in information by reading, whereas many dyslexic people prefer to take in information through alternatives to reading e.g. video or audio.

This means that in order to include everyone, a congregation should offer flexibility or variety. For example, if the person leading my church Bible study group uses various different learning channels (e.g. listening, reading, drama, discussion, music), then everyone will be able to

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<sup>34</sup> [Contemporary English Version](#)

<sup>35</sup> See also 4.4.3 below

<sup>36</sup> A print disability is a disability that makes it difficult or impossible for someone to read print.

engage with some of it. And if they announce which passage we will be studying the following week, this gives everyone the flexibility to engage with it beforehand using their preferred learning channel(s).

But a dyslexia-friendly approach to learning will often not even affect others. For example, to engage with a Bible passage, I expose myself to it repeatedly, using different senses, e.g. listening to an audio dramatization of it, looking at pictures of it such as illustrations or film clips, and recreating my own illustrated text version of it. But I do all of this independently, before the activity when it will be read, studied etc. So my approach doesn't affect anyone else as I am doing it on my own. See also 3.1.2 below.



## 2.10 What if a congregation can't reasonably make a certain adjustment?

As I mentioned in 2.6 above, under the Equality Act 2010, churches are legally obliged to make adjustments for dyslexic people in the parts of a church service that are aimed at *people* rather than at *God*. However, a church is only legally obliged to make adjustments that are **reasonable** for it to make.

So if it is reasonable for a congregation to make a dyslexia adjustment then they are *legally obliged* to make it (i.e. they are breaking the law if they don't). However, if an adjustment is *not* reasonable for a congregation to make e.g. it would necessitate spending more time or money than the congregation has, then they are *not* obliged to make it.



For example, if you as a congregation have the time and skills to give advance notice of the Bible readings on your website, then it would be reasonable for you to do this as an adjustment for dyslexic people.

However, if your webmaster is off long-term sick and no-one else has the time or skills to edit your website, and it would take you more time than you have to it work out, then it wouldn't be reasonable.



However, you could maybe find an alternative that would be more achievable. For example if you have a rota for your Bible readers, you could give a copy of it (anonymised for data protection) to anyone who wishes advance notice of the Bible readings.

### **2.11 Who decides what is 'reasonable'?**

It is up to a congregation to decide what constitutes 'reasonable', not the disabled person or group of people who would benefit from the adjustment. That's because it is the congregation who will be making the adjustment, not the disabled person / group.

## Part 2: Doing differently things you already do



### Chapter 3: Dyslexia-friendly communication

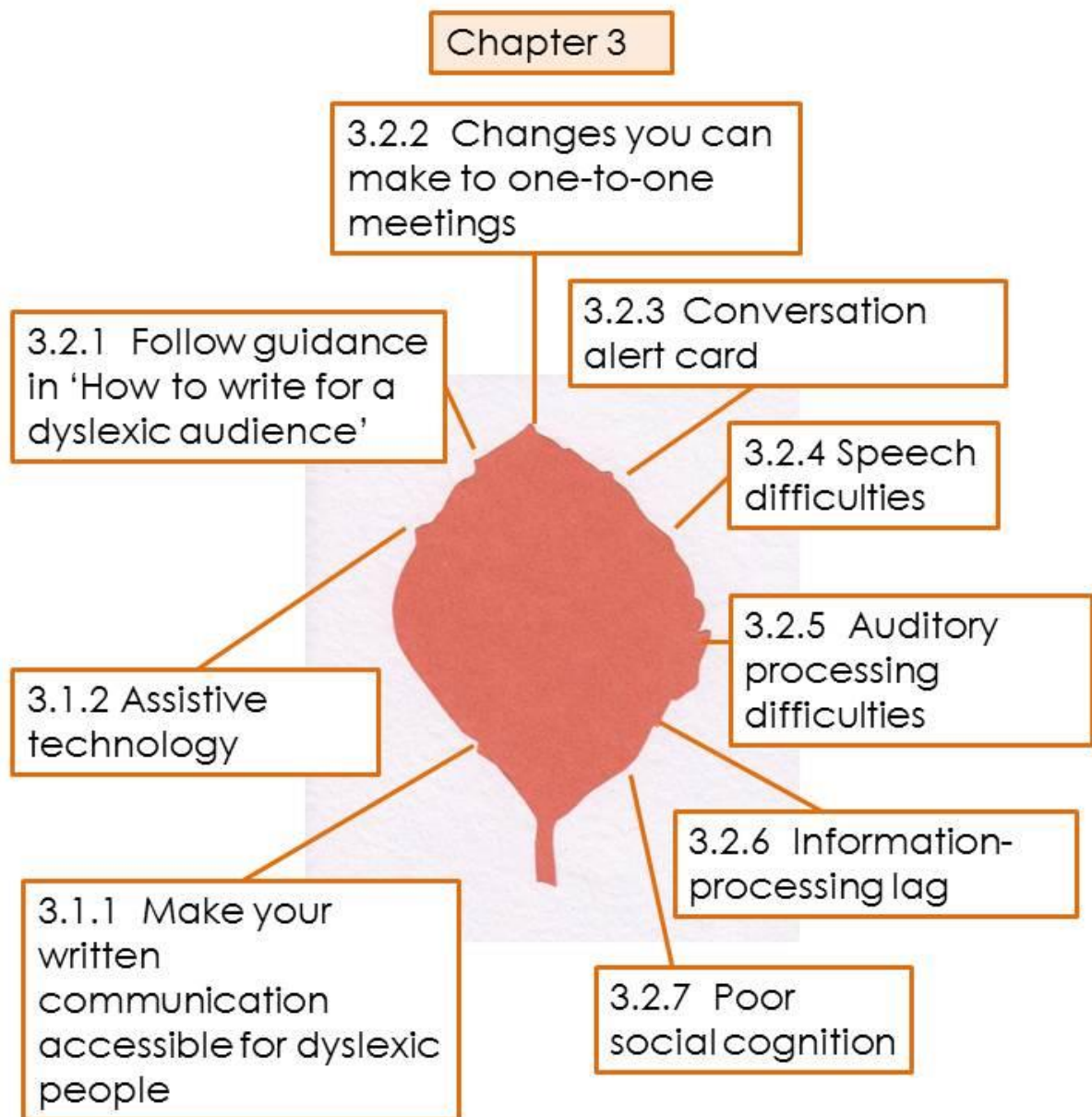


### Chapter 4: Dyslexia-friendly activities



### Chapter 5: Dyslexia-friendly sermons

## Chapter 3 visual summary



## Chapter 3: Dyslexia-friendly communication

The rest of the chapters in this guide suggest adjustments that congregations can make for dyslexic adults. The purpose of this is so that congregations can make adjustments without having to work out first what they might be.

You might find it helpful to think of making adjustments as **'making our church's practice dyslexia-friendly by doing differently things we already do, and by doing things we haven't done before'**.

You may find that some or all of the adjustments suggested below are already in place in your church. Obviously you will only need to make any you're not already making in order to become (more) dyslexia-friendly.

Churches are already doing things they haven't done in the past, and doing things differently, to include people with a range of disabilities e.g. hearing loss and deafness, learning disabilities and dementia. Even if this weren't the case, we would still be capable of including dyslexic people in our churches.

The next 3 chapters of this guide look at some changes you can make to things you already do namely communication, activities and sermons. The points are in 3 chapters but points from each may apply to 1 or both of the other 2 also. Also, you will find certain points and techniques discussed in more than 1 chapter e.g. giving the gist and 'chunking'<sup>37</sup>.

This chapter suggests 2 adjustments for written communication and 7 adjustments for spoken communication.

### 3.1 Changes you can make to written communication



#### 3.1.1 Make your written communication accessible for dyslexic people

[This blog post](#) tells you (in the attached guide) how to use language in a dyslexia-friendly way. It also signposts to guidance (in the footnote) on dyslexia-friendly design (e.g. which typeface, which colour of font, which colour of background to use).

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<sup>37</sup> Giving the gist means giving a very brief summary of something.

'Chunking' means breaking down information into manageable sized bits

### 3.1.2 Assistive technology<sup>38</sup>

People with sight impairment need high contrast between text and background e.g. white text on a black background, whereas many dyslexic people need dark text on a light background but not black text on a white background.

It's not possible to have both at the same time. So to be accessible, a website needs to let users customise the appearance of the text to meet their own needs. There are various accessibility tools that let people do this e.g. 'Browsealoud', which you can try out on [NHS Inform](#).

Some accessibility tools include a function called a text reader that reads aloud the text on a webpage using a computer voice. This helps dyslexic people because it means they can listen to the text instead of read it.<sup>39</sup>

So something you can do to make your written communication dyslexia-friendly is install a text reader / accessibility tool on your website.

If you are not able to do this, signpost your website users to [Using text readers to access websites and blogs](#). This will let them install a text reader on their own device or memory stick.

The most helpful thing I've learned about website accessibility is that it needs to be built into your website as you design it. In other words, you can't set up a website *then* make it accessible: you have to make it accessible as you set it up.

## 3.2 Changes you can make to spoken communication



### 3.2.1 Follow the guidance in '[Writing for a dyslexic audience](#)'

This guidance is about written communication. But much of it applies to spoken communication too e.g. using visual imagery.

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<sup>38</sup> Technology that makes something accessible for disabled people

<sup>39</sup> For guidance on text readers see [this blog post](#).

### 3.2.2 Changes you can make to one-to-one meetings



#### **Dyslexia support in the form of a person**

If you wish to meet a dyslexic person one-to-one to discuss church business, or if they wish to meet you, something that may help them greatly is if they can bring someone along with them who can provide them with dyslexia support. If this is a reasonable adjustment for you, then legally you have to make it.

#### **Audio recording**

Let the dyslexic person make an audio recording of the meeting. This means they don't feel under pressure to take notes (which can be very difficult for dyslexic people due to language processing difficulties). It also frees up their processing capacity for following and contributing to the discussion.

#### **The chance to contact you after the meeting with any thoughts**

Having an audio recording lets them listen again and think without being under time pressure. Then they can contact you after the meeting with anything (more) they wish to say.



#### **Time-keeping**

Many dyslexic people have a poor sense of time passing.<sup>40</sup> An hour can feel like 5 minutes. This can be problematic in a meeting. The following should help.

- **Chair firmly**

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<sup>40</sup> Scott 2004, p47

Chair the discussion firmly. Use phrases like 'I'm conscious of time' as often as you need to keep the discussion focussed.

- **Set a time limit - use a timer**

At the beginning of a meeting set an end time then set a timer to count *down* - not up - the minutes. Position it so that you can *both* see at any point how long you have left.

Set a time limit for each point on the agenda and take responsibility for keeping to these time limits.

- **Manage side-tracking and excessive detail**

Many dyslexic people go off at tangents when they are talking. They can also become very bogged down with detail. I suggest the following to keep the discussion on topic.

- Give the agenda and questions in writing in advance.
- If someone is going off topic, intervene, don't wait politely. Summarise what you think the person is trying to say and ask them to confirm.
- Check they have understood the question - if they haven't, ask it a different way, using an example or analogy.
- With someone you know well agree a hand signal to indicate staying on track.

### **Make a written note of the discussion**



After the meeting write up brief notes / minutes including any action points and give the dyslexic person a copy. Keep a copy on file because you may need to refer back to it in future. For example at a later date the dyslexic person may think they or you said something that they or you didn't.

Most of these points also apply to phone calls, WhatsApp calls etc. And also to less formal settings e.g. conversations rather than meetings.

### **Consider using written communication instead of spoken**

Writing can give dyslexic people the time they need to express themselves, which spoken communication often doesn't. Some dyslexic people might be able to communicate better in writing / email than in person. In such cases, you might have more success if you communicate with them in written form e.g. email.

#### **3.2.3 Conversation alert card**



I've created a card to help dyslexic adults tell other people what will help them in the context of a conversation. It's aimed at dyslexic adults. But the right hand column gives a set of actions that other people can take to aid the communication process. You will find it in [Appendix 4](#).

#### **3.2.4 Managing speech difficulties**



Dyslexic people often have speech defects that lead them to clutter speech, stutter or fall over multisyllabic words.<sup>41</sup> This means that some dyslexic people might struggle to physically say what they want to say.

As I've already suggested in 3.2.2 above, be open to using written communication forms instead of spoken.

However, here are some adjustments you can make in conversation / discussion with a dyslexic person (whether or not they have any speech difficulties).

- Give the dyslexic person time to say what they want to say. Be patient, wait if necessary, don't fill gaps or predict what they're going to say - this is their thinking time. However, beware of side-tracking and excessive detail - see 3.2.2 above.
- Speak at a steady pace

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<sup>41</sup> This sentence is closely based on the analysis on Scott 2004, p246

- If you wish to ask a dyslexic person for their opinion at a group meeting e.g. board of trustees, give them advance notice if possible so that they can think and prepare a response without feeling under pressure. Alternatively, allow them to give their response after they've had a chance to think about it at some point after the meeting e.g. over the next few days
- Avoid putting dyslexic people on the spot - don't ask 'what do you think [dyslexic person's name]?' Instead, say 'if anyone would like to let me know their views on this at some point after the meeting that's fine'. Alternatively, advise the dyslexic person in advance of the meeting that they can do this.

### 3.2.5 Managing auditory processing difficulties



See also 4.4 below.

Auditory processing means taking things in by ear (rather than by sight). Many dyslexic people have auditory processing difficulties. This means that in conversation, a dyslexic person might struggle to take in some or all of what you say. To make it as easy as possible for them:

- Make your sentences as short and simple as possible.
- Break down multiple questions into separate questions and ask them one at a time.
- Use a quiet place with minimal background noise and visual distraction to have the conversation. For example, your office with the door closed, not a church hall full of people talking and moving about
- Back up anything important in writing e.g. in a note or email, or let the dyslexic person take notes or make an audio recording

- Always back up detailed instructions, e.g. how to operate any equipment, in writing or with diagrams<sup>42</sup>. Alternatively, when you are explaining something (in speech), let the person take notes or an audio or video recording. For example, I once videoed someone showing me how to link up a computer to an AV system. I then wrote up step-by-step instructions. Allow for any extra time this will take

### 3.2.6 Managing information-processing lag<sup>43</sup>

Many dyslexic people need longer than other people to process (= take in) what you've said and to process (= give out) a response. Gaps in conversation can feel awkward, and might give you the impression that the other person has nothing to say. However dyslexic people *need* gaps in the conversation. So:

- Respect the dyslexic person's need for silence by giving it.
- Pause for a few seconds at the end of sentences to let the dyslexic person take in what you've just said. Imagine you are on a long-distance phone call.
- Be prepared to repeat what you've just said or part of it. For example, they may have caught the tail end of it but missed the rest of it.
- If you find that you are constantly talking over the dyslexic person, give them more time. The amount of time you will need to give will vary from person to person. If you fail to make this adjustment, the dyslexic person will switch off and the communication between you will break down.

### 3.2.7 Managing poor social cognition



<sup>42</sup> British Dyslexia Association, 2019: Appendix 3, subsection on verbal communication (pp42-3).

<sup>43</sup> Scott, 2004 p247

'Social cognition is the ability to understand people by reading what they are thinking or feeling, and judging their possible responses.' Many dyslexic people are very poor at this<sup>44</sup>.

Consequently, dyslexic people might not pick up on your non-verbal cues. For example, imagine they are telling you a long-winded story, full of tangents and detail. You have listened for a reasonable time but are starting to feel overwhelmed by volume.

So you look at your watch. Dyslexic people might not see you do so, and even if they do, might not process the underlying meaning of your action. So they might carry on regardless. Then you sigh - they still don't notice.

Another example: if you frown at something they do, to indicate your disapproval, they might carry on doing it.

Here are some ways you can deal with this.

- If a dyslexic person doesn't pick up on your non-verbal cues, make them verbal. E.g. if someone is talking too much, say 'You've raised some interesting points, but I'm afraid I'm starting to get a bit lost in the detail. So I'd like to summarise what I think are your main points.'

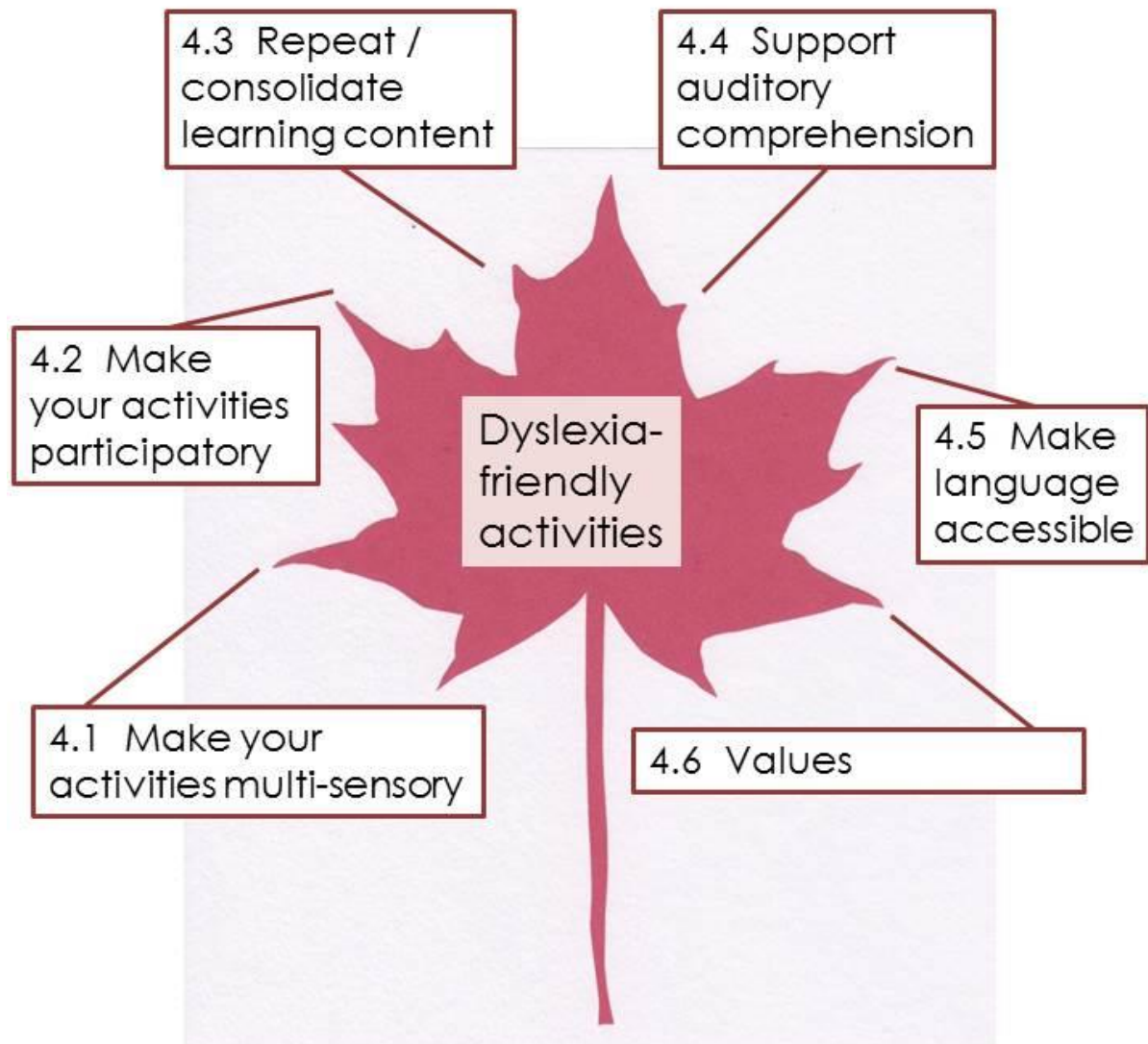


- If a dyslexic person does something you don't want them to do, ask them not to, or do something audible e.g. clear your throat, tap your foot on the floor (a sound or vibration might reach them, whereas something purely visual might not).
- If this is appropriate in your relationship with the person, model whatever you want them to do. For example, if someone is absent-mindedly fiddling with the zip on their bag and it is irritating you, motion a hand dropping towards the floor. If they're not looking at you, say their name.
- Understand that dyslexic people might not be able to judge as well as others how you might respond to something they say. In other words, they may say something direct or insensitive, without realising it is likely to offend you.

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<sup>44</sup> Scott, 2004, p197

## Chapter 4 visual summary



## Chapter 4: Dyslexia-friendly activities

This chapter suggests 6 adjustments that churches can make to their activities e.g. church services, group Bible study.

### 4.1 Make your activities *multi-sensory*



A multi-sensory approach to learning is not just desirable but essential for including dyslexic adults. If you just talk at them for an hour from the start to the end of your service without any other kind of communication, even with breaks for congregational singing, they simply won't be able to take in what you say.<sup>45</sup>

So here are some ways you can make your activities multi-sensory.

#### 4.1.1 Use various modes of communication (e.g. listening, seeing, doing) and various formats (e.g. video clips, still images, songs, drama, games) to convey the learning content in different ways

For example, the theme of one church service I attended was the people Jesus spent His time with. It was introduced at the beginning of the service by a drama sketch acted out by members of the congregation.

Then, throughout the service, it was explored through a pop song ('Sit down' by James), a game (a variation on 'musical chairs' where chairs were added instead of removed), and a short talk

#### 4.1.2 Tips on using video clips and live drama



- Use a short clip (e.g. 2 or 3 minutes) that illustrates a point well

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<sup>45</sup> British Dyslexia Association, 2019: guidelines for trainers pp18 & 19

- Make the connection explicit between the video and the theme for the service. Focus on the connection / relevance e.g. say 'I'm going to show you a video now because it illustrates the point that...'
- There are many films available that dramatize the Bible e.g. ['The Bible' TV miniseries](#), [Noah](#)



- You can also use live drama to make a point. For example, at my Bible study group, the leaders of the group performed a sketch of 2 window cleaners cleaning windows. Then they asked the group to describe what we'd seen.

Each person in the group gave a different description, depending on what they had noticed. This gave a very simple but memorable illustration of the point that the gospels are told from 4 different perspectives.

There are Christian theatre companies in the UK that you can book to do a show at your church or community venue e.g. [Riding Lights Theatre Company](#), [4front theatre](#), [Saltmine Trust](#). I have seen shows by all of these companies and have found them very powerful and memorable.

#### 4.1.3 Make your service content visual

- For example, put a picture of something on the front of the service sheet rather than an explanation of the significance of that thing to the service.



- Use props. These don't have to be sophisticated or expensive - they can be household items or things that are in every church e.g. a chair.
- Use visualisation e.g. set 2 chairs out at the front of the church. Ask the congregation to imagine someone sitting in one of them who needs our prayers and to direct their

intercessions towards them. This makes an abstract concept concrete, which is very helpful for dyslexic people.

- Display visual presentations of what you talk about e.g. a diagram, map or picture on your overhead screen. You can also display a list or definition (in words or images). But don't overdo it by backing up everything you say with a picture. Just use it when an illustration will be useful, e.g. to show a process, Biblical artefact or geographical route.

4.1.4 For more ideas of multi-sensory activities, see the [further information](#) section below.

## 4.2 Make your activities *participatory*



- The more your congregation participates in the services, the more they will learn and feel involved. I don't just mean singing hymns and scripture reading. I mean presenting the other parts of the service too, working with the worship leader as a team, e.g. prayers, announcements, Bible reflections, group dramatizations, dramatic monologues / dialogues<sup>46</sup>. If you have groups in your congregation e.g. women's or men's groups, invite them to do something

This has the added advantage of giving variety to the voice that your congregation hears and 'chunking' the service content (breaking it up into manageable-sized pieces).



- Include 'audience participation' e.g. a quiz, a game, opening / closing responses<sup>47</sup>, or a Taizé chant during a prayer. If you are doing a roving mic. session, ensure that you make explicit the connection

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<sup>46</sup> You will find examples of monologues in Guinness, 2016.

<sup>47</sup> See [appendix 5](#) for an example

between it and the theme of your service rather than just 'what do you like to have for breakfast?'.

### **4.3 Repeat / consolidate learning content**



#### **4.3.1 Repeat important points as soon as you've made them**

Say twice in immediate succession any key points you want your congregation to remember. Repeat what you say verbatim. This is because if you use different words, it is giving the dyslexic person two things to process, instead of the same thing twice.<sup>48</sup> Leave a gap of a few seconds between iterations to let people with a slower processing speed take it in.<sup>49</sup>

#### **4.3.2 Consolidate learning content after a time delay**

- Quiz your congregation, Bible group etc. on what they remember from previous weeks, or summarise it for them. If it is in the context of a service, use a roving microphone for this.
- Refer back and forward to previous / future learning content.

#### **4.3.3 Repeat the learning content using different learning channels and formats**

See point 4.1.1 above.

#### **4.3.4 Use Bible content for quotes and responses**

If you wish to display an inspiring quote at the end of the service on your overhead screen, use a Bible quote that consolidates the message you wish people to take away.

Don't use a quote that is from a source other than the Bible e.g. contemporary literature because this just gives dyslexic people something else to process and remember.

The same applies to opening and closing responses - use Bible content for these to consolidate Bible teaching. For an example see [appendix 5](#).

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<sup>48</sup> Goodwin and Thomson 2004, p9

<sup>49</sup> Scott, 2004 p247

## 4.4 Support auditory comprehension (taking things in by ear)



See also 3.2.5 above.

The following will help dyslexic people to take in the parts of your activities that you present through speech.

### 4.4.1 Facilitate active listening

Give the congregation a specific question or two to bear in mind during the Bible reading(s). You may wish to ask these questions during a roving mic. session or children's address. Or answer them yourself during your sermon. Include the questions on the service sheet or display them on the overhead screen.

### 4.4.2 Provide questions in writing

We will deal with this adjustment in the context of supporting learning (6.4.1) and have done already in the context of meetings (3.2.2). It is something that I often ask for and which really helps me, and which is extremely doable. In some settings, you don't even need a flipchart or overhead screen: the back of a used envelope will do.

Dyslexic people (and anyone else with memory difficulties) will struggle to remember questions that are only asked orally, especially as the discussion proceeds. So *always* give questions in writing too. Here are 3 ways you can do this.

- If you are leading a question / answer session within the context of a church service, display the questions on the overhead screen or in your service sheet.
- In a group discussion setting e.g. Bible study, write the question or prompt on a piece of paper and pass it round the circle. When a person has the piece of paper in their hands, they talk and everyone else listens. If they don't wish to say anything, they pass the piece of paper on to the next person.

This is especially helpful for icebreakers e.g. 'I have come tonight because...' and finishing off e.g. 'The point that has most stood out for me tonight is...'

- Provide Bible group discussion questions in advance, e.g. at the end of a session for the following week. This will give dyslexic people time to think about them and prepare their responses. You are not giving them an unfair advantage by doing this; you are levelling the playing field for them. But it's good practice to give everyone the questions in advance.

#### **4.4.3 Spoken communication**

Also see section 3.2 above.



- When you are talking e.g. reading lessons, making announcements, preaching, talk fluently but steadily. Try to minimise hesitation *during* a sentence but leave gaps *between* sentences for processing
- In prayers, say a sentence then give the congregation the same amount of time to think about it before going onto the next sentence
- Speak with good diction: enunciate your words clearly
- If you have someone in your congregation who is particularly good at reading lessons, ask them to coach others if they are good at teaching / coaching too
- Be unambiguous: be clear, concise and direct<sup>50</sup>
- Avoid implicitly implying anything - make everything you say explicit. For example, explain jokes and don't drop hints or assume that a dyslexic person has understood them<sup>51</sup>. (See also 6.4.2 below and 3.2.7 above)
- Engage people's attention at the beginning e.g. start an address with a question or factoid

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<sup>50</sup> British Dyslexia Association 2019, p43

<sup>51</sup> British Dyslexia Association 2019, p43

- Use an accessible version / translation of the Bible for your Bible readings in church services, Bible group etc.

The Contemporary English Version (CEV) is specifically written to be read aloud.<sup>52</sup> It is in current, accessible UK English, and is translated directly from the original Greek and Hebrew.

The CEV is the *only* translation of the Bible I find accessible.<sup>53</sup>

For comprehensive guidance on how to help dyslexic people access the Bible, see [Tips on Engaging with the Bible](#).

- Choose your Bible readers carefully



If someone is going to read aloud in a church service, they should be good at reading aloud *on the day*.

Reading aloud is difficult (and potentially humiliating) for many dyslexic people. Some might be able to do it in the privacy of their own home but struggle at the lectern. However, others might be good at it.

Don't put pressure on dyslexic people to read aloud in any context (e.g. church service, Bible study group, meeting). Instead, 'ask for volunteers - never pick someone at random'.<sup>54</sup> You will find 10 tips for dyslexic people on reading the Bible aloud in church in [appendix 6](#) below.

## 4.5 Make language accessible

### 4.5.1 Use accessible hymns or explain them to the congregation

- The language of some hymns is completely inaccessible for me. The word order and archaic language make obscure something that could be expressed simply and

<sup>52</sup> For details see <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/bibles/english-bibles/cev/>

<sup>53</sup> See also 2.9 above

<sup>54</sup> British Dyslexia Association, 2019, page 19

comprehensibly. As I already find reading difficult, I need the language to be accessible

- If you are using hymns that are in archaic language, give a plain English introduction to the hymn that explains / paraphrases it. The introduction doesn't need to be long - one or two sentences is sufficient. Its purpose is to give an overall sense of the meaning ('gist') of the hymn (see 5.2 below)



- Ensure your church keyboard player / organist plays hymns at a speed that people can sing them at, and that gives them sufficient time to process (take in) the words

#### **4.5.2 The Lord's Prayer**

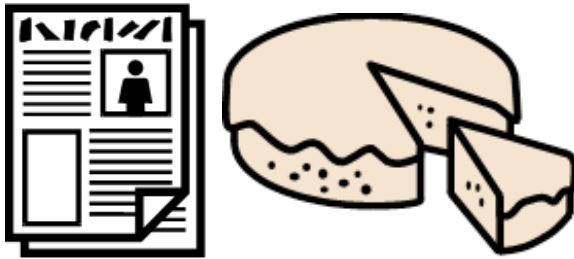
- The word 'trespasses' is too metaphorical for me. I understand that it is 'going somewhere I shouldn't go' morally. But it's not exactly plain English.

Even if the language conveyed the meaning to me, which it doesn't, I'd still struggle to say and remember the sentence 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us'. It's a mouthful and I am never confident that I'll get it right. So I say the debt and debtors version, even if everyone else is saying the trespasses one.

- Given the speech difficulties associated with dyslexia (see 3.2.5 above) I suspect that many dyslexic people would struggle with the trespasses version. The debts and debtors one is much easier to say.
- So whether you say the trespasses version or not, give people the option of saying the debts version if they prefer.
- Write the whole prayer out on the service sheet so that everyone knows exactly what the wording is and put it on your website so that people can practise it if they need to.

## 4.6 Values

Dyslexic people might feel different enough - don't make them feel any more different by excluding them in other ways. Here are 2 examples.



- **Don't impose values on your congregation**

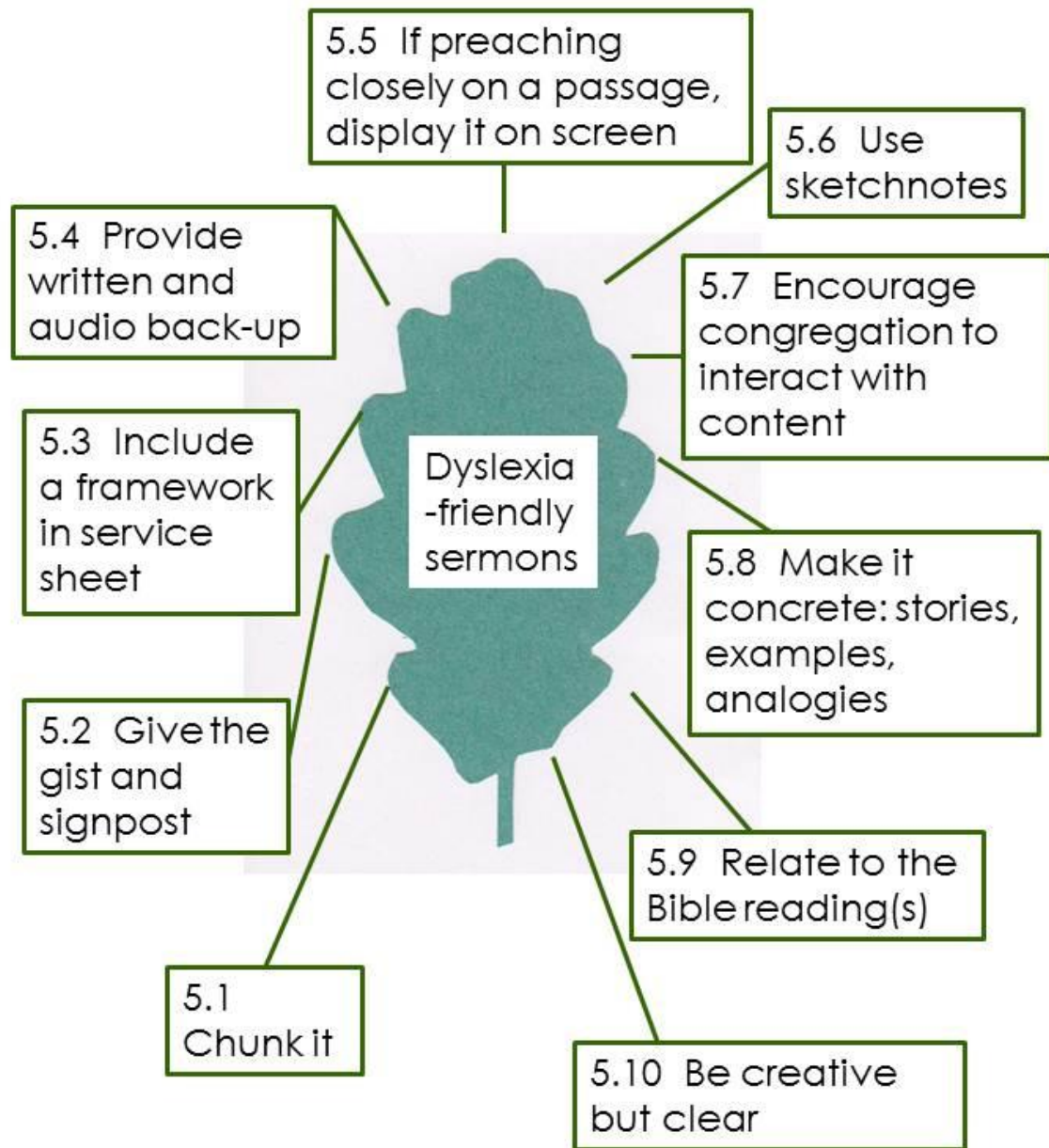
Don't assume that everyone does things like shop in supermarkets, follow mainstream media and eat certain foods. If you do, this will make the people who don't do these things feel marginalised.

Many dyslexic people are highly individual and actually enjoy their individuality. So don't devalue it by giving the message that they should conform to whichever values you'd like them to

- **Choose your words carefully**

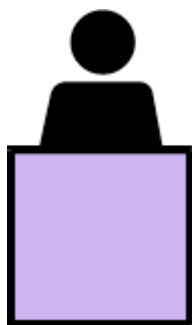
e.g. 'foreigners' is not an inclusive term to use for people who have come to live in the UK from another country. The Bible uses such words. But if you are using them, make this explicit. E.g. say 'the Bible uses the word "foreigner"; we would say "migrant"'

## Chapter 5 visual summary



## Chapter 5: Dyslexia-friendly sermons

This chapter suggests 10 changes you can make to your sermons. Point 1 suggests chunking (dividing) your sermon up into 2 or more shorter addresses and presenting them separately. Points 2 - 4 apply especially to sermons that you present all in one go e.g. 1 sermon that lasts 18 minutes. Points 5 - 10 apply to both chunked addresses and full-length sermons.



### 5.1 Break your sermon up into chunks and present them separately

E.g. 3 addresses that last 6 minutes each instead of 1 sermon that lasts 18 minutes

- Give each address a title and print them in the service sheet
- Make it clear at the beginning of each address what it's going to be about
- Intersperse the addresses with other elements of worship - e.g. hymns, prayers, readings - in order to stagger the delivery of them

### 5.2 Give the gist at the beginning and signpost as you go

- Giving the gist of something is very helpful for dyslexic people because many dyslexic people are holistic ('big picture') thinkers. This means that when taking in information, they need to have a sense of the whole in order to take in the parts.<sup>55</sup>
- So give the gist at the beginning of a sermon e.g. 'We're going to think about suffering today, with reference to Job Chapter ...' then summarise the main points of your sermon
- Sum up at the end of each section of your sermon and give the gist of the next section. E.g. after you've made the 1<sup>st</sup> point, say 'So [say in a nutshell what was the 1<sup>st</sup> aspect of suffering]. Now we're

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<sup>55</sup> British Dyslexia Association 2019, p19: 'Dyslexic people tend to learn better when they are given an overview of the subject first before going into the minutiae.'

going to look at the second, which is [say the 2<sup>nd</sup> aspect in a nutshell]

### **5.3 Include a framework of your sermon in your service sheet**

- Give the overall heading, the subheadings and a bullet point or two under each subheading. Leave plenty space for people to note any thoughts / details as you speak. Alternatively, display the framework of your sermon on your overhead projector

### **5.4 Provide written and audio back-up of your sermons**



- Distractibility is a feature of dyslexia. Some dyslexic people have limited auditory memory, which means they can't focus on what someone is saying for as long as other people. This is especially the case if whatever is being said is difficult for them to follow (also see 3.2.6 and 4.4 above)
- Have you ever dozed off during a film then woken up again? You've missed some of the action and lost track of the plot. It's not easy to follow the rest of the film, in fact it's guess work. That's what it's like for someone whose attention has wandered during your sermon.

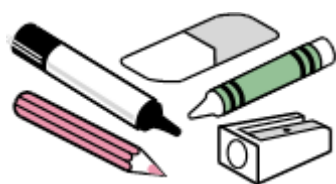


- Dyslexic people can be easily distracted, e.g. something moving in front of them or a thought that sparks a tangential thought process. This means that dyslexic adults benefit greatly from the chance to listen again to your sermon, or read it. So share your sermons in print or audio, e.g. on request or [Soundcloud](https://www.soundcloud.com/) or your website

### **5.5 If you are preaching closely on a passage, display it on your screen**

I have seen this done where whoever was operating the computer scrolled through the passage as the sermon progressed. Give whoever operates the computer a copy of your sermon so they can do this

## 5.6 Use sketchnotes



- Sketchnoting (also called 'visual recording' or 'graphic recording') is an illustration technique that consists of images and key words. If you have someone in your congregation who can do sketchnoting, ask them to make a sketchnote of your sermon in advance
- Display their sketchnote on your overhead screen during your sermon and include it in the service sheet if possible. This will help all visual thinkers (dyslexic and non-dyslexic alike) because it will present the content of your sermon visually. Another thing that is dyslexia-friendly about a visual summary like this is it presents the sermon all on one page, which is helpful for holistic thinkers<sup>56</sup>.
- If you don't have a sketchnoter in your congregation, support someone in your congregation to learn this skill e.g. by giving them a [book](#) or sending them on a [course](#). [This blog post](#) might help sketchnoters to sketchnote things from the Bible.

## 5.7 Encourage your congregation to interact with the sermon content

- E.g. by taking notes or drawing a spider diagram<sup>57</sup> or sketchnote of it as they listen. This usually helps me to keep focused on the sermon and so prevents my thoughts or something external distracting me.

## 5.8 Make your sermon as concrete as you can

### 5.8.1 Stories



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<sup>56</sup> See 5.2 above

<sup>57</sup> You will find a worked example of a spider diagram on page 3 of the summary document at the end of [5 ways to present information visually](#)

- Engaging stories about people are a good way for many dyslexic people to take in information by ear. There are lots of stories in the Bible about people. So maximise the use of storytelling in church services
- Some people are gifted storytellers. It's not a natural strength for everyone, but there's likely to be at least one great storyteller in your congregation - find them and use them. (Dyslexic people can be excellent storytellers). For example ask them to retell whichever Bible story you are preaching on in their own words. The children's address can be a good opportunity for telling stories to the whole congregation.<sup>58</sup>
- If you want to tell another (non-Bible) story to illustrate a Bible story, keep it brief i.e. a few sentences. Focus on the Bible one and realise it with as many sensory details as you can

### **5.8.2 Illustrate abstract points with examples and analogies**

For example, when I tell people that I need the gist of something at the beginning in order to take in the detail (see 5.2 above), I tell them it's like decorating a Christmas tree: having a sense of the whole tree lets me imagine hanging the details on the branches

## **5.9 Relate your sermon to the Bible reading(s)**

- This will connect up the different elements of worship and give the service coherence. It is another way for you to repeat the learning content, which helps people with language processing difficulties (see 4.3 above)

## **5.10 Be creative / imaginative but make it clear what you are talking about**



E.g. write an imaginary dialogue between Jesus and Peter, where Peter asks Jesus what his healing technique is. Ask one of your congregation to take the part of Jesus. Announce who is who before

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<sup>58</sup> You can train in storytelling at the [Scottish Storytelling Centre](#). Or how about making a digital story of a Bible story like [this one](#) and showing it in a church service?

you start and what the conversation is e.g. 'I'm taking the role of Peter and Anne's going to play the part of Jesus. I'll be asking Anne what her healing technique is, and she'll be answering me.'

## Part 3: Doing things you (maybe) haven't done before

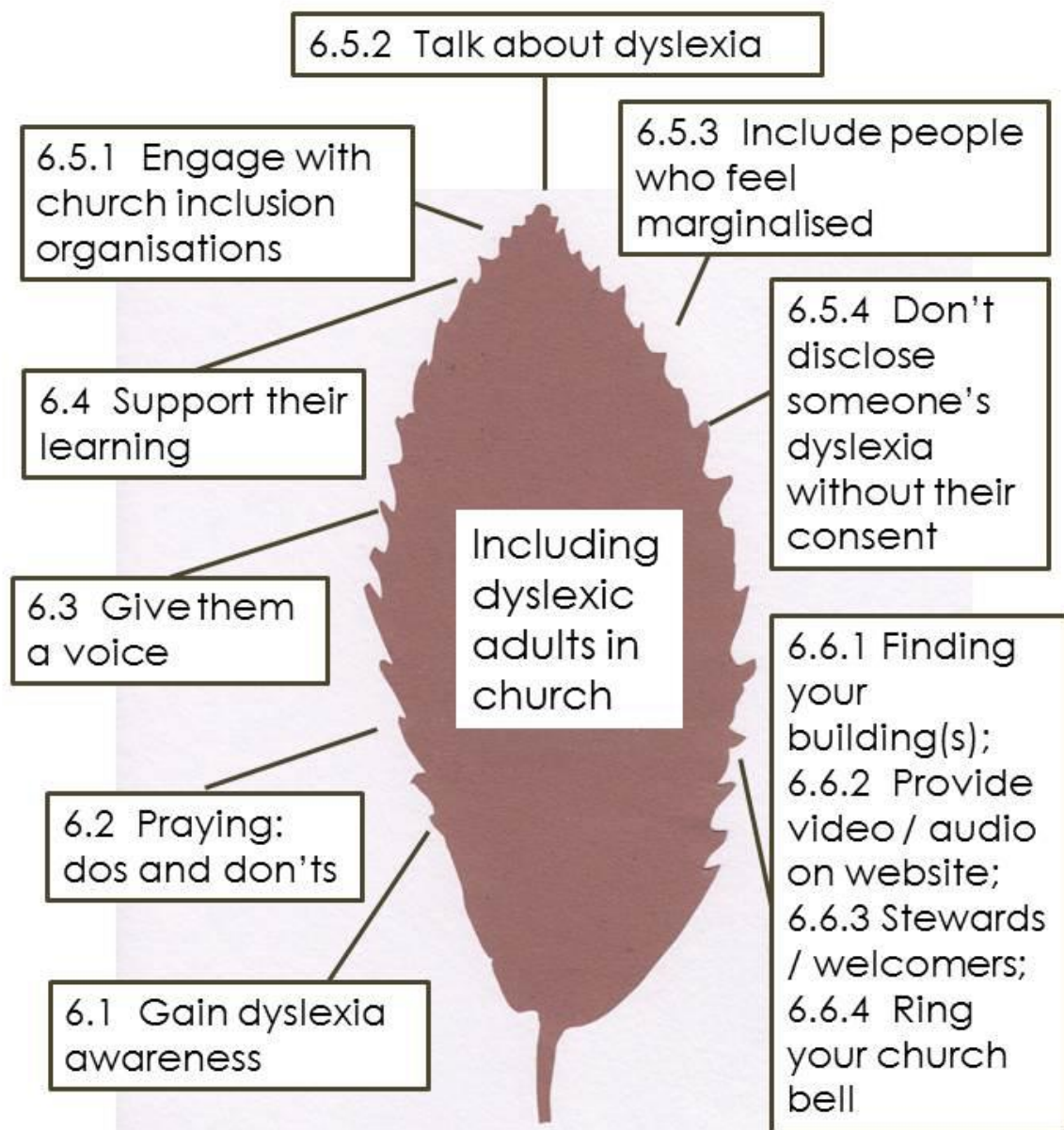


Chapter 6: Including dyslexic adults in church - general points



Chapter 7: Supporting dyslexic adults in church

## Chapter 6 visual summary



## Chapter 6: Including dyslexic adults in church - general points



The last 2 chapters of this guide look at some things churches can do - that they may not already be doing - to include and support dyslexic adults. This chapter suggests 6 things churches can do to include dyslexic adults.

### 6.1 Gain dyslexia awareness



Dyslexia awareness is low in the general population. Many people wrongly think it is just a problem with literacy<sup>59</sup> that can be overcome with a pair of tinted spectacles<sup>60</sup>.

Here are 3 things a congregation can do to learn about dyslexia.

#### 6.1.1 Have dyslexia awareness training

- Dyslexia Scotland offers [dyslexia awareness training](#)

#### 6.1.2 Inform yourselves on adult dyslexia

- Signpost your congregation to Dyslexia Scotland's [leaflets](#)
- Read and signpost your congregation to Sylvia Moody's '[Checklists](#)'; the British Dyslexia Association's '[Adult Dyslexia Checklist](#)'; and Dyslexia Scotland's leaflet '[Checklist and Indicators of Dyslexia](#)'. These list the signs / indicators of adult dyslexia
- Signpost your congregation to this guide, especially the [further information](#) on adult dyslexia below

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<sup>59</sup> There is a lot more to dyslexia than literacy problems - see ch 1 above

<sup>60</sup> Wearing tinted spectacles and a printing on coloured paper can help with a condition called visual stress. For further information see [Sylvia Moody's leaflet on visual stress](#) (in the 'General Information' section).

### 6.1.3 Take part in Dyslexia Awareness Week

- Dyslexia Awareness Week runs every year in [Scotland](#) in November. It takes place in October in the [rest of the UK](#)
- Dyslexia Scotland provides awareness raising resources such as Power Point presentations and posters. Display these in your church building(s) during Dyslexia Awareness Week and keep them on file for subsequent years
- Dyslexia Scotland provides blue awareness ribbons for wearing during Dyslexia Awareness Week. You can order up to 200 by emailing [blueribbon@dyslexiascotland.org.uk](mailto:blueribbon@dyslexiascotland.org.uk). Ribbons are sent out in October.

### 6.2 Praying: dos and don'ts

- See [Appendix 2](#) for suggestions of prayer points for Dyslexia Awareness Week
- Ask your congregation for prayer requests for Dyslexia Awareness Week but don't name dyslexic people in public prayer e.g. in a prayer group or church service (see point 6.5.5 below)
- Don't pray for dyslexic people to be healed: there is no cure<sup>61</sup>

### 6.3 Give dyslexic people a voice



For example on [Ability Sunday](#) invite a dyslexic person to give a Bible reflection or address in church. They could speak about their faith journey as a dyslexic person or give a Bible reflection on a passage that is particularly relevant / helpful to them. See [Appendix 3](#) for a sample Bible reflection and complementary prayer.

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<sup>61</sup> 'We do not have a cure for dyslexia. This is because it is a human difference. We might as well look for a cure for blue eyes.' Scott 2004, p244. See also Baird, Young and Dicken, p4: the religious model of disability

## 6.4 Support dyslexic people's learning

### 6.4.1 Give dyslexic people opportunities to engage with learning content independently

(By 'learning content' I mean whatever you want people to take away with them from the church activity). By doing this, you are letting dyslexic people learn in their own ways, at their own pace. This is how dyslexic people need to learn. Here are 3 examples.



- Give advance notice of which passage(s) from the Bible will be read out in your church service the following week.



- If you are running a Bible study group, use a study guide that people can use in advance of the group sessions<sup>62</sup>. Alternatively, give a note of the discussion points in advance so that people can think about them and work out their responses. See 4.4.2 below for a fuller explanation of this.
- Signpost your congregation to visual recordings<sup>63</sup> in advance. For example, [this video](#) gives an overview (the gist) of 1 and 2 Kings. And [these 4 visual recordings](#) of 1 Kings (select '2016 Bible Teachings' then 'Bible Conference 2016')

### 6.4.2 Use humour



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<sup>62</sup> Such as Guinness 2016

<sup>63</sup> See 5.6 below

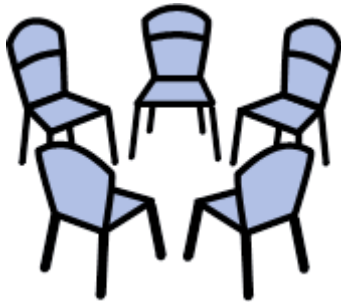
People learn best when they feel unstressed and when it's fun<sup>64</sup>. So if humour is part of the activity this will help dyslexic people to take in the content. If I find something funny early on in an activity, it means I'm more likely to remember whatever follows.

Not everyone can make the congregation laugh. But you don't have to be a comedian yourself - you can use humorous video clips or fun activities to illustrate points you wish to convey. I've seen both these used to great effect in church services.

Dyslexic people might not 'get' jokes. But don't let this put you off telling jokes in the company of dyslexic people. And jokes are not the only form of humour. See 4.4.3 below

#### **6.4.3 Support Bible learning**

Don't assume that all adults have learned about the Bible before reaching adulthood. Even if a dyslexic person has attended church and children's church activities, they won't necessarily have taken in much - or even any - of the learning content.



- Provide opportunities for the dyslexic people in your congregation to discuss the Bible with others e.g. a Bible study group for adults.
- Signpost your congregation to this [guide](#). It gives tips for dyslexic people on engaging with the Bible.
- Use the opportunities you have e.g. your sermon, prayers to tell stories from the Bible well, and to reinforce / consolidate their message. For example, a sermon on the story of Gideon made vivid (and memorable) for me the message that I can do whatever God wants me to do because He will help me do it.

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<sup>64</sup> Mortimore 2008, p269: 'We all remember the emotional and the unexpected' and p264: 'set the preconditions for learning - low stress [...] and p267: 'What is it that makes some things easier to remember? [...] fun - you enjoy learning about it'

#### **6.4.4 Help dyslexic people to remember lines for songs, plays etc.**

Dyslexic people may need extra support to learn lines for songs, plays etc. Dyslexic difficulties are exacerbated under stress, which may cause a dyslexic person to forget something 'on the night' that they have learned thoroughly.<sup>65</sup>

There are specific strategies dyslexic people can use to learn lines for plays. See 2 articles that give tips for dyslexic actors in 'Dyslexia Voice'<sup>66</sup> issues for June 2016 and Sept. 2016.

### **6.5 Including dyslexic adults in other ways**

#### **6.5.1 Use dyslexic people's strengths**



Find out what the abilities of the dyslexic people in your congregation are and use them (bearing in mind that they might not identify as dyslexic). For example, if you have a dyslexic singer, invite them to sing in your band / choir. Showcase their work e.g. if they write poetry, invite them to submit their poems to the church magazine.

This gives the dyslexic person the chance to give of their best, and the congregation the chance to see them at their best. This is very important for dyslexic people and everyone else because of the extreme discrepancy between a dyslexic person's abilities and difficulties (which I've explained in 1.5 above).

#### **6.5.2 Engage with church inclusion organisations active in Scotland**

2 church inclusion organisations currently active in Scotland are:

- [Scottish Churches Disability Group](#) (SCDG)
- [Edinburgh and the Lothians Roofbreaker Network](#)

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<sup>65</sup> Mortimore 2008 gives details on what can help dyslexic people to memorise and learn

<sup>66</sup> The [members' magazine](#) of Dyslexia Scotland

The aims of both organisations overlap but operate from different and complementary perspectives:

- SCDG operates at a systemic (i.e. *national church*) level across denominations to promote disability inclusion
- Edinburgh and the Lothians Roofbreaker Network encourages disabled individuals to act from the ground up, to build, connect and serve within their respective *local churches* and faith communities

**Disability inclusion needs to be effected by churches**, because it is the churches that are doing the including, not the disabled people. It's a bit like receiving a guest into your home: they can ring your doorbell but they can't receive themselves - it's you who has to open the door and let them in.



These 2 organisations are there to work *with, not for*, churches to achieve disability inclusion. Churches can support and engage with these groups e.g. by providing venues for their meetings and attending them.

### 6.5.3 Talk about dyslexia



Talking about dyslexia can help to destigmatise it and make dyslexic people feel more included.

Acknowledging the existence of any minority group is fundamental to including it. Doing this once a year on Ability

Sunday or during Dyslexia Awareness Week is tokenistic: it needs to be done regularly, as a normal part of church life

- If someone in your congregation tells you that they are dyslexic, take an interest and ask them how dyslexia-friendly they find your church activities. If you listen non-judgementally you will be showing them that you accept and value them as an individual

Bear in mind that some dyslexic people might be able to give you a clear account of how dyslexia affects them, while others might not (see 2.7.2 and 2.7.3 above)

- Refer to dyslexia in your church activities, in your print publications and on your website / social media
- Mention dyslexia and other disabilities in relation to Bible passages e.g. the through the roof story in Mark 2, Mephibosheth, Moses
- Avoid the 'tragedy' and 'religious' models of disability. Instead, promote the social model of disability<sup>67</sup>. The social model of disability is the idea that it's not a person's disability that disables them but society's failure to accommodate it. And so society needs to accommodate a person's disability e.g. by making adjustments
- Talking about dyslexia in church can also help dyslexic people who don't realise they're dyslexic think 'maybe I'm dyslexic'. This can start the process of them addressing their dyslexia. See sections 7.1.1 - 7.1.3 below

#### **6.5.4 Include people who *feel* marginalised (they may not look it)**



Accept that some people come to church because they feel that they don't fit in anywhere else. Acknowledge their presence as an integral part of the congregation. Accept them as they are.

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<sup>67</sup> Baird, Young and Dicken pp 4 and 5

Acknowledge to your congregation that a church needs *all* its members in order to function as a church<sup>68</sup>. A church is made up of its people, so everyone's contribution is valid, whether you are a pillar of the kirk<sup>69</sup> or not

- Don't assume that no-one in your congregation feels marginalised.

Dyslexic people have a different way of thinking from 90% of the population. They might attend church as a way to cope with feeling different and not meeting societal expectations, including their own.

Ensure your congregation doesn't give out the message 'outcasts don't come to church - they are somewhere outwith our church and need our help'. People can feel marginalised without looking it. Many disabilities are hidden and many disabled people are socially isolated.

- Dyslexic people can find social interaction difficult. If you see someone standing on their own in a social setting, don't ignore them - talk to them.
- Don't use dyslexic people as a source of information on dyslexia. Respect that they are a person, not their dyslexia or an information-giving service. There is lots of information on dyslexia available, for example on Dyslexia Scotland's [website](#), [blog](#), and in the [anthology of personal stories](#)<sup>70</sup>. You may also be able to attend or host a [Human Library event](#). There is also a list of sources of [further information](#) on adult dyslexia below.
- If you use your church hall for refreshments before / after your service(s), lay the tables out joined in a horse-shoe with chairs at them, rather than individual tables with chairs round them. This way no-one will get stuck at a table with no-one to talk to.

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<sup>68</sup> 1 Corinthians 12 vv12-27

<sup>69</sup> A Scots idiom meaning someone a church depends on (implying if they weren't there the church would collapse)

<sup>70</sup> 'Dyslexia and Us' 2011 - see bibliography

### **6.5.5 Don't disclose someone's dyslexia to others without their consent**



For some dyslexic people, disclosing their dyslexia (telling others they are dyslexic) is a huge consideration. For example, some dyslexic people don't want certain people in their lives to know about their dyslexia for fear of being discriminated against in employment or being victimised in some way.

Someone's disability is theirs to disclose if they choose, not yours. As a rule of thumb, it would not be legal for a church to disclose that someone has dyslexia without the person's consent<sup>71</sup>.

If you wish to tell others about someone's dyslexia ask the dyslexic person for their consent to do this. If they refuse, accept this - don't try to persuade them. You don't actually have to use the label 'dyslexia' - you can talk about specific needs / difficulties in a good practice way. E.g. 'Jim needs the questions in writing' not 'Jim needs the questions in writing because he's dyslexic'.

## **6.6 Practical ways to include dyslexic people**

### **6.6.1 Make it as easy as you can for people to find your church building(s)**

Many dyslexic people struggle to read maps and tell left from right. It will help dyslexic people find your church if you provide the following on your website.

- a photo of your church especially how it looks as people approach it e.g. from the pavement leading to the entrance to the church grounds or door
- a map that gives an 'earth' option so that people can go through a virtual journey to the church e.g. from the nearest bus stop

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<sup>71</sup> This information was provided to me by Dyslexia Scotland Helpline in July 2018. For further information, see <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/principles/lawfulness-fairness-and-transparency>

- the postcode (so that people can find it using technology)
- the full postal address including the street name
- a 'how to find us' section giving directions that use land marks e.g. next to Jo's Garage / opposite the entrance to [name of local] Park / next to [name of local] primary school



#### **6.6.2 Provide video / audio on your website to let people know what to expect without having to read any text**

- This is particularly helpful to newcomers or anyone who might feel anxious about coming to church for a return visit
- If you are not able to make a video, make an audio recording instead, explaining what will happen during a service at your church. Post this online e.g. on [SoundCloud](#) and signpost to it from your website
- Offer an audio recording of a service or sermon online e.g. on SoundCloud and signpost to these from your website
- Signpost to '[Give Church a Go at St Nicholas Buccleuch, Dalkeith](#)' (an introductory video) if it will give people an idea of what to expect at your congregation

#### **6.6.3 Stewards / welcomers**



'Through the Roof' gives guidelines on how stewards / welcomers can include disabled people. The 2 points that are relevant for dyslexia are:

- Be aware that some people have hidden disabilities and may need help [a hidden disability is one you can't see]

- Assume nothing - always ask!

I'd like to add the following points:

- Always stand facing the door / entrance so that people will see you when they approach, and you will see them. There is nothing more unwelcoming than someone's back
- Smile and make eye contact but then look away or down if necessary. Don't stare at someone as they walk towards you - this is intimidating for anyone who feels self-conscious
- Keep to a bare minimum the amount of information you give orally. For example, just hand the person the service sheet and say 'good morning' and hold your hand out in the direction they should go
- Ensure that there is a chain of stewards into the sanctuary i.e. at every juncture so that people can follow the faces to the door rather than have to follow signs or guess
- It also helps if there is a steward / welcomer actually inside the sanctuary, keeping track of where there are seats and showing people to a seat, or at least telling them where there are some seats e.g. half way back on the right
- Avoid laying out your church building in such a way that people have to enter from the front rather than the back. If you are self-confident, it probably doesn't bother you to walk into a room with a sea of faces. But to anyone who isn't, it might feel intimidating.
- Display a digital clock on the wall so that people can see how long they have before the service starts (some dyslexic people find it difficult to read analogue clocks)

#### **6.6.4 Ring your church bell**



Time management can be a significant challenge for many dyslexic people. It can be very stressful trying to reach somewhere on time. It can be very helpful if a church bell sounds to indicate that the service will start soon (but hasn't started yet). If you have a church bell, mention somewhere in your information when you will ring it e.g. 5 minutes before the service begins

## Chapter 7 visual summary



## Chapter 7: Supporting dyslexic adults in church



Supporting dyslexic adults is a way of including them. So this final chapter suggests 2 things that churches can do - that they may not already be doing - to support dyslexic adults. Firstly it suggests 5 ways a church can support dyslexic adults who don't realise they're dyslexic. Secondly it suggests 5 ways a church can give dyslexic adults emotional support, or signpost them to this.

### 7.1 Help dyslexic adults who don't realise they are dyslexic

Many people aren't aware of what dyslexia is, and so don't recognise the signs of dyslexia in themselves. People around them don't pick up on the signs of dyslexia either. So their dyslexia goes undetected.

As a result, many dyslexic people don't know they are dyslexic, and so don't appreciate the problems their unaddressed dyslexia might be causing them and the people around them.

Dyslexia assessment is expensive and not presently government funded. Unfortunately, this means that many people can't access assessment. Being assessed can let dyslexic people understand how dyslexia affects them and start to self-manage it.

But even if people can't access assessment, suspecting they are dyslexic might help them to start self-managing their dyslexia.<sup>72</sup> So one thing a church can do is help dyslexic people to realise they might be dyslexic. Here are 5 ways a church can do this.

#### 7.1.1 Give opportunities for dyslexic people to talk to others at church



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<sup>72</sup> For example, some self-help resources are aimed at anyone who is dyslexic or thinks they might be.

For example, provide refreshments after a service. A chat about dyslexia in the church hall can literally save a dyslexic person's life. A classic example is given in Veena's story<sup>73</sup>:

Veena was so miserable as a result of unaddressed dyslexia that she was contemplating suicide. She didn't realise that it was dyslexia that was causing her the problems she was experiencing.

Then a lady at Veena's church told Veena that she'd just been identified with dyslexia. As this lady described her difficulties, Veena recognised her own and 'this was the beginning of a long road that led [Veena] out of darkness and back into the light'.

You can also give opportunities for dyslexic people to tell people about dyslexia anonymously e.g. through your church magazine.

### **7.1.2 Play a film or audio clip of someone describing their dyslexia**

Another way you can let people realise they might be dyslexic is by playing or reading out someone's description of how dyslexia affects them e.g. from a radio programme or documentary, or article or book<sup>74</sup>. You could use this in a church service to introduce a theme e.g. disability, diversity, difficulties / strengths

### **7.1.3 Notice the signs of dyslexia in others and consider telling them**



If you notice signs of dyslexia in someone in your church whom you know well, you may want to consider pointing these out to them and saying 'I think you might be dyslexic'. This could prompt them to explore whether they are.

It's best if you can give specific examples to back up your comment, referring to a published resource e.g. the BDA's '[Adult Dyslexia Checklist](#)' or Sylvia Moody's '[Checklists](#)'.

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<sup>73</sup> Bartlett and Moody 2010, pp57-58

<sup>74</sup> 'Dyslexia and Us' is a good source for this as it has a wide range of descriptions of the ways dyslexia affects people. There are details of this book below the leaflets at <https://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/our-leaflets>

Dyslexic people may deny or excuse the dyslexic behaviour e.g. 'I didn't have my glasses on'; or 'Oh, I always do that - that's just me'.

It's common for dyslexic people to cover up their dyslexia. So it may take a dyslexic person time to come round to the idea that they might be dyslexic. Give them time. Respect that it could be very difficult and scary for them to face up to the possibility that they are not who they've always thought they are up till now.<sup>75</sup>

But still broach the subject. And if their unaddressed dyslexia is inconveniencing you, point out how it's affecting you. They may be so taken up in dealing with their unaddressed dyslexia that they don't realise that it's affecting others too.

Even if your comment doesn't prompt them to act at the time, they might follow it up at a later point, e.g. if something else happens in their life that consolidates what you have said.

If you think that someone in your congregation is dyslexic but doesn't realise it, refer them to [Sylvia Moody's](#) and the [BDA's](#) checklists, [Dyslexic Adult?](#) and '[Adult Assessment](#)'. If you think you might be dyslexic yourself, refer yourself to the same resources.

#### **7.1.4 Signpost to information on dyslexia**

Signpost to your local [national dyslexia organisation](#) e.g. in your church notices or magazine. This will let people access information and advice on dyslexia anonymously

#### **7.1.5 Be aware that unaddressed dyslexia can cause personal, professional and domestic difficulties<sup>76</sup>**



Unaddressed dyslexia can put strain on work and personal relationships and may lead to relationship breakdown. So conflict on your board of trustees or in a family, a crisis at work,

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<sup>75</sup> For further information on this, see '[Dyslexia on the Defensive](#)'.

<sup>76</sup> Moody 2006, pp 6 and 7

addictions<sup>77</sup> and mental health problems might all have unaddressed dyslexia as their root cause.

If you suspect unidentified dyslexia is causing relationship problems for people in your congregation, refer them to the screening tests, webpage and blog post detailed in 7.1.3 above.

## 7.2 Emotional support



Dyslexic adults commonly experience stress, low self-esteem and poor self-confidence. These can lead to mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and addictions<sup>78</sup>.

Added to this, anger, frustration and not liking or valuing oneself are typical characteristics of dyslexia in adults<sup>79</sup>.

Even dyslexic people who have developed effective self-management strategies can find it difficult to change the way they think about themselves.

Part of the challenge for many dyslexic people is dealing with past negative experiences e.g. bullying in education, family or employment. These can be traumatising - Post-Traumatic Stress is common in dyslexic people.<sup>80</sup>

Dyslexic adults can feel misunderstood and at odds with those closest to them. Due to a range of factors, they can be socially isolated. They may feel that society doesn't value or accept them.

Here are 5 things you can do in response.

### 7.2.1 Be understanding but maintain strong boundaries<sup>81</sup>

If you are aware of what dyslexic people commonly experience on their journey through life, this can inform the way you

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<sup>77</sup> Scott 2004, p261

<sup>78</sup> Sylvia Moody '[Emotions and Dyslexia](#)'; and International Dyslexia Association '[The Dyslexia-Stress-Anxiety Connection](#)'

<sup>79</sup> Hammond and Hercules 2003, p17

<sup>80</sup> Scott 2004, p161

<sup>81</sup> Scott 2004, pp262-3. This reference is about the relationship between a counsellor and a dyslexic adult. But I imagine the same applies in a relationship between a dyslexic adult and someone providing pastoral care.

communicate with them.<sup>82</sup> For example, if a dyslexic person is truculent and challenges your authority, it may be because they are wary of authority figures as a result of past experiences.<sup>83</sup>

Look beyond negative behaviour and find positive ways to respond. E.g.

- Reassure them and tell them that they are welcome in this environment.
- Show them that you accept them and value their positive contributions.
- Give them time to trust you - this may take longer than with others.
- Pick up on their positive behaviours and ignore the negative ones.

Be firm about time-keeping<sup>84</sup>.

### 7.2.2 Signpost to self-help or counselling



- You will find 2 lists of self-help resources for dyslexic adults on common mental health conditions at [Engaging with Books for Dyslexic Wellbeing](#)
- Counselling is one type of intervention (support) that dyslexic adults can benefit from after they are identified as dyslexic<sup>85</sup>.
- Any dyslexic adult going for counselling / psychotherapy can refer their counsellor / psychotherapist to [this list](#) (entitled 'Resources for counsellors on counselling dyslexic adults', 3<sup>rd</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> For further insight into the psychological and social effects of dyslexia I recommend Scott 2004, chapter 7; Bartlett and Moody 2010 chapters 5 and 16; and Moody 2009 chapters 5 and 10. If you are not able to access these books, Sylvia Moody's free download on Emotions in her '[Working Person's Guide](#)' offers a comprehensive overview.

<sup>83</sup> Scott 2004, p282. This reference is about the relationship between a counsellor and a dyslexic adult. But I imagine the same applies in a relationship between a dyslexic adult and someone providing pastoral care.

<sup>84</sup> Scott 2004, p262-3

<sup>85</sup> McLoughlin and Leather 2013, pp41-42

resource from the bottom of the list). The resources on it may also help dyslexic adults to understand themselves and optimize the benefit of counselling

### **7.2.3 Encourage dyslexic people**

Many dyslexic people experience excessive criticism in their lives, both from themselves and others<sup>86</sup>. So if you encourage dyslexic adults consistently in what they are good at, this can help them much more than it would help other people.

So look out for their abilities and give them positive feedback when they do things well. One comment from one person might have a significant impact on a dyslexic person. But so too might many comments from different people. It's like a cloudburst or a prolonged shower: they both produce puddles.

Be aware that some dyslexic people are uncomfortable with praise and find it difficult to accept compliments.<sup>87</sup>

### **7.2.4 Provide a peaceful, calm space**

- Provide a calm, peaceful atmosphere where dyslexic people and those who support them can be still and contemplate their lives, but also feel accepted, renewed and strengthened. You can do this within the context of your church services, by giving silent time for reflection. You can also achieve it by walking and talking at a steady pace.

### **7.2.5 Promote Christian meditation**



Meditation promotes mental *and* physical wellbeing. Christianity has its own meditation tradition, dating back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. I understand Christian meditation to be emptying your mind of distractions in order to spend quality time with God.

The World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) is a worldwide ecumenical meditation organisation based in the UK. It suggests a very simple kind of meditation.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Scott 2004, pp265-267

<sup>87</sup> Scott 2004, p266: paragraph starting 'Dyslexics grow to neither expect nor attract praise'

Here are some potential benefits to dyslexic adults of the WCCM type of meditation.

- It offers them respite from the world where people's expectations - including their own perhaps - are based on the norm<sup>89</sup>
- It strengthens their relationship with God
- It doesn't require them to process information, or attend church services or converse with people
- It makes them give their minds a rest, which they may not do at any other time
- It lets them 'just be' with God, rather than be dyslexic, different or anything else

Here are some ways you can promote Christian meditation in your congregation.

- Try it for yourself
- Tell your congregation about the WCCM and signpost them to the [WCCM website](#)
- Encourage your congregation to try meditation by attending a WCCM local [group](#).
- Teach your congregation to meditate and give them the chance to try it out briefly e.g. during a church service
- Encourage and support your congregation to set up a meditation group e.g. provide a room for it.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> You'll find instructions at <https://www.christianmeditation.org.uk/how-to-meditate/how-to-meditate2>

<sup>89</sup> 'Dyslexia and Us' 2011, p90

<sup>90</sup> For guidance on setting up a group, see <http://wccm.org/content/wccm-meditation-groups>

## Closing poem: Think of a forest



Think of a forest,  
Think of a tree,  
Or empty your mind  
And with God, just be.

Think of a cloudburst  
Think of a shower.  
Now's the day  
And now's the hour<sup>91</sup>.

See the forest,  
See the trees,  
See our needles,  
See our leaves.

See our majesty,  
See our might:  
We too breathe,  
Striving for light.

Who made the forest?  
Who made us 'other'?  
Who loves a'body<sup>92</sup> and says  
'Love one another'?

By Aurora Betony

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<sup>91</sup> For churches to include dyslexic adults

<sup>92</sup> Scots for 'everybody'

## Further information



### Further information on church disability inclusion

#### 8.1 Resources

##### 8.1.1 From 'Through the Roof' charity

- 1) ['Removing barriers'](#)  
A self-assessment questionnaire for churches to check how inclusive their services, activities and programmes are for disabled people. £3.
- 2) ['A Church that Cares - What does good pastoral care look like for families affected by disability?'](#)  
Provides concrete suggestions and examples to help churches include disabled people and their families. £5.
- 3) ['A Welcoming Place - Autistic Young People in Church'](#)  
Designed to help churches create an environment in their youth and children's work which effectively includes everyone, including those with autistic spectrum conditions. £5.
- 4) [Cards for stewards / welcomers](#)  
Easy to carry and read, so your greeting team can make sure disabled people receive a warm and informed welcome

##### 8.1.2 From other organisations

- 1) ['Worship and Disability - A Kingdom for All'](#)  
By Katie Tupling and Anna de Lange. Helps church members and leaders look at their worship and its context through new eyes, and suggests easy ways of improving accessibility. £3.95.
- 2) [10 Ways to Belong - Supporting children, young people and young adults with additional needs to belong in your church](#)  
By the Methodist Church. Free to download.
- 3) [More than Welcome - A journey to help churches support the participation of disabled people](#)

By Livability. Free to download.

## 8.2 Guides

1) [‘All Welcome’](#)

A best practice guide to including disabled people into the different aspects of the life of the church e.g. communion, worship. £5.

2) [‘Guidelines for Inclusion - Dyslexia’](#)

By Quaker Disability Equality Group

An introduction to dyslexia, dyslexic difficulties and dyslexic abilities. Includes a comprehensive section on dyslexia-friendly design of printed materials. Free to download.

3) [‘Tips on taking in and remembering Bible content’](#)

By Aurora Betony. A good practice guide on engaging with the Bible for everyone, and especially anyone with a print disability. Free to download.

4) [A guide to supporting people with dementia in the local church](#)

By Dementia Services Development Trust. Free to download.

## 8.3 Training / courses



1) [Training workshops from Through the Roof](#) on:

- including disabled people in church life
- developing an inclusive approach
- including families with disabled children
- mental health
- including autistic people
- exploring what the Bible says on disability

2) [‘Enabling Church’](#) by Through the Roof

A flexible eight-session course exploring how to enrich church life through sharing mission and ministry together with disabled people. £25 for the download version.

3) [‘Lifting the Lid’](#) by Livability

A free six-week Bible study course focused on faith and mental health.

#### **8.4 Books on church disability inclusion**



- 1) ['Making Church Accessible to All - Including disabled people in church life'](#)  
By Tony Phelps-Jones and other contributors. The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2013. ISBN 978-0-85746-157-5
- 2) ['Enabling Church - A Bible-based resource towards the full inclusion of disabled people'](#)  
By Gordon Temple with Lin Ball. SPCK, 2012. ISBN 978-0-281-06649-0. Available from Through the Roof

#### **8.5 Resources that give ideas for multi-sensory activities**

- 1) Scripture Union's 'Multi-sensory' series  
This series is out of print and Scripture Union UK no longer holds the copyright for it. But here is a list of the titles and their ISBNs:  
Multi-sensory Together: 978-1-8442-71641  
Multi-sensory Scripture: 978-1-8442-71665  
Multi-sensory Seasons: 978-1-8442-71757  
Multi-sensory Parables: 978-1-8442-72310  
Multi-sensory World: 978-1-8442-72662  
Multi-sensory Message: 978-1-8442-72730  
Multi-sensory Worship: 978-1-8442-73973  
Multi-sensory Church: 978-1-8599-96676  
Multi-sensory Prayer: 978-1-8599-94658  
Multi-sensory Bible: 978-1-8442-76219
- 2) [Go Create - Easy arts and crafts projects for worship and outreach](#)  
by Rob Rawson. St Andrew Press, 2019. ISBN 978-0-7152-0376-7

- 3) [Godly Play for older people](#) (Stories for the Soul)

## 8.6 Other

### 8.6.1 [Through the Roof's Roofbreaker programme](#)

You can register as a Roofbreaker (church inclusion activist) with Through the Roof. There are a number of local Roofbreaker groups where Roofbreakers can meet up to support to each other. They also publish the 'Roofbreaker' [e-newsletter](#) online.

### 8.6.2 [Ability Sunday](#)

- an annual day run by Livability to encourage churches to celebrate the gifts of disabled people and to think about how they might include disabled people better.

### 8.6.3 [Scottish Churches Disability Group](#)

- promotes the inclusion of disabled people within all Christian churches in Scotland, enabling people with any kind of impairment to reach their fullest potential in participation at all levels of church life.
- works with Christian churches in Scotland to promote the inclusion of all disabled people.

### 8.6.4 [Inclusive Church](#)

- a network of churches, groups and individuals. It runs a disability conference every year.

### 8.6.5 [Disability & Jesus](#)

### 8.6.6 [Churches for All](#)

- a network of UK Christian disability-engaged organisations

### 8.6.7 The [World Community for Christian Meditation](#) (WCCM)

- has many [local groups across Scotland](#) and elsewhere in the UK. WCCM also provides [resources for starting a group](#)

## Further information on adult dyslexia

## 8.7 Leaflets / downloadable resources

- 1) Sylvia Moody's [web resources on adult dyslexia](#)
- 2) Dyslexia Scotland's [leaflets](#) including 'Dyslexia-friendly tips for speakers'
- 3) [Writing for a Dyslexic Audience](#) - gives guidance on how to use language in a way that dyslexic adults will find accessible.

## 8.8 Books on adult dyslexia



- 1) '[Understanding Dyslexia - An Introduction for Students in Higher Education](#)' by Jill Hammond, Fabian Hercules and Ruth MacPherson. Glasgow School of Art, 2000 and 2007
- 2) '[The Dyslexic Adult in a Non-Dyslexic World](#)' by Ellen Morgan and Cynthia Klein. Whurr, 2000. ISBN 978-1-861-56207-4
- 3) '[Dyslexia and Mental Health](#)' by Neil Alexander Passe. Jessica Kingsley, 2015. ISBN 978-1-84905-582-6
- 4) '[Dyslexia - How to survive and succeed at work](#)' by Sylvia Moody. Vermilion, 2006. ISBN 978-0-09190-708-2
- 5) 'Making Dyslexia Work for You' by Vicki Goodwin and Bonita Thomson. Routledge, 2011. ISBN 978-9-812-83262-7. This book is illustrated. There is a set of [free online resources](#) that go with it.
- 6) 'The Dyslexic Adult - Interventions and Outcomes' 2<sup>nd</sup> edition by David McLoughlin and Carol Leather. BPS Blackwell, 2013. ISBN 978-1-119-97393-5.
- 7) 'Dyslexia in the Workplace - An Introductory Guide' Second Edition by Diana Bartlett and Sylvia Moody with Katherine Kindersley. Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. ISBN 978-0-470-68374-3.
- 8) 'The Other Side of Dyslexia: God's Faithfulness to Redeem, Restore and Heal the Wounded Heart' by Hope S. Beale. Xulon Press, 2019

### Options for accessing books on adult dyslexia

#### Buying

Specialist books on dyslexia that are aimed at professionals, rather than dyslexic adults or parents of dyslexic children, tend to be expensive even second hand.

#### Borrowing

- Your local library service

You will probably be able to borrow some books on dyslexia from your local library. However, it might not stock the more specialist titles. If your local library service offers an interlibrary loan service, although it costs, it might be cheaper than buying

- [National Library of Scotland](#)

The National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh and Glasgow has most of the books on adult dyslexia that have been published recently, either in paper or electronic copy. NLS is not a lending library but you can access any of their resources on a reference basis

- [British Library](#)

Similarly, I imagine you can access the more specialist books on adult dyslexia on a reference basis at the British Library in London and also at Boston Spa near Wetherby in Yorkshire.

- [Dyslexia Scotland's resource centre](#)

If you are a member of Dyslexia Scotland you can borrow books and other resources from this. If you are not a member, you can consult the resources at their office in Stirling on a reference basis.

## 8.9 Documentary films on dyslexia

- 1) '[Read me Differently](#)' directed by Sarah Entine
- 2) '[The Big Picture - Rethinking Dyslexia](#)' directed by James Redford
- 3) 'Don't call me Stupid' starring Kara Tointon
- 4) [Dyslecksia - The Movie](#) (2012)

## 8.10 Dyslexia Awareness Week



[Scotland](#)

[Rest of the UK](#)

## 8.11 Dyslexia organisations

[Dyslexia Scotland](#)

[British Dyslexia Association](#)

## 8.12 Dyslexia Scotland's members' magazine and blog

These give an insight into what it is like to be a dyslexic adult in Scotland today, as well as helpful information on adult dyslexia.

The members' magazine, [Dyslexia Voice](#), is published 4 times a year and sent out to members in hard copy. Each issue has a section on adult dyslexia. Back copies are also available to consult in electronic copy for members, and on a reference basis for non-members at Dyslexia Scotland's office in Stirling.

The blog, [A Life Less Ordinary](#), is publicly available and anyone can subscribe to it. There is a new post every fortnight.

## Including people in church who have dyspraxia, ADD and autism

There is overlap between dyslexia, dyspraxia (also called Developmental Co-ordination Disorder or DCD), Attention Deficit Disorder (with or without hyperactivity) and autism. This means that a dyslexic person might also be 'a bit' dyspraxic, ADHD and / or autistic. (Think of a Venn diagram).

As well as this overlap, these conditions can 'co-occur'. This just means that many people who have 1 of them also have one or more of the other 3. So many dyslexic people are actually also dyspraxic, ADHD and / or autistic, not just as part of their dyslexia, but substantially enough to be identified / diagnosed with these conditions too.

## Resources other than books on dyspraxia and ADHD

Moody, Sylvia: 'Dyspraxia in Adulthood' and 'ADHD in Adulthood' in the 'General Information' section at <http://www.sylviamoody.com/dyslexia.html>. These give an overview of adult ADHD and dyspraxia.

Moody, Sylvia: Screening checklists for dyspraxia and ADHD in the 'checklists' document at <http://www.sylviamoody.com/workingperson.html>. These give an *indication* of whether a person might have these conditions.

## Books on dyspraxia, ADHD and Tourette's Syndrome

Angelotti, Maren 'Of Different Minds: Seeing Your **ADHD** Child Through the Eyes of God'. Regal, 2009

Carrillo, David Michael: 'Fearfully and Wonderfully Made: My Christian Journey with **ADHD**'. Lulu, 2006

Colley, Mary: 'Living with **Dyspraxia**: A Guide for Adults with Developmental Dyspraxia' by. Jessica Kingsley, 2006. A very good practical guide to the topic. Useful for dyspraxic people and those who want to include them better in their communities

Nashif, Gregory: 'John Twitch and Shout, Hallelujah, Amen: Poems of Love, Forgiveness and Living with **Tourette's** syndrome'. Resource Publications, 2019

### **Resources on autism**

Churches for All: webpage on Autism Spectrum. Useful guidance presented under subheadings in table format. <https://churchesforall.org.uk/about-disabled-people-and-church/autism-spectrum/>

Diocese of Oxford: '[Welcoming and including autistic people in our churches and communities](#)'. Used as main guidelines for Church of England

'[Included by Grace](#)' (blog). Gives much helpful guidance presented visually and in manageable sized chunks

Macaskill, Grant: 'Autism and the Church: Bible, Theology and Community'. Baylor University Press, 1 November 2019

Memmott, Ann: '[The churches, safeguarding, autism, and the dark spaces](#)' (blog post)

Through the Roof: [Ten Ways Churches Can Help Those With Autism](#)

Through the Roof: [A Welcoming Place - Autistic Young People in Church](#). Aims to help churches create an environment in their youth and children's work which effectively includes everyone, including those with autistic spectrum conditions.

## Bibliography



### Traditional or electronic print resources (e.g. books, guides, reports)

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- 3) Betony, Aurora: How text readers can make your web content more accessible (guide) <http://inclusivecommunication.scot/1205-2>
- 4) Betony, Aurora: Writing for a dyslexic audience (guide) <http://inclusivecommunication.scot/writing-for-a-dyslexic-audience>
- 5) Betony, Aurora: Using text readers to access websites and blogs (guide) <http://inclusivecommunication.scot/1205-2>
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- 7) Bible Society, 2007: 'Contemporary English Version (CEV) Into The Light Hardback Bible', ISBN 978-0-564-09475-2
- 8) British Dyslexia Association: '[Code of Practice for Employers](#)' 8<sup>th</sup> edition. 2019. ISBN 978-1-872-65370-9
- 9) Edinburgh City Libraries, 2011: 'Dyslexia and Us - A Collection of Personal Stories'. ISBN 978-1-906401-36-8. Available from [Dyslexia Scotland](#)
- 10) Eide, Brock and Eide, Ferne: '[The Dyslexic Advantage](#)' (scroll down - the top of the page is blank). Hay House, 2011. ISBN 978-1848-50639-8
- 11) '[What equality law means for your voluntary and community sector organisation \(including charities and religion or belief organisations\)](#)'. Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2014. ISBN 978-1-84206-579-2

- 12) Goodwin, Vicki and Thomson, Bonita: 'Making Dyslexia Work for You'. David Fulton, 2004. ISBN 978-1-843-12091-9
- 13) Green, Jim: 'Meditation and Mental Health: Mercy not Sacrifice'. Meditatio in association with medio Media, 2012. ISBN 978-0-957-1-04037
- 14) Guinness, Abby: 'At the Cross'. From the 'Cover to Cover Lent Study Guide' series. CWR, 2016. ISBN 978-1-7825-94987. Currently out of print but available from CWR: phone 01252 784 700
- 15) Hammond, Gill and Hercules, Fabian: 'Understanding Dyslexia - A guide for students in higher education'. Glasgow School of Art, 2003. No ISBN. (This edition is now out of print and not available online. But there is a revised edition 2007 available free in [electronic copy](#).)
- 16) McLoughlin, David and Leather, Carol: 'The Dyslexic Adult - Interventions and Outcomes - An Evidence-based Approach' 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. BPS Blackwell, 2013. ISBN 978-1-119-97393-5
- 17) Moody, Sylvia, ed.: 'Dyslexia and Employment - A Guide for Assessors, Trainers and Managers'. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. ISBN 978-0-470-69478-7
- 18) Moody, Sylvia: 'How to survive and succeed at work'. Vermilion, 2006. ISBN 978-0-091-90708-2
- 19) Moody, Sylvia: 'Visual Stress' (downloadable document) <http://www.sylviamoody.com/dyslexia.html> (under 'General Information')
- 20) Moody, Sylvia: 'Working Person's Guide' (set of downloadable documents) <http://www.sylviamoody.com/workingperson.html>
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- 24) Quaker Disability Equality Group: 'Guidelines for Inclusion - Dyslexia' <http://quakerdisabilitygroup.org.uk/guidelines-for-inclusion>
- 25) Scott, Rosemary: 'Dyslexia and Counselling'. Whurr, 2004. ISBN 978-1-861-56395-8

- 26) South Ayrshire Council: 'Good Practice in South Ayrshire Dyslexia Friendly Schools' (2014) and 'Dyslexia Friendly Schools Handbook' (June 2014). You will find these by googling 'dyslexia friendly schools north ayrshire council'

## Web resources



- 1) Barvas Church of Scotland services in audio format on SoundCloud  
<https://soundcloud.com/user-505998303>
- 2) Baxendale, Paul / Our Daily Bread Ministries: sketchnotes of 1 Kings  
<https://ourdailybread.org/sg-events>
- 3) 'Beyond Inclusion: Part One - Lizzie Lowe's Story' video  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=14&v=4Wz2ylsz9-l](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=14&v=4Wz2ylsz9-l)
- 4) Bible Gateway <https://www.biblegateway.com>
- 5) The Bible Project: Overview of 1-2 Kings  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=bVFW3wbi9pk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=bVFW3wbi9pk)
- 6) Dyslexia Research Trust: 'About Dyslexia'  
<https://www.dyslexic.org.uk/about-dyslexia>
- 7) Dyslexia Scotland blog post entitled 'Adult Assessment' posted 19 May 2017 <https://alifelessordinaryds.wordpress.com/2017/05/19/adult-assessment/>
- 8) Dyslexia Scotland blog post entitled 'Learning styles and strategies' posted 5 Mar. 2018  
<https://alifelessordinaryds.wordpress.com/2018/03/05/learning-styles-and-strategies>
- 9) Dyslexia Scotland blog post entitled '5 ways to present information visually' including download of worked examples at end. Posted 13 Apr. 2018 <https://alifelessordinaryds.wordpress.com/2018/04/13/5-ways-to-present-information-visually/>
- 10) Dyslexia Scotland webpage entitled 'Dyslexic Adult?'  
<https://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/dyslexic-adult>

- 11) Glottopedia: 'Acquired dyslexia'  
[http://www.glottopedia.org/index.php/Acquired\\_dyslexia](http://www.glottopedia.org/index.php/Acquired_dyslexia)
- 12) Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland: definition of self management <https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/self-management-and-co-production-hub/what-is-self-management/>
- 13) Information Commissioner's Office guidance: 'Principle (a): Lawfulness, fairness and transparency' <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/principles/lawfulness-fairness-and-transparency>
- 14) International Dyslexia Association: factsheet on 'The Dyslexia-Stress-Anxiety Connection' <https://dyslexiaida.org/the-dyslexia-stress-anxiety-connection>
- 15) NHS Inform website <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>
- 16) St Nicholas Buccleuch Church of Scotland, Dalkeith: 'Give Church a Go at St Nicholas Buccleuch, Dalkeith' video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4drNLiLkZAk>
- 17) Stone Soup for Five - Drawing Closer to Jesus: 'Doodles' blog post  
<https://www.stonesoupforfive.com/p/doodles.html>
- 18) UK Government: The Equality Act 2010  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
- 19) Visual Facilitation training by 'Listen Think Draw'  
<http://www.listenthinkdraw.co.uk/intro-visual-facilitation-training>

## Appendix 1: Details of my correspondence on the Equality Act



I was confused by the explanatory note to the Equality Act which states at paragraph 742 (in the “explanation” of Schedule 3 paragraph 29 of the Act): “This does not apply to acts of worship (which are not themselves “services” within the meaning of the Act so no exception is required).”

Although this sentence appears in the specific context of Schedule 3 paragraph 29, the text in the brackets appears to be making a much wider, more general statement. It appears to say that none of the provisions of the Equality Act apply to acts of worship. If “acts of worship” include regular church gatherings (typically involving singing, prayer, bible readings and sermon) this is a very surprising statement.

Following correspondence with the UK Government Equalities Office, they agreed that the following 5 paragraphs were a reasonable statement about the relevance of paragraph 742 of the explanatory notes.

The final sentence of paragraph 742 of the Explanatory Notes to the Equality Act 2010 does not reflect any particular view on the question of whether an act of worship is a ‘service’ for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. This question is not addressed in the Equality Act 2010, nor in any other primary source of law.

The Explanatory Note is merely noting that in the absence of clarity on that question there was no need in the Act itself to provide any exemption in relation to acts of worship. (In contrast certain activities provided in the context of organised religion are clearly ‘services’ for the purposes of the Equality Act and so exemptions have been granted.)

Had it not been for the fact that acts of worship are commonly described (in non-legal contexts) as ‘services’, the sentence in the explanatory notes would probably not have appeared. It was inserted to avoid people carelessly confusing the non-legal use of the term ‘service’ with the use of that term in the Equality Act 2010.

If all or part of an act of worship does in law constitute a 'service' for the purpose of the Equality Act, then Section 29 of the Act would apply to that service, subject only to the specific exemptions set out in the Act.

The Explanatory Note is not intended to express any view on the question of whether any or all parts of an act of worship constitute a 'service' for the purposes of the Equality Act. In the view of the Government Equalities Office that question will only be definitively answered if and when it is specifically dealt with in future legislation or a future court case.

[Hyperlink for going back to [section 2.6](#)]

## Appendix 2: Prayer points for Dyslexia Awareness Week



- 1) During Dyslexia Awareness Week [say the calendar year e.g. 2018] we thank you for dyslexia. You have made us diverse, and part of that diversity is dyslexia. Please help us to accept that dyslexia is a different way of thinking and learning and that we are all different in some way from everyone else.
- 2) Thank you for all the things that we can do to ensure that dyslexia doesn't impede us in our discipleship. Thank you for the strengths of dyslexia and help us all to give dyslexic people opportunities to use and develop them.
- 3) Thank you for the simple and easy things that we can all do to include dyslexic people, like giving them encouragement and wearing a name badge.
- 4) Help us to accept that dyslexia is difficult to understand and define. Thank you that we don't need to understand it in order to make adjustments that will help dyslexic people.
- 5) Help us to accept that human beings instinctively fear difference. Help us to override this fear of difference by using the compassion we also have within us. Help us to remember that Jesus spoke to the people who were excluded and disliked for who they were. Help us also to welcome and include new dyslexic people into our church.
- 6) Help us to be aware that dyslexia affects people in different ways and that, although some dyslexic people are famous and successful, others

are struggling with unaddressed dyslexia and the many problems it can lead to.

- 7) Help the Scottish Government to support dyslexic adults. Especially help the Scottish Government to fund assessment for dyslexia for adults.
- 8) Help people with dyslexic family members to love and support their dyslexic family members. Help them with any difficult conversations about dyslexia that they need to have.
- 9) Thank you for Dyslexia Scotland, our national dyslexia organisation. Help the staff and volunteers who contribute to its work through its activities.
- 10) Help all those who support dyslexic people for example employment advisors, teachers and dyslexia assessors. Help education workers to include dyslexic learners. Help school management to support staff to do the Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit modules as part of their Continuing Professional Development.
- 11) Help dyslexic people to recognise their abilities and use them to help themselves and to provide peer support to each other, and to contribute positively to society.
- 12) Help everyone who doesn't have any specialist knowledge of dyslexia to respond to people's dyslexia with sensitivity and good practice. Help dyslexic people to tell others what they need by way of adjustments. Give us all courage in this and help us to do it with kindness and empathy.
- 13) We know that we need to look after each part of the church so that it can work as a body, with all the parts working together and complementing each other. So please help us to look after the dyslexic part of the church so that it can make its full contribution to your church.

## Appendix 3: Bible reflection and complementary prayer

### Bible reflection on the 'through the roof' story in Mark 2



I think this story is telling us 3 things:

#### 1) We need friends

- We all need friends not just to share the good times with but also to do things for us that we can't do for ourselves.
- Those things can be the most important ones, like reaching Jesus, as was the case with this man.
- So I think there are 2 questions here:
  - a) What do I need other people to do for me so that I can be close to Jesus?
  - b) What do other people need me to do for them that will let them be close to Jesus?

Something I do to bring people close to Jesus is [complete]. It brings people close to Jesus because [complete]

#### 2) There is a way for everyone to reach Jesus, and the way that works for disabled people might be different from the way everyone else uses.

- I think this story shows this point very clearly because everyone is using the door to reach Jesus except for the disabled man, who is using the roof.
- I think it's important for disabled people to accept and be aware that they need to do some things differently.
- It's also really important for churches to accept this too, because disabled people need churches to let them do some things differently to everyone else, so that they can take part.

For example, if I want to study the Bible, I don't take in the content if I just read it - I need to use other ways to study it, for example listen to it or look at it in pictures. So to take part in a Bible study group at church, I need the leaders to tell me which passage we'll be discussing a week in advance so that I can study it using my own ways. Then I'm able to discuss it in the group.

### **3) For churches to include disabled people, they have to want to include them, to work hard, and to be good at working in teams**

The friends in this story are a perfect example of these 3 things:

- They want their friend to be healed by Jesus - that's why they bring him to the house;
- They work hard to make that happen, which involves them overcoming many barriers;
- They work well as a team because all the things they do are things that you can only do together with others.

This is a perfect model for churches then.

- Churches need to want to include disabled people.  
It's all very well disabled people wanting their churches to include them. But disabled people need their churches to want to include them, because it's the churches that are doing the including.
- Churches need to be able and willing to work hard to include disabled people.  
For example, a disabled person might need their worship leader to change the way they preach. This might take quite a lot of effort, if that's the way they have preached for decades.
- And lastly, churches need to be good at working in teams. For example, if a church is fitting a ramp to one of its buildings so that a wheelchair user can access it, they need to work with a range of people such as architects and builders. And someone needs to pay the bills.

**Prayer to complement Bible reflection above** - see next page

### Prayer to complement Bible reflection above



- God, thank you for the things our friends do for us, that bring us close to Jesus
- Please help us to do things that will bring other people close to Jesus

Chant: Everyone can reach Jesus if we help each other.

- Thank you for videos that show Bible stories vividly and memorably
- Please help us to accept that disabled people need to do some things differently from everyone else

Chant: Everyone can reach Jesus if we help each other.

- Thank you for the visitors who come to our church. Please help us to welcome them.
- Please help us to work hard to include disabled people in our church

Chant: Everyone can reach Jesus if we help each other.

Amen.



## Appendix 4: Conversation alert card

I'm dyslexic. I find many aspects of conversation difficult. I might need you to do the following things to help me.

Things I find difficult	How you can help me
Processing (taking in information and giving it out)	
Taking in what you say	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk at a steady pace.</li> <li>• Pause for a few seconds at the end of each sentence.</li> <li>• Keep what you say to a minimum and only say what is relevant.</li> <li>• Speak to me in a place where there is minimal background noise and visual distraction.</li> </ul>
Formulating a response to what you say	Give me time e.g. up to 10 seconds.
Giving my response clearly	Ask me 'do you mean...?' and say what you think I'm trying to say
Remembering	
Remembering what you've said	Remind me
Remembering what I want to say	Repeat what you've just been saying as this would have been the trigger.
Non-verbal reasoning	
'Getting' jokes	Give me time to work it out - this may take up to 20 seconds. If I still don't get it, explain it to me and give me time to understand it.
Summarising: getting bogged down in details / stories / going off at tangents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarise what you think I'm trying to say and ask me to confirm, e.g. 'Do you mean you find maps difficult to read?'</li> <li>• Remind me of the point I started with and ask me what I wish to say about it.</li> <li>• If you asked me a question, try asking it again.</li> </ul>

(You can add your own specific conversation needs here)

Things I find difficult	How you can help me
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## Appendix 5: Example of opening response based on Bible texts



One: People of God, let us praise our God. Let us join our voices with those of every age and place to praise the name of the Lord.

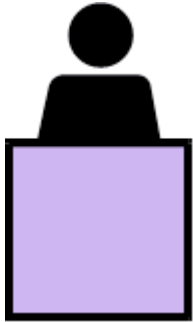
**All: Let all the peoples praise you God, let all the peoples praise You.**

One: From north and south and east and west may voices ring with praise.

**All: Let all the peoples praise you God, let all the peoples praise You.**

(Based on Psalm 67 verses 3-5, and Luke 13 verse 29)

## Appendix 6: 10 Tips for dyslexic people on reading the Bible aloud in church



- 1) Find out in advance what the passage is, and which translation you are to read from
- 2) Copy and paste the text from Bible Gateway into a Word document.
- 3) Customise the design to suit your own preferences e.g. typeface, size of font, line spacing. Use double spacing and a dyslexia-friendly font e.g. Century Gothic
- 4) Print it on your preference of pastel paper and stick it to a piece of card
- 5) Practise reading your reading. If it is from the New Testament you may find it useful to listen to the passage in '[You've Got the Time](#)' (see below)
- 6) Much as it is cringe worthy for many people, make an audio recording of yourself reading and listen to it to see what you need to improve e.g. do you need to slow down or vary your speed or volume?
- 7) Vary your speed, pitch and volume
- 8) Mark up your copy e.g. highlight words you are going to emphasise with a highlighter pen, mark in breaks or pauses, pitch, volume, speed
- 9) Do a run-through in church to get used to speaking into the microphone and adjusting it if necessary. Ask someone to sit in the pews and tell you if your voice is coming through the microphone OK
- 10) When you read in church, use your customised version and use a plain bookmark to track the text, holding the bookmark *above* the text you are reading, *not below*<sup>93</sup>

Index for [You've got the time](#) on SoundCloud is shown on the next 2 pages:

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<sup>93</sup> Goodwin and Thomson 2004, p49

Day	Starts with
<b>Gospels</b>	
1	Matthew 1
2	Matthew 8
3	Matthew 13
4	Matthew 19
5	Matthew 25
6	Mark 1
7	Mark 7
8	Mark 12
9	Luke 1
10	Luke 5
11	Luke 9
12	Luke 12
13	Luke 17
14	Luke 21
15	John 1
16	John 7
17	John 12
18	John 16
<b>The Good News Spreads</b>	
19	Acts 1
20	Acts 7
21	Acts 12 Chapter 16 starts at 22 mins. 13 secs.

22	Acts 17
23	Acts 23
<b>9 Letters</b>	
24	Romans 1
25	Romans 9
26	1 Corinthians 1
27	1 Corinthians 10
28	2 Corinthians 1
29	2 Corinthians 11
30	Ephesians 1
31	Philippians 2
32	1 Thessalonians 1
33	1 Timothy 4
34	Philemon
35	Hebrews 9
36	James 1
37	1 Peter 4
38	1 John 4 Revelation starts at 18.00
39	Revelation 6
<b>Prophecy</b>	
40	Revelation 15

## **Appendix 7: Some tips for including dyslexic children in church activities**

A qualified and practising primary teacher who leads children's activities in his local church in Scotland kindly gave me the following comments.

"Lots of techniques that work for dyslexic children work well for all children. It's about making little changes that are no more effort for those organising the activities... it's just about thinking slightly differently and it soon becomes second nature.

Here are some of the things we do at our children's clubs:

- 1) We don't use white backgrounds for song words.
- 2) We try to sing repetitive songs.
- 3) Ask for volunteers when reading aloud, but never push it. If a dyslexic child wants to read, that's fine! Support them subtly through the reading.
- 4) Linked to this, we often have an 'active' telling of the Bible story, e.g. sound effects on certain words work well. And the children love just 'acting' things out.
- 5) Follow-up short video clips are well received by dyslexic children.
- 6) Chat about the Bible teaching rather than writing down responses.
- 7) Demonstrate craft activities rather than issuing a set of oral instructions."

## Your notes



You can use these pages to make a note of whatever will be useful e.g.

- observations
- reflections e.g. how well adjustments work, any modifications
- sources of useful images
- adjustments that you devise based on your experience or things people say to you
- adjustments dyslexic people in your congregation request

[Notes]

[Notes]