

PositivelyAutism.com Newsletter

April 2013

Topic: Autism and Spirituality

"Do It Yourself ABA" Online Class from Positively Autism

A home-based ABA program can cost \$15,000 to \$80,000 (and up) per year. This class will help you save money by learning ABA strategies that will help parents, family members, and even siblings implement ABA at home. If you would like to teach your child yourself using an ABA program, this class is for you. It provides a basic foundation in ABA, which is considered by many to be the "gold standard" in autism interventions. More info and registration: <http://www.positivelyautism.com/training/>

April Newsletter Topic: Autism and Spirituality, Continued.

This month, we'll continue our posts on Autism and Spirituality/Religion and share the results of our "Autism and Church" survey!

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us." - Romans 12:6

Process Map for Starting a Disability Ministry

A "road map" to help navigate the arduous task of starting and nurturing a new Disability Ministry as well as expanding an existing ministry. From Joni and Friends.

http://www.joniandfriends.org/static/uploads/downloads/church_relations_process_map_rev.pdf

Religious Resources from Autism Speaks (Many Faiths Included)

A listing of books, online blogs, essays, and websites for various religious faiths.

<http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/resource-library/religious-resources>

Speechless: Finding God's Grace in My Son's Autism by Sandra Peoples

Book Description:

Publication Date: November 22, 2011

When Lee and Sandra Peoples took their son James in for his three year well-visit, they knew something was wrong. He was literally speechless--unable to say even basic words. A few months later when he was diagnosed with autism, Lee and Sandra were speechless--unable to articulate all the emotions they wrestled with.

Speechless: God's Grace in My Son's Autism is Sandra's story of the first year of their journey as special needs parents. It is also the story of God's grace in their lives and the life of their son.

[Buy the book from Amazon.com \(only \\$2.99 on Kindle\).](#)

Is Your Church Open to Autism? An Article from Christianity Today

Churches that make space for autistic children on Sunday mornings will be disrupted — by joy.

By Emily Colson

http://blog.christianitytoday.com/women/2011/01/is_your_church_open_to_autism.html

Inclusive Congregation Toolkit

"These easy tips on making your House of Worship more inclusive in the areas of affirmation, communication and accessibility contain an access survey, training for ushers, Open Hearts Awards application information, bulletin insert "How You Can Make a Difference" and more."

http://www.inclusioninworship.org/open_faith_community.php

"Autism: Discover What Makes Your Friend Unique" Video for Kids

A video and activity about autism for kids from a Christian perspective. From Joni and Friends. <http://www.joniandfriends.org/kids-corner/be-a-better-friend/autism/>

Autism and Religion Info from the Autism Society

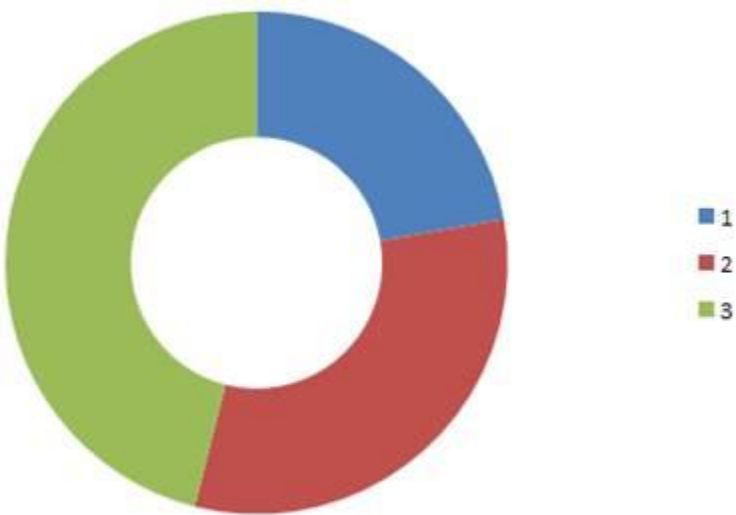
Autism and Religion info from the Autism Society. Includes Jewish and Christian perspectives. <http://www.autism-society.org/living-with-autism/family-issues/religion-and-autism.html>

Results of PositivelyAutism.com's Churches and Autism Survey

In early 2013, Positively Autism asked for responses on our "Churches and Autism" survey. We received 126 completed surveys, and we are excited to share the results with you. We hope that churches can use this information in creating welcoming environments for families of children with autism.

As a note about the structure of the survey, the first question was multiple choice, and the other two were open-ended questions (no possible choices suggested).

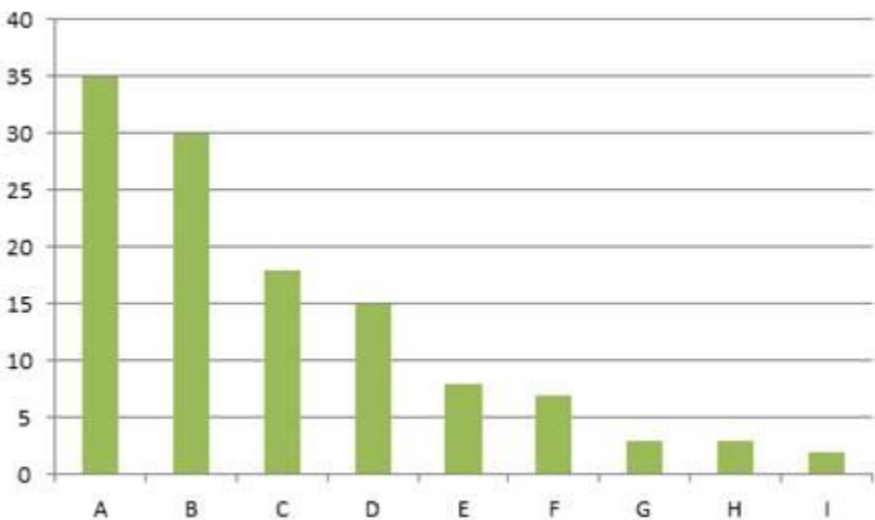
Question 1: Do you think your church or place of worship is autism-friendly?



Key:
1 (Blue) = No (22%)
2 (Red) = Somewhat (32%)
3 (Green) = Yes (46%)

Comments: I was encouraged by the responses to this question. Almost half of the people who responded indicated that their church or place of worship was autism-friendly, with about another third saying it was somewhat autism-friendly. Of course, it shows we still have more work to do in this area, but that many churches are doing a good job in creating an inclusive worship environment.

Question 2: If yes, what do they do to make it welcoming to families of children with autism?



Key:

A = Tolerance, respect, and acceptance from the church community, including tolerance for children making sounds or needing to move around.

B = Church has a special needs ministry and/or classes specifically designed for individuals with disabilities.

C = Church provides a "buddy system" or aide to help individuals with autism participate in religious classes.

D = Church staff and volunteers have training about autism.

E = Church provides a quiet area for families to go if their children get overwhelmed, where they can still hear the sermon.

F = Church allows children/adults with autism to have accommodations, such as using headphones/iPads, moving around during the service, and lowering the lights and music volume.

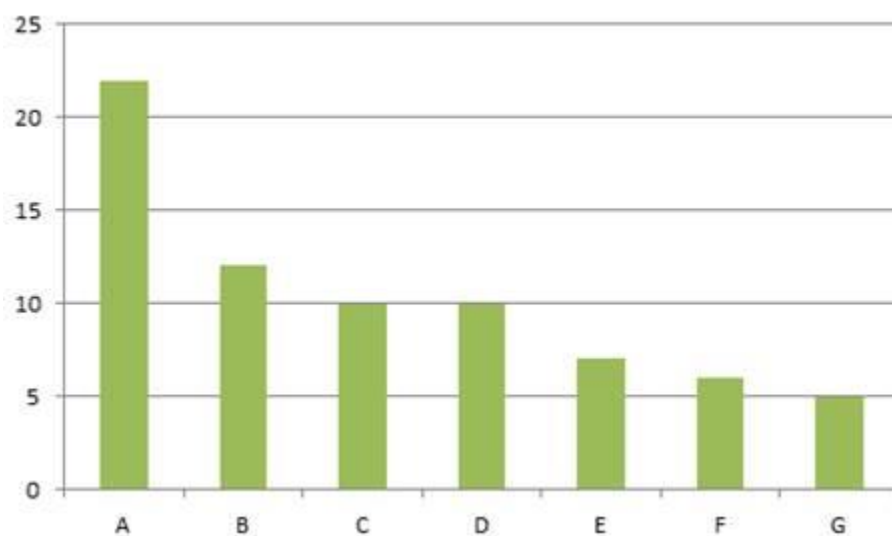
G = A church staff member has a family member with autism.

H = Church provides a respite program for families.

I = Sunday school teachers use computers and/or video modeling to teach.

Comments: The above graph shows the number of people who suggested each item on this list. As an example, item "A" has the highest number of votes (35 people stated that their church does this). I think it is interesting that the number one item on the list is tolerance, respect, and acceptance from the church community. This is something we can work towards in our churches and communities, and it costs nothing to incorporate.

Question 3: If no, what would you like them to do to make it more welcoming?



Key:

A = Church congregation to be more accepting, understanding, and aware of autism.

B = Provide a quiet area for families to go if their children get overwhelmed, where they can still hear the sermon.

C = Offer a special needs ministry or classes for all ages (adults and children).

D = Train church staff and volunteers about autism.

E = Provide a "buddy system" or aide to help individuals with autism participate in religious classes.

F = Offer a separate service on a different day with less crowds, no loud music, and no bright lights.

G = Have more inclusion in age-appropriate regular religious classes.

Comments: This question addresses things that families would like to see their churches do. Again, we see that an accepting attitude is number one on the list. This and the rest of the items on the list can be taken into consideration when planning church services and special needs ministries. Of course, some are easier to implement than others, but I hope this provides an idea of some things families might appreciate.

News

April Positive Autism News

Connecting Workers on the Autism Spectrum with Tech Jobs: Program Aims to Tap Strengths of Those with Autistic Disorder and Asperger's

April 28, 2013

http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2013-04-28/business/bs-bz-autism-aspergers-tech-jobs-20130428_1_autism-asperger-autistic-disorder

Beer, Autism, and Hope: When Autism's 'Narrow, Focused Interest' Is a Gift, Not a Symptom

April 24, 2013

<http://www.babble.com/mom/beer-autism-and-hope-when-autisms-narrow-focused-interest-is-a-gift-not-a-symptom/>

Young Adults With Autism Can Thrive In High-Tech Jobs

April 22, 2013

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2013/04/22/177452578/young-adults-with-autism-can-thrive-in-high-tech-jobs>

This Is Autism: Parents Share Pictures Of Children With ASDs

April 15, 2013

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/15/this-is-autism_n_3064385.html

'Autism In Love' Documentary Film Is Raising Money On Kickstarter

April 10, 2013

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/10/autism-in-love-documentar_n_3054057.html

Free Downloads

Mother's Day Social Skill Story

A story that describes, in words and pictures, what Mother's Day is and what some families do on Mother's Day.

<http://www.positivelyautism.com/free/mothersday.html>

Visit <http://www.PositivelyAutism.com/> for more great articles and teaching materials!