

First Baptist Church is a microcosm of our world today. Those involved are from multiple generations, diverse cultures and backgrounds and have various physical abilities and special needs.

The purpose of this brochure is to celebrate our commonality as well as to remind us that we might need to rethink some of our reactions and ways of speaking with each other.

The purpose of inclusion is to recognize that we are community and that each participant is valued. Our prayer is that the time spent here at worship, education and fun will positively introduce the triune God to those who may be unaware of knowing God on a personal level and to reinforce God's intention in the lives of those who have experienced His love.

Each of us is part of the whole experience that others have when they come to First Baptist. You are the visible hands and feet of God in this endeavor.

Because of our desire to be examples of God's love, we need to think about what we do and say and how our words may resonate with others. Sensitivity is defined as "Having or displaying a quick and delicate appreciation of others' feelings".

We want to be thoughtful and inclusive in our choice of words. The old dictionary definition of the term "family" is no longer applicable in the lives of some of our participants.

In the past we might have said "Tell your parents" or "You have a earthly father and God is your Heavenly Father." Today such words may not resonate with those who do not have the historical nuclear family.

Families may include:

- Abusiveness at home
- Divorced Parents
- Foster Family—long or short term
- Same Sex Parents
- Single Parent/Guardian
- Step Parents
- Transgendered Parent



## Vacation Bible School

Some children are taught to not talk to people they do not know even when with their parents. Others are taught to be congenial with everyone! Somewhere there is a happy medium...

BUT...

no matter how our students have been instructed, some have never met us! They may be conflicted since we are being so kind and supportive but so is the perpetrator whom they have been warned to avoid.

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How can you help?

Wear a First Baptist Church t-shirt so you can be spotted from across a room and wear a name tag on a lanyard so your name can be easily read.

When talking with a student you do not know, say your name and state that you are part of the VBS team.

Be careful to not ask personal/prying questions but to listen. We are not therapists. Any issues should be referred to the Pastor.

*And Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."*

*Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."*

*And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.*

*Mark 10:13-16*

In the past, children who couldn't sit still, concentrate or respond in what was considered to be an acceptable manner, were often labeled as "problems". With better diagnostic tools, we now know that they are not deliberately acting out.

These children need an extra measure of our love, patience and understanding. Rather than berating or lecturing them about their behavior, we should step back and think before speaking.

If there is an issue, please talk to Pastor Matt for help, support and reassurance.

## Special Needs

We need to support and not judge each other as we may not know if any of the children or adults, are daily struggling to cope with one or more of the following issues.

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD and ADHD)
- Attachment Disorder
- Avoidance Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (AR/FID)
- Depression
- Dietary/Medical Restrictions
- Dyslexia
- Executive Function Deficit
- Gender Identity Issues
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)
- Sensory Integration Disorder
- Sexual Orientation Issues



**First Baptist Church**  
Rockport, MA



**DIVERSITY**

**AND**

**HOW WE RESPOND**