



Mentoring Adults with Disabilities in Faith

Accessibility Summit 2008 at McLean Bible Church in Vienna, Virginia, held on April 4th and 5th was an event teeming with beneficial encounters and information. Jackie Mills-Fernald, director of McLean's Access Ministry, and Jim Pierson jointly presented a session entitled *Mentoring Adults with Disabilities in Faith*.

One of the topics discussed during the session was dealing with relationship questions when ministering with teens and adults with developmental disabilities.

Jim made participants aware of a recent CCFH publication, *Being a Man or Woman of God*, which gives guidance for discussing this sensitive subject. The author, Karen Carter, is a special education professional with a strong Christian background. Before the conference, the resource was only offered when someone asked for specific direction on the matter.

Introducing the book at the conference allowed us to know we were making it available to ministry workers who were familiar with the realities of working with teens and adults with cognitive disabilities.

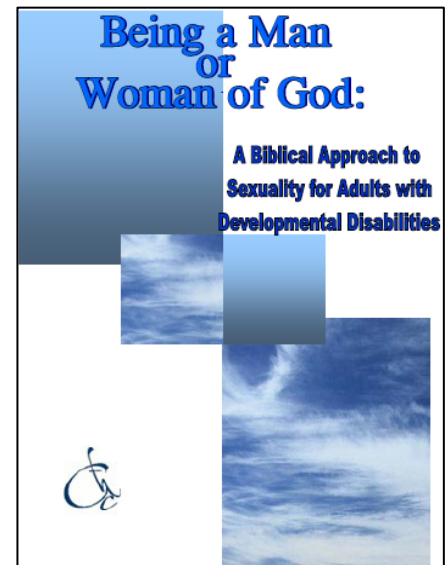
After having the opportunity to get the reactions of this diverse group and running out of all the copies we brought with us, it was decided to put *Being a Man or Woman of God* in our online store under workbooks.

The publication is straight forward and direct yet discerning.

To get a sample of the material, you may request a pdf file that contains the book's introduction, a list of the lessons and the first chapter by sending us an email at info@ccfh.org.

As stated in the book, these are sensitive issues that can be embarrassing, but the students you minister with need to know about these things. You will want to discuss the use of this curriculum with your pastor and your student's parents before you start to make sure they are aware of the subject matter that will be taught. You may chose not to use this as a curriculum but as a reference source should the need arise.

What ever you choose to do, remember that the more guidance you give, the less likely students are to learn or model inappropriate behaviors.



We Are Looking for *Your* Input

No matter how many topics we cover, it seems as though there are always requests for material on specific disability ministry related issues that need to be addressed in-depth. We are listening and are currently working on two publications that will focus on a couple of these concerns. Two booklets under development are: ***"Holding Up Their Arms: Suggestions for Providing Respite Care to the Family Experiencing Disability"*** and ***"Teaching Social Graces using Bible Stories."***

Dealing with the broad based audience we now have, it is often difficult to know the exact needs of those who use our resources. When invited to speak, Jim Pierson asks what subject is close to the hearts of those in the audience he will address. Over the years a few of his workshop titles have been:

- Assisting Children Without Disability to Understand Their Peers Who Do
- Creating a Barrier Free Church
- Disability is a Family Affair
- Every Child Ought to Know Jesus
- Faith, Friendship and the Disabled
- Helping Children Understand Disability
- Making Sunday School Comfortable for Student with Autism
- Making the Congregation Inclusive
- Making the Gospel Accessible to People of All Abilities
- One on One Disability Ministry
- Providing Lesson Materials for the Adult with Cognitive Disabilities
- Some Ideas on Discipline for Persons with Developmental Disabilities
- Storytelling for Persons with Developmental Disabilities
- Teaching Faith to Children with Disabilities
- Teaching Learners with Mental Retardation
- The Basis of Disability Ministry
- The Value of Music for People with Disabilities
- Training Buddies
- Using the Vowels to Open the Valves of Your Church's Heart

Many of these subjects are covered in other resource material; however, because Jim has been asked to specifically address them, we know that they need more concentration.

You can help us by telling us if there is an issue for which you can not find appropriate resource material or need training guidance. It does not have to appear on the list above. We will be glad to offer direction or consider developing resource material if none is available.

Please email us at info@ccfh.org. Each email will receive a personal reply. We look forward to hearing from you.

The Blessings Come Riding In

Missy Farrington, director of the In His Image Ministry at Highlands Church, Scottsdale, Arizona, who is currently enrolled in the Certificate in Disability Ministry program, recently sent Jim this email message: *"I thought you might be interested in seeing part of my job at Highlands. This was a HUGE highlight for me. I am so excited they posted it on the website. Click on the link that follows and then click on **special needs horseback riding event**. This announcement was made in church on Sunday. It was pretty exciting!"*

<http://www.highlandchurch.org/Sermons/>"



Take a look and let your heart be blessed.

*Information in this CCFH **Connections** newsletter compiled by Sylvia Hemphill, Director of Administrative Functions and Resource Materials.*