



**Neurodivergent Inclusion for  
Churches  
focusing on Children and  
Young people**

# Sensory-Friendly Church Suggestions

## Environment

- Quiet zone available (soft lighting, cushions, low sensory input)
- Loud zone available (space to scream, shout or vocalise/stim)
- Sensory kits available (fidgets, headphones, visual timers), and confirm everyone knows where they are
- Clear signage with icons and simple language
- Space for movement at the back or sides of the church
- Lighting adjustable or not overly bright
- Avoid strong smells (scented candles, incense, perfumes)
- Seating options vary (chairs, beanbags, space to stand or pace)
- Safe food options for after service times

## Service Flow

- Visual service schedule available
- Leaders explain transitions (“Now we stand... now we pray...”)
- Communion options flexible (first, last, quiet corner, after service)
- Noise and movement accepted without judgement
- Sermon notes or summaries available

# Accessibility & Inclusion Suggestions

Neurodiversity can come with many different needs, including physical differences.

## **Physical Accessibility**

- Ramps, accessible bathrooms, and wide pathways
- Clear signage to key areas
- Quiet room easy to find
- Chairs easy to move or rearrange
- Area where noise can be made
- Securely fenced area

## **Communication Accessibility**

- Plain-language service sheets
- Visual supports (pictures, icons, diagrams)
- Announcements also provided in writing
- Website includes accessibility information

## **Program Accessibility**

- Predictable routines
- Flexible participation options
- Sensory-friendly alternatives to group activities
- Volunteers trained in ND-affirming practice
- Sensory support whilst listening (wiggle cushions, fidgets)
- Keep the game rules the same every time

# Volunteer Readiness Suggestions

## **Training & Understanding**

- Completed neurodivergence awareness training
- Understands behaviour as communication
- Knows basic sensory processing principles
- Knows co-regulation strategies
- Understands trauma-informed practice basics

## **Practical Skills**

- Can use visual supports
- Can adapt activities for different needs
- Can support transitions calmly
- Knows how to de-escalate through connection
- Knows where sensory kits and quiet spaces are located

## **Attitude & Culture**

- Welcomes movement, noise, and stimming
- Avoids judgemental language
- Respects family expertise
- Prioritises belonging over behaviour
- Knows who to ask for help

# “First-Time Family” Welcome Suggestions

## **Before the Visit**

- Offer a pre-visit tour
- Send a “What to Expect” guide with photos
- Introduce key leaders via email or video
- Ask about sensory needs and preferences

## **During the Visit**

- Greet family warmly without overwhelming them
- Offer seating options
- Explain where the quiet zone (or loud zone) is
- Provide sensory kit if needed
- Check in discreetly but supportively

## **After the Visit**

- Follow up with a gentle message
- Ask what worked and what didn't
- Invite them to return without pressure
- Offer pastoral support if appropriate