

***If you are ever distracted by someone at Mass,
it may help to consider the perspective of
St. Thérèse of Lisieux on her shared experience:***



*"I also have many [distractions]
but as soon as I am aware of them,
I pray for those people the thought
of whom is diverting my attention,
and in this way they reap
benefit from my distractions.*

*Sometimes God wants to divert
our attention and shed light
on a struggling friend or family member.
They may need our prayers or our charity.
This way the distraction is turned in the right
way and instead of taking us away from God,
it brings us closer to him and his divine plan."*



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F R I E N D L Y

M A S S

This template was created by staff and volunteers in "Belonging: Ministry with Persons with Disabilities" in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend to assist parishes in promoting and explaining a Sensory Friendly Mass.

You can change the font and background style, size, and color. Use, delete, or change the symbols and wording provided in the map key. Replace images with ones featuring your church and parishioners (with their permission). Include your parish logo and website. Delete or add information in any section as needed to reflect the uniqueness of your own faith community.



Parish
Date & Time

An adaptive template for parish use

What is a Sensory Friendly Mass?

A Sensory Friendly Mass provides a safe, comfortable, and stigma-free setting for children and adults with sensory challenges, mental illness, social anxiety, or any kind of disability to feel engaged and experience Mass in a meaningful way.



Why is it Important?

Many individuals have experienced being treated unkindly or feeling unwelcome because of their "visible" or "invisible" disability

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Every child and adult should be able to attend Mass without the fear of encountering cruel comments and stares from others

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A SFM allows individuals with disabilities and their families to worship together as one

Map Key



wheelchair accessible pews (front pews in 4,5)



best sections for full sound (3,4,5,6)



best sections for lower sound level (1,2, 7,8)



best sections to spread out (1,2,3,4)



women's wheelchair accessible restroom



men's wheelchair accessible restroom



family wheelchair accessible restroom



baby changing table available



automatic doors (list all areas. i.e., entrances, restrooms, other areas that have this feature)



wheelchair/van accessible parking available



nursery



gathering space – prayerful area for anyone who needs more room to move around

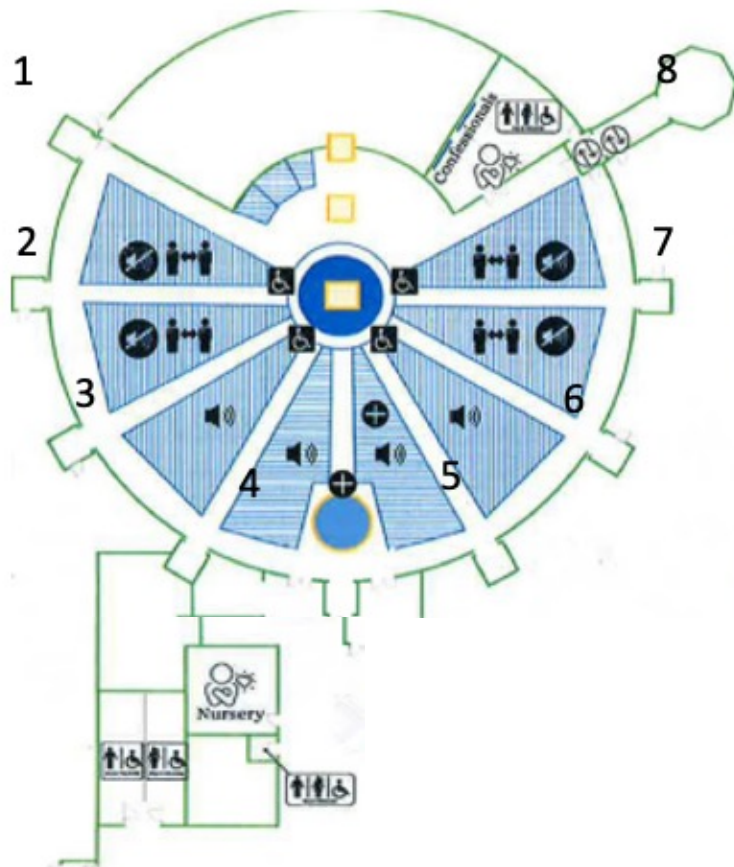


calming room (dedicated space for anyone who needs a quite place. Located)



low-gluten hosts (describe your procedure, e.g., place a low gluten host in the marked tray by the ..., distribution in section ...)

Map of your church



"Sensory" ... makes it possible

Providing the necessary accommodations to reduce or eliminate "external" over-stimulation so that individuals can participate more fully:

30-35 minutes
Low lights
No music, bells, or incense
Prayers are said, not sung
Children's Lectionary (optional)
Short, literal homily (about 2-3 minutes)
Simple petitions
Short Eucharistic Prayer
Uses microphone (for LOOP & Livestream)
Space for people to spread out
Low-gluten hosts provided

"Friendly" ... makes it desirable

Creating a welcoming space so that each person feels that he or she truly belongs:

At every Sensory Friendly Mass celebrated, it is important for the priest to convey the following:

Acknowledge the pain and isolation that some have felt while attending Mass because of the unkind actions of others. **State** that all are welcome at this Mass
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Offer a petition for children and adults with disabilities, their caregivers, etc.
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Invite children and adults to serve as greeters, ushers, and gift-bearers. Offer server and lector training (allow staff or family to accompany the individual for support during Mass if so desired)
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Express the commitment on behalf of staff and volunteers to do their best to accommodate requests by individuals and families

Things you may see (or hear) at a Sensory Friendly Mass

People sitting, standing, kneeling, or moving around when others are not

People making sounds or talking out loud

People in wheelchairs reclining or in a spot other than the wheelchair accessible pews

People using noise canceling earphones to help block out unwanted sounds

People using "fidget" toys or other devices to reduce anxiety and increase focus

People using their phones to access the readings and prayers in a larger font

Please let us know if you need assistance with any of the following:

Assisted listening devices

Fidget toys

Noise canceling earphones

Low-gluten hosts

Access to the LOOP

Finding the right place to sit

Anything else!

There is a sort of "chaotic" joy at this Mass. Although as many "external" noises as possible are reduced or eliminated, some children and adults will move around or make noises because this is their unique way of praying and participating at Mass.

Every Baptized Catholic has the right to attend Mass

Our parish is committed to celebrating the Sensory Friendly Mass. We are grateful you are here and invite you to spread the word so that more children, adults, and families who would benefit from attending a Sensory Friendly Mass may join us in worship.



Questions? Please contact:

Name:

Phone:

Email: