

WONDERFULLY WIRED

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DEVOTIONAL



NOTHING BUT AUTISM

Wonderfully Wired: A 30-Day Devotional for Amazing Kids with Autism

How to Use This Devotional

For Children:

- Try to read one devotional each day
- If you need to, use a visual timer to help you focus during reading time
- You can read the devotional by yourself or with an adult
- Use the "My Thoughts" section to draw, write, or place stickers about how you feel
- Look for Noah's story at the end of each day to see what happens next!

For Parents/Caregivers:

- Establish a consistent time and place for devotional reading
- Allow flexibility in how your child engages with the material
- Use the visual schedule provided to track progress
- Adapt the reflection activities based on your child's communication preferences
- Consider reading the devotional message aloud while your child follows along

Schedule

Print this page and use stickers or markers to track your progress through the devotional!

Day 1: Just the Way God Made Me

Day 2: When Things Get Too Loud

- Day 3: Finding My Special Interests

Day 4: Making Friends My Own Way

- Day 5: When Plans Change

- Day 6: Understanding My Feelings

- Day 7: My Amazing Brain

- Day 8: When Words Are Hard to Find

- Day 9: Brave in a Busy World

- Day 10: God Understands My Sensory Needs

- Day 11: My Unique Way of Showing Love

- Day 12: When I Need My

- Day 13: Telling My Story

- Day 14: God's Love Doesn't Need Eye Contact

- Day 15: When I Feel Misunderstood

- Day 16: Finding Calm in God's Creation

Day 17: God Hears Me in My Own Language

- Day 18: Moving My Body, My
- Day 19: Finding My People
- Day 20: Seeing Details Others Miss
- Day 21: Honest with God About Hard Days
- Day 22: Taking Things Literally
- Day 23: Celebrating Small Victories
- Day 24: When I Need to Stim
- Day 25: Jesus Was Different Too
- Day 26: God's Instructions Are Clear
- Day 27: When I Need a Break
- Day 28: My Different Perspective
- Day 29: Growing at My Own Pace
- Day 30: God's Special Purpose for Me

Day 1: "Just the Way God Made Me"

Scripture: Psalm 139:14 - "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

God made you exactly the way you are supposed to be. Your brain works in amazing ways that make you special. Sometimes you might notice things others don't see or feel things others don't feel. These differences aren't mistakes – they're part of God's wonderful design for you!

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for making me exactly who I am. Help me remember that I am wonderfully made, even when I feel different. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Different, not less." - Dr. Temple Grandin (Autism advocate and professor)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of a fingerprint. Just like your fingerprint, you are unique and designed by God.

My Thoughts: *Use this space to draw or write how you feel about being wonderfully made by God.*

Sensory Connection: Find something soft to touch while you think about how God carefully made you.

Noah's Story - Part 1: Meeting Noah Noah is 10 years old and has autism. He loves trains, remembers amazing facts about space, and notices patterns that other people miss. Sometimes Noah flaps his hands when he's excited or rocks when he needs to think. Today, Noah got a new devotional book. "Mom, can I read this by myself?" he asked. "Of course," his mom smiled. "God made your brain special. You'll understand His words in your own perfect way." Noah felt happy knowing God made him just the way he's supposed to be.

Day 2: "When Things Get Too Loud"

Scripture: Isaiah 26:3 - "You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you."

Sometimes the world can feel too loud, too bright, or too much. When everything feels overwhelming, remember that God understands your feelings. Jesus often went to quiet places when He needed peace. It's okay to need quiet time too!

Prayer: God, when things get too loud or too much, help me find your peace. Thank you for understanding when I need quiet time. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Find a place inside where there's joy, and the joy will burn out the pain." - Joseph Campbell (Writer whose work inspired Star Wars)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of a quiet place you like to go when things get too loud.

My Thoughts: *What helps you feel calm when things get too loud? Draw or write about it here.*

Sensory Connection: Close your eyes and cover your ears for 10 seconds. Feel how peaceful quiet can be.

Noah's Story - Part 2: Too Many Sounds Noah went to church with his family. The music was very loud today, and people were talking all around him. Noah's ears started to hurt, and his heart beat faster. "Mom, it's too loud," he whispered. Mom understood right away. She handed Noah his noise-canceling headphones and showed him a quiet corner with pillows. "Jesus needed quiet places too," she reminded him. Noah sat in the quiet corner, took deep breaths, and felt much better. He remembered God gives peace even when things are too loud.

Day 3: "Finding My Special Interests"

Scripture: Colossians 3:23 - "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."

God gives everyone special interests and talents! Maybe you know lots about trains, dinosaurs, space, or another amazing topic. These interests are gifts from God. When you learn about things you love, you're using the curious mind God gave you!

Prayer: Thank you, God, for giving me interests that make me excited. Help me use what I know to make the world better. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." - Theodore Roosevelt (President who loved nature and learning)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of something you love learning about.

My Thoughts: *What special interests has God given you? What do you know a lot about?*

Sensory Connection: Hold or look at an object related to your special interest while you pray.

Noah's Story - Part 3: Train Facts Noah's class had "Show and Tell" today. Noah brought his favorite train book. When it was his turn, Noah shared amazing facts about steam engines. "The first steam locomotive was built in 1804," he explained. Some kids looked confused, but Ms. Garcia said, "Wow, Noah! Your knowledge about trains is incredible!" On the way home, Noah wondered if God liked his train facts. Dad smiled, "Noah, God gave you your amazing train knowledge. He loves when you get excited about what you've learned. That's why your eyes light up when you talk about trains!"

Day 4: "Making Friends My Own Way"

Scripture: Proverbs 18:24 - "One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."

Making friends might sometimes feel tricky. That's okay! Jesus made friends in His own special way, and He values quality over quantity. Remember that God gave you a unique way of connecting with others.

Prayer: Dear God, help me be brave when making friends. Thank you for people who understand me and accept me just as I am. Amen.

Hero Quote: "You don't need the whole world to love you. Just a few good people." - Charles M. Schulz (Creator of Charlie Brown and Snoopy)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of what friendship means to you.

My Thoughts: *Who is a good friend to you? How do you like to spend time with friends?*

Sensory Connection: Hold a small toy or object that reminds you of a friend.

Noah's Story - Part 4: Recess Time Noah usually spent recess alone, looking at the patterns in the clouds or the cracks in the sidewalk. Today, a new boy named Marcus sat nearby. "What are you looking at?" Marcus asked. Noah wasn't sure what to say at first. Finally, he said, "Cloud patterns. That one looks exactly like a diesel engine." Marcus looked up. "Cool! I like video games and dinosaurs." Noah smiled. "I know some dinosaur facts." They sat quietly together, sometimes talking about dinosaurs, sometimes just watching clouds. Noah realized you don't always need lots of words to make a friend. Sometimes just being together is enough.

Day 5: "When Plans Change"

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Changes in plans or routines can be really hard! Even when things change, God's love for you never changes. God understands when you feel upset about surprises or when things don't go as expected.

Prayer: God, help me when things change and I feel upset. Remind me that you are always with me, even during unexpected moments. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans." - John Lennon (Musician who wrote songs about peace)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of something that helps you when plans change.

My Thoughts: *What helps you feel better when something unexpected happens?*

Sensory Connection: Take five deep breaths while counting on your fingers to help calm your body.

Noah's Story - Part 5: The Changed Schedule Noah's class was supposed to go to the library today. Noah had been looking forward to it all week. But when he got to school, Ms. Garcia announced, "The library is closed for repairs. We'll have art class instead." Noah felt his stomach tighten. He didn't like this change! He started to rock back and forth. Ms. Garcia noticed and came over with a schedule card. "I know changes are hard, Noah. Let's cross out 'library' and write in 'art' so you can see the new plan." Noah took some deep breaths like Mom had taught him. He remembered that God's love stays the same even when plans change. By the end of art class, Noah had created a beautiful picture of a train crossing a bridge.

Day 6: "Understanding My Feelings"

Scripture: Philippians 4:7 - "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Feelings can sometimes be big and confusing. It might be hard to explain how you feel, or your emotions might come out in ways you didn't expect. God understands all your feelings, even when words are hard to find.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for understanding my feelings, even when I don't understand them myself. Help me find good ways to express how I feel. Amen.

Hero Quote: "You don't have to control your thoughts. You just have to stop letting them control you." - Dan Millman (Author of "Way of the Peaceful Warrior")

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of a feeling you had today.

My Thoughts: *What feeling is the strongest for you today? How does your body show this feeling?*

Sensory Connection: Place your hand on your chest and feel your heartbeat while you name a feeling.

Noah's Story - Part 6: Big Feelings Noah was having a hard time at lunch. The cafeteria was noisy, his favorite blue cup was being washed, and his sandwich had the wrong jelly. Noah felt a big feeling building inside, but he couldn't find the words to explain it. His face got hot, and he pushed his tray away. Ms. Garcia came over and showed him a feelings chart with pictures. "Can you point to how you feel?" Noah pointed to "overwhelmed" and "disappointed." Ms. Garcia nodded. "Those are big feelings. It's okay to have them." She helped Noah take some deep breaths and found him a quiet spot to finish lunch. Later, Noah told God about his big feelings during his prayer time, even though the words were still hard to find. He was glad God understood his heart, even when the words wouldn't come.

Day 7: "My Amazing Brain"

Scripture: Romans 12:2 - "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Your brain works in special ways! Sometimes you might notice details others miss or think about problems differently. This is part of how God made you, and these different ways of thinking help make the world a better place.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for my unique brain. Help me use my special way of thinking to do good things and help others. Amen.

Hero Quote: "The world needs different kinds of minds to work together." - Dr. Temple Grandin (Scientist who designed better systems because of how her autistic mind works)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of what your brain thinks about most.

My Thoughts: *What's something your brain notices or understands that others might not?*

Sensory Connection: Gently tap your fingers on your head while thanking God for your amazing brain.

Noah's Story - Part 7: Brain Differences During science class, Noah's teacher showed a model of the human brain. "Our brains all work differently," she explained. "Some brains are really good at math, others at art, and others at remembering facts." Noah's friend Marcus whispered, "Your brain is good at remembering train facts!" Noah smiled. At home, Noah asked, "Mom, is my autism in my brain?" Mom sat down next to him. "Yes, it's just how your brain is wired. God made your brain to notice details, remember amazing facts, and see patterns others miss." Noah thought about that. "So God made my brain different on purpose?" Mom nodded. "Absolutely. Your brain is exactly how God designed it to be." Noah felt proud of his amazing brain that God had carefully created.

Day 8: "When Words Are Hard to Find"

Scripture: Romans 8:26 - "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans."

Sometimes finding the right words can be tricky. God understands you perfectly, even when you can't find the words to say. The Bible tells us that sometimes even the Holy Spirit communicates without words!

Prayer: God, thank you for hearing me even when I can't find the words. Help me communicate in ways that work best for me. Amen.

Hero Quote: "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough." - Albert Einstein (Scientist who may have been autistic himself)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of different ways to communicate (pictures, typing, sign language).

My Thoughts: *What helps you when words are hard to find? Draw or write about it.*

Sensory Connection: Practice taking three deep breaths when words feel stuck.

Noah's Story - Part 8: Prayer Without Words Noah's youth group was sharing prayer requests. When it was Noah's turn, the words wouldn't come. He knew what he wanted to say—he was worried about his grandma who was sick—but the words got stuck. He started to tap his fingers together quickly. "It's okay," his youth leader said gently. "You don't have to use words." She handed Noah some paper. "You can draw your prayer if you want." Noah drew a picture of his grandma in a hospital bed with an angel nearby. The youth leader smiled. "That's a beautiful prayer for your grandma's healing." On the way home, Dad said, "Noah, Romans 8:26 says the Holy Spirit helps us pray when we don't have words. God understood your prayer perfectly, even without words."

Day 9: "Brave in a Busy World"

Scripture: Joshua 1:9 - "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

The world can sometimes feel too busy, too noisy, or too crowded. Being in busy places takes extra courage for you. God is with you in those moments, giving you strength when you need to be brave.

Prayer: Dear God, please give me courage when places are busy or loud. Thank you for being with me everywhere I go. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'" - Mary Anne Radmacher (Artist and writer)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of a time when you were brave in a busy place.

My Thoughts: *What helps you be brave when places are too busy or noisy?*

Sensory Connection: Squeeze your hands together tightly, then release them while taking a deep breath.

Noah's Story - Part 9: Mall Adventure Today Noah had to go to the mall with Mom to buy new shoes. Malls were one of the hardest places for Noah—too bright, too noisy, too many people. Just thinking about it made his heart beat fast. "Can I bring my noise-canceling headphones and sunglasses?" he asked. "Of course," Mom answered. "And we'll make a map of exactly where we're going." At the mall, Noah followed the map and wore his headphones. It was still hard, but he made it to the shoe store. "You were so brave," Mom said afterward. "Being brave doesn't mean you're not scared. It means you do something even though it's hard." Noah thought about Joshua 1:9 from his devotional. God had told Joshua to be brave too. Noah realized that sometimes trusting God means being brave in a busy world.

Day 10: "God Understands My Sensory Needs"

Scripture: Matthew 11:28 - "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

God made your senses and understands when things feel too bright, too loud, too scratchy, or too strong-smelling. Jesus offers rest when your senses feel overloaded. It's okay to need breaks or to use tools that help your senses feel better.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for understanding my sensory needs. Help me find peace when things get overwhelming. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Sometimes the smallest things take up the most room in your heart." - A.A. Milne (Creator of Winnie the Pooh)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of something that helps your senses feel better (headphones, soft blanket, sunglasses).

My Thoughts: *What sensory tools help you feel calm? What sensations are difficult for you?*

Sensory Connection: Touch something with a texture you find calming while you pray.

Noah's Story - Part 10: The Scratchy Sweater Noah was helping Mom fold laundry when he touched a scratchy sweater. He quickly pulled his hand away. "I can't touch that one," he explained. Mom nodded and gave him the soft t-shirts to fold instead. Later, they talked about sensory feelings. "Some things that don't bother other people really bother me," Noah said. "Like scratchy clothes or bright lights." Mom showed Noah a Bible verse about Jesus' clothes. "See, Jesus wore soft clothes made of linen. I think He understands when things feel too scratchy or bright or loud." Noah smiled. "So Jesus understands my sensory needs?" "Absolutely," Mom replied. "God made your senses and understands exactly how they work." Noah felt happy knowing God understood when things were just too much for his senses.

Day 11: "My Unique Way of Showing Love"

Scripture: 1 John 3:18 - "Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

Everyone shows love differently! Maybe you show love by sharing facts about your favorite subject, by giving specific gifts, or by wanting to be near someone without talking. Your way of showing love is special and valuable.

Prayer: God, thank you for the unique ways you've given me to show love. Help others understand how I express caring. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Love is not about how much you say 'I love you,' but how much you prove that it's true." - Unknown (Often used by superheroes in comics)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker showing how you like to express love to others.

My Thoughts: *How do you show people you care about them? What makes you feel loved?*

Sensory Connection: Hold something that reminds you of someone you love while you pray for them.

Noah's Story - Part II: Birthday Drawing It was Mom's birthday. Noah wanted to show her how much he loved her. He didn't always like hugs or saying "I love you," but he wanted Mom to know. He decided to make her a special gift. Noah spent hours creating a detailed drawing of Mom's favorite garden with every flower in the right place. When he gave it to her, Mom's eyes filled with tears. "Noah, this is beautiful! You remembered every single flower!" Noah explained, "The drawing shows I love you because I remembered all the details of what you like." Mom hugged the drawing to her heart. "That's one of the special ways you show love—by noticing and remembering what's important to others. That's a wonderful gift God has given you." Noah realized there are many ways to show love, and his way was special too.

Day 12: "When I Need My Routines"

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1 - "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."

Routines and schedules help make the world feel safe and make sense. Did you know God created routines too? Day and night, seasons of the year, and many Bible stories show the importance of order and patterns.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for creating order in the world. Help me when my routines need to change, and help others understand why routines matter to me. Amen.

Hero Quote: "If you are always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be." - Maya Angelou (Poet and civil rights activist)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker showing your favorite daily routine.

My Thoughts: *What routines help you feel safe and comfortable? What's your favorite part of your day?*

Sensory Connection: Trace the same pattern with your finger five times while thinking about God's orderly creation.

Noah's Story - Part 12: Bedtime Routine Every night, Noah had the same bedtime routine: brush teeth, read one chapter, pray, arrange his stuffed animals in a specific order, then lights out. Tonight, Grandma was babysitting, and she forgot about arranging the stuffed animals. When Noah reminded her, she said, "Does it really matter what order they're in?" Noah felt his chest tighten. "Yes, it matters." Grandma looked confused but helped him arrange them. The next day, Mom explained to Noah, "Routines help your brain feel safe, just like they helped the people in the Bible. God created routines like day and night, seasons, and special celebrations to help people feel secure." Noah thought about that. "So God likes routines too?" Mom smiled. "Yes, He does. And He understands why they're important to you."

Day 13: "Telling My Story"

Scripture: Psalm 71:15 - "My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds, of your saving acts all day long—though I know not how to relate them all."

Your story and experiences matter! God wants to hear about your day, your thoughts, and your feelings—even if you share them differently than others might. Your unique perspective helps others see God's world in new ways.

Prayer: God, thank you for my unique story. Help me share my experiences in ways that others can understand. Amen.

Hero Quote: "If you've got a different mind, you've got a different perspective to bring to the world." - Greta Thunberg (Environmental activist with autism)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of something important that happened in your life.

My Thoughts: *What's a story about you that you'd like others to know? What makes your story special?*

Sensory Connection: Hold a special object from your life while thinking about your story.

Noah's Story - Part 13: Sunday School Sharing Noah's Sunday School class was sharing about times they felt God's love. Noah had a story about seeing a perfect line of red autumn leaves that reminded him of God's beautiful order, but he wasn't sure how to tell it. When his turn came, his words got jumbled. "Take your time," his teacher said kindly. Noah tried again, "God made red leaves... in a line... perfect pattern... made me happy." It wasn't exactly what he wanted to say, but his teacher smiled. "So you saw God's perfect design in nature?" Noah nodded gratefully. On the way home, Mom said, "Noah, God understands your whole story, even the parts that are hard to put into words. And when you share even a small piece of your story, it helps others see God in new ways."

Day 14: "God's Love Doesn't Need Eye Contact"

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7 - "The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Some people think eye contact shows you're listening, but God knows there are many ways to pay attention! God sees your heart and knows you're listening, even if you're looking elsewhere. Your connection with God doesn't depend on where your eyes are focused.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for seeing my heart and knowing I'm listening, even when I can't show it the way others expect. Amen.

Hero Quote: "What makes you different or weird—that's your strength." - Meryl Streep (Actress known for understanding different perspectives)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of where you like to look when listening to others.

My Thoughts: *What do you like to look at when you're thinking or listening? How do you show you're paying attention?*

Sensory Connection: Close your eyes while praying today to focus on listening to God with your heart.

Noah's Story - Part 14: Church Volunteer At church, a new volunteer kept saying, "Noah, look at me when I'm talking to you." Noah tried, but looking at eyes was uncomfortable—too much information all at once. He looked at her chin instead. Later, Dad explained to the volunteer, "Noah is listening even when he's not making eye contact. He actually hears better when he doesn't have to process faces at the same time." On the way home, Noah asked, "Does God want me to look Him in the eyes when I pray?" Dad thought carefully. "God sees your heart, Noah. He knows you're listening and loving Him, no matter where your eyes are focused. God's love doesn't depend on eye contact." Noah felt relieved. He could talk to God while looking at the patterns in his carpet or the leaves on a tree, and God would still understand him perfectly.

Day 15: "When I Feel Misunderstood"

Scripture: Psalm 139:1-2 - "You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar."

It can be frustrating when others don't understand you. Remember that God always understands you perfectly! Jesus often felt misunderstood too, but He kept being exactly who His Father made Him to be.

Prayer: God, help me when others don't understand me. Thank you for knowing my heart and my thoughts completely. Amen.

Hero Quote: "To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." - Ralph Waldo Emerson
(Writer who inspired many heroes)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of something others might not understand about you.

My Thoughts: *When have you felt misunderstood? Who helps you feel understood?*

Sensory Connection: Wrap your arms around yourself in a hug while remembering that God understands you completely.

Noah's Story - Part 15: Cousin's Visit Noah's cousin Jake came to visit. While they were playing, Noah started explaining how train signals work. He knew ALL about them! But after a few minutes, Jake interrupted, "Can we talk about something else? Trains are boring." Noah felt like he'd been punched in the stomach. Mom saw his face fall and came over. "Jake, Noah is sharing something that's really important to him. That's how he connects with people he cares about." Later, Mom reminded Noah, "Jesus was often misunderstood too. When people didn't understand Him, He kept being exactly who God made Him to be." Noah thought about that. "So when people don't understand me, I should just keep being me?" Mom nodded. "Exactly. And remember, God always understands you perfectly."

Day 16: "Finding Calm in God's Creation"

Scripture: Psalm 46:10 - "He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.'"

Nature can be a wonderful place to find calm when the world feels too much.

Jesus often went to quiet natural places to pray. The patterns, details, and quiet spaces in nature can help your mind and body feel peaceful.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for creating nature where I can find calm. Help me notice the amazing details in your creation. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better." - Albert Einstein (Scientist who found peace in the patterns of the universe)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of your favorite natural place that makes you feel calm.

My Thoughts: *What patterns or details in nature do you notice that others might miss?*

Sensory Connection: Touch something natural like a leaf, rock, or blade of grass while thinking about God's creation.

Noah's Story - Part 16: Park Walk Noah had a hard day at school. Too many changes, too much noise. When he got home, he was still feeling shaky inside. Dad suggested they take a walk in the park. As they walked, Dad asked Noah to find patterns in nature. Noah spotted the symmetrical veins on leaves, the spiral pattern of pinecones, and the perfect spacing of stones along the path. With each discovery, Noah's breathing slowed and his shoulders relaxed. "Nature helps me feel calm," Noah explained. Dad nodded. "Jesus often went to quiet natural places to pray and find peace. God's creation shows His perfect order and care." Noah collected a perfectly symmetrical leaf to put in his Bible. When things got overwhelming, he could look at it and remember God's peaceful creation.

Day 17: "God Hears Me in My Own Language"

Scripture: Romans 8:26-27 - "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."

Whether you use spoken words, written words, pictures, sign language, or a communication device, God understands you perfectly! The Holy Spirit even helps translate your feelings into prayers when words are hard to find.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for hearing me in whatever way I communicate. I'm glad you understand me perfectly! Amen.

Hero Quote: "Communication works for those who work at it." - John Powell
(Author who wrote about understanding others)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker showing your favorite way to communicate.

My Thoughts: *How do you like to communicate with others? With God?*

Sensory Connection: Try praying in a new way today—through drawing, building, or movement.

Noah's Story - Part 17: Prayer Stations Noah's church was hosting a special prayer night. "Everyone will take turns praying out loud," Dad explained. Noah felt worried. Sometimes when he tried to pray out loud, the words wouldn't come right. Dad seemed to understand. "Noah, did you know there are many ways to pray? Some people use written prayers, some draw their prayers, and some use movement." When they arrived, Noah was surprised to see prayer stations set up around the room. At one station, people wrote prayers on paper. At another, they drew pictures. Noah chose to build a prayer with Lego bricks, creating a structure that represented his family with God at the center. "Your prayer looks beautiful, Noah," the pastor said. Noah smiled. God could understand his Lego prayer language perfectly.

Day 18: "Moving My Body, My Way"

Scripture: Psalm 149:3 - "Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with timbrel and harp."

Everyone's body moves differently! Maybe you flap your hands when excited, rock when thinking, or need to move around to listen better. David in the Bible danced with his whole body to show his joy to God. Your movements are another way to express yourself.

Prayer: God, thank you for my body and all the ways it moves. Help others understand that my movements are part of how you made me. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change." - Stephen Hawking
(Brilliant scientist who showed we can think differently than we move)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker showing how your body likes to move.

My Thoughts: *What movements help your body feel good? How does your body show excitement or happiness?*

Sensory Connection: Rock, bounce, or move in your favorite way while thinking about how God made your body.

Noah's Story - Part 18: Worship Movements During worship at church, Noah noticed everyone lifting their hands and swaying. He preferred to stand still, but sometimes he needed to rock or bounce a little. "Is it wrong that I don't move like everyone else during worship?" he asked Mom later. Mom showed Noah a Bible verse about David dancing before the Lord. "David moved his body in a way that felt right to him," she explained. "God created your body and understands how it needs to move." The next Sunday, when the music started, Noah felt comfortable standing still while gently rocking. Then when a song about trains came on (his favorite!), he couldn't help it—his hands started flapping with excitement. Mom smiled at him. "That's worship too," she whispered. "Your body praising God in its own special way."

Day 19: "Finding My People"

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:18 - "But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be."

God created you to be part of a community where you belong and are valued.

Finding "your people" who understand and appreciate you is a special gift.

Remember that you have an important place in God's family!

Prayer: Dear God, help me find friends who understand me and appreciate me just as I am. Thank you for giving me a place in your family. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Why fit in when you were born to stand out?" - Dr. Seuss (Author who celebrated uniqueness)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of people who understand and accept you.

My Thoughts: *Who are the people who make you feel accepted and understood? How do they show you that?*

Sensory Connection: Hold a special object that reminds you of belonging while you pray.

Noah's Story - Part 19: Special Needs Group Noah's church started a new group for kids with different learning styles. When Noah arrived, he was surprised to see five other kids there—including his friend Marcus! Some kids used tablets to communicate, one girl wore headphones like Noah sometimes did, and another boy kept a special toy with him. They played games that didn't require too much talking, and no one thought it was strange when Noah needed to take a break in the quiet corner. "I like this group," Noah told Mom afterward. "No one thinks I'm weird." Mom smiled. "You've found some of your people, Noah. God gives everyone a community where they belong." Noah realized that God had placed him in a family, both at home and at church, where he was understood and valued.

Day 20: "Seeing Details Others Miss"

Scripture: Matthew 10:30 - "And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

God created you with amazing attention to detail! You might notice things others miss—like patterns, small objects, or specific facts. This special ability can help you understand God's world in unique and valuable ways.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for helping me notice details that others might miss. Help me use this gift to better understand your amazing world. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Sometimes it's the smallest details that make the biggest difference." - Sherlock Holmes (Detective who solved mysteries by noticing details)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of a small detail you've noticed that others might miss.

My Thoughts: *What details do you notice that others might not see? How does noticing details help you?*

Sensory Connection: Find something with intricate details and examine it closely while thanking God for your detail-focused mind.

Noah's Story - Part 20: Neighborhood Drawing Noah's class was drawing pictures of their neighborhood. Noah carefully added every window on every building, the exact number of stripes on the crosswalk, and precisely four birds on the telephone wire—just like in real life. His teacher was amazed. "Noah, you've included details I never even noticed!" On the way home, Noah spotted a small bird's nest high in a tree that no one else saw. "You have a special ability to see details others miss," Dad explained. "God gave you eyes that notice everything." Noah smiled. "Does God notice small details too?" Dad nodded. "The Bible says God notices every sparrow and has counted every hair on your head. God is the ultimate noticer of details—just like you!"

Day 21: "Honest with God About Hard Days"

Scripture: Psalm 42:11 - "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."

Some days are harder than others. Maybe you had sensory overload, communication challenges, or felt misunderstood. God wants to hear about your tough days and your feelings. Many Bible characters honestly told God when they struggled too.

Prayer: God, today was hard because [you can fill in what made today difficult]. Please help me and stay close to me. Amen.

Hero Quote: "You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think." - Christopher Robin to Winnie the Pooh (A.A. Milne)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker showing something that was hard for you recently.

My Thoughts: *What helps you feel better after a hard day? Who can you talk to when things are difficult?*

Sensory Connection: Squeeze a stress ball or hug a stuffed animal while telling God about a hard day.

Noah's Story - Part 21: The Terrible Day Noah had a really hard day. Nothing went right—his favorite lunch spot in the cafeteria was taken, fire drill noise hurt his ears, and he got a math problem wrong even though he usually loved math. By the time he got home, Noah felt like crying. During his prayer time, Noah wasn't sure what to say. "Can I tell God I had a terrible, horrible, no good day?" he asked Mom. "Absolutely," Mom said. "In the Bible, people like David and Jeremiah told God exactly how they felt on hard days." Noah took a deep breath and prayed, "God, today was really awful. My ears hurt from the fire drill, and I made a mistake in math, and lunch was all wrong. I'm sad and tired." Somehow, just telling God about his terrible day made Noah feel a little better. Mom reminded him, "God can handle all your big feelings, Noah—even on the hardest days."

Day 22: "Taking Things Literally"

Scripture: Psalm 119:130 - "The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."

Sometimes people say things they don't exactly mean, which can be confusing! Jesus often used stories to explain things, but He also valued clear, straightforward truth. God understands when figurative language is confusing, and God's truth is always reliable.

Prayer: Dear God, help me understand what people mean when they say confusing things. Thank you for always being truthful with me. Amen.

Hero Quote: "If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything." - Mark Twain (Author who valued straightforward honesty)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of something that people say that confuses you.

My Thoughts: *What sayings or expressions have confused you? Who helps you understand confusing language?*

Sensory Connection: Hold something solid and real while thinking about God's solid, reliable truth.

Noah's Story - Part 22: Raining Cats and Dogs Noah looked out the window at the heavy rain. His teacher had said, "It's raining cats and dogs out there!" Noah was confused—he didn't see any animals falling from the sky. At home, he asked Mom about it. "Sometimes people use expressions that don't mean exactly what the words say," Mom explained. "When someone says 'it's raining cats and dogs,' they just mean it's raining very hard." Noah thought about that. "That's confusing. Why not just say it's raining hard?" Mom smiled. "You're right—it would be clearer. I love how you prefer straightforward communication." Later, Dad showed Noah a Bible verse about God's words giving light and understanding. "God's word is clear and true," Dad explained. "When you're confused by expressions people use, remember that God's truth is always solid and reliable—just like you prefer!"

Day 23: "Celebrating Small Victories"

Scripture: Zechariah 4:10 - "Who dares despise the day of small things...?"

Every small step forward is worth celebrating! Maybe you tried a new food, handled a change in routine, or found a way to explain your feelings. God sees and celebrates these victories with you, no matter how small they might seem to others.

Prayer: God, thank you for helping me [something you accomplished today]. I'm proud of this victory, and I know you're proud of me too! Amen.

Hero Quote: "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together." - Vincent Van Gogh (Artist who created masterpieces through tiny brushstrokes)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of a small victory you've had recently.

My Thoughts: *What small step have you taken that made you proud? Who helps you celebrate your victories?*

Sensory Connection: Give yourself a gentle high-five or pat on the back while thinking of something you accomplished.

Noah's Story - Part 23: New Food Success Noah usually ate the exact same lunch every day—a peanut butter sandwich (no jelly), apple slices (not touching the sandwich), and a blue cup of water. Today, Mom asked if he wanted to try adding a thin slice of banana to his sandwich. Noah wasn't sure—new foods were tricky. But he decided to try. He carefully lifted the bread, placed one banana slice on half the sandwich, and took a tiny bite from that side. The texture was different, but the taste was okay! "I tried it!" Noah told Mom proudly. Mom made a big deal about his bravery. "That's a huge victory, Noah!" At dinner, Dad asked everyone to share something good from their day. Noah shared his banana victory, and the whole family cheered. Dad reminded him, "God celebrates these small steps with you, Noah. The Bible says we shouldn't despise small beginnings because they lead to great things."

Day 24: "When I Need to Stim"

Scripture: Psalm 139:13 - "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb."

Stimming (like hand-flapping, rocking, or humming) helps many autistic people regulate their feelings or express emotions. God understands your need for these movements and sounds! They're part of how your wonderfully-made body works.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for understanding why I need to move my body in these special ways. Help others to understand too. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Your body. Your mind. Your choice." - Captain Marvel (Superhero who empowers others to be themselves)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker showing your favorite way to stim or move your body.

My Thoughts: *What movements or sounds help you feel better when you're excited, nervous, or overwhelmed?*

Sensory Connection: Take a moment to stim in your favorite way while thanking God for your body.

Noah's Story - Part 24: Flapping at the Science Museum Noah's class took a field trip to the science museum. When they reached the train exhibit, Noah got so excited that his hands started flapping quickly at his sides. A boy from another school pointed and laughed. Noah immediately tried to stop his hands, but that made his body feel tight and uncomfortable. Ms. Garcia noticed and came over. "Noah, it's okay to move your hands when you're excited. That's part of how your body expresses joy." On the bus ride home, Noah asked, "Why do my hands flap when I'm happy?" Ms. Garcia explained, "Everyone's body responds differently to feelings. Some people jump, some people clap, and your hands flap. It's a beautiful way your body shows excitement." That night, Mom reminded Noah, "God designed your body perfectly, including how it moves when you're excited. Your stimming is part of how God knit you together, and it's good."

Day 25: "Jesus Was Different Too"

Scripture: Isaiah 53:3 - "He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem."

Jesus didn't always follow social rules that didn't make sense. He touched people others avoided, spoke truth when others wanted politeness, and prioritized kindness over fitting in. Jesus understands what it's like to be seen as different.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for understanding what it's like to be different. Help me be brave like you when others don't understand me. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Our differences are our strengths." - X-Men's Professor Xavier (Leader who built a community of differently-abled individuals)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker showing how you might be different from others in a good way.

My Thoughts: *How was Jesus different from others? How are your differences actually strengths?*

Sensory Connection: Place your hand over your heart and feel it beating while thinking about Jesus understanding your different experiences.

Noah's Story - Part 25: Different Like Jesus During Sunday School, the teacher talked about how Jesus broke social rules that didn't make sense—like when He healed on the Sabbath or talked to people others avoided. On the way home, Noah thought about this. "Mom, was Jesus different like me?" Mom considered the question carefully. "Yes, in many ways He was. Jesus didn't always do what was expected. He spoke directly when others wanted Him to be polite. He noticed people others ignored. He didn't follow social rules that got in the way of showing love." Noah smiled. "So Jesus understands what it's like when I don't understand social rules?" Mom nodded. "Absolutely. And Jesus was criticized for being different, just like you sometimes are. But His differences were actually His strengths—just like yours." Noah felt a special connection to Jesus, knowing that He understood what it was like to experience the world differently.

Day 26: "God's Instructions Are Clear"

Scripture: Psalm 119:105 - "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

The Bible gives us clear instructions about how to live. When social rules seem complicated or confusing, God's guidance is straightforward: love God and love others. Jesus made complicated things simple by focusing on what truly matters.

Prayer: God, thank you for giving clear instructions in the Bible. Help me understand how to love you and others in my own unique way. Amen.

Hero Quote: "With great power comes great responsibility." - Spider-Man's Uncle Ben (Teaching that clear rules help us make good choices)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of a lamp or flashlight to represent God's Word lighting your path.

My Thoughts: *What rules or instructions make sense to you? What confuses you about how to act around others?*

Sensory Connection: Hold a small flashlight or look at a lamp while thinking about how God's Word guides you.

Noah's Story - Part 26: Confusing Rules Noah sometimes found social rules confusing. At school, kids were supposed to raise their hands to speak, but then at lunch, they all talked at once. Some adults wanted him to make eye contact, while others didn't seem to care. It was all so complicated! One day at church, Noah's Sunday School teacher explained that Jesus simplified all God's rules into just two: love God and love others. "But how do I know if I'm loving others the right way?" Noah asked. His teacher showed him 1 Corinthians 13, which says love is patient and kind. "These are clear instructions," she explained. "When you're patient with others and kind to them, you're loving them." Noah felt relieved. "That's easier to understand than all the complicated social rules!" On the way home, Dad reminded Noah, "God's Word is like a lamp showing us the important path. It helps us see what really matters when other rules seem confusing."

Day 27: "When I Need a Break"

Scripture: Mark 6:31 - "Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'"

Jesus understood the need for breaks! When things get overwhelming, it's okay to take time away to reset. Finding a quiet place to rest is not just okay—it's something Jesus specifically taught His followers to do.

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for understanding my need for quiet breaks. Help me find peaceful moments when the world feels too much. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day is the rest we take between two deep breaths." - Etty Hillesum (Writer who found peace in difficult circumstances)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of your favorite quiet place where you like to take breaks.

My Thoughts: *Where do you like to go when you need a break? What helps you feel calm and rested?*

Sensory Connection: Close your eyes and take three deep breaths, imagining you're in your favorite quiet place.

Noah's Story - Part 27: Break Card Noah's teacher gave him a special card he could place on his desk when he needed a break. The green side meant "I'm okay," and the red side meant "I need a break." One day during a noisy group project, Noah felt his heart racing and the room getting too loud. He flipped his card to red, and Ms. Garcia nodded. Noah went to the quiet corner with noise-cancelling headphones for five minutes. When he returned, he felt much better and could focus again. At home, Noah told Mom about using his break card. "Jesus took breaks too," Mom explained, showing him Mark 6:31. "When things got busy and overwhelming, Jesus told his disciples to come away to a quiet place and rest." Noah thought about that. "So taking breaks isn't being weak—it's doing what Jesus did!" Mom smiled. "Exactly. Knowing when you need rest and quiet is actually very wise."

Day 28: "My Different Perspective"

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:16 - "For, 'Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ."

Your unique way of thinking helps you see God's world differently than others might. This different perspective is valuable! Throughout history, people who thought differently have helped others understand new things about God and His creation.

Prayer: God, thank you for my different perspective. Help me use my unique viewpoint to understand you better and to help others see new things. Amen.

Hero Quote: "We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are." - Anaïs Nin (Writer who helped people understand different perspectives)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker showing something you see differently than others might.

My Thoughts: *What do you notice or understand that others might miss? How might your different perspective help others?*

Sensory Connection: Look at an object from different angles while thinking about how your perspective is valuable.

Noah's Story - Part 28: The School Project Noah's class was doing a project about their town's history. Each student had to contribute something different. Noah had been collecting train facts—how the railroad had changed their town when it was built 100 years ago. Some students talked about famous buildings, others about important people. When it was Noah's turn, he showed detailed drawings of how the train tracks connected their town to other cities, with specific dates and distances. His teacher was amazed. "Noah, your perspective on our town's history through the lens of trains adds something no one else thought of!" On the way home, Mom said, "That's why God made people with different minds—so we can see His world from many angles. Your different perspective helps others understand things in new ways." Noah smiled, realizing his different way of thinking wasn't just okay—it was valuable and needed.

Day 29: "Growing at My Own Pace"

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1 - "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."

Everyone grows and learns at their own pace. Some things might take you longer to learn, while you might master other skills quickly. God's timing is perfect, and He has a special plan for your growth that doesn't need to match anyone else's timeline.

Prayer: Dear God, help me be patient with myself as I grow and learn. Thank you for having the perfect plan and timeline for my life. Amen.

Hero Quote: "Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." - Albert Einstein
(Scientist who developed at his own unique pace)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker showing something you've learned at your own pace.

My Thoughts: *What things have you learned that took time? What are you still working on learning?*

Sensory Connection: Plant a seed in soil or draw a growing plant to represent how things grow in their own time.

Noah's Story - Part 29: Learning to Tie Shoes Noah was learning to tie his shoes. Many kids in his class had learned this years ago, but Noah found it tricky—his fingers didn't want to make the right movements. Mom had tried to teach him several times, but it always ended with Noah feeling frustrated. Today, Mom showed him a new method with loops that stayed in place longer. Noah practiced and practiced. Finally, after many attempts, he got it! "I did it!" he shouted, jumping up and down. "I knew you would," Mom said proudly. "You just needed the right method and time." That night, they read Ecclesiastes 3:1 together. "God has perfect timing for everything in your life, Noah," Mom explained. "Some things you learn quickly, like train facts. Other things take more time, like tying shoes. Both ways are exactly as they should be." Noah felt peaceful knowing he could grow at the pace that was right for him.

Day 30: "God's Special Purpose for Me"

Scripture: Ephesians 2:10 - "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

God created you with a special purpose in mind! Your unique way of seeing the world, your interests, and your abilities are all part of God's good plan. The things that make you different are often connected to the special work God has for you to do.

Prayer: God, thank you for creating me with a special purpose. Help me discover the good works you've prepared for me to do. Amen.

Hero Quote: "When you've figured out your purpose, everything falls into place." - Ms. Marvel/Kamala Khan (Superhero who discovered her unique purpose)

Visual Reminder: Draw or place a sticker of something you might want to be or do when you grow up.

My Thoughts: *What special purpose might God have for you? How might your unique brain help others?*

Sensory Connection: Place your hands over your heart and feel it beating as you think about God's purpose for you.

Noah's Story - Part 30: Noah's Big Idea Over the past month, Noah had been reading his devotional every day. Today, he had a big idea. "Mom," he said, "I want to make a train club at church for kids like me." Mom looked surprised. "That sounds wonderful! What would you do in this club?" Noah's eyes lit up. "I could teach kids about trains, and we could learn Bible stories using train pictures. Some kids feel left out because they're different, but in my club, being different would be good!" Mom hugged Noah. "I think that's exactly the kind of special purpose God had in mind for you." Noah smiled. He was excited to use his love of trains and his different way of seeing the world to help other kids feel like they belonged in God's family too.

Encouraging Scriptures for Difficult Days

From The Message Translation

When feeling overwhelmed:

- "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest." - Matthew 11:28-29
- "God has a sure grip on you and I have a sure grip on the promises of God." - 2 Corinthians 1:14
- "So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong." - Hebrews 12:12-13

When feeling different or misunderstood:

- "You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill." - Matthew 5:14-15
- "But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you." - 1 Peter 2:9
- "So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering." - Romans 12:1

When needing comfort:

- "I'm telling you these things while I'm still living with you. The Friend, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send at my request, will make everything plain to you. He will remind you of all the things I have told you." - John 14:25-26
- "He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us." - 2 Corinthians 1:4
- "Even when the way goes through Death Valley, I'm not afraid when you walk at my side. Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure." - Psalm 23:4

For sensory challenges:

- "God's Spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go! This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike 'What's next, Papa?'" - Romans 8:15
- "Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down." - Philippians 4:6-7
- "Quiet down before God, be prayerful before him." - Psalm 37:7

For parents on difficult days:

- "We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next." - Romans 5:3-4
- "So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit." - Galatians 6:9
- "You're blessed when you stay on course, walking steadily on the road revealed by God." - Psalm 119:1

For celebrating differences:

- "God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you." - James 1:4
- "I praise you because you made me in an amazing and wonderful way. What you have done is wonderful. I know this very well." - Psalm 139:14
- "Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out." - Romans 12:2

For when you need courage:

- "Don't panic. I'm with you. There's no need to fear for I'm your God. I'll give you strength. I'll help you. I'll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you." - Isaiah 41:10
- "This is God's Message, the God who made earth, made it livable and lasting, known everywhere as God: 'Call to me and I will answer you. I'll tell you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own.'" - Jeremiah 33:2-3
- "Be strong. Take courage. Don't be intimidated. Don't give them a second thought because God, your God, is striding ahead of you. He's right there with you. He won't let you down; he won't leave you." - Deuteronomy 31:6

God's Love Jingle

God made me special, Just the way I am. He loves all my differences, Yes, yes,
He can!

When things get too noisy, Or the world feels too bright, God stays right beside
me, Holding me just right.

My brain works amazingly, In its own special way. God planned all my
patterns, For His purpose each day.

I am wonderfully made, This I know is true. God loves every part of me, And
He loves every part of you!

This jingle uses:

- Simple, concrete language
- A predictable rhythm pattern
- Repetitive elements
- Affirmations of God's love and acceptance
- Direct references to common autism experiences
- Short lines that are easier to process and remember

The melody could be kept very simple with minimal pitch changes to make it more accessible. Parents could also add simple hand motions to help with memorization and provide sensory engagement. The jingle could be sung during difficult transitions, overwhelming moments, or as part of a bedtime routine.

God's Design Family Interview

Discovering and Celebrating Each Person's Unique Design and Gifts

Introduction for Parents

This interview activity is designed to help your family discover, acknowledge, and celebrate the unique ways God has designed each family member. As you work through these questions together, you'll uncover the beautiful diversity within your own home and how each person's design contributes to God's bigger purpose.

How to use this activity:

- Set aside a special family time when everyone can participate without distractions
- Ask questions in a relaxed way, allowing plenty of time for thinking
- Accept all answers without judgment
- Record answers using whatever method works best (writing, drawing, voice recording)
- Consider making this a regular activity, perhaps quarterly, to see how answers develop over time

Interview Questions

Section 1: Unique Qualities & Design

1. **What is something your body does that helps you in a special way? (For younger children: "What is your body really good at doing?")**
2. **What senses are strongest for you? (Seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling) (For younger children: "Which is better for you - using your eyes, ears, or hands?")**
3. **What things in the world are easiest for you to notice that others might miss? (For younger children: "What do you see that others don't always see?")**
4. **When do you feel most comfortable in your body? (For younger children: "When does your body feel happy and calm?")**
5. **What helps you feel calm when things get too much? (For younger children: "What makes you feel better when you're upset?")**

Section 2: Special Interests & Gifts

1. **What topic or activity could you talk about for hours without getting tired? (For younger children: "What do you love learning about most?")**
2. **What is something you know a lot about that you could teach others? (For younger children: "What are you really good at?")**
3. **What patterns or details do you notice that make you say "wow"? (For younger children: "What beautiful things do you notice that others might miss?")**
4. **When do you feel most excited or most like yourself? (For younger children: "When do you feel super happy to be you?")**
5. **What activity makes time seem to disappear because you enjoy it so much? (For younger children: "What do you like doing so much that you forget to stop?")**

Section 3: Communication & Relationships

1. **How do you best show others that you care about them?** (*For younger children: "How do you let people know you love them?"*)
2. **What helps you understand what other people are saying or feeling?** (*For younger children: "How do you know what other people mean?"*)
3. **How do you like others to show they care about you?** (*For younger children: "How do you like people to show they love you?"*)
4. **What kind of people do you find easiest to be around?** (*For younger children: "Who is easy and comfortable to be with?"*)
5. **What's your favorite way to pray or talk to God?** (*For younger children: "How do you like to talk to God?"*)

Section 4: God's Purpose & Design

1. **What do you think God especially loves about how He made you?** (*For younger children: "What part of you makes God smile?"*)
2. **How might God use your special interests or abilities to help others?** (*For younger children: "How could the things you're good at help other people?"*)
3. **What challenge in your life has helped you grow stronger?** (*For younger children: "What hard thing have you learned to do?"*)
4. **When have you felt most proud of being exactly who God made you to be?** (*For younger children: "When did you feel really happy to be you?"*)
5. **If you could tell others one thing about how God made you special, what would it be?** (*For younger children: "What should everyone know about how God made you?"*)

Celebrating What We've Discovered

After completing the interviews, take time to celebrate what you've learned about each family member. Consider these follow-up activities:

1. **Create a family "God's Design" poster** where each person's unique qualities are displayed
2. **Begin a tradition of "design affirmations"** where family members regularly acknowledge the beautiful ways God designed each other
3. **Pray together**, thanking God for the specific ways He designed each family member
4. **Identify ways your family can support each person's design**, perhaps by creating quiet spaces, allowing time for special interests, or adapting family activities
5. **Discuss how your family's combined designs** create a beautiful mosaic that reflects God's creativity and purpose

Remember: God doesn't make mistakes. Every sensory sensitivity, every special interest, every unique way of moving and communicating is part of His intentional design. When we celebrate these differences, we honor the Creator who carefully crafted each of us.

"For we are God's masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." - Ephesians 2:10

How to Start an Inclusive Ministry

A Step-by-Step Guide for Autism Inclusion at Your Church

Introduction

Creating a church environment where children and adults with autism can fully participate in worship, learning, and fellowship is a beautiful way to express God's inclusive love. This guide offers practical steps for families who want to advocate for autism inclusion at their church. Remember that small changes can make a big difference, and every step toward inclusion helps fulfill the biblical call to welcome all members of the body of Christ.

Phase 1: Research & Preparation

Step 1: Understand Your Why

- Write down your personal reasons for wanting an inclusive ministry
- Identify specific ways inclusion would benefit your family and others
- Connect your motivation to Scripture (1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Acts 10:34-35, etc.)
- Prepare a brief, heartfelt explanation of why this matters

Step 2: Gather Information

- Connect with other families affected by autism in your congregation
- Document specific needs and challenges currently faced
- Research successful models at other churches (many offer free resources online)
- Create a simple one-page summary of autism basics for those unfamiliar with it

Step 3: Set Realistic Goals

- Start small rather than attempting a complete program immediately
- Identify "quick wins" that could be implemented with minimal resources
- Create short-term (3 months), medium-term (1 year) and long-term (2+ years) goals
- Focus on inclusion rather than separation whenever possible

Phase 2: Building Support

Step 4: Find Key Allies

- Schedule a meeting with your pastor or children's ministry leader
- Share your story and vision in a constructive, solution-oriented way
- Identify staff or volunteers who have professional experience with special needs
- Connect with other ministries (education, facilities, worship) who will be affected

Step 5: Form a Core Team

- Recruit 3-5 committed people with different gifts and perspectives
- Include at least one person with decision-making authority at the church
- Involve self-advocates (individuals with autism) when possible
- Schedule regular meetings to maintain momentum

Step 6: Educate and Inspire

- Offer a brief presentation during a leadership or volunteer meeting
- Share specific stories (with permission) that illustrate both challenges and potential
- Provide basic autism awareness training for key ministry leaders
- Frame inclusion as a biblical mandate, not just a nice addition

Phase 3: Starting Small

Step 7: Begin with Sensory Accommodations

- Create a simple sensory break area in a quiet corner of the children's area
- Provide noise-canceling headphones for use during louder worship services
- Develop visual schedules for Sunday school and worship experiences
- Identify seating options that offer more personal space or reduced stimulation

Step 8: Train Specific Volunteers

- Select compassionate, patient volunteers for initial training
- Teach basic strategies for communication and sensory support
- Create simple accommodation plans for known participants with autism
- Establish clear procedures for helping during difficult moments

Step 9: Develop Visual Resources

- Create visual schedules showing the sequence of activities
- Develop simple social stories explaining church routines and expectations
- Make picture cards for non-verbal communication during activities
- Ensure all resources are durable, consistent, and easy to understand

Phase 4: Growing the Ministry

Step 10: Implement a Buddy System

- Match trained volunteers with participants who need additional support
- Create clear guidelines for buddy responsibilities and boundaries
- Schedule regular check-ins with buddies to provide support and guidance
- Consider rotating buddies to prevent burnout and build broader connections

Step 11: Adapt Existing Programs

- Review curriculum and modify activities to include different learning styles
- Provide fidget tools and alternative seating options in classes
- Create visual supports for worship participation
- Develop alternative ways to engage with lesson content (drawing, building, etc.)

Step 12: Provide Community and Support

- Start a monthly support group for parents of children with special needs
- Create opportunities for siblings to connect with other siblings
- Develop resources to help families practice faith at home in accessible ways
- Connect families with community resources beyond the church

Phase 5: Sustaining and Growing

Step 13: Gather Feedback Regularly

- Check in with families to ensure accommodations are helpful
- Ask volunteers about challenges and successes they've experienced
- Invite self-advocates to share what's working and what could improve
- Be willing to adjust approaches based on feedback

Step 14: Celebrate and Share Success Stories

- Highlight inclusion efforts in church communications
- Share testimonials (with permission) of how inclusion has blessed families
- Recognize and appreciate volunteers who serve in the inclusive ministry
- Document the journey to encourage other churches

Step 15: Expand Your Vision

- Consider sensory-friendly worship services if there's sufficient need
- Develop transition plans for children moving to youth programs
- Create opportunities for adults with autism to serve according to their gifts
- Partner with other churches to share resources and ideas

Common Challenges and Solutions

Resistance to Change

- Focus on one small change at a time
- Connect inclusion efforts to biblical principles
- Share specific stories that illustrate the need
- Offer to start with a trial period for new accommodations

Limited Budget

- Begin with no-cost accommodations (seating arrangements, schedule adjustments)
- Create homemade visual supports rather than purchasing expensive materials
- Seek donations of needed supplies (headphones, fidget tools, etc.)
- Apply for inclusion grants from denominational organizations

Volunteer Concerns

- Address fears through specific training and shadowing opportunities
- Start with volunteers who have some experience or natural comfort
- Create detailed support plans so volunteers aren't left guessing
- Ensure leadership is readily available to assist when needed

Balancing Needs of All Children

- Explain how many accommodations benefit all children
- Implement universal design principles in teaching
- Create clear behavioral expectations that apply to everyone
- Help typically developing children understand and appreciate differences

Final Thoughts

Remember that inclusive ministry is about relationship, not just accommodation. The goal is to create a church environment where people with autism are known, valued, and empowered to grow in faith alongside their neurotypical peers.

Jesus consistently sought out those who were excluded and brought them into community. By advocating for inclusion at your church, you're participating in this gospel work. Even small steps toward greater inclusion reflect God's heart for His diverse body.

"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." - Romans 12:4-5

Recommended Resources

- **Websites:**

- Autism and Faith (autismandfaith.org)
- Key Ministry (keyministry.org)
- Friendship Ministries (friendship.org)

- **Books:**

- "Leading a Special Needs Ministry" by Amy Fenton Lee
- "Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship" by Barbara J. Newman
- "The Inclusive Church" by Joni and Friends

- **Training:**

- "Welcoming People with Disabilities" - CLC Network
- "Autism and Your Church" - Friendship Ministries
- "Disability Ministry Training" - Joni and Friends

Autism-Friendly Bible Study Methods

Structured Approaches to Bible Study That Work Well with Autistic Thinking Styles

Introduction

Autistic thinking styles often include strengths in pattern recognition, attention to detail, logical analysis, and visual processing. These Bible study methods are designed to harness these cognitive strengths while accommodating common challenges with executive functioning, abstract language, and sensory processing. Each method provides clear structure while allowing for deep engagement with Scripture.

Method 1: The Pattern Detective

Best for: Detail-oriented thinkers who enjoy finding patterns and making connections

Materials needed:

- Bible (consistent translation)
- Colored highlighters or pencils
- Notebook with designated sections

Process:

1. Choose a specific pattern to track through a book of the Bible:

- A repeated word or phrase
- A character trait (patience, kindness, etc.)
- Actions of God or responses of people
- Questions asked or answered

2. Create a color code for marking the pattern:

- Assign specific colors to specific elements
- Make a key in your notebook for reference
- Be consistent with your marking system

3. Read the text methodically, marking each instance of your chosen pattern

- Start with shorter books or specific chapters
- Read the same passage multiple times, looking for different patterns
- Note the exact verse references for each pattern occurrence

4. Organize your findings in your notebook:

- Create charts to display where patterns appear
- Note any exceptions to the pattern
- Look for connections between different patterns

Example: In the Gospel of John, highlight in blue each time Jesus says "I am..." and in yellow each time "believe" appears. Then create a chart showing how these statements relate to each other.

Method 2: Concrete Connections

Best for: Those who prefer concrete thinking and benefit from explicit connections

Materials needed:

- Bible
- Visual mapping tools (paper and colored pencils or digital mind-mapping app)
- List of concrete questions (provided below)

Process:

1. Read a short passage (5-10 verses) multiple times

2. Answer these concrete questions:

- Who is in this passage? (List every person or group)
- Where does this take place? (Be specific about location)
- What actions occur? (List all verbs in order)
- What objects are mentioned? (List physical items)
- What time indicators appear? (Time of day, season, era)

3. Create a visual map connecting these concrete elements:

- Place the passage reference in the center
- Branch out with each category (people, places, actions, etc.)
- Use different colors for each category
- Draw lines between related elements

4. Build application from concrete to practical:

- How do the actions in this passage connect to actions I could take?
- How do the locations connect to places in my life?
- How do the people connect to relationships I have?

Example: For the Good Samaritan parable, map out every location (road to Jericho, side of road, inn), person (traveler, priest, Levite, Samaritan, innkeeper), action (beat, passed by, took care), and object (oil, wine, donkey, money) before drawing application connections.

Method 3: The Sequence Approach

Best for: Those who appreciate order, structure, and clear sequences

Materials needed:

- Bible
- Notecard system (physical or digital)
- Timeline template

Process:

1. Break down the passage into individual events or statements:

- Write one event per notecard
- Include the exact verse reference on each card
- Keep language precise and consistent

2. Arrange the notecards in chronological sequence:

- Physical cards can be laid out on a table
- Digital cards can be arranged in a numbered list
- Identify any unclear time sequences

3. Create a visual timeline:

- Transfer the sequence to a linear timeline
- Mark specific time indicators mentioned
- Note cause-and-effect relationships

4. Study repeated sequences across Scripture:

- Look for similar patterns in different Bible stories
- Note when sequences are broken or changed
- Compare God's consistent actions across time

Example: Break down the Creation account in Genesis 1 by creating seven cards (one for each day), arranging them in sequence, then comparing this sequence to other creation references in Psalms or the New Testament.

Method 4: Visual Vocabulary Builder

Best for: Visual thinkers who benefit from seeing concrete representations of abstract concepts

Materials needed:

- Bible
- Concordance or Bible app with search function
- Drawing materials or image collection
- Notebook or digital document

Process:

1. Select an important but abstract Bible word to study:

- Faith, love, sin, grace, redemption, etc.
- Start with one word for thorough exploration

2. Find multiple passages that use this word:

- Use a concordance or Bible app search
- Focus on 5-7 key verses that define or illustrate the concept

3. Identify concrete images associated with the abstract concept:

- Note physical metaphors used in Scripture (shield of faith, etc.)
- Look for story examples that demonstrate the concept
- Find tangible actions that express the abstract idea

4. Create visual representations:

- Draw or collect images that represent the concept
- Create a visual dictionary page for the word
- Make connections between the images and the concept

5. Build a personal reference for abstract theological terms:

- Keep all visual vocabulary pages together
- Review regularly to reinforce understanding
- Add new images as your understanding grows

Example: For "faith," collect images of a mustard seed, a shield, Abraham looking at stars, and Peter walking on water—all biblical representations that make the abstract concept more concrete.

Method 5: Sensory Scripture Engagement

Best for: Those who process information best through multiple sensory channels

Materials needed:

- Bible
- Sensory engagement tools (varies by passage)
- Recording device (optional)

Process:

1. Read the passage and identify sensory elements:

- Note any mentions of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, or smelling
- Identify actions that involve physical movement
- Look for emotional responses that might have physical components

2. Create a sensory engagement plan:

- Select 2-3 appropriate sensory activities related to the passage
- Prepare any needed materials in advance
- Set up a distraction-free environment

3. Engage with Scripture using multiple senses:

- Listen to an audio Bible while following along with text
- Handle objects mentioned in or related to the passage
- Act out movements described in the story
- Taste foods mentioned (when appropriate)
- Draw or build scenes from the passage

4. Record your observations:

- Note how sensory engagement affected your understanding
- Record insights gained through different sensory channels
- Identify which sensory approaches worked best for you

Example: When studying the Last Supper, actually handle bread and grape juice, sit at a table in the same position as disciples might have, and listen to an audio recording of the passage while engaging with these elements.

Method 6: The Bible Fact File

Best for: Those who enjoy collecting and categorizing specific information

Materials needed:

- Bible
- Index card system or digital database
- Categorization system with clear rules

Process:

1. Decide on categories for collecting Bible facts:

- People (names, relationships, actions)
- Places (locations, descriptions, events that happened there)
- Objects (items mentioned, their uses, their significance)
- Commands (instructions, who gave them, who received them)
- Promises (what was promised, to whom, conditions if any)

2. Create a standardized template for each fact card:

- Bible reference (book, chapter, verse)
- Category and subcategory
- The fact itself (quoted directly when possible)
- Related cross-references
- Consistent formatting for all cards

3. Build your fact file systematically:

- Work through one book at a time
- Collect all facts in your chosen categories
- Add cross-references when you notice connections
- Maintain consistency in how you record information

4. Use your fact file for deeper study:

- Sort cards to find patterns
- Compare similar facts across different books
- Build a personal reference system for Bible knowledge
- Use as a foundation for topical study

Example: Create a "People of the Bible" fact file with standardized cards for each person mentioned, including consistent categories like family relationships, actions, interactions with God, and locations associated with them.

Method 7: Rule-Based Interpretation

Best for: Those who appreciate clear rules and systematic approaches

Materials needed:

- Bible
- List of interpretation rules (provided below)
- Structured worksheet template
- Commentary (optional reference)

Process:

1. Select a passage to study (start with narrative passages)

2. Apply these interpretation rules in sequence:

- Rule 1: Identify the type of literature (narrative, poetry, letter, etc.)
- Rule 2: Note when and where this passage takes place
- Rule 3: Identify who wrote it and who received it originally
- Rule 4: Look for repeated words or phrases
- Rule 5: Check what comes directly before and after this passage
- Rule 6: Identify any commands or promises
- Rule 7: Look for connections to other Scripture passages
- Rule 8: Consider how this passage points to or connects with Jesus

3. Complete a structured worksheet with sections for each rule:

- Include specific evidence from the text for each rule
- Use direct quotes from Scripture when possible
- Note any rules that don't apply to this specific passage

4. Formulate conclusions based on your analysis:

- What is the main point of this passage?
- How would the original audience have understood it?
- What principle or truth does it teach?
- How does it connect to my life today?

Example: Create a worksheet applying all eight rules to the Parable of the Lost Sheep in Luke 15:1-7, systematically analyzing the passage according to each interpretive principle.

Bible Study Planning Template

Preparation:

- **Select method:** Choose which method best fits the passage and your thinking style
- **Gather materials:** Prepare all needed supplies before beginning
- **Set environment:** Minimize sensory distractions and create a comfortable space
- **Schedule time:** Set a specific time block with a clear beginning and end
- **Define scope:** Choose exactly which verses you will study today

During Study:

- **Follow procedure:** Use the steps of your chosen method in order
- **Take breaks:** Schedule short breaks at natural stopping points
- **Record insights:** Note specific observations and questions that arise
- **Check progress:** Monitor how far you've gotten compared to your plan

Follow-up:

- **Review findings:** Summarize what you learned in a consistent format
- **Note questions:** Keep a list of questions that arose during study
- **Plan application:** Identify one specific way to apply what you learned
- **Schedule next session:** Set a specific time for your next study

Special Considerations

For Literal Interpretation Preferences:

- Start with narrative passages before moving to more figurative sections
- Use a translation that emphasizes clarity (NIV, ESV, or NLT)
- Keep a list of common metaphors and their literal meanings
- Check a study Bible for notes on figurative language

For Executive Functioning Support:

- Break Bible study into smaller, clearly defined tasks
- Use timers for each section of your study method
- Create visual checklists for each step of your chosen method
- Establish a consistent routine for Bible study sessions

For Sensory Sensitivities:

- Use Bible apps that allow you to control font, size, and background color
- Try listening to Scripture with noise-canceling headphones
- Consider using a weighted lap pad during study time
- Keep fidget tools available that don't require visual attention

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." - Hebrews 4:12

Remember that your unique thinking style gives you special insights into God's Word. The patterns, details, and connections you notice may be exactly what helps others understand Scripture in new ways.