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Bradley and Cargin's "Creative ideas for worship with all abilities" (book review)

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Book Review



Bradley, H. & Cargin, J. (2019). *Creative ideas for worship with all abilities*. La Vergne: Church Publishing, Incorporated. 207 pp. \$25.00. ISBN 9781640653993 (paperback); 9781640654006 (ebook)

For those who plan worship services and worship activities, *Creative ideas for worship with all abilities* will be of interest as a practical resource for ways to engage and include adults with learning disabilities. The book is grounded with the conviction that all members make up the Body of Christ and all members should be able to worship together, and that there is a special joy for the whole Body when this is done well. The book's ideas could apply to children and other groups but adults with learning disabilities is the focus of the book.

Authors Hazel Bradley and Jim Cargin bring great experience from their involvement with the L'Arche communities. L'Arche is an organization where adults with and without intellectual disabilities share life and friendships in community. The L'Arche communities, founded in 1964 and today having 150 communities in 38 countries, are acknowledged for providing many of the examples for the book. Bradley has 40 years of international experience with L'Arche and has created many worship services. Cargin was an editor of "Letters of L'Arche" and a former communications director in L'Arche International.

Throughout the book the reader's sensitivity is heightened to the need and the joy for including individuals with learning disabilities in worship. It doesn't dwell on this, however, and proceeds to serve as a resource with ideas and examples of services and celebrations along with forms, templates, a booklist, song suggestions (although no melodies for the songs) and additional webpage resources. A glossary of "church-speak" words is a wonderful addition. It's almost like a workbook.

Parts one and two begins with a *Questionnaire on disability and inclusion* for a church leadership team followed by a *Church belonging form* for a learning-disabled adult. Eight basic guidelines are presented for planning inclusive services. A mime services section discusses ways to include those who may not be able to read or speak a part and other suggestions such as having a member serve as a bell-ringer for a call to worship; taking up an offering; leading a repeated refrain, i.e. "Lord, in your mercy", and collecting or passing out hymnbooks are given.

In part three, twelve services from Scripture stories such as the Call of Mary, the Raising of Lazarus and the Feeding of the 5,000 are provided. In part four there is an additional set of 12 small group celebrations on topics such as Building up the body, Light in the darkness, Forgiveness and reconciliation and Encouragement. An appendix includes the church-speak glossary, suggested songs (words only), a booklist, online resources and templates. There are no footnotes or index as this is not a scholarly but a practical resource book.

Creative ideas for worship with all abilities achieves its purpose of being an idea and resource book for worship planning for adults with learning disabilities. Unlike another similar 2021 title that is more personal but less practical, *Disability and the church: a vision for diversity and inclusion*, *Creative ideas for worship with all abilities* is just that; a straight-forward, clearly organized, idea-filled resource for planning worship for learning-disabled adults.

Reviewer

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