

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Bishops' Committee for the Family and for Life



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Parish resource kit to celebrate International Day of People with a Disability

The Catholic Church in Australia will celebrate International Day of People with a Disability this year with the release of a parish resource kit to encourage and assist the full participation of people with disability and their families in parish life.

The resource kit is a project of a national network for disability and spirituality established by the Bishops' Committee for the Family and for Life (BCFL).

It follows the success of "I Have a Story", a pastoral document for parishes which was launched last year and has sold more than 3,200 copies. Prayer cards have also been distributed which celebrate the gifts of all people.

Students from Black Mountain School in the ACT packed the disability resource kit, destined for every parish in Australia, as part of their work sampling, demonstrating the Committee's commitment to promoting and encouraging full participation of people in both parish life and work life.

Peter, one of the students who packed the kit, said he enjoyed the experience: "I liked sticking on the labels," he said.

Another student, Andrew, said: "I like work". And Jessica explained there were: "Lots and lots of envelopes to label. I counted them and used rubber bands. I liked that too."

A complete version of the resource list is available for viewing and downloading from the national network for disability and spirituality's webpage to be launched on December 3, the International Day of People with a Disability.

This year's theme for the Day is 'Celebration of Ability'. Disability Consultant to the BCFL, Trish Mowbray said there was much we could do, as the Body of Christ, to promote the value of people with disability.

Bishop Eugene Hurley, the Committee's Chairman, wrote in his letter to parishes that, "We need to identify those groups within our communities that are not participating fully; not because they don't want to, but because we are not inviting, encouraging and supporting them," she said. "We, as the Church, need to actively invite and welcome all; for when we include everybody in the Body of Christ, we will then be truly one."

The International Day of People with a Disability will be celebrated in a number of parishes across Australia and throughout at least two dioceses – Brisbane and Wollongong.

For more information contact Trish Mowbray on (02) 6201 9868 or 04 0856 1255.