



# **Irresistible Church Training**

*For Disability Ministry*

Presented by



## **Helping with Life Transitions Presentation Outline**

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## How to Use:

This script lays out suggested talking points and content pulled directly from the specific book/resource highlighted. Here are a few things to know before you begin to use these scripts:

1. **Bold Type** is what you say. *Italic type* are suggestions and instructions.
2. The script is laid out with wide margins for easier reading without too much side to side eye movement. Sentences and paragraphs are broken up by phrasing and suggested pauses. = indicates a thought, phrase, or slight pause. • indicates the next slide.
3. In the *Italics* you will find suggestions for customizing the material with personal stories or examples.
4. Please retain the Irresistible Church logo and the Joni and Friends logo on each slide, with the exception of slides added for your church's purposes.
5. The first 3–5 slides will be similar in each presentation to allow you consistency in introducing yourself, the topic, Luke 14, and a definition of an Irresistible Church. If you are doing more than one session in a day, we suggest you present these slides in the first session and eliminate them in later presentations on the same day. (*You could also use them to encourage participation, or “test” the audience and ask them to describe the Luke 14 Mandate or to define an Irresistible Church*)
6. We have added suggested resources for each presentation. If you would like to purchase these, please visit [joniandfriends.org](http://joniandfriends.org).

## Helping with Life Transitions Presentation Outline

**Main objective:** To give an overview of how to help people with special needs transition between age-appropriate ministries.

**Suggested supplies:** *Bible* with all passages marked, copy of *Helping with Life Transitions* book or PDF for each participant, PowerPoint in handout form, pens for each person.

**Suggested resources to accompany *Helping with Life Transitions* training:**

*Joni: An Unforgettable Story*  
*Beyond Suffering Bible*  
*Real Families, Real Needs*  
*Another Kind of Courage*  
*Same Lake, Different Boat*

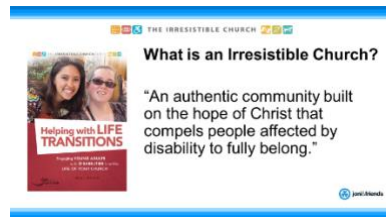
## SLIDE 1 - The Irresistible Church Series



*Use this slide while people arrive. You can choose to play some music in the background while the class arrives, gets settled and prepares for the session. If you want to add music to this presentation, go to Insert → Media*

*→ Audio/Audio on my PC. Choose the song and it will add a small music icon that you can place in the corner. You can customize the settings by clicking play back. Here's how you do it: Click the music icon on the slide, then click playback from the menu. All your options are here.*

## SLIDE 2 – What is an Irresistible Church?



*When you are ready to begin click to this slide. The music should stop so that you can begin presenting. This is a great place to share why you are conducting this training. Focus on the heart of the ministry, and what you hope to accomplish*

*through today's training!*

- = **An Irresistible Church is an authentic community built on the hope of Christ that compels people affected by disability to fully belong.**
- = **As we go through today's workshop, we want to explore ways we can help people with disabilities to *fully belong* in our churches.**
- = **To not merely be *allowed* into church, but to positively contribute and thrive in community.**
- = **As theologian John Swinton once put it ... "To belong is to be missed when you are absent."**
- = **Do adults with disabilities *belong* in our church today?**

## SLIDE 3 – Helping with Life Transitions



- = **Particularly as school life ends and adult life begins, daily routines become less structured.**
- = **Friendships that naturally formed by virtue of being in the same class with your peers now require intentionality.**
- = **Schedules become less predictable, and the natural avenues for belonging dissipate.**
- = **Which brings us to our goals for today...**

## SLIDE 4 – Our Goals for Today

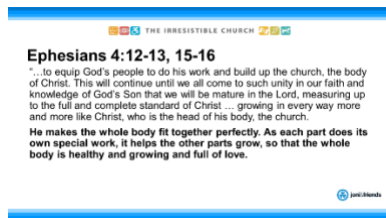


*Take time here to talk about the specific adult ministries at your church. Keep this section from becoming too abstract.*

- **Our goal for today is to help people with special needs transition between age-appropriate ministries.**
- **This means helping ease transitions between classroom changes as a child, or youth ministry as a teen.**

- **But perhaps most significantly... it means helping our friends with disabilities transition into the normal, adult life of our church.**
- **Our secondary goal is to help create structures that encourage people with disabilities to find true belonging in the church.**
- **This means that people with disabilities are both served by the church and have a chance to serve in the church.**

## SLIDE 5 – Ephesians 4:12-13, 15-16



*This verse is from the New Living Translation, taken from the Beyond Suffering Bible.*

- = **As a church, it is our role to fulfill the words of Ephesians chapter 4...**
- **“...to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ ... growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.**

- **He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”**

## **SLIDE 6- Navigating Transitions**



- **Transitions can be dangerous!**
- **How often do we hear warnings when a transition is coming up? Caution! Watch your head. Caution! Mind the gap. Caution! Pedestrians crossing.**
- **We want to pay attention to caution signs that can pop up when making transitions between seasons of life.**
- **Let's use an example from real life. Most car accidents occur while changing lanes or turning.**
  - = **This doesn't mean we should never change lanes or turn ... but it does mean that we need to pay attention as we make these changes.**
  - = **We need to check our mirrors, use our blinker to signal intent to change, look over our shoulder, and be aware of when the turns are coming up.**

- = **If you're in the far-left lane when you need to turn right, you're either going to miss your exit or risk cutting across the road without time to adequately check your surroundings.**
- = **Or, we might take a turn too sharply and risk spinning out of control.**
- = **We don't want that to happen as we transition between ministries!**
- = **We want to give our friends plenty of time to get over into the right lane, we want to use our blinkers, and we want to make the turns at a reasonable speed.**
- **Because the fact is... Most people who leave the church do so during periods of transition.**

## **SLIDE 7 – Easing the Transition**



- **The first step to knowing how you can help is by asking questions!**
- = **Finding out what someone is excited for in a new stage of life, what they're worried or anxious about, and knowing their goals will all help ease the transitions.**
- **We can also help ease transitions by creating continuity and overlap with familiar settings.**



- **For example, if someone is concerned about the social aspect of transitioning,**
  - = bringing some unfamiliar people from the new program (a middle school ministry leader) into a familiar setting (the elementary classroom) may help relieve a little of their anxiety.**
  - = As a general principle, “all new, and all at once” is a recipe for stress and anxiety!**
- **The other aspect of this is allowing for familiarity with a physical space prior to a transition.**
  - = This might happen in a number of ways. For example, someone may find it easier to transition by being allowed to explore a new space while it’s empty and free of distractions.**
  - = It may also be best to allow someone to have limited participation in the new environment prior to the transition.**
  - = Entering the new space for worship, for example, may help ease the “newness” of it all.**
- **And lastly, communication between leaders is critical.**
  - = Creating opportunities for leaders to communicate with one another allows the leader in the “new” program to benefit from the what the “previous” leader has learned about the person with special needs.**

- = **With solid communication and a thoughtful handoff between leaders,**
- = **the person with a disability can transition to the new program more easily and successfully,**
- = **building on what has previously been learned!**

## SLIDE 8 – Moment of Reflection

THE IRRESISTIBLE CHURCH

**Moment of Reflection**

- Think about periods of transition in your life. Graduating school, getting married, having your first child... What were the challenges you faced in each transition?
- What role did the church play in those transitions?

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*Encourage people to think in both negative and positive terms. What were some difficult transitions, and what could (or did) help ease that transition?*

- **Think about periods of transition in your life—graduating school, getting married, having your first child. What were the challenges you faced in each transition?**
- **What role did the church play in those transitions?**

## SLIDE 9- Caring for the Whole Family

THE IRRESISTIBLE CHURCH

**Caring for the Whole Family**



- The "empty nest" is often reversed.
- Long-term care is often a concern.
- Cycles of grief are normal.

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- = **Particularly for families affected by disability, transitions are not just about an individual.**

- = I'm sure any parent could share about their experience sending their child off to school for the first time... or sending their child off to college for the final time.**
- = But for families with special needs, the script is often flipped.**
- For many families affected by disability, the “empty nest” is often reversed.**
- = The structure of school often creates a mid-day break for parents, and also allows for more natural friendships to form.**
- = When the school years end, many parents find themselves with no “natural” avenues for their child, and struggle to fill the day with meaningful activities.**
- Parents and siblings will both likely be thinking about the long-term care of their loved one.**
- = Will they be able to live independently? Hold down a job? Have reliable access to transportation and medical care?**
- = Siblings, as well as parents, are often deeply concerned by these considerations.**
- We must also recognize that cycles of grief are normal.**
- = From the first initial diagnosis that let the family know their life would never be “normal,”**

- = **to watching their child's peers hit milestones their loved one may never reach...**
- = **grief is a reoccurring, natural, and normal part of life for families affected by special needs.**
- = **Acknowledging that the burdens of everyday life may be compounded by emotional burdens**
- = **can go a long way toward our church being able to care for the whole family.**
- = **Think of how those burdens might be lightened by the knowledge that there is a community that supports, values, and loves their child.**
- = **Think of how anxieties about transitions might be lifted by a church that helps smooth out the bumpiest roads of life.**
- = **Our ministry to individuals with disabilities is a ministry that is multiplied.**
- = **By ministering to an individual, we minister to the entire family!**

## **SLIDE 10- Creating Authentic Community**

THE IRRESISTIBLE CHURCH

**Creating Authentic Community**

- Remove physical and social barriers.
- Create opportunities for long-term friendships.
- Help people with disabilities find a mentor.



jeff@church

- = **Community is at the core of successful life transitions.**

- **Removing barriers to community is essential.**
  - = **Some barriers may be physical in nature... such as a lack of transportation.**
  - = **Other barriers may be social.**
  - = **These social barriers are often much harder to identify, since they are often defined by a negative attitude toward those with disabilities.**
  - = **Someone with a disability, for example, who rarely receives invitations to participate in social activities will find it difficult to form meaningful friendships.**
- **Removing social barriers involves correcting misconceptions about people with disabilities**
  - = **and creating opportunities for people to form long-term friendships.**
  - = **Often, people just don't know what they don't know.**
  - = **False beliefs about people with disabilities can sometimes be unconsciously held.**
- **Helping people with disabilities find a mentor is also a great way to help them integrate into mainstream, adult community.**
  - = **Mentors can serve as an intentional point of contact for handling everyday life issues.**

## SLIDE 11- Tackling Real-Life Issues



- **Mentors can help serve as a listening ear and provide wise counsel in the realm of emotional health.**
  - = **Often, simply being present is an aid to emotional health!**
  - = **Isolation is one of the greatest sources of pain and suffering for people with disabilities.**
- **Mentors can also help their friends navigate relationships ...**
  - = **whether friendships, romantic interests, or professional relationships.**
- **Mentors can also help identify opportunities for their friend with a disability to serve in the church.**
  - = **They may, for example, find opportunities to serve alongside one another in a ministry capacity (greeting, ushering, prayer ministry)**
- **Mentors can also help their friend live independently by assisting with things like budgeting and shopping.**
  - = **A mentor can also help coach their friend on finding employment and applying for jobs.**

- **Mentors can also be there to help their friend process and grieve the death of a loved one.**
- = **Particularly as parents grow older,**
- = **it is crucial that they have other adults in their lives who understand their life situation**
- = **and can speak meaningfully into it.**

## SLIDE 12- The Result



*Close in prayer after this slide. The best laid plans will fail if God is not behind it!*

- **The results of these efforts are a church that reflects the heart of Christ and...**
- **A church where people with disabilities are shown to not only be welcomed... but *indispensable*.**
- = **When we help to make transitions as seamless as possible, we help reduce the risk of losing people during the changing seasons of life.**

## SLIDE 13- Irresistible Church Website



*Remind your audience that “Helping with Life Transitions” and other books related to serving families affected by disability are available as*

*free downloads at [IrresistibleChurch.org](http://IrresistibleChurch.org).*

## SLIDE 14- Questions



*Remember to change this to your contact information!*