



# Irresistible Church Training

*For Disability Ministry*

Presented by



## Doing Life Together Presentation Outline

### 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 you need to click over to the next slide or animation.
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 few slides will be similar in each presentation. 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 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).

### **Doing Life Together Presentation Outline:**

**Main objective:** To help churches build community and relationships for families impacted by disability that go beyond programs, meeting practical, spiritual, and relational needs.

**Suggested supplies:** *Bible* with all passages marked, copy of *Doing Life Together* book or PDF for each participant, supplement resource handouts: Accessibility Checklist, Coordinating Care, Offering Practical Care. (Available on [irresistiblechurch.org/library](http://irresistiblechurch.org/library))

### **Suggested resources to accompany *Doing Life Together* training:**

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

## SLIDE 1 - The Irresistible Church Series



*Use this slide while people arrive. If you want to add music to this presentation go to Insert, Media, Audio/Audio on my PC. Select the song and a small music icon will appear in the corner of the*

*slide. Music should automatically begin when you start the slide show.*

## SLIDE 2 - Doing Life Together



*The music will stop when you switch to this slide. Share your heart for this training! What motivated you to lead this session, and what do you hope to accomplish?*

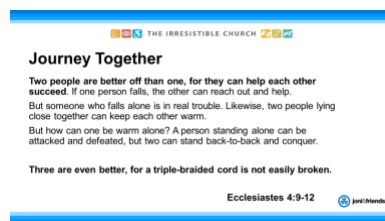
## SLIDE 3 – What is an Irresistible Church



- = **How can the church be “Irresistible” to families affected by disability?**
- = **By building genuine community.**
- = **Relationships require effort**
- = **and for families affected by disability it is often difficult to**
- = **pour out the energy necessary to**
- = **initiate and develop new relationships.**

- = **And yet, families affected by disability share the same need for deep, meaningful relationships.**
- = **If a family feels like they do not fit into the typical world, we need to step into their world.**

## SLIDE 4 – Journey Together



- = **Many families affected by disability have faced rejection and isolation from much of society... including the church.**
- = **Even if a family is new to your church, they likely have past experiences with a church community that will inform their expectations, fears, and attitudes.**
- = **Seeking community is a risk for these families.**
- = **The exhaustion brought on by rejection means that an open door is often not enough.**
- = **We must make the first move to include and welcome these families.**
- = **Even if only one member of the family has a disability, all members are impacted!— Because disability is a FAMILY AFFAIR.**

## SLIDE 5 – It's a Family Affair



*Inserting a story about a family in your local church can be a powerful way to explain the significance of building community for families affected by disability. You can change*

*this picture to make this your own if you want to. Always get permission from the family before sharing their story.*

- = **When a family has a member with a disability, the entire family is impacted.**
- = **Nothing happens in a vacuum**
- = **and understanding how each family member is impacted will go a long way towards serving the entire family.**
- = **There are many things that could keep a family affected by disability from the gift of *Doing Life Together*.**

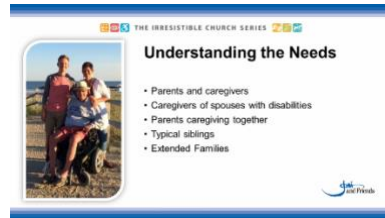
## SLIDE 6 – Main Objectives



*Don't spend too much time on this slide. A sentence or two for each point is enough*

- = **Objectives of our time together:**
  - **Understanding the Needs**
  - **Combatting Isolation**
  - **Meeting Practical Needs**
  - **Building Community**
  - **Nurturing the Soul**

## SLIDE 7 – Understanding the Needs 2/2



*You may want to add a personal example of a family who has experienced rejection*

- **Families often fear rejection.**
- = **Isolation and loneliness can become chronic and cyclical.**
- = **The more a family does not participate, the harder it becomes to reach out.**
- = **Barriers to participation could be negative attitudes from church members, inaccessible facilities, or exhaustion, which create isolation.**
- = **The more isolated the family becomes, the easier it is for the church to ignore their needs.**
- = **The more a church ignores their needs, the more a family will be isolated.**
- = **It's our goal to help break this cycle, and love families affected by disability with the love of Christ.**
  
- = **Disability is a family affair. But different members of the family will have different needs. To help, we must understand the needs.**
  
- **Parents and caregivers of someone with a disability**

- = **Parents, especially single parents, often face chronic exhaustion and isolation...**
- = **both physical and emotional**
  
- = **It becomes difficult to develop and maintain relationships outside the family.**
- = **For single parents, isolation and exhaustion is often compounded.**
- = **In extreme cases, they may lack any meaningful adult friendships.**
  
- = **In cases where one spouse is the primary caregiver, marital stress can develop because the caregiving spouse lacks physical and emotional energy for their partner.**
  
- = **Grief is another cycle parents experience.**
- = **Realizing that the life they had planned has been disrupted by disability causes grief.**
- = **This grief is often experienced again at various landmark phases of life ...**
- = **such as when kids their child's age begin driving, or dating, or going off to college, or entering the workforce.**
- = **This grief can itself be a source of distress, as parents feel guilt over their feelings of grief.**
  
- **Caregivers of spouses with disabilities**
  
- = **In cases where a spouse is caring for the disabled partner, they can essentially take on three full-time jobs**
- = **Employment**
- = **Household chores**
- = **Caregiving**
  
- **Typical siblings**

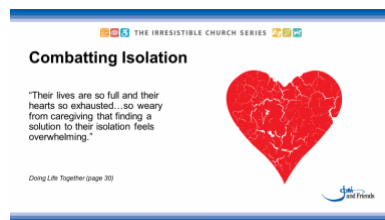


- = **Like their parents, siblings experience a wide range of emotions, often contradictory and conflicting.**
- = **Siblings of someone with a disability are often forced to grow up much faster than their peers,**
- = **and this may give the illusion of competency.**
- = **They may even be eager and forceful in their desire to be involved with their sibling at church.**
  
- = **But as mature as they may seem, they are still children, and likely lack the maturity to process their emotions.**
- = **They even go through their own cycle of grief.**
- = **The needs of their sibling are so overwhelming that their needs seem small in comparison.**
- = **Wanting their needs to be addressed, acknowledged, and met may cause them to feel guilty, then possibly bitter, then causing resentment toward themselves or their sibling.**
- = **This spiral of emotions is complex and unique to each individual.**
- = **So, special care should be extended to siblings.**
  
- **Extended family**
  
- = **Disability may impact a family's ability to interact with their extended family.**
- = **With little energy available to maintain even the most basic family unit,**

**relationships with extended family can easily fall by the wayside.**

- = **When nuclear families and marriages are cared for, families can more easily maintain relationships with extended family, and perhaps even find an additional support structure.**

## SLIDE 8 – Combatting Isolation 1/2



- = **The challenge can be connecting isolated families with churches that are understanding and accepting.**
- = **It's not always enough to say, "we'd love a family with disabilities if they came to our church."**
- = **We need to be proactive in reaching out.**

*This is a good place to talk about the Luke 14 Mandate.*

***When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed... Go out quickly into the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full" Luke 14:13-14, 23, NIV***

## SLIDE 9 – Combatting Isolation 2/2



- **Assess Access**

- = **Remove barriers that keep families affected by disability from entering the church.**
- = **These might be physical barriers, like stairs or**
- = **social barriers, such as the expectation of absolute silence during the sermon,**
- = **certain expectations in Sunday School, or stigma against behavioral issues.**
- = **Providing access may require...**
- = **adapting curriculum,**
- = **adapting space, or**
- = **adapting attitudes through awareness and training.**

*Refer to Accessibility Checklist handout*

- **Welcoming families impacted by disability means intentionally inviting these families to participate in events and providing support to ensure they can participate.**

**One of the big ways we can accomplish this is by...**

- **Providing trained Buddies**

- = Many families may be reluctant to engage in church activities, fearing it will be more trouble than it's worth.
- = We can help ease this anxiety by providing “Buddies” who will know, love, and care for family members with special needs.
- = Buddies do not need to be experts on disabilities!
- = They only need to have a heart for the individual they're serving.

*This may be a good time to mention the Irresistible Church book Call Me Friend for buddy training.*

- But above all, we need to learn to ask the right questions! Asking the family is the best way to learn what they need.
- = Combatting isolation isn't complicated, but it does require time and effort!

## SLIDE 10 – Meeting Practical Needs 1/2

THE IRRESISTIBLE CHURCH SERIES

**Meeting Practical Needs**

*"I was hungry and you fed me,  
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,  
I was homeless and you gave me a room,  
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,  
I was sick and you stopped to visit,  
I was in prison and you came to me."  
Whenever you did one of these things to someone  
overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to  
me.*

Matthew 25: 36-42

Call Me Friend

- = The basis for service is Jesus' example! We serve because Christ served us! And in serving others, we are serving Christ.

*Read scripture on slide*

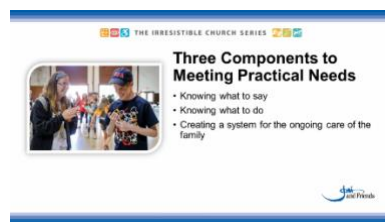
## SLIDE 11 – Meeting Practical Needs 2/2



*Ask for examples of needs (meals, rides) your church has met for families with short-term needs (a hospitalization, birth of a baby, death).*

- = **Families affected by disability have short-term needs like these too**
- = **A surgery**
- = **Special child care needs**
- = **Transportation needs due to scheduling conflicts for children in the family**
  
- = **They also have long-term needs because a disability doesn't go away.**
- = **Long-term care considers the day-in, day-out ongoing responsibilities**
- = **The husband with the disability will never be able to do the yard work**
- = **The child with multiple disabilities will always need assistance with their daily physical needs (eating, bathing, dressing) and transportation.**
- = **How can we help families meet some of the daily needs that reach beyond what is reasonable for one family?**

## SLIDE 12 – Three Components to Meeting Practical Needs



- = **Thinking through meeting practical needs involves three key components:**
  - **The first is knowing what to say:**
    - = **Sometimes knowing what to say is knowing what *not* to say.**
    - = **“A friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing... not healing, not curing... that is a friend who cares.” -Henry Nouwen**
    - = **Sometimes being present is more powerful than any words we can offer.**
    - = **And any words spoken must be earned. Encouragement from someone you know and love is so much more meaningful than the encouragement of an acquaintance.**
    - = **Avoid platitudes such as:**
      - = **“God won’t give you more than you can handle!”**
      - = **“Special needs children are a blessing.”**
      - = **“Trust God. He is good!”**
      - = **Platitudes, even when true, are usually unhelpful.**
    - **Second, we need to know what to do:**
      - = **Put yourself in the shoes of the family you’re seeking to serve.**
      - = **What daily activities might they find challenging to complete?**
      - = **What siblings in the family might be feeling put aside because of the disability?**

- = **What do the caregivers enjoy?**
- = **Sometimes, looking beyond the absolute barebones necessities and looking for small ways to improve the quality of a family's life is the best way to help.**
  
- = **DO NOT offer vague offers of assistance.**
- = **"If you need anything, call me."**
- = **"What can I do to help you?"**
  
- = **As well intentioned and genuine as these offers might be, they are extremely unlikely to be acted on.**
  
- = **To truly help a family in need, look for potential needs they have, and offer specifically to meet that need!**
- = **Grocery shopping, housekeeping, yardwork, childcare, transportation**
  
- **Lastly, we need to get organized and develop a system for ongoing care.**
  
- = **Supporting families in need can seem overwhelming when the issue is chronic, and the care team is small. It takes a village!**
  
- = **Some ideas on how we can organize...**
- = **Find someone the family trusts to act as a coordinator, talking to people outside the family to arrange for care.**
- = **This allows families to be honest about their needs without fear of rejection, or the awkwardness of having to ask themselves.**
  
- = **Create teams for specific areas:**
- = **Meal-care teams**

- = **Rides and care for siblings**
- = **Hospital visit support**
- = **Errand support**
- = **Biblical counseling**

*Maintaining healthy organization requires frequent evaluation. Spend time in advance of your presentation evaluating who will lead this. Needs can shift and change, and the way you care for a family will require adjustments too.*

*Refer to Coordinating Care and Offering Practical Care handouts.*

- = **Some pitfalls to avoid:**
- = **Maintain healthy boundaries and avoid co-dependency.**
- = **Remember that practical care must always be accompanied by spiritual nourishment.**
- = **We are both body and spirit.**
- = **Neglecting one or the other can lead to long-term harm.**

### **SLIDE 13 – Building Community**

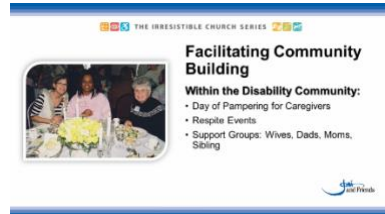


- = **The difference between care and community is RECIPROCITY.**
- = **Families affected by disability are not objects of our service, but members of our community.**



- = **And the good news of that is that relationship goes both ways!**
- = **Our goal is not simply to provide a service, but to develop genuine relationships with one another and with God.**

## SLIDE 14 – Facilitating Community Building 1/2



*Edit the contents of this page to fit with your ideas!*

**Some ideas for fostering community between families affected by disability are**

- **Day of pampering for caregivers**
- **Respite events**
- **Support groups: Couples, dads, moms, siblings**

*You might also suggest other specific, unique experiences (such as a Joni and Friends Family Retreat)*

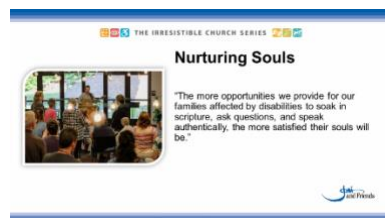
## SLIDE 15 – Facilitating Community Building 2/2



- = **Connecting only with other families affected by disability can still be a form of isolation!**
- = **We need to consider how families can engage and participate in regular life of the church.**
  
- = **Creating special events for families affected by disability is important,**
- = **but most important of all is making sure that your church's core programs are accessible.**
  
- = **This includes...**
  - **Church-wide events**
  - = **Opening up as many events to as many people as possible should always be the goal!**
  
  - **Small group participation**
  - = **True friendships are best formed in smaller settings.**
  - = **It's hard to truly know someone who is only a face in the crowd.**
  - = **Creating space to get involved in a small group or Bible study can go a long way towards creating genuine belonging for people with disabilities.**
  
  - **Invitations to serve**

- = **Everyone who receives also want to give—using their gifts and abilities.**
- **And finally, collaborating with other churches or parachurch organization can help foster connection in the broader church community.**
- = **Network with like-minded local churches, or parachurch organizations (such as Joni and Friends, Young Life Capernaum, or Night to Shine).**
- = **Churches are stronger together. Keep an open eye for opportunities to share resources, volunteers, and ideas.**
- = **Schedule Respite events throughout the month at different churches**
- = **Invite the community in. This is an evangelistic opportunity!**

## SLIDE 16 – Nurturing Souls 1/2



- = **We can meet physical needs through arranging meal trains or carpools,**
- = **emotional needs through genuine friendships and support...**
- = **but the key thing that makes the church “the church” ... is our ability to meet spiritual needs!**
- = **The greatest gift we can give?**
- = **THE GOSPEL!**

## SLIDE 17 – Nurturing Souls 2/2



- = **We can assess the success of our ministry by answering the question,**
- = **“How well can our families affected by disability participate in ...**
  - **Worship,**
  - **and small groups and Bible studies**
  
- = **We also need to ask...**
  - **Is our church a safe place to ask difficult questions?**
- = **Many families experience frequent cycles of grief as it relates to disability.**
- = **The shock of an initial diagnosis can spark many different feelings amongst family members. Watching their friend’s children hit milestones may cause these cycles to begin again.**
- = **People who become disabled later in life will experience similar cycles of grief as they question why God allowed disability to impact their life.**
- = **Providing a safe place to process complex, shifting feelings while pointing them back to the truths of Scripture and the hope of Christ goes a long way towards caring for the souls of our family members.**

*Adjust this list to fit your church’s specific programs and events!*

## SLIDE 18 – Conclusion



- = **One of the first things we read in Scripture is that “it is not good for man to be alone.”**
- = **If we take steps to care for families and individuals impacted by disability in our community, we can help...**
  - **Bring families affected by disability out of isolation, and into genuine community.**
  - **To see them go from community, to thriving.**
  - **And to go from thriving to leading other families on their faith journey.**
- = **Our prayer is that as God brings families to our church, we will be equipped to love them with the love of Christ.**
- = **It’s our prayer that wherever a family is at on this journey, we would be helping them move deeper into the life of the church.**
- = **“People with disabilities are subjects of relationships, not objects of programs.”**
- = **Our goal is to help families find true belonging in this church. To develop deep and lasting relationships. To see them become indispensable parts of the body of Christ.**

**SLIDE 19 – Irresistible Church.org**



*Remind your audience that Doing Life Together and other books related to serving families affected by disability are available as free downloads at IrresistibleChurch.org.*

**SLIDE 20 – Questions**



*Don't forget to fill in your own contact information.*

*Close in prayer.*