



# Our Church Shines a Light on Autism this April during Autism Awareness Month!

Please join us on the Sundays of April for Autism Awareness Month. Together we will welcome individuals with autism spectrum disorder, supporting them and their families as valued members of our Church and parishes.

Let us take this month of April to learn more about the ways we accommodate the needs of those in our parishes diagnosed with autism, and to seek out and celebrate the richness of the gifts they have to offer. If your family includes a person diagnosed with autism who may benefit from visually-oriented resources and other supports to participate fully in liturgy and parish life, please reach out to our Church offices

**or visit: [AutismSpeaks.org/religion](https://autismspeaks.org/religion)**



**Give Hope. Take Action.**

This April, help us celebrate the special talents of every individual with an autism spectrum disorder. Visit [autismspeaks.org/liub](https://autismspeaks.org/liub) and help lend your voice...because 1 in 68 can't wait.

## Facts About Autism

**1 in 68 children**, 1 in 42 boys, will be diagnosed this year with an autism spectrum disorder.

**There are currently 70 million** individuals in the world with autism.

**Autism is the fastest growing** developmental disorder in the U.S.

In the past 6 years, the prevalence of **autism has increased 78%**.

**Autism costs a family \$65,000** a year (on average).

## Creating Communities Where All Are Welcome:

### Some Tips for Parishioners:

- Introduce yourself to a family in your parish that has been touched by autism. Autism can create social isolation for the family; networking with others can build stronger communities and enrich one's faith.
- Some individuals may be unable to attend the entire Mass. They may need extra space in the pew or to take a break. Their parents may bring books or Mass kits for them.
- Every person is a gift from God, has a human and universal need of spiritual connection to our Creator and His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Even persons who are non-verbal can acknowledge this connection through gesture or respectful temperament.
- Families interested in considering a Catholic School for their child with autism may call the Catholic Schools Office.
- We are all made in the image and likeness of God and, therefore, have inherent value and worth. The limitations of what we might be able to do are extrinsic to the measurement of our inherent human dignity.
- Every Human being IS a person first, not a diagnosis; so we strive to use people first language in all of our conversations.

*For additional information about autism, please visit our friends Autism Speaks at **AutismSpeaks.org** For free resources and toolkits that may benefit your family, including religious resources, visit: **AutismSpeaks.org/religion***