

AUTISM AND CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Some suggestions for use of these videos and resources

Feel free to use these resources in the combination that best suits your circumstance (small group conversations/ inclusion in a sermon/Church Council).

You might choose to use only one video with it's accompanying questions, but if possible, it is recommended viewing the three videos as a whole.

Invite and encourage people with lived experience of autism to consider sharing their perspectives.

- Promote in advance and ensure an accessible space is part of the advertising (will you advertise beyond your own congregation?) Mention the videos are captioned

- In planning the venue use Assembly Guidelines for Disability Access. [Find these at Disability Inclusion - Uniting Church in Australia. Synod of Victoria and Tasmania \(uca.org.au\)](https://www.uca.org.au/resources/disability-inclusion)
- Request people inform organiser(s) of any support needs and if so, liaise as to how to best respond
- Determine optimal time for conversations, bearing in mind the need to encourage the contributions of all participants, and that people take varying times in communication
- Facilitator should become familiar with content by viewing the videos, and consider which questions are best to begin the conversation
- Leave time for people to explore and discuss the issues rather than necessarily trying to attend to all the questions
- The aim is to encourage people's curiosity and conversation, in order to raise awareness and consider how best to make a response.



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Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

AUTISM AND CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Videos and questions

Part 1 Personal Perspectives with Kellie Burke, Allister Coots and Clare Keogh.

15:01 mins [Click here to watch or download the video](#)

- In what ways might your congregation encourage the 'voice' of people living with autism?
- Might your congregation invite a speaker to learn more about autism/communication styles?
- Are there roles and opportunities which have been assumed could not be undertaken by someone with autism?
- Clare says: "To build in accessibility, rather than an afterthought". Might your congregation do anything differently to enhance your welcome and participation of people on the autism spectrum?
- In viewing this video, what else stood out for you?

Video 2 Parental perspectives with Fiona Bottcher, Mark Zirnsak.

16:17 mins [Click here to watch or download the video](#)

- How might your congregation encourage the 'voice' and participation of parents and families?
- What has been the experience(s) of supporting children with autism in the worship and social life of your congregation? What were the positives? What were your learnings?

- Fiona talks of her tension and protectiveness in introducing Jack to the congregation. How might parents be supported in such transitions?
- Might your congregation be known as being 'autism-friendly'?
- Might your congregation invite a speaker to learn more about autism/communication styles?
- In viewing this video, what else stood out for you?

Video 3 Theological perspectives With Kylie Crabbe and Andy Calder.

17:34 mins [Click here to watch or download the video](#)

Have you considered a more in-depth Bible study about this topic?

[Bible Study 3 \(The Great Banquet\) of the 2021 Synod Bible Studies can be found by clicking here \(uca.org.au\)](#)

For more resources please visit

[Disability Inclusion - Uniting Church in Australia. Synod of Victoria and Tasmania \(uca.org.au\)](#)

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Links to resources

Faith communities and worship

- ▶ [General overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders and some coping strategies by Kellie Burke](#)
- ▶ [Welcoming Autism Church Guidelines 2021 — Diocese of Oxford \(d3hgrrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net\)](#)
- ▶ [How to create a safe and welcoming space for autistic people to worship and serve \(anglicanfocus.org.au\)](#)
- ▶ [Centre for Autism and Theology | The School of Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History | The University of Aberdeen \(abdn.ac.uk\)](#)
- ▶ [Neurodiversity in the Classroom: Creating A More Inclusive Sunday School \(buildfaith.org\)](#)
- ▶ [Autism and Your Church: Barbara J. Newman: Amazon.com: Books](#)
- ▶ [Autism & Grief - Autism & Grief Project \(autismandgrief.org\)](#)
- ▶ [Disability Inclusion - Uniting Church in Australia. Synod of Victoria and Tasmania \(victas.uca.org.au\)](#)
- ▶ [Called to be a Church for All: New Liturgy Regarding People with Disabilities \(uca.org.au\)](#)

Community resources and information

- ▶ ['Autistic' or 'has autism'? Why words matter and how to get it right - ABC EverydayAspect Australia | Autism Spectrum Australia \(Aspect\)](#)
- ▶ [Amaze — Shaping the future for autism](#)
- ▶ [To Siri With Love: A Mother, Her Autistic Son, and the Kindness of a Machine by Judith Newman \(goodreads.com\)](#)
- ▶ [Victorian Autism Plan | Victorian State Disability Plan](#)
- ▶ [Kyeema Support Services](#)
- ▶ [Thinking Person's Guide to Autism — Autism news and resources: from autistic people, professionals, and parents \(thinkingautismguide.com\)](#)



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