

BLESTARE WE®

Children with Special Needs Teaching Tips







a Kendall Hunt Company

Evangelization and catechesis for individuals with disabilities must be geared in content and method to their particular situation.

Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities #25 November 1978

The pastoral statement from our Bishops encourages teachers of religion in Catholic schools and parish catechists to differentiate catechesis based on the needs of the learner, especially individuals with special needs. RCL Benziger supports catechists/ teachers to meet the special needs of children so these young people can more fully participate in their own faith formation and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

In the Blest Are We: Faith and Word faith formation program, catechists/teachers are guided to address the learning differences of children throughout the year. Practical teaching tips are already provided in the catechist/teacher guide with suggestions, ideas, and ways to adapt lessons focusing on many different types of needs. The teaching tips empower catechists/teachers to help students learn and retain their faith knowledge, thereby helping them to integrate their faith into daily living.

The ritual prayer experiences support children by helping them focus on and experience the prayer life of the Church. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we welcome all people in our faith formation programs to experience God's loving mercy. We are blessed by all young people because they help us see the beauty of life with warm and open hearts.

The following pages identify the types of differences addressed in the catechist/ teacher's guide, and the teaching tips to support the formation of children with disabilities throughout all grade levels. Let RCL Benziger's Blest Are We: Faith and Word program help you minister to your children with special needs.

Another special education resource is The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Program to Improve Catholic Religious Education for Children and Adults with Intellectual Disabilities. Through 220 developmentally constructed lessons, students learn about the Sacraments of the Church, the life of Christ, the Blessed Mother, and the Commandments, the saints, and living the Christian life. It provides student activities, lesson plans, prayer services, and other ideas for a variety of religious education settings, including parish, school, and in the home for family catechesis.

RCL Benziger is committed to you by providing catechetical resources to support the ongoing faith formation of the People of God. We are grateful for your partnership on the formative journey.







OVERVIEW Children with Special Needs Teaching Tips

GRADE 1	
Chapter 1:	Children with ADHD
Chapter 4:	Child with Speech or Hearing Impairment
Chapter 7:	Child with Reading and Processing Disability
Chapter 10:	Child with Fine Motor Skills Problem
Chapter 14:	Children with ADHD
Chapter 16:	Child with Fine Motor Skills Problem
Chapter 19:	Children with a Writing Skills Disability

GRADE 2	
Chapter 1:	Child with Cognitive Impairment
Chapter 3:	Child with Visual Impairment
Chapter 4:	Child with Hearing/Cognitive Impairment
Chapter 5:	Child with Dyslexia
Chapter 6:	Child with ADD/ADHD
Chapter 7:	Child with Visual Impairment
Chapter 8:	Child with Learning Disability
Chapter 9:	Child with Hearing/Vision Impairment
Chapter 10:	Child with ADD/ADHD
Chapter 11:	Child Using Wheelchair
Chapter 12:	Family Issues
Chapter 13:	Child with Cognitive Impairment
Chapter 14:	Hearing Impaired or Learning Disabled Child
Chapter 15:	Children with Medical Issues
Chapter 18:	Child with Physical Limitations
Chapter 20:	Child with Visual Impairment





OVERVIEW Children with Special Needs Teaching Tips (continued)

GRADE 3		
Chapter 1:	Students with a Learning Disability (oral expression)	
Chapter 4:	Students with a Learning Disability (associations)	
Chapter 6:	Students with a Specific Learning Disability (tactile)	
Chapter 8:	Students with a Learning Disability (spelling)	
Chapter 9:	Students with Visual Impairment	
Chapter 10:	Students with a Learning Disability (multi-step problems)	
Chapter 11:	Students with Cognitive Impairment	
Chapter 15:	Students with a Reading Disability	
Chapter 16:	Students with a Learning Disability (formulating ideas for writing)	
Chapter 19:	Students with ADD/ADHD	
Chapter 20:	Students with a Learning Disability (written language)	
GRADE 4		
Chapter 5:	Students with Motor Problems	
Chapter 16:	Students with Reading Disabilities	
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GRADE 5		
Chapter 2:	Students with Visual Impairment	
Chapter 9:	Students with ADD or ADHD	
Chapter 14:	Processing-Skills Disability	
Chapter 18:	Students with a Specific Learning Disability	
GRADE 6		
Chapter 2:	Students with a Writing Disability	
Chapter 3:	Students with Cognitive Impairments	
Chapter 5:	Students with ADD/ADHD	
Chapter 7:	Students with a Learning Disability	
Chapter 10:	Students with a Visual Perceptual Disability	
Chapter 13:	Students with a Hearing Impairment	



Chapter 15:

Chapter 20:

Students with ADHD

Students with a Learning Disability (comprehension)



OVERVIEW Children with Special Needs Teaching Tips (continued)

THE STORY OF JESUS	
Chapter 2:	Comprehension Clues
Chapter 3:	Writing Helps
Chapter 7:	Letter-Writing Lines
Chapter 10:	A List of Words (for cognitively impaired)
Chapter 11:	Role Playing
Chapter 13:	Fill-in-the-Blanks Thanks (written expression)
Chapter 15:	A Graphic Organizer (comprehension, written expression)
Chapter 19:	Fill in the Blanks (cognitive impairment)
Chapter 20:	Meditative Music (ADHD)

THE STORY OF OUR CHURCH	
Chapter 3:	Activity #3 (comprehension)
Chapter 4:	Activity #4 (written expression)
Chapter 7:	ADHD
Chapter 9:	Activity #2 (written expression)
Chapter 14:	(comprehension and processing skills)
Chapter 16:	Activity #3 (written expression)
Chapter 17:	Activity #3 (cognitive impairment, comprehension)



Children with Special Needs Teaching Tips

GRADE 1	
Chapter 1:	Children with ADHD To help children with ADHD listen to the Bible story of the Good Shepherd, you may wish to have a child move around Nativity-set figures of a shepherd and some sheep while you are reading the story. Focusing the children's attention on the concrete objects may help improve their comprehension skills.
Chapter 4:	 Child with Speech or Hearing Impairment For the child who is speech or hearing impaired, consider incorporating gestures that correspond to the words of the Gloria and can be imitated easily. The gestures can either be formal American Sign Language or simple gestures that you or the group make up. By involving the children physically, every child will have the opportunity to pray in a meaningful way.
Chapter 7:	Child with Reading and Processing Disability A child who has a specific learning Disability in reading and processing dmay have difficulty with written directions or processing written and/or oral directions. Before playing the game on page 115, model each step of the directions as you read them aloud. Step 1 Check to see that you have the proper materials for the game. Step 2 Toss the penny. Step 3 Move the penny the correct number of spaces referring back to the directions on the game.
Chapter 10:	Child with Fine Motor Skills Problems For a child with a disability that affects his or her fine motor skills, use hand-overhand guidance for the connecting the dots activity. Place your hand over the child's hand and guide it. This is a common strategy with young children who are still developing their motor skills.
Chapter 14:	Children with ADHD For children who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, it is important to keep them focused. After looking at the pictures about making choices, have the children role-play the situations. You may wish to discuss the role-playing possibilities beforehand. The "audience" can decide the better choice. The children will be excited about "acting" and more inclined to stay on-task.

Chapter 16:	Child with Fine Motor Skills Problems For the child who has difficulty writing because of poorly developed fine motor skills, let the child tape record the petition instead of writing the prayer in the book. If you think the child might feel uncomfortable using a tape recorder, consider asking the child to dictate the petition to you as you write it in the child's book.
Chapter 19:	 Children with a Writing Skills Disability For children who have a specific learning disability that affects their spelling, writing, or formulating of ideas for writing, construct a Prayer Word Box. Include a selection of words and phrases, written on index cards or sentence strips, which could be used in a child's prayer. For example, Dear God, Amen, Please help, the Church, and so on. The children can then choose the words or phrases that they would like to use for their prayer. The Prayer Word Box can also be used for future writing projects.

GRADE 2	
Chapter 1:	Child with Cognitive Impairment To help cognitively impaired children draw their picture on page 33, talk about ways they help at home. Encourage them to use these ideas for their drawing. For children who need more space to draw, provide large sheets of drawing paper.
Chapter 3:	 Child with Visual Impairment To help a visually impaired child, provide directions in a clear and precise manner. Always call on the child by name to participate. Keep in mind that visually impaired children may take longer to complete a task. Group activities can be more beneficial than individual ones, as children can gain support from others. Invite others in your group to describe each of the four illustrations on page 56 in great detail. Be sure to have them describe the placement of each person's hands.
Chapter 4:	Child with Hearing/Cognitive Impairment To include those who are hearing impaired or cognitively impaired, encourage all children to add gestures or dance movements to the Gloria on page 68. For the two activities on this page, have the children with special needs draw a picture or partner with someone who can assist them.

Chapter 5:	Child with Dyslexia To help a child with dyslexia, pair the child with another before doing the activity. In that way, the dyslexic child will have help sorting letters and making words. Or a partner could show the dyslexic child the three completed words on a separate sheet of paper and say aloud each one. The child would then write the correct word on the blank lines following the sentence context.
Chapter 6:	Child with ADD/ADHD For a child with Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, maintain eye contact during verbal instruction. For the first activity, photocopy the three forgiveness words. The child can then cut them out and place them onto the blank lines in the text where they belong. For the second, photocopy the four parts. The child can cut these out and put them in order.
Chapter 7:	Child with Visual Impairment For the additional activity, invite each child who is visually impaired to work with another child to draw the picture. Encourage them to work as a pair with one child creating the idea for the picture and the other drawing it. Be sure that both children put their names on the drawing. Give physically impaired children jumbo markers or crayons for drawing pictures, or magazines for cutting or tearing out pictures.
Chapter 8:	Child with Learning Disability A child with a learning disability may have above-average intelligence but may need help processing information. The child may take longer to complete the activity and may also need to have the task clarified first. You might choose to have another child help, or demonstrate how to begin the activity. Remember that the child is a child first and a disabled person second.
Chapter 9:	Child with Hearing/Vision Impairment Speak clearly and slowly. Repeat the questions of other children before answering them. When giving directions, face the child with a hearing loss. Repeat aloud anything you write on the board. Erase the board, except for items being discussed. Allow extra time for copying information.
Chapter 10:	Child with ADD/ADHD Help a child with ADD/ADHD participate more fully in the additional activity. Highlight the part of the Liturgy of the Word he or she will role-play. Make sure the child understands the directions before beginning. When it is the child's turn, use a signal you have previously agreed upon, such as touching the child's shoulder. The child may need to move about during the role-play session. Determine how to do this unobtrusively.



Chapter 11:	Child Using Wheelchair When planning the additional activity, keep in mind that a child in a wheelchair may have difficulty pantomiming certain actions. When you speak one-on-one to a child in a wheelchair, be seated so that the child does not need to strain to look up. Remind children that a wheelchair is part of a person's "personal space." No one is to lean on or push the chair unless asked.
Chapter 12:	 Family Issues This chapter addresses the reality that people have needs. Within your own group of children there may be families dealing with the illness or recent death of a family member. Some families may be welcoming babies. Be alert to the needs of children in such situations. Include family members in class prayer, especially this chapter's prayers.
Chapter 13:	Child with Cognitive Impairment When grouping the children for the additional activity, pair any cognitively impaired child with two children who are not cognitively impaired. All the children in the group can work together on their ideas for the drawings. For the dialogue, the cognitively impaired child could share ideas while the other two children print the words inside the speech bubbles.
Chapter 14:	Hearing Impaired or Learning Disabled Child For children who are hearing impaired or learning disabled, consider taperecording the text from the Eucharistic Prayer on page 214. Make the tape available so that they may benefit from hearing this at a comfortable volume or learning pace.
Chapter 15:	Children with Medical Issues The additional activity addresses the illness of Mrs. Nye and how it affects others. It may remind children of times they or family members have been ill. Allow children to share their experiences. Be sure you have close at hand a list of children with medical issues, such as allergies or asthma. Your list should include parent/ guardian and emergency phone numbers. Know what to do in case of an emergency.
Chapter 18:	Child with Physical Limitations You may want to make an enlarged photocopy of the dove on this page to provide more space for children with physical limitations to work with. This may also simplify the activity for those with visual impairment. Children can still write the message on the text page.



Chapter 20: Child with Visual Impairment

- If you have a child with visual impairment in your group, invite others to explain in detail the photographs before reading the story and the list on page 300.
- Encourage the children to describe the actions shown so that everyone will have a sense of how to bless others by serving them.

GRADE 3

Chapter 1:

Students with a Learning Disability (oral expression)

- Students with a learning disability in the area of oral expression may find it easier to complete the first activity using a chart such as this.
- Have the students select one child from the photos and draw how they are similar to and different from the child they chose. If possible, have them label their drawing as in the chart.

SAME	DIFFERENT
hair	shirt pants

Chapter 4:

Children with a Learning Disability (associations)

Students with a disability affecting their ability to make associations may need help with activity #2. Have them write each type of prayer on one side of an index card and keywords that describe each prayer on the other side of the card. Have them read the keywords, find them in the psalm in their books, and refer back to their card to identify the type of prayer.

Chapter 6:

Students with a Specific Learning Disability (tactile)

For students with a specific learning disability, a tactile approach to sequencing in activity #2 is helpful. On strips of paper, write the steps of Penance and Reconciliation, one per strip. Have the students place the steps in the correct order using page 396 as needed.

Chapter 8:

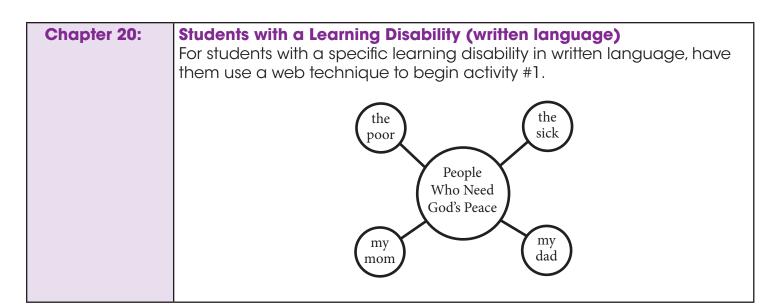
Students with a Learning Disability (spelling)

Students with a specific learning disability that affects spelling may become frustrated by activity #2. Print the words send, us, your, and spirit next to each of the flames on page 127 (out of order if you choose). Students can place the correctly spelled words in their proper space by using the letter clues given in the prayer.



Chapter 9:	A Student with Visual Impairment Pair another student in your group with a student with a visual impairment. Have the visually-able student describe each of the three illustrations in detail. Have the pair discuss the illustrations. Then, they can complete the activity in their own books.
Chapter 10:	 Students with a Learning Disability (multi-step problems) For students with a learning disability that affects their ability to complete multi-step problems, break up activity #2 into three parts. Beginning with the letter E, have the students point to each letter as they count from one to three. Have them circle the third letter. After circling every third letter, have the students cross out letters that are not circled. Then they can write each circled letter on a line.
Chapter 11:	Students with Cognitive Impairment For students who are cognitively impaired, locating information in the Tolton story to complete the puzzle may be difficult. Construct a word box with the puzzle words in it. This can be placed near the puzzle activity. Students may then select choices from the word box to complete the activity.
Chapter 15:	 Students with a Reading Disability For students with a specific learning disability in reading comprehension, activity #1 may be confusing. Assist them in completing the activity by having them underline the key words in each sentence. For example, next to the letter G, the sentence "A lector proclaims, or reads, God's holy Word," lector and reads can be underlined. In turn, children can then scan the picture, locate the person who is reading, and circle that person in the picture.
Chapter 16:	Students with a Learning Disability (formulating ideas for writing) Some students may have a learning disability that affects their ability to formulate ideas for writing. For Activity 1, provide words and phrases on index cards appropriate to the faith writing activity. Place these in a box and suggest that students choose and arrange terms to create their statement of faith.
Chapter 19:	Students with ADD/ADHD Students with Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder may find activity #1 difficult. Have them use paper to cover the write-on lines of the prayer part they are not working on. As they complete the top write-on lines, have them move the paper down to uncover the next set of write-on lines.





GRADE 4	
Chapter 5:	 Students with Motor Problems Some students may have difficulty drawing; they also may have poor fine-motor control. Invite them to look through magazines for pictures that in some way remind them of Jesus. Encourage the students to choose a favorite picture and to bring it to the prayer celebration.
Chapter 16:	 Students with Reading Disabilities To assist students with reading disabilities, you may wish to pair students together as they look for the Scripture passage. Encourage them to read the passage aloud together before writing their responses.

GRADE 5	
Chapter 2:	Visually Impaired Students For the first question in the activity on page 41, you might wish to pair a visually impaired student with a partner who will read the passage from Eucharist Prayer IV aloud.
Chapter 9:	Students with ADD or ADHD Students who have Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD or ADHD) may become overly stimulated by the first activity. Have them use a blank piece of paper to cover the lines they are not working on at the moment. As the students complete the first line of the message, have them move the paper down to uncover the second line, and so on.

Chapter 14:	Processing-Skills Disability To help the students who may have difficulty processing the activity directions on page 219, provide students with visuals of people who have put their faith and trust in God. Bring in mission magazines and diocesan newspapers and show the students photos of people taking care of the sick and elderly, and of people comforting others.
Chapter 18:	Students with a Specific Learning Disability Brainstorming and listing the students' responses on the board can help the entire class complete the activities on page 277, while especially helping students with a specific learning disability by giving them something concrete to work with.

GRADE 6	GRADE 6	
Chapter 2:	Students with a Writing Disability The e-mail-writing activity on page 45 may be difficult for young people who have a specific learning disability in the area of writing. Break the activity into three parts. First, have the young people write about what God promised Isaac. Then have them write about Isaac's feelings that day. Finally, ask them to write about how God kept his promise.	
Chapter 3:	Students with Cognitive Impairments The name activity on page 57, which involves creating words using the letters of a name, requires a level of thinking that might be above the comprehension ability of some students who are cognitively impaired. Simply having them verbalize what is special about them will meet the objective of the activity.	
Chapter 5:	Students with ADD/ADHD The activity on page 91 may be overstimulating for students with Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Keep the students focused on one line at a time to increase their attention. Have them cover the lines they are not working on with paper or a ruler and to move it down as they complete each line.	
Chapter 7:	Students with a Learning Disability If learning disabled young people are in your group, you might adapt the Ten Commandments activity on page 115 for the group by preparing index cards showing each Commandment's meaning for today. Give the cards to the young people after explaining the directions. Ask them to determine which index card belongs with each Commandment, and to copy the meaning shown on the card into the appropriate lines on the tablet.	



Chapter 9:	Students with a Visual Perceptual Disability If there are students with a visual perceptual disability in your class, consider adapting the crossword puzzle activity on page 149 by providing a word bank with the answers, and allowing the students to work in pairs.
Chapter 13:	Students with a Hearing Impairment Consider inviting a student with a hearing impairment to teach the class the sign language for the responses for the litanies on page 208. Then ask the entire group to sign, as well as recite, the responses.
Chapter 15:	Students with a Learning Disability (comprehension) For students who have a specific learning disability in comprehension you might conduct a review before beginning the activity on page 230. Ask the students to find and define the virtues taught on page 229. Have them write these virtues inside a box. Once faith and charity have been identified, have them place their word boxes next to the activity and use it for reference when filling in the blanks
Chapter 20:	Students with ADHD If there are students in your class with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, you might wish to adapt the activity on pages 300 and 301 in the following way. Read aloud each paragraph with the words of Jesus. Write Jesus' words on the board and say them aloud as you go along. Have the students look at the words of Jesus on the board and then highlight or underline these words in their books. Invite each student with ADHD to work with a partner in writing the meanings of Jesus' words.

THE STORY OF JESUS	
Chapter 2:	Comprehension Cues Students with a specific learning disability in comprehension can use different-colored highlighting markers to mark text in the chapter. For the first activity (p. 48), have students highlight Josephine's challenge and response and record their answers on the lines. The same process can be used for the second activity (p. 49).



Chapter 3:	Writing Helps For students who have a specific learning disability that affects their spelling, writing, or ability to formulate ideas for writing, construct a prayer box. Write words and phrases that may be used in the prayer-writing activity (#5) on index cards or sentence strips and place those in a box. The students can choose the words or phrases that they would like to use in their prayers. Depending on their abilities, students can either arrange the words and phrases to create their creed or use the words and phrases to supplement their own writing. This prayer box can also be used for future projects.
Chapter 7:	Students with fine motor difficulties may experience frustration and difficulty when filling in the blanks of the form letter on the page (#3). For these students, rewrite the form letter on another sheet of paper with additional lines. Add extra lines after I am writing to you regarding, an issue that is very important because, and I urge you to support laws that will help address this issue by. Distribute copies of this form.
Chapter 10:	A List of Words (for cognitively impaired) Students who are cognitively impaired may have difficulty completing the fill-in-the-blanks exercise with words found in the chapter (#1). Provide a list of words to select answers from, and allow the students to refer to the list to complete the activity.
Chapter 11:	Role Playing Students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) may benefit from role playing, rather than writing, their responses to activity #3 on page 177. This can help the students stay focused as well as make the activity seem more concrete. Read aloud the moral dilemmas on the page, and then invite the students to think about the ways Jesus would respond. After giving the students time for reflection, invite volunteers to act out the ways Jesus might respond.
Chapter 13:	Fill-in-the-Blanks Thanks (written expression) Students with a specific learning disability in the area of written expression will benefit from a fill-in-the-blanks form letter (Activity #4). Write the necessary parts of the thank-you letter to Jesus, and leave blanks for the parts to be written by the students. Before the letter-writing activity, have the students brainsform a list of reasons they are thankful to Jesus.



Chapter 15: A Graphic Organizer (comprehension, written expression) Students with a disability that affects comprehension and/or written expression might benefit from using a graphic organizer to display their response to Activity #5. Write "Spreading the Spirit of Jesus" in a circle in the middle of a sheet of paper. In a separate circle stemming from this circle, the students can write the ways that a group in their community spreads the Spirit of Jesus. **Chapter 19:** Fill in-the Blanks (cognitive impairment) For students who are cognitively impaired, write the activity question (#3) at the top of a sheet of paper. Type the verses from the top scroll on page 288, leaving blanks for significant words. Then type those words at the bottom of the page. Instruct the students to read the words in the first scroll, then use their books to fill in the blanks from the word bank at the bottom of the page. Then say, "Circle the kinds of love that you do best." **Chapter 20: Meditative Music (ADHD)** Students who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) may find it challenging to sit guietly during the guiet time with God (#4). Playing a piece of meditative-style music while the students are relaxing and praying will involve another one of their senses, helping them to stay focused and engaged in the task at hand. THE STORY OF OUR CHURCH **Chapter 3:** Activity #3 (comprehension) Students who have a specific learning disability in comprehension will benefit from a warm-up activity that can help them organize thoughts and make the main question clearer. Make a three column chart. Head the first column "How the Church/World Was"; the second, "How the Church/World Is"; and the third, "What the Church Can Do." The students can list facts in the first two columns. In the third column, they can write what the Church can do to be effective today. **Chapter 4:** Activity #4 (written expression) Students who have a specific learning disability that affects written expression may benefit from a list or box containing words or short phrases from the Apostles' Creed. Write words and phrases, such as I believe, God, Father, Son, helps, and created on index cards for the students. They can choose words to supplement their list.



Chapter 7:	Students who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or a specific learning disability that affects written expression may benefit from completing this activity as an oral discussion. First, distribute a table labeled "Should the Church Speak Out?" (See below.) Have the students place check marks in the appropriate columns to express their opinions. Then, lead a discussion of the reasons for their opinions. This method will better engage the students and enable them to complete the activity.
Chapter 9:	Activity #2 (written expression) Students who have a specific learning disability in the area of written expression may have difficulty writing a list of what they do during their day. The daily activity chart can be rewritten on a larger scale, removing the lines given for writing in the activity column. Students can illustrate what they do on a daily basis in the appropriate time frame. In this way, the students are able to provide the same information, using pictures rather than words.
Chapter 14:	(comprehension and processing skills) To assist students who have a specific learning disability in comprehension or processing skills, you might offer two to three suggestions for each of the parts of the penitential celebration that they are being asked to plan on their own. For example, suggest three well-known songs or hymns for the opening song. The students can then choose the one that they would like to use. The same can be done for the prayers and readings. Providing a limited list of suggestions will help the students focus on planning the penitential celebration.
Chapter 16:	Activity #3 (written expression) For students with a learning disability that affects written expression, use a prayer box. Include a selection of words and phrases written on index cards or sentence strips that would apply to the writing of a prayer intention. The students can choose the ones they would like to use to supplement the writing of their prayer.
Chapter 17:	Activity #3 (cognitive impairment, comprehension) Students who are cognitively impaired or have a specific learning disability that affects comprehension may be frustrated as they try to complete the crossword puzzle on page 269. Provide them with the words they will need to complete the puzzle. You may wish to suggest that the students count the number of letters in each word in order to match the words with the correct spaces in the puzzle. Providing the words in advance will also help them spell the words correctly.

