



# **Make Room at the Inn:**

## **An Inclusive Audit Framework for Churches**

A light-touch guide to considering your current practices and habits, exploring ways you could increase the inclusivity and accessibility of the welcome your church offers across a diverse range of needs. With lots of space to discuss and reflect.

Designed to be used as 7 stand-alone sessions or grouped together as an away day.

Suggested timings and structure:

- Welcome & prayer – 5 mins
- Theme intro & video – 5 mins
- Group discussion – 25–30 mins
- Action planning – 15 mins
- Closing summary & prayer – 5–10 mins



## Opening Prayer:

God of welcome, show us your heart and help us see your people through your eyes. Teach us to make room at the inn. **Amen.**

## Discussion Perspectives

### Head (Understanding)

What stood out to you in this extract/video?  
Was there anything surprising or challenging?

### Heart (Empathy)

How might someone with this lived experience *feel* at our church?  
How do we make it harder or easier for them to belong?

### Hands (Action)

What's one practical step we can take to broaden our welcome for folk in this area?

## Closing prayer:

God of grace, thank you for the gifts of each person here. Bless the small steps we've named today, and help us grow them into signs of your love. Amen.



# 1: Mental Health & Anxiety

## Extract

Christmas can be tough for those struggling with mental health. The pressure to appear “happy” can worsen loneliness or grief.

Simple gestures, quiet spaces, clear service info, extra toilet rolls, or signposting facilities, can help people feel safe and understood.

Watch the film:




What **one idea** or phrase strikes you?

## Questions

*Head:* What ideas here are new or challenging for you? It can be common for churches to forget that some folk might be particularly sensitive to alcohol being the default assumption to offer.

*Heart:* How might someone in our church feel pressure at Christmas or other times?

*Hands:* What small change could we make to reduce stress or anxiety for newcomers? Do



we explain our expectations and signpost stages of services?

### **Action Prompt**

Plan one new tangible step you will introduce (e.g. a quiet space, clear directions, “Blue Christmas” service).

## **2: Disabilities & Accessibility**

### **Extract**

Accessibility isn’t only ramps. Clear speech, transcripts, readable fonts, working loop systems, sign language, and removing trip hazards all matter. Prepare space for wheelchair users and anticipate hidden disabilities.


Watch the film:

What **one idea** or phrase strikes you?



### **Questions**

*Head:* Which accessibility issues are most often overlooked in our church? Do we always use the microphones and loop system?



*Heart:* How might someone with a disability experience our current setup?

*Hands:* What one improvement could we make this month?

### **Action Prompt**

Audit your building and worship practices. Choose one practical fix (e.g. check loop system, clear aisles, have someone check that all written material is in large-print text).

## **3: Scran & Brass (Food & Poverty)**

### **Extract**

People may arrive hungry or cold. Offering soup instead of just biscuits can make a big difference. Be clear about donations, some value giving back in ways other than money.

Watch the film:

What **one idea** or phrase strikes you?





## Questions

*Head:* Why is food such a powerful sign of hospitality?

*Heart:* How might it feel to arrive hungry at church?

*Hands:* How can we offer food/drink that affirms dignity and welcome?

## Action Prompt

What is one improvement you could make to the hospitality you offer – especially in colder months (e.g. hot food at events, clear info about donations, opportunities for service instead of payment). This area can also give you the opportunity to develop links with local shops and businesses, many are keen to support their community in practical ways.



## 4: Building Considerations & Facilities

### Extract

Signs, lighting, toilets, and storage speak volumes. Gender-neutral toilets, baby-change for all genders, and removing clutter all show care. Livestreaming can extend welcome to those at home.

Watch the film:

What **one idea** or phrase strikes you?



### Questions

*Head:* What do our facilities communicate to first-time visitors?

*Heart:* How might a parent, carer, or shift worker feel arriving at our church?

*Hands:* What change could we make to our signage, toilets, or online presence?



## Action Prompt

Pick one facility issue to improve (e.g. signage at entrance, lighting, uncluttered toilets).

You might find some ideas you could try in the June 2026 Inclusive Church newsletter too.

## 5: Language & Labels

### Extract

Words matter. Using “partner” or “grown-ups” avoids assumptions. Leaders sharing pronouns shows welcome. Space, toys, and communication style signal who belongs.


Watch the film:



What **one idea** or phrase strikes you?

### Questions

*Head:* Where do we use language that might exclude? Are we aware of the hurt that using exclusively male gendered terms for God and people can cause?



*Heart:* How would a newcomer hear our prayers or notices? Would everything make sense without additional explanation?

*Hands:* What one wording change could we introduce?

### **Action Prompt**


Review notices/prayers/hymns for inclusive language. Trial one shift (e.g. leaders use pronouns, use “partner/household”).

Having key members wear badges with their names, pronouns and roles, can help those looking for advice, support and information know who to ask.

## **6: Race, Gender & Representation**

### **Extract**

Representation matters. Who leads, who serves, and the images we use communicate belonging. Be mindful of language around “light” and “darkness.” Visuals should reflect real diversity, not stereotypes.



Watch the film:



What **one idea** or phrase strikes you?

## Questions

*Head:* What unspoken messages do our visuals or leadership patterns send?

*Heart:* How might someone of a different background experience our church?

*Hands:* What change could help us better reflect God's diverse people?

## Action Prompt

Audit your images, leadership roles, or hymn choices. What intentional changes can you make? (e.g. use more representative images, balance roles across genders).



## 7: Think Differently - Neurodivergence & Learning Styles

### Extract

People learn and worship differently. Headphones, fidget toys, or drawing may help some concentrate. Be explicit about welcome for neurodivergent people. Offer flexible ways to participate.

Watch the film:

What **one idea** or phrase strikes you?



### Questions

*Head:* What assumptions do we make about "appropriate" behaviour in worship?

*Heart:* How might a neurodivergent person feel walking into our service?

*Hands:* What one step could we take to make our services friendlier to different needs?



## Action Prompt

Provide sensory tools, clear instructions, or flexibility (e.g. communion brought to people, quiet spaces, craft corner).

## Closing Reflection

Inclusion begins with intentional small acts. Over time, these acts cumulate to reshape our culture into one that reflects Christ's welcome. What steps have we already taken, and where would we like to get to? How will we know if we're making a difference?

How will we ensure this is a journey we continue moving along?

Where can we build into our practice, times to audit and record progress, **celebrating** achievements, **articulating** challenges and **rejuvenating** our focus?