



SPIRITUAL INDICATOR GUIDE



The OPWDD Faith Based Initiative Program



NYS Office For People With Developmental Disabilities

Putting People First



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Faith Initiative Program

People with disabilities want to be active participants and meaningful contributors in their community. They want the same choices to grow spiritually, to enjoy community life, and experience relationships.

The OPWDD Faith Based Initiative Program was instituted in 2007. Its mission is to explore new avenues and expand upon choice opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities that will ***respect*** their beliefs, ***support*** their right to belong to a faith community, and ***assist*** individuals with developmental disabilities to become a valued member in the house of faith they have chosen.

Our Purpose:

In partnership with faith communities and other interested parties, OPWDD will develop opportunities that meet the expectations of individuals with developmental disabilities who make choices to:

- ▣ ***Believe*** -have their faith acknowledged and respected.
- ▣ ***Belong*** – attend a house of worship based upon their faith beliefs and choice.
- ▣ ***Become***- receive supports and assistance that will allow consistent access for faith community integration.



Our mission is to support:

Individuals with developmental disabilities: who want the same choices to grow spiritually, to enjoy community life, and have meaningful relationships as others experience in the community.

Parents: who struggle to find faith communities that will welcome them and their children.

Congregants: who struggle to find a “meaningful way” to include people with developmental disabilities in their faith community.

State and voluntary agencies: who struggle to find the best ways to offer continuous support and opportunities for person with disabilities to participate in this important part of their life.

Our goals:

1st Goal: Apply person centered planning to faith community inclusion.

Objective: *To provide faith education and community practice for our staff*

2nd Goal: Create a Faith Community Database

Objective: *to create a listing of houses of worship that will be accessible by zip codes in all 62 counties:*

3rd Goal: Work with individuals, families, and self-advocates in providing educational and listening forums for the community.

Objective: *To help the faith communities welcome and support individuals to become valued members in their congregation.*

4th Goal: Build support systems that will assist an individual’s access and inclusion to their faith community:

Objective: *To increase participation in faith community worship and other activities on a consistent basis.*



About the Spiritual/Faith Indicator Guide

“Spirituality: your pathway to discovery of self”

While the pathway to discovering spirituality encompasses many facets of a person’s being (family, friends, community, service, and religion), the purpose of this guide is to assist the Medicaid Service Coordinator (MSC), Active Treatment Coordinator (ATC), and Qualified Mental Retardation Professional (QMRP) in working with an individual with mental retardation and/or developmental disabilities to discover the values and interests that are important to their spiritual well being.

This indicator guide differs in other assessments tools a coordinator may use in that the objective of the spiritual indicator tool is designed to help the coordinator and individual make definitive inquiry into the historical, interest, and further exploration of the individual’s spiritual needs.

The expected outcome of this exploration is that the coordinator will have better insight into the desire and needs of the individual and can provide opportunity, access, and supports through person centered planning of their spiritual choices.

It is also important to accept that people may change their minds about their spirituality/religion. Some previous non spiritual/religious persons may become so, and some may change their faith beliefs.



Facts about Faith Community Inclusion

Facts	Possibilities
People with disabilities are much less likely to attend religious services compared to people without disabilities (50% versus 57% respectively) ¹	When people with disabilities are connected to their chosen faith community, their quality of life is enhanced
Some people with disabilities have never had the chance to explore their spirituality	People with disabilities have the opportunity to express their right to a full life of faith
SOME congregations WELCOME people with disabilities	ALL congregations VALUE people with disabilities as active and contributing members
People with disabilities have to think creatively just to get through their day successfully	Congregations tap the creativity of people with disabilities by identifying ways to remove barriers
Lack of community connections is often a source of frustration for people with disabilities and is related to increased safety and health consequences	Congregational inclusion creates natural connections that enable faith belonging <u>and</u> community belonging

Taken from the DDPC/OPWDD Spirit Project/2007

¹ N.O.D. Harris Survey 2010

Module 1: Defining Spirituality, Religion, and Faith

A. Difference between spirituality and religion:

Spirituality and religion are often perceived to have the same meaning. This perception can be misleading and confining in understanding and accepting different individuals' spirituality. Spirituality is commonly viewed as a broader concept than religion. While religion can be the method by which one explores and expresses their spirituality, spirituality can be expressive of many different aspects of a person's life.

B. What is Spirituality?

Spirituality means different things to different people. They may interpret it as:

- ❖ Their religion or faith
- ❖ Giving meaning and direction to their life, sometimes described as their “journey”
- ❖ A way of understanding the world and their place in the world
- ❖ Belief in a higher being or a force greater than any individual
- ❖ A core part of their identity and essential humanity
- ❖ A feeling of belonging or connectedness
- ❖ A quest for wholeness, hope or harmony
- ❖ A sense that there is more to life than material things

People may develop and express spirituality through religious practices such as:

- ❖ Worship, prayer and reading religious texts
- ❖ Coming together as a spiritual community
- ❖ Living by certain values
- ❖ Rituals such as burning incense
- ❖ Wearing particular clothes or eating particular foods
- ❖ Cultural or creative activities such as making music or creating art
- ❖ Getting closer to nature
- ❖ Activities that develop self awareness or personal control such as contemplation or yoga
- ❖ Physical activity
- ❖ Friendship or voluntary work

(Spiritual Well Being: Policy and Practice Bradford 2001)



C. Definition of Terms

Spirituality - “it is the power, energy and hopefulness in a person. It is what is deepest in us, what gives us direction, motivation. It is what enables us to survive bad times, to be strong, to overcome difficulties”.

Religion - “describes one way in which some people find expression for the spiritual. Religion is marked by four components: creed, worship, code (or ethics) and community.”
(Spiritual Well Being: Policy and Practice Bradford 1999)

Faith – “belief and trust in and loyalty to God b: belief in the doctrines of a religion c: firm belief even in the absence of proof d: complete confidence. “Something that is firmly believed especially a system of religious beliefs.”



Module 2: Exploring an Individual’s Spiritual/Religious/ Faith Interest

Guiding Principles

The individual profile included in a person’s Individualized Service Plan (ISP) is a narrative about the person. It includes selected person centered information about the person discovered during the planning process. The profile may address abilities, skills, preferences, accomplishments, relationships, health, cultural traditions, community service and valued roles, spirituality, career, recreational interests and enjoyment, challenges, needs, pertinent clinical information, or other information that impacts how supports and services will be provided. The profile tells the reader about the person and his/her current interest. Because there are many different ways to discover what a person wants for their lives, this guide gives you the latitude to choose the best way to gather information for a particular person.

How do we support the interests, choices, and dreams of people with disabilities, including those related to faith and spirituality?

- ***It is important to plan.*** Areas like faith, spirituality, and congregational participation must be addressed on purpose or they get overlooked too easily. Studies show that spirituality and faith are important in the lives of many Americans—it is a valued outcome for most people. One purpose of this guide is to ensure that this dimension of the lives of people with disabilities is always considered within the planning process.
- ***It is okay to talk about and work on spirituality.*** For a variety of reasons, service providers are sometimes hesitant to address this aspect of people’s lives. The charge is to identify the services, supports, and connections a person needs to live a quality life and that includes faith and spirituality. Just as with other areas of life—like community and civic involvement, leisure activities, social relationships, and sexuality—faith and spirituality are areas in which people with developmental disabilities may want and need support. In fact, spirituality is a domain that is already listed on the ISP to consider during planning.
- ***This may be new territory.*** The service system has not always done well at addressing the religious and spiritual needs of people with developmental disabilities due, in part, to the hesitancy mentioned above. Service coordinators often wonder where to begin or how to proceed. Families have thrown up their hands in frustration. Providers might have been uncomfortable in this role. This guide is full of very practical tools you can use to navigate this important part of the lives of the people you support. It is new, and we will all be learning together how to make it work.

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- ***There is no single right way.*** For some individuals, identifying their valued outcomes simply involves asking them. For others, it will take some careful and thoughtful steps to discover their valued outcomes. When a person experiences communication challenges or has never been given the chance to explore this area, they may not start a conversation on their own.
- ***This is a process.*** Understanding what a person wants for their lives can take time. As with any area of a person's life, the process of planning and supporting should be ongoing. We learn more about people's dreams and goals over time as we get to know them and they get to know us. When a person has difficulty communicating and/or has had few opportunities in the past to explore this aspect of their lives, it can take time to figure out their preferences.
- ***People express their faith differently.*** Like everyone else, people with developmental disabilities will express their faith and spirituality in a variety of ways. We should be careful not to assume that spiritual expressions will look a certain way because a person has a particular disability. As with all planning, the goal is to support people in making *their* own choices about what is important for *their* own lives.
- ***Spiritual assessment and expression are ongoing.*** Spirituality is a journey. It is an ongoing process as people's values and preferences sometimes deepen or change over time. What might be a valued outcome today could change next week and most certainly by next year. Just as in all service-related valued outcomes, the activities individuals engage in help build up to a goal. Regular "check ins" should be made to assure progress toward that goal. Anticipate that working toward a valued outcome around spirituality will not be a one-time event or just one kind of activity; it is likely to be more of a process.
- ***It should be easy.*** When a person has indicated an interest in expressing their spirituality, making the connections and supporting him/her to enjoy the experience should be easy and rewarding. We hope providing some simple tools to assist you in this area will help keep it easy. Integrating spiritual valued outcomes into the ISP process simply becomes part of the planning that you already do; it is not an add-on.
- ***It isn't for everyone.*** For some people, spirituality and involvement in a faith community are an important part of their lives. For others, however, these things won't be valued outcomes. The key is to listen to people, learn about their lives, discover their dreams, and find out what they want for themselves.



What You Might Discover about Spiritual Inclusion Needs through this Process:

When you invest time exploring whether spirituality or faith are valued outcomes for the person, you will likely discover every person is different. Consider the following possibilities for discussion with individuals, family members, advocates, team members and staff as you discuss their level of faith/spiritual interest:

<p>No Interest</p>	<p><i>Being part of a faith community or expressing spirituality may not be an important part of a person’s life and might not be considered a valued outcome.</i></p>
<p>Exploring</p>	<p><i>Some people may identify spirituality or attending a congregation as important or something they would like to consider, but they may not yet identify with a particular faith tradition or are just beginning to explore this dimension of their lives. Perhaps they have never been to a church before or have never been given the opportunities or supports to explore their spirituality. In these situations, a valued outcome may focus on exploring different areas of spirituality and faith.</i></p>
<p>Connecting</p>	<p><i>Some people may share that they would really like to be part of a faith community, but they currently are not connected with a local church, mosque, synagogue, temple, or other place of worship. Perhaps they attended a congregation in the recent past or when they were younger; or this may simply be a new interest for them. Making these connections may be the focuses of helping someone realize their valued outcome of being part of a congregational community.</i></p>
<p>Maintaining</p>	<p><i>Some people are currently involved in a congregation and they are satisfied with the ways in which they are participating and contributing. Receiving the supports and services needed to maintain this currently level of involvement may be listed as a valued outcome.</i></p>
<p>Changing or Deepening</p>	<p><i>At different times in their lives, people may decide they want to become more or less involved in their church, find a new congregational home, or even explore a new faith tradition. Finding a new congregation or becoming more meaningfully involved in a one’s congregation could be listed as a valued outcome.</i></p>



Module 3: Conversations about Faith/Spiritual Needs

A. Simple Conversation Starters for People with Disabilities:

The best starting place for finding out about a person and what is important to them is by asking the person. Below are a few simple questions Service Coordinators, Advocates, or others might use to start this conversation prior to or as part of a planning meeting. The answers people share can help you complete the Profile section of the ISP and to learn whether this is a Valued Outcome. In other words: Is this an important part of their lives? Do they want it to be? Are they currently involved in a faith community? Do they want to be? Are there other ways they express their spirituality? What help do they need to make these things happen? Adapt or add to these questions as needed to make sure the wording is understandable to the person. Remember that people talk about their faith communities (e.g., church, congregation, mosque, synagogue, temple) and their spirituality (e.g., beliefs, faith, religion, etc.) using different language. Find out what words are understandable to the person with whom you are talking.

You may also show the individual pictorials to observe changes in countenance or assist the person in understanding what you are asking. While these pictures are intended to facilitate assessments with persons who are non-verbal, it could certainly be beneficial as a supplement to guided conversations as well.

Another way to use art as a way to identify indicators of interest or areas of spiritual interest is to present the person with blank paper and a pencil or crayons and ask them to draw what they think about when you use the words “God” or “religion”, et cetera. Using music as a method for observing responsiveness is an additional way to see if an individual might be interested in religious activities. Consider taking the individual to a music store to listen to gospel or hymnal music or go to various community services.

The following are examples of questions that could be asked about their level of interest in being part of a Congregation:

(check *ONE* that best reflects where the individual has attended religious services most of the time):

<p>(1)</p>  <p>Church</p>	<p>(2)</p> <p>A</p>  <p>Synagogue / Temple</p>	<p>(3)</p>  <p>Mosque</p>	<p>(4)</p>  <p>Temple</p>
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A. For the individual who has indicated a **“Maintaining”** level of interest:

Do you like to go? (Y/N)_____

Who do you go with?_____ (*relationship*)

How do you get there?_____ (staff, family member, paid support, church member)

Are you happy there? (y/n)

How often do you go there?_____ (weekly, monthly, annual, religious/holiday celebrations)

What do you like most/best about going there?_____

Who are some of your friends there?_____

Do you wish you could do more things there?_____

***Note: Now have them answer the questions on pages 14-17**



B. For the individual who has indicated a **“Connecting”** level of interest

If provided the opportunity, would you like to go? (Y/N)

What faith would be your choice? _____ (see or circle pictures above)

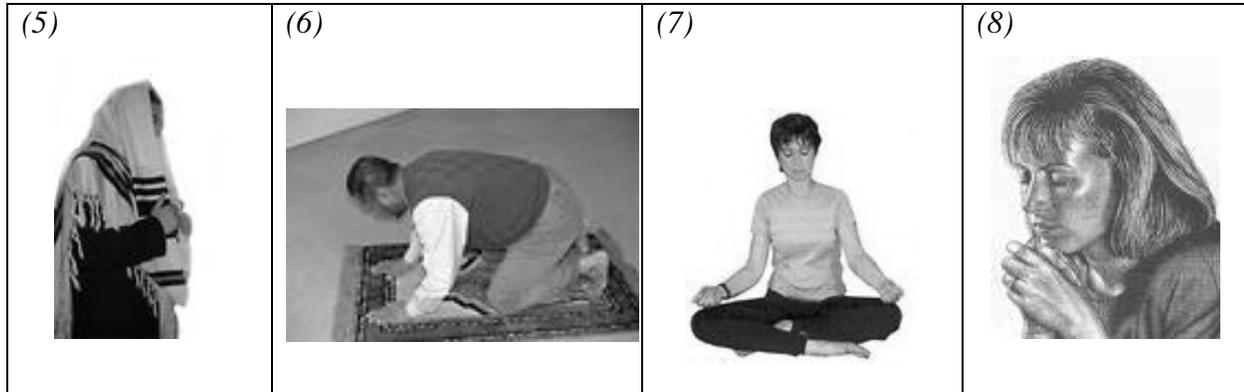
Who would you like to go with? _____

How often would you like to go? _____

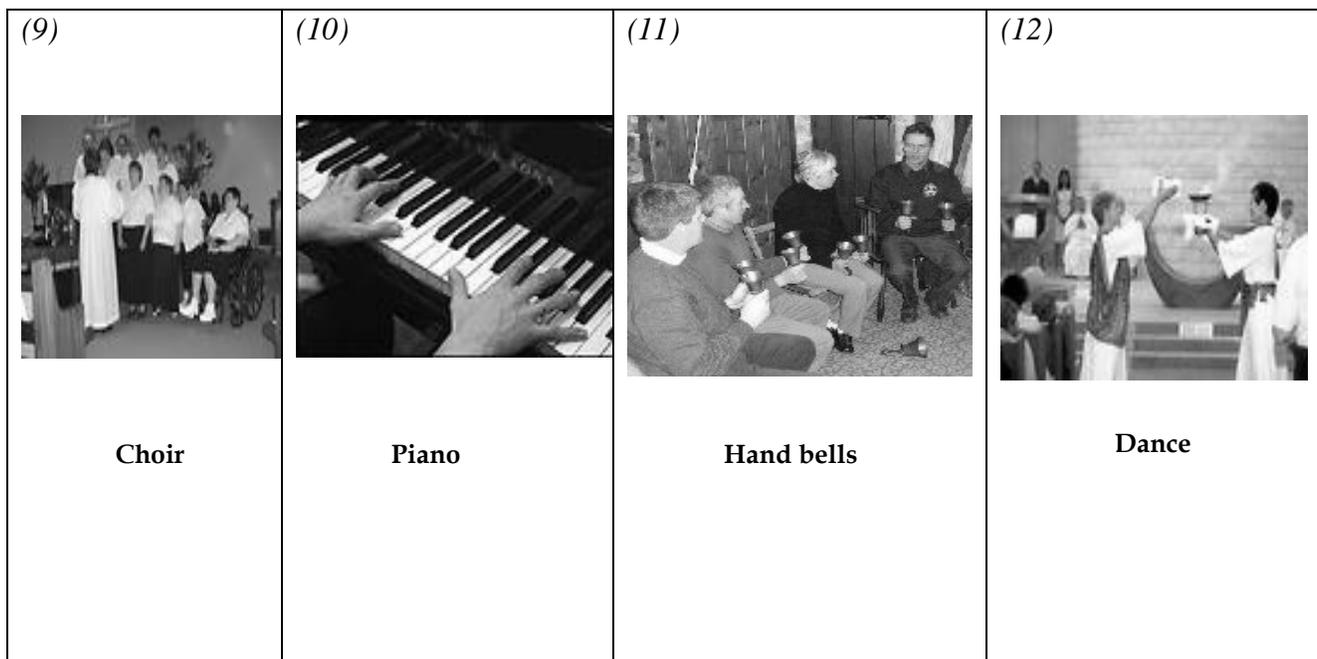
***Note: Use the pictures on the following pages to answer what “would” be their choices**

1. Pray: (y/n)

a. How do you pray?



2. Music (check all that apply):



3. Activities:

Do you like to help? (Check all that apply):

<p>(13)</p>  <p>Helping to greet people</p>	<p>(14)</p>  <p>Helping to serve</p>	<p>(15)</p>  <p>Helping with arts and crafts</p>	<p>(16)</p>  <p>Helping to clean</p>
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4. Would you like to become a member?

<p>(17)</p>  <p>Judaism</p>	<p>(18)</p>  <p>Protestant</p>	<p>(19)</p>  <p>Catholic</p>	<p>(20)</p>  <p>Islam</p>
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5. Who would you like to speak to?

<p>(21)</p>  <p>Imam</p>	<p>(22)</p>  <p><i>Minister</i></p>	<p>(23)</p>  <p>Rabbi</p>	<p>(24)</p>  <p>Priest</p>
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C. For the individual who indicated they “**used to go**”, some current level of interest questions:

Did you go to a (church, mosque, synagogue, or temple) in the past? (y/n) _____

Using the pictures on page 13, indicate where _____

Why did you stop going? _____

Would you like to start going again? (y/n) _____

Using the pictures on page 13, indicate where (their choice may be difference now) _____

Are there activities you participated in that you’d like to do again? (y/n) _____ (Provide examples from pages 15-17)

What were they? _____



D. For the individual who expressed an “**interest in spirituality**” but not a faith community

Are there things you do at home (or other places) to feel close to God or show your faith?

- If yes...
 - What do you do? _____

- If no....
 - Are there some things you'd like to do? Yes/no_____
 - Like what?_____

. Do you want someone to help you do these things? (y/n)

- If yes, who?_____
- Or, do you want someone to help you try new things? _____



Module 4: Looking For Indicators of an Interest in Spirituality:

Spiritual beliefs are particular to the individual. They are expressive of a person's being and their progressive journey. It can be described as a journey of meaning, whether self-awareness, or oneness with the (their) world. It can be a journey of purpose, toward advancement of oneself or inward centeredness. Usually a spiritual discovery is about exploring those things that effect our being; joy and sorrows, peace and anxiety, happiness and grief, pain and well being.

One's spirituality may be expressed through:

- Physical activities
- Yoga/Meditation
- Friends and Family
- Cultural activities (fiestas, ceremonies)
- Creative activities (music, art, writing)
- Celebrations
- Praying (higher power [s])
- Moral values
- Eating rituals
- Community activities
- Getting closer to Nature

Not everyone can easily verbalize or communicate their interests, preferences, and values related to spirituality and faith. But this does not necessarily mean that they have none. Silence should not automatically be interpreted as disinterest. When a person experiences substantial communication challenges or has had limited opportunities to explore this area of their lives, it is important to look for other indicators that offer hints of what he or she values. You might notice that a person seems to enjoy particular activities or his/her expression changes when a particular activity, person, or event is mentioned.



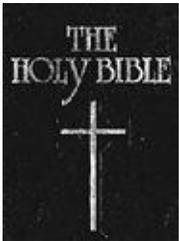
Consider the following questions as you spend time interacting with the person or talk with other staff who spend time with the person.

- Has the person shown an interest in religious things (religious art, churches passed while driving by, specific holiday decorations, etc.)? **Yes**_____/ **No**_____
- Does the person listen to and enjoy religious music? **Yes**_____/ **No**_____
- Has the person asked questions or had conversations about church, prayer, or other spiritual topics? **Yes**_____/ **No**_____
- Does the person pray before meals or at other times? **Yes**_____/ **No**_____
- Do they own religious books, magazines, music, or other materials? **Yes**_____/ **No**_____
- Does the person watch religious television shows? **Yes**_____/ **No**_____
- Does the person celebrate or seem to enjoy particular religious holidays, such as Christmas, Passover, Easter, Lent, Eid (Muslim), or Diwali (Hindu)? **Yes**_____/ **No**_____
- Does the symbolism and rituals of those holidays seem to be particularly appealing to the person?
Yes_____/ **No**_____
- When you are near a church, synagogue, or other place of worship, does the person indicate an interest in going in? **Yes**_____/ **No**_____
- Are changes in countenance/affect/expression evident when someone mentions or talks about religious or spiritual issues or they see religious imagery/images?
Yes_____/ **No**_____

Below is another group of symbols that may assist in understanding an individuals' faith or spiritual needs or interest. Remember spiritual interest can be a number of things not related to a particular religion:

Religious Icons

Directions: Show pictures one at a time. Observe behavior or changes in expression. Note observations as needed.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Picture</i>	<i>Observational notes</i>
<p><i>Rosary Beads</i></p>	<p>(25)</p> 	
<p><i>Mary and Baby Jesus</i></p>	<p>(26)</p> 	
<p><i>Minister</i></p>	<p>(27)</p> 	
<p><i>Bible</i></p>	<p>(28)</p> 	

Religious /Ritual Symbols

<i>Item</i>	<i>Picture</i>	<i>Observational notes</i>
<p>(29)</p> <p><i>Menorah</i></p>		
<p>(30)</p> <p><i>The Ark (with the Torah)</i></p>		
<p>(31)</p> <p><i>Prayer Rug</i></p>		
<p>(32)</p> <p><i>Muslim Kofu (prayer cap)</i></p>		

Religious Celebrations

<i>Item</i>	<i>Picture</i>	<i>Observational notes</i>
<p><i>Passover</i></p>	<p>(33)</p> 	
<p><i>Rosh Hashanah</i></p>	<p>(34)</p> 	
<p><i>Ramadan</i></p>	<p>(35)</p> 	
<p><i>Eid Al-Fitr</i> <i>(breaking the Fast at the end of Ramadan)</i></p>	<p>(36)</p> 	

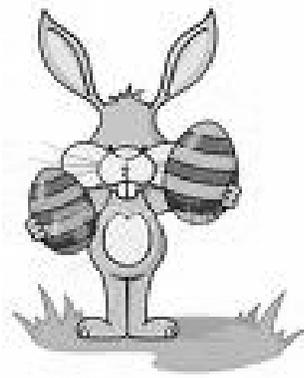
Religious Celebrations:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Picture</i>	<i>Observational notes</i>
<p>(37)</p> <p><i>Day of Nativity</i> <i>Christmas</i></p>	<p>(37)</p>  A black and white illustration of the Nativity scene. Mary is kneeling in prayer, holding the infant Jesus. Joseph stands to the right, and three wise men are on the left, one presenting a gift. The scene is set under a starry sky with a manger in the background.	
<p>(38)</p> <p><i>Good Friday</i></p>	<p>(38)</p>  A black and white illustration of the crucifixion. Jesus is on the cross, with a crown of thorns on his head. The background shows a cloudy sky.	
<p>(39)</p> <p><i>Ash Wednesday</i></p>	<p>(39)</p>  A black and white photograph of a priest performing the Ash Wednesday ritual. The priest is on the right, applying ash to the forehead of a man on the left. The man has a solemn expression.	

The pictures below can provide insight into an individual's other interests that bring them joy (spirituality). Some people find meaning in celebrating holidays (cultural and ethnic), sports, and hobbies.

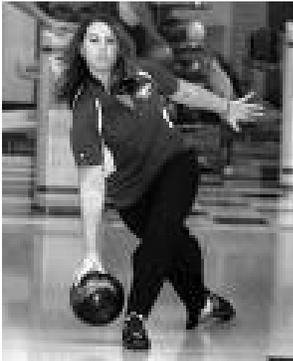
Holiday Seasonal Celebrations

<p><i>Thanksgiving</i></p>	<p>(40)</p> 	
<p><i>Christmas</i></p>	<p>(41)</p> 	

<p><i>4th of July</i></p>	<p>(42)</p> 	
<p><i>Easter</i></p>	<p>43</p> 	
<p><i>Kwanzaa</i></p>	<p>44</p> 	

<p><i>Cinco De Mayo</i></p>	<p>45</p> 	
<p><i>St Patrick's Day</i></p>	<p>46</p> 	
<p><i>Native American Day</i></p>	<p>47</p> 	

<p><i>Chinese New Year</i></p>	<p>48</p> 	
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<p>Baseball</p>	<p>49</p> 	
<p>Football</p>	<p>50</p> 	
<p>Basketball</p>	<p>51</p> 	
<p>Bowling</p>	<p>52</p> 	

<p><i>Tennis</i></p>	<p>53</p> 	
<p><i>Soccer</i></p>	<p>54</p> 	
<p><i>Fishing</i></p>	<p>55</p> 	
<p><i>Skating</i></p>	<p>56</p> 	

<p><i>Amusement Parks</i></p>	<p>57</p> 	
<p><i>Gardening</i></p>	<p>58</p> 	
<p><i>Swimming</i></p>	<p>59</p> 	
<p><i>Clothes shopping</i></p>	<p>60</p> 	

<p><i>Pottery</i></p>	<p>61</p> 	
<p><i>Puzzles</i></p>	<p>62</p> 	
<p><i>Wood work</i></p>	<p>63</p> 	
<p><i>Video Games</i></p>	<p>64</p> 	



Module 5: Gathering Input from Parents, Family Members, or Other Relatives

Family members—including parents, grandparents, or siblings—may be able to offer unique insight into the importance of faith and spirituality to a person’s life, as well as the ways that they have been or would like to be involved in a congregation (e.g., church, mosque, parish, synagogue, or temple). Consider inviting these family members to share their perspectives on the types of congregational involvement a person might desire and the supports, services, and connections that would be needed to make it happen. The questions included on the attached questionnaire can be raised during a planning meeting, asked over the telephone, or sent to family members by mail.

Questionnaire for Family Members

We are committed to making sure that those we serve are supported in participating in a congregation and expressing their spirituality in ways that are important to them. To help us better understand the spiritual needs and strengths of the people we serve—as well as whether and how they are interested in being part of a faith community—we are asking for input and insight from others who might know them well. Answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

1. Describe some of the faith traditions that have been important to your family (if any).



2. How has your family member with disabilities been involved in these traditions?

3. Are there things that your family member does that suggest to you an interest in being involved in a congregation or expressing his or her spirituality?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Watching religious shows on television</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Praying</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Listening to religious music</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Meditating</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Celebrating religious holidays/festivals</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Reading the Bible or other sacred scriptures</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Having quiet time alone</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Creative activities</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Private devotions</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other: _____</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Dietary practices</i> | |

4. What is your understanding of the importance of faith or spirituality in his or her life?



5. Is there a particular faith tradition, religious practices, or forms of spiritual expression that you think are important to him or her?

6. Did your child/sibling attend when younger or in the past? yes no I don't know

7. What type of congregation? _____

▪ How Long? _____

8. What kinds of things does he or she do there? _____

9. How did he or she get there? _____

10. What type of help or support did he or she need to attend? _____

11. Is your child/sibling currently attending a congregation? Yes No I don't know

▪ Where?

▪ For how long? _____

12. What kinds of things does he or she do there? _____

13. How does he or she get there? _____

14. Does he or she seem to enjoy attending? _____

15. What type of help or support does he or she need to attend? _____

16. Is there anything else we should know about supporting this area of your child's/sibling's life?



Module 6: Gathering Input from Direct Support Staff

Direct care staff—especially residential staff—have a unique opportunity to get to know the people they serve well as they support them to participate everyday life activities. They can offer valuable insight into the importance of faith and spirituality to a person’s life, as well as the ways that they have been, currently are, or would like to be involved in a faith community (e.g., church, mosque, parish, synagogue, or temple).

In addition, they can be very helpful in looking for indicators of whether spirituality might be an important outcome for a person. Invite these staff members to share at planning meetings their perspectives on the types of congregational involvement the individual might want and the supports, services, and connections that would be needed to make it happen. The questions included on the attached questionnaire can be raised during a planning meeting, asked over the telephone, or returned by mail.



Questionnaire for Direct Support Staff:

We are committed to making sure that the individuals we serve are supported in participating in a congregation and expressing their spirituality in ways that are important to them. To help us better understand whether this area is a personal valued outcome—as well as whether and how they are interested in being part of a faith community—we are asking for input and insight from Direct Support Staff who might know them well.

Use this tool to speak with at least one if not more direct care staff who work with this individual and answer following questions to the best of your knowledge.

1. Is he or she currently attending a congregation? Yes No I don't know

▪ Where? _____

▪ For how long? _____

2. What kinds of things does he or she do there? _____

3. How does he or she get there? _____

4. Does he or she seem to enjoy attending? _____

5. What type of help or support does he or she need to attend? _____

6. Has he or she attended in the past? Yes No I don't know

7. What type of congregation? _____

▪ For how long? _____

8. What kinds of things does he or she do there? _____

9. How did he or she get there? _____



10. What type of help or support did he or she need to attend? _____

11. Why did he or she stop attending? _____

12. Have you or other staff had conversations with this individual about their interests and values in this area?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

13. Are there things that he or she does at home or elsewhere that suggest to you an interest in being involved in a congregation or expressing their spirituality?

<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Watching religious shows on television</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Listening to religious music</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Celebrating religious holidays/festivals</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Having quiet time alone</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Private devotions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Dietary practices</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Talking with others about spiritual issues</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Praying</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Meditating</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Reading the Bible or other sacred scriptures</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Creative activities</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other:</i> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other:</i> _____
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14. What is your understanding of the importance of faith or spirituality to his or her life?

15. Is there a particular faith tradition, religious practices, or forms of spiritual expression that you think are important to him or her?

16. Is there anything else we should know about planning for and supporting this dimension of the person's life?



Module 7: Developing a Spiritual Inclusion Plan

You now have gathered information from various sources concerning the spiritual aspects of this individual's life. What are your next steps?

Step I: Spiritual Exploration

1. Does the information gathered from family/friends/supports, indicate pursuing further exploration?
2. Does the spiritual assessment from the individual support further exploration?
3. Do the responses to questions put to Direct Support Professional staff support further exploration?

If you have answered **yes to any of these questions** move to next step. If you have answered **no to all of these questions** please provide your observations and explanation for no further exploration.



STEP II: Is Spirituality and Congregational Participation a Valued Outcome?

Finding out what a person wants for their lives—whether related to attending a congregation, expressing their spirituality, or any other aspect of life—comes through **asking thoughtful questions, careful listening, close watching, and lots of learning**. Although the primary voice that should be heard in good planning is that of the person with disabilities, it often is necessary to seek out information from a variety of sources. This is especially true when –

- a person’s own preferences and values are difficult to learn because of challenges related to speech, language, and communication; or
- a person has had limited involvement in their community in the past.

Identifying a person’s valued outcomes usually requires talking with others who may have different insights into a person’s life and know about his or her interests, preferences, values, and current involvement from different vantage points.

- Documents you might review
 - Previous Individualized Support Plans
 - Past assessments or evaluations
 - Enrollment information or individual history
 - Other service and support records
 - Residential records
 - Institutional records
- Observations of and interactions with the person with disabilities
 - Visiting congregations or other spiritual locations and events
 - Encouraging residential support staff to ask targeted questions or look for indicators of interest in faith and spirituality



Identifying Needed Activities, Supports, and Services

What kind of help will people need to achieve their valued outcomes in the area of spirituality and congregational involvement? What skills might a person learn? What supports would be helpful? What connections should be made? For every valued outcome identified by a person, a written plan must address the steps that will be taken to help them achieve those personal interests and aspirations.

Below are some examples of skills, supports, and connections that might be addressed as part of a meaningful support plan.

Examples of Skills That Might Be Addressed	Example Supports and Connections That Might be Offered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to call a friend from church • Arranging one’s own transportation to attend worship services, social events, or other congregational events • Mobility training to get to and from church using public transportation • Learning needed information a church membership class • Learning hygiene and grooming skills that match social expectations for their synagogue • Budgeting and money management skills to give financially to a congregation or other ministry • Social interaction skills to meet others at church or to serve as a greeter or usher • Learning to participate in routines and traditions common to their congregation • Functional communication training to decrease challenging behaviors • Traveling to social events through church • Training in appropriate social behavior • Basic reading skills to better understand the bulletin, congregation newsletter, scriptures, or other written information • Learning social behaviors that are expected at the congregation. • Learning skills that would enable them to volunteer in outreach ministries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing or arranging rides to and from church or other activities • Finding a companion or someone from the congregation the person can sit with • Identifying or coordinating a circle of support within a congregation • Developing a behavioral support plan that can be used to address worship time or other congregational activities • Arranging for counseling with pastoral staff • Help from a Spiritual Inclusion Partner to find and connect to a church • Help finding a new congregation • Assistance with visiting a congregation for the first time • Attending a community class, workshop, or talk about religion • Visiting with a pastor, clergy, priest, or other person to talk about spiritual interests • Visiting congregations in the area to find one that feels welcoming • Talking with someone at church about volunteering or helping during worship service • Developing an emergency plan for ____ (<i>getting to or from services when plans fall through; behavior interventions during services, etc.</i>)



Planning Services and Supports that Lead to Valued Outcomes

The planning process should identify the outcomes a person values and the services, supports, and activities that will be needed to achieve those valued outcomes. How can we put this plan into action? What might a support plan look like?

There are two basic choices: 1) to use an existing plan and amend it to include the services, supports, and activities that are needed specifically for spiritual inclusion, or 2) to create a separate plan that is not attached to any other service delivery plans.

- Weaving spiritual components into existing support plans

If a person is already receiving a fairly comprehensive set of services for which plans already exist, then the valued outcome and related plans around spirituality and faith could be included right into these plans:

- **Residential Habilitation Plan**

A person receiving residential habilitation services will already have staff involved in his or her life and a ready set of supports in place to which spiritual activities simply need to be added.

- **Day Habilitation Plan**

It may be that an individual only receives day services and the inclusion of faith-based valued outcomes in the day habilitation plan is the only avenue the person might have for being supported to achieve their spiritual inclusion goals. Or it may be that the level or type of their desired involvement requires that day services assist with personal skills that will enable him/or to be more successful in their spiritual inclusion efforts.

- Creating a separate, stand-alone support plan/tool

- **Spiritual Inclusion Plan**

An example of when it might be most appropriate to create a separate plan is when person lives at home with their family and as a result of the assessments that are completed, it is determined that members of the family will be providing most, if not all, of the supports. Another example might be when there are a variety of activities that the individual will be engaged in, and it helped to have all the information centralized in one place rather than scattered throughout other existing plans. It simply may be the individual's, family's, provider's, or service coordinator's preference. Finally, the format of the Plan provides a helpful structure for enhancing faith-based activities for individuals who are looking to maintain, change, or deepen their congregational connections.



Spiritual Inclusion Plan (Make copies)

Name: _____

Date ____/____/____

Plan Writer: _____

Desired Type of Involvement/Spiritual Expression

- Exploration Connecting Maintaining Changing or Deepening

Please briefly describe the valued outcome, goal, and or activities for this Spiritual Inclusion Plan

What types of exploration activities should be considered (if any)? *Exploration activities should be planned when a person would like to learn more about spirituality, religions, and specific practices and/or experience different types of spiritual activities to assist in making an informed decision about*

What spiritual direction and/or faith tradition they would like to select in the long term.



For each of the following congregational and other religious activities, indicate the desired level of involvement, need for support, and provider of support.

	<i>What involvement would he or she like? If none, indicate this.</i>	<i>What supports are needed to make this happen meaningfully?</i>	<i>How will these supports be provided? Who will take primary responsibility?</i>
Worship services			
Sunday/Sabbath school or other religious education programs			
Small groups or Bible studies			
Fellowship, recreational, and other social activities			
Opportunities to serve within the congregation			
Outreach, service, and ministry opportunities outside of the congregation			



	<i>What involvement would he or she like? If none, indicate this.</i>	<i>What supports are needed to make this happen meaningfully?</i>	<i>How will these supports be provided? Who will take primary responsibility?</i>
Other activities:			

Will transportation need to be arranged or provided? No Yes:

Back Up: _____

Will direct support from staff need to be provided? No Yes:

Back Up: _____

Will a behavior support plan need to be developed? No Yes:

Back Up: _____



Who has been a part of this conversation? (Name/Relationship)

Who else should be invited to be part of this conversation?

When will this plan be revisited to determine whether it is working or needs to be strengthened?

We will update this plan in ___ months. Due Date: _____

What future needs should be considered or might be anticipated when this plan is updated?

******A Faith Inclusion Guide accompanies the Spiritual Indicator Guide. This guide will assist you with spiritual exploration and/or participation for the individual who has just received an assessment.**

Resources and Bibliography

Spiritual Inclusion Handbook and Tool Kit; publication of the “Spirit Project”, “Connecting People thru Faith; Imagine the connections you will make”; a partnership between New York Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, The NYS Office Of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, The Central New York Developmental Disabilities Service Office, Consortium on Innovative Practices

Bradford Social Services/Bradford Community Health, N.H.S. Trust /Bradford Interfaith Education Centre (1999/2001) Spiritual Well Being: Policy and Practice

II. Photo acknowledgements

<i>Photo number</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Source</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>www.winonams.us/Catholic.htm</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>Synagogue</i>	<i>badgerherald.com/news/2008/05/08/Sinagogue_BC.jpg</i>
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<i>4</i>	<i>Temple</i>	<i>www.panoramio.com/photo/9133052</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>Rabbi with prayer shawl</i>	<i>www.judaic.com/tallit/tallit-images/</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>Muslim in prayer</i>	<i>www.japaninc.com/images/may2004/muslim</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>Woman meditating</i>	<i>www.msrc.co.uk/images/gallery/pics_med</i>
<i>8</i>	<i>Woman hands folded in prayer</i>	<i>www.healingtherapies.info/prayer_and_healing.htm</i>
<i>9</i>	<i>Choir</i>	<i>http://specialgathering.files.wordpress.com/2...</i>
<i>10</i>	<i>Musician playing piano</i>	<i>http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/3924000..</i>
<i>11</i>	<i>People playing hand bells</i>	<i>www.seatonandmarion.talktalk.net/Handb.</i>
<i>12</i>	<i>People dancing</i>	
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<i>14</i>	<i>Helping to serve</i>	<i>www.usd.edu/orgs/vetsclub/019_19_w.jpg</i>
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20	<i>Imam Warith Deen Muhammad, who formed the American Muslim Mission in 1980</i>	www.bangkokpost.com
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45	<i>Cinco De Mayo</i>	2.bp.blogspot.com/.../s320/cinco+de+maya.gif



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OPWDD Staff Acknowledgements:

Thank you to our dedicated staff members who participated in all of the processes it takes to make such an endeavor possible.

For More Information about the Faith Based initiative program:

OPWDD INTRANET Page:

<http://omrnet.omr.state.ny.us/entity.aspx?entityId=6436>

OPWDD Web site

http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/hp_communitylink_faithbased.jsp

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