Disability Concerns

User Guide

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Introduction

The Lausanne Global Classroom is designed to connect emerging evangelical leaders to key issues and ideas in global mission today. As these leaders grow into national, regional, and global influence, our hope is that they will be equipped and knowledgeable for the work of mission in their generation through this resource.

This Classroom episode is on Disability Concerns. It is done in partnership with the Disability Concerns network of the Lausanne Movement. The goal of the Disability Concerns network is ‘to encourage church and mission leaders to think not only of mission among those with a disability, but to recognize, affirm and facilitate the missional calling of believers with disabilities themselves as part of the Body of Christ’ (The Cape Town CommitmentII-B-4). Ministry among disabled persons is fundamentally ministry to people. People with disabilities are businessmen, professionals, and pastors; they struggle and need counsel and many are children at risk. People with disabilities need the gospel. Neglecting to evangelize these individuals means neglecting 1/7 of the global population. Therefore, the global church must be catalyzed to not only minister to, but also to equip, empower, and enable those with disabilities to fully engage in ministry and service to the Body of Christ. Current mission and church leadership must realize the reality that for the body of Christ to express itself fully in line with God’s design, the disabled must be involved as strategic ministry partners. This Global Classroom helps fulfill these goals, and seeks to inspire young leaders, established leaders, churches, organizations, and movements to understand the importance of disability concerns in all their ventures.

Global Classroom episodes are based on short videos in documentary format totaling about 35-45 minutes, designed to give a broad introduction to the subject of the episode. The short video sections may be viewed all at once, or section-by-section at the discretion of the group leader or instructor. The Video Introduction page in the User Guide may help you to determine which section is most appropriate for your use and/or where to stop the video to facilitate reflection and discussion.

Additionally, each episode has a User Guide, which builds on what is introduced in the video. The User Guide contains curriculum for four tracks: 1) small group settings, such as a ministry staff meeting or a mission-minded discussion group; 2) an academic unit as part of a course; 3) a semester-long academic course; and 4) an individual setting for those personally seeking missiological content that is current and globally representative. Sections of this User Guide are relevant to one of these four contexts indicated by the following icons:

- Small group
- Academic unit
- Academic course
- Individual

We hope you feel the freedom to use this resource in a way that makes sense for you and your group, class, or organization. We welcome any feedback you may have about this or future Classroom courses. Please send your feedback to the email address below.

Thank you for participating in Global Classroom: Disability Concerns.

Brent Burdick,
Director, Lausanne Global Classroom
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https://www.lausanne.org/lausanne-global-classroom/global-classroom
Episode Introduction and Outline

This video is designed to give you a broad introduction to the topic of the Disability Concerns. Much more can, and indeed should, be said about the Disability Concerns in mission.

The sections videos in the episode progress through the outline below:

Outline of Episode

1. Introduction
2. Define Disability. What is Meant by or Constitutes Disability?
3. Who are People with Disabilities? How Many? Where are They?
4. Biblical Foundations
5. Theology of Suffering and Disability
7. Disability and the Church
8. The Disabled in Ministry
9. Conclusion

Total time: 46 minutes, 38 seconds.
Small Group Facilitation Guide

Materials

Lausanne Global Classroom: Disability Concerns video episode

YouTube Playlist
Episode page with link to HD file downloads

The episode can be watched in its entirety or by section. Each section is titled with a graphic. Feel free to pause for discussion (potential questions provided below). Also, in some contexts, you may only desire to use 1 or 2 sections of the video and cover the remaining information another way. Feel free to make these resources work for you and your context.

Articles:

1. **What Does the Gospel Have to Say to Disabled Persons?** By Joni Eareckson Tada.  
   [https://www.lausanne.org/content/what-does-the-gospel-have-to-say-to-disabled-persons](https://www.lausanne.org/content/what-does-the-gospel-have-to-say-to-disabled-persons)

2. **Developing Young Leaders with Disabilities: A ministry beyond our wildest dreams?**,  
   Lausanne Global Analysis, January 2016. [https://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2016-01/developing-young-leaders-disabilities](https://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2016-01/developing-young-leaders-disabilities)

3. **God’s Story of Disability: The Unfolding Plan from Genesis to Revelation.** David C. Deuel.  
   Beyond Suffering NLT Bible, NavPress. 2016. Pages 1474 – 1477. Or PDF:  
   [https://store.joniandfriends.org/product/gods-story-disability-jcid-article/](https://store.joniandfriends.org/product/gods-story-disability-jcid-article/)

Leader Responsibilities Include:

- Tailor the use of these resources to the knowledge of your particular group. Is your group already familiar with disability concerns or will these concepts be new to the group?
- Determine the time frame and format to discuss disability concerns as applied to global mission for your group.
- Determine which questions best fit the reflection and discussion process for this particular group.
- Assign the activities listed below to members of the group. Decide on a timeline for presentation to the group for discussion of the results.
Discussion Questions for Small Groups—based on the video episode and articles:

A. Video Episode Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the definition of disabilities. How does this help you understand disabled people better?
2. Why are people with disabilities ‘hidden’ or hard to see? How can this be avoided? What role does the church have in addressing this?
3. How did God use people with disabilities in the Old Testament? How is this significant for you?
5. How is the image of God reflected in the disabled?
6. Discuss how theology of disability should be gospel-centered.
7. How is the reality of heaven reflected in the life of the disabled? The abled? What is the reason for the difference?
8. Review some of the cultural barriers that impact the disabled. How might these be addressed by the church?
9. How might your church be more accommodating to the disabled? What is keeping the church from reaching out to the disabled?
10. Where do you see people with disabilities in ministry? Discuss successes, roadblocks, and challenges for people with disabilities to be involved in ministry.
11. How might ministry with the disabled change them, and you?

B. Discussion Questions on Article 1, “What Does the Gospel have to Say to Disabled Persons”:

1. Discuss the fact that the disabled are often overlooked when it comes to evangelism. What might be some reasons for this?
2. Read Luke 14:12-14 as a group and discuss it. How do you interpret what Jesus is saying about the disabled and marginalized? How much do you agree or disagree with Joni Eareckson Tada’s interpretation of what Jesus says?
3. How do Christian leaders ignore the disabled? What might be done about this?
4. Discuss the role of prayer for healing of a disabled person. What biblical foundations support your view? Review and discuss Joni’s points regarding this.

C. Discussion Questions on Article 2, “Developing Young Leaders with Disabilities: A ministry beyond our wildest dreams?”:

1. How is engaging and equipping people with disabilities for ministry strategic?
2. Discuss the ten facts about disabilities presented in the chart by the World Health Organization. How do the realities behind these statistics impact you? What conditions in society exist to contribute to these realities?
3. How does the statement that we will all eventually be disabled (in our latter years) help sensitize you to the challenges of the disabled today?
4. Discuss gifts people with disabilities have that can benefit the body of Christ. Share an example from your experience.
5. What obstacles and misunderstandings are in the church that prevent the disabled from participating in ministry? How might you help remove those obstacles and open the door for the disabled in ministry?

D. Discussion Questions on Article 3, "God's Story of Disability: The Unfolding Plan from Genesis to Revelation":
   1. What does the author say is the cause of disability, and what is God's role in disability?
   2. How do you respond to the statement, "God's call includes disability"?
   3. How were people with disabilities included in the Old Testament story? Discuss why this is important.
   4. Reflect on Zephaniah 3:19. What does this verse say to the disabled? The abled?
   5. Discuss some of the wrong ideas and myths about people with disabilities that the article brings out. How does the New Testament address these ideas? How should believers respond?

Suggested Activities to Do in Your Community

1. Do a survey in your church or community to locate people with disabilities. Determine what needs are predominant. Plan an activity to encourage the disabled, such as a party, group craft, outing to the zoo, etc.
2. Walk around your community to see how accessible public buildings and homes are for the disabled. Share your findings with your pastor or local officials. Plan and execute a project to address a need you discovered.
3. Interview a person with disability who is in ministry. Find out what challenges they have, and what blessings there are for them as they serve the Lord with a disability. Share your findings with your group.
4. Show the Lausanne Global Classroom episode on Disability Concerns to people in your church or community. Have a discussion afterward using the video discussion questions above.
5. You may also review the assignments from the academic and individual sections below to choose from books to read and find additional activities to do.
Syllabus for an Academic Unit

Global Classroom: Disability Concerns

This syllabus can be used as a unit in a class on ministry, missions, global issues, etc. See our Syllabus for an Academic Course below for a full-semester length directed study course.

Purpose

To introduce disability concerns to students, helping them to understand that disabled people not only need ministry, but are able to do ministry as well. To help students realize that disabled people have gifts that can be used in the local church. To help students take persons with disabilities seriously, valuing their gifts as an important contribution to the life of the church and mission. To help students think creatively about needs and opportunities in ministry for ministry persons with disabilities.

Outcomes

After viewing the Lausanne Global Classroom episode on Disability Concerns and completing the accompanying readings, discussion, and assignments, students will be able to:

- Understand what constitutes disability.
- Develop a theological understanding of suffering and disability.
- Provide biblical examples of how God views disability.
- Understand how disabled persons can be both ministered to and be used to minister.
- Identify needs and opportunities for disabled persons in ministry, worship, and mission.
- Become aware that disabled persons have gifts that can be used in the local church.

Faculty Responsibilities Include:

- Determine what part or parts of the video best fit your course purposes.
- Determine the time frame to be used for implementing sections of the video or the whole video resource.
- Customize the use of these materials and assignments to best fit your purposes and course outcomes.
- Determine what other resources might be helpful for your students to learn about disability concerns in their ministry context.
- Determine how you will grade or score the assignments and activities you choose.
Unit Materials

Lausanne Global Classroom: Disability Concerns video episode

   YouTube Playlist
   Episode page with link to HD file downloads

The episode can be watched in its entirety or by section. Each section is titled with a graphic. Feel free to pause for discussion (questions provided below). Make these resources work for your context.

Articles:

2. What Does the Gospel Have to Say to Disabled Persons? By Joni Eareckson Tada. [https://www.lausanne.org/content/what-does-the-gospel-have-to-say-to-disabled-persons](https://www.lausanne.org/content/what-does-the-gospel-have-to-say-to-disabled-persons)
3. Developing Young Leaders with Disabilities: A Ministry Beyond Our Wildest Dreams?, Lausanne Global Analysis, January 2016. [https://www.lausanne.org/content/iga/2016-01/developing-young-leaders-disabilities](https://www.lausanne.org/content/iga/2016-01/developing-young-leaders-disabilities)

Suggested readings from the Bibliography (Appendix):


In-Class Discussion Questions based on the video episode and articles:

Note: Some of the discussion questions below may be used as essay questions for a test.

A. Video Episode Discussion Questions:

   1. Discuss the definition of disabilities. How does this help you understand disabled people better?
   2. Why are people with disabilities ‘hidden’ or hard to see? How can this be avoided? What role does the church have in addressing this?
   3. How did God use people with disabilities in the Old Testament? How is this significant for you?
5. Identify additional biblical examples of disability. How do these examples give guidance on how disability can be used in ministry, worship, and mission today?
6. How is the image of God reflected in disabled persons?
7. Discuss how theology of disability should be gospel-centered.
8. How is the reality of heaven reflected in the life of the disabled? The abled? What is the reason for the difference?
9. Review some of the cultural barriers that impact the disabled. How might these be addressed by the church?
10. How might your church be more accommodating to the disabled? What is keeping the church from reaching out to the disabled?
11. Where do you see people with disabilities in ministry? Discuss successes, roadblocks, and challenges for people with disabilities to be involved in ministry.
12. How might ministry with the disabled change them, and you?

B. Discussion or Essay Questions on Article 1, Lausanne Occasional Paper 35B.

1. Reflect on how other cultures view or treat people with disabilities. Compare this with the biblical view of disabilities. What difference does this make?
2. How do you respond theologically to the statement ‘No trial, no disease or illness, no accident or injury reaches us apart from God’s permission.’? Explain. What Scriptures shed light in this area?
3. Discuss the ‘benefits of affliction’ as noted in the article. Share an experience of personal pain that God used for good.
4. What hope of healing should disabled persons have? Discuss the points the article makes about healing.
5. What other suggestions for effective ministry to the disabled can you suggest in addition to the personal, church, and training models mentioned in the article?

C. Discussion or Essay Questions on Article 2 by Joni Eareckson Tada:

1. Discuss the fact that the disabled are often overlooked when it comes to evangelism. What might be some reasons for this?
2. Read Luke 14:12-14 as a group and discuss it. How do you interpret what Jesus is saying about the disabled and marginalized? How much do you agree or disagree with Joni Eareckson Tada’s interpretation of what Jesus says?
3. How do Christian leaders ignore the disabled? What might be done about this?
4. Discuss the role of prayer for healing of a disabled person. What biblical foundations support your view? Review and discuss Joni’s points regarding this.

D. Discussion or Essay Questions on Article 3 from the Lausanne Global Analysis:

1. How is engaging and equipping people with disabilities for ministry strategic?
2. Discuss the ten facts about disabilities presented in the chart by the World Health Organization? How do the realities behind these statistics impact you? What conditions in society exist to contribute to these realities?

3. How does Deuel’s statement that we will all eventually be disabled (in our latter years) help sensitize you to the challenges of the disabled today?

4. Discuss gifts people with disabilities have that can benefit the body of Christ. Share an example from your experience.

5. What obstacles and misunderstandings are in the church that prevent the disabled from participating in ministry? How might you help remove those obstacles and open the door for the disabled in ministry?

E. Discussion or Essay Questions on Article 4, “God’s Story of Disability: The Unfolding Plan from Genesis to Revelation”:

1. What does the author say is the cause of disability, and what is God’s role in disability?
2. How do you respond to the statement, “God’s call includes disability”?
3. How were people with disabilities included in the Old Testament story? Discuss why this is important.
4. Reflect on Zephaniah 3:19. What does this verse say to the disabled? The abled?
5. Discuss some of the wrong ideas and myths about people with disabilities that the article brings out. How does the New Testament address these ideas? How should believers respond?

Assignments

Choose from the assignments below.

1. Write an essay or essays answering selected discussion questions from above based on the video.

2. Write an essay or essays answering selected discussion questions from above based on the articles.

3. Select one of more of the activities that are listed in the Lausanne Occasional Paper on Disability to plan and carry out as an outreach or ministry to disabled people in your community or church.

4. Show the Lausanne Global Classroom episode on Disability Concerns to people in your church, school, or the community. The student should lead a discussion afterward using the video discussion questions above.

5. Write a five-page response paper on each of the three of the books suggested in the materials section above. In your paper(s), discuss how is each book significant for you and for a biblical and Christian understanding of disability. Outline how the book changes the way you think about disability, ministry, and culture. What will change in your life and ministry after reading this book?

6. Interview a person in ministry with a disability. If they are willing, sensitively ask them basic questions about their disability, i.e., how they got it; how long they have had it; how it impacts them, etc. Ask them how they process their disability spiritually, and how they minister despite their disability and because of it. Write a three-page descriptive reflection report.
Syllabus for an Academic Course

Global Classroom: Disability Concerns

This syllabus can be used for a semester-long directed study course on Disability Concerns. The student(s) should meet with the instructor for three to four one-hour sessions during the course to discuss the readings, assignments, and projects. See the Syllabus for an Academic Unit for a shorter unit-length version.

Purpose

To introduce disability concerns to students, helping them to understand that disabled people not only need ministry, but are able to do ministry as well. To help students realize that disabled people have gifts that can be used in the local church. To help students take persons with disabilities seriously, valuing their gifts as an important contribution to the life of the church and mission. To help students think creatively about needs and opportunities in ministry for ministry persons with disabilities.

Outcomes

After viewing the Lausanne Global Classroom episode on Disability Concerns and completing the accompanying readings, discussion, and assignments, students will be able to:

- Understand what constitutes disability.
- Develop a theological understanding of suffering and disability.
- Provide biblical examples of how God views disability.
- Understand how disabled persons can be both ministered to and be used to minister.
- Identify needs and opportunities for disabled persons in ministry, worship, and mission.
- Become aware that disabled persons have gifts that can be used in the local church.

Faculty Responsibilities Include:

- Determine what part or parts of the video best fit your course purposes.
- Determine the time frame to be used for implementing sections of the video or the whole video resource.
- Customize the use of these materials and assignments to best fit your purposes and course outcomes.
- Determine what other resources might be helpful for your students to learn about disability concerns in their ministry context.
- Determine how you will grade or score the assignments and activities you choose.
Course Materials

Lausanne Global Classroom: Disability Concerns episode

   YouTube Playlist
   Episode page with link to HD file downloads

Articles:

   https://www.lausanne.org/content/ministry-among-people-disabilities-lop-35b
2. What Does the Gospel Have to Say to Disabled Persons? By Joni Eareckson Tada. 
   https://www.lausanne.org/content/what-does-the-gospel-have-to-say-to-disabled-persons
3. Developing Young Leaders with Disabilities: A Ministry Beyond Our Wildest Dreams?, 
   Lausanne Global Analysis, January 2016. https://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2016-01/developing-young-leaders-disabilities
   Beyond Suffering NLT Bible, NavPress. 2016. Pages 1474 – 1477. Or PDF: 
   https://store.jonilandfriends.org/product/gods-story-disability-jcid-article/

Required Reading from the Bibliography (Appendix):


Assignments:

Choose from the assignments below.

1. Write a five-page integrative response paper to each of the books listed above. Do not summarize the contents, but reflect on how the book touches, inspires, challenges, or convicts you regarding people with disabilities. What do you agree with; not agree with, and why? How is your understanding of disability ministry challenged or changed? What biblical and theological reflections are noteworthy? Why is the book important, or not, to your understanding of people with disability and ministry to and through them? Explain.
2. Show the Lausanne Global Classroom video episode on Disability Concerns to a group in your church or school. Use the discussion questions in the Small Group guide above to engage the viewers in conversation about disability concerns. Write a three-page report outlining the responses of the group to disability concerns and how they plan to do things differently from now on.

3. Read the four articles listed above. Write a three-page essay for each of the articles:
   
a. LOP: Reflect on how other cultures view or treat people with disabilities. Compare this with the biblical view of disabilities. What difference does this make?
   b. Tada: Discuss the role of prayer for healing of a disabled person. What biblical foundations support your view? Review and discuss Joni’s points regarding this.
   c. Lausanne Global Analysis: What obstacles and misunderstandings are in the church that prevent the disabled from participating in ministry? How might you help remove those obstacles and open the door for the disabled in ministry?
   d. Deuel: Discuss the biblical understanding of disability and God’s role and purposes for it.

4. Write a ten-page research paper on the theology of disability and suffering. Summarize, integrate, and apply your research to your present or future ministry or life of faith.
Suggestions for Individual Study

Materials

Lausanne Global Classroom: Disability Concerns video episode

YouTube Playlist
Episode page with link to HD file downloads

Articles:


Suggested Reading:


Suggested Activities

1. After viewing the Lausanne Global Classroom video episode on Disability Concerns, journal your answers to the discussion questions in the Small Group guide above.
2. Journal your thoughts on each of the books in the suggested reading section above. What is God saying to you through these books? How will you respond? What is your key takeaway from reading them?
3. Show the Lausanne Global Classroom video episode on Disability Concerns to a group in your church or school. Use the discussion questions in the Small Group guide above to engage the viewers in conversation about disability concerns.
4. Plan an activity for disabled children or adults in your church or community. Or, volunteer for to serve on a day camp team for disabled youth.
Appendix

Suggested Bibliography of Resources on Disability Concerns

Books:


Articles:

Burd, Deborah A.; Barta, Dennis W. 2015. ‘No limits: answering God’s call to ministry when you have a disability’. Journal of the Christian Institute on Disability 4:75-97 Fall/Winter 2015.


Lee, Sophia. 2015. ‘Vital parts of the body: God created persons with cognitive disabilities for a reason, and special needs ministries are showing how much they can enrich a church’. World 30:36-41 Jan 24, 2015.

McNair, Jeff. 2016. ‘Disability Studies Applied to Disability Ministry’. Review & Expositor, 113 no 2 May 2016, p 159-166.


Internet Sources:

(A) International Christian organizations serving people with disabilities:


Joni and Friends International Disability Center. www.joniandfriends.org

(B) International secular organizations serving people with disabilities:


Mobility International, USA https://www.miusa.org/
World Institute on Disability. [https://wid.org/](https://wid.org/)