

Creating Inclusive Content: A Principle-Based Guide

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness is for all of His children. It is important for people to see themselves as part of this truth as we communicate it to the world. Often, that means presenting stories, perspectives, and environments different from our own. We want all people to feel respected and acknowledged. Church communications use language and images that recognize people’s differences in thoughtful, loving ways.

Best practices for creating inclusive content:

- ✔ Use “people-first” descriptions.
- ✔ Choose appropriate descriptors.
- ✔ Avoid elevating one person over another.
- ✔ Ask for input.

Use “people-first” descriptions.

People-first language acknowledges *who* someone is before describing *what* makes them unique. For example, we prioritize the *person* in the phrase “a boy with Down Syndrome” or “a woman with a wheelchair” instead of leading with the conditions (“a Down Syndrome boy” or “handicapped woman”).

Some individuals use a personal descriptor they identify with; for example, a Black woman or a Deaf man. Note that these descriptors refer to a community (the Black community or Deaf community), not a trait. Use person-first descriptions as a guiding principle; follow an individual’s personal preference for using a community identifier.



Example

“Again, educating ourselves about mental illness prepares us to help ourselves and others who might be struggling. Open and honest discussion with one another will help this important topic to receive the attention it deserves. After all, information precedes inspiration and revelation. These all-too-often invisible challenges can affect anyone, and when we are facing them, they appear insurmountable.”

Erich W. Kopischke, “[Addressing Mental Health](#),” October 2021 general conference.

Choose appropriate descriptors.

Be mindful of terms and phrases that have negative connotations or that may make someone feel excluded or diminished. Some descriptors that have been used in the past are no longer socially acceptable and have more inclusive substitutions.

Instead of	Consider
Normal	Typical
Mental retardation	Developmental or intellectual disability
Disabled, handicapped, or crippled	Person with disabilities
Hearing impaired	Hard of hearing
Autistic	Person with autism
Handicapped bus/bathroom/parking	Accessible bus/bathroom/parking
Mentally ill or insane	Person with a mental health condition
Homeless person	Person experiencing homelessness
Wheel-chair bound or confined to a wheelchair	Wheelchair user
Colored/black*/brown person	Person of color

**Example of a personal descriptor an individual may choose to use as a community identifier.*

Example

“While some of us have physical challenges, many more battle with emotional strife, others struggle to nurture social connections, and we all seek respite when our spirits are challenged. We are all afflicted in some manner.”

Reyna I. Aburto, “We Are The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” April 2022 general conference.

Avoid elevating one person over another.

While each of God's children has challenges, circumstances do not make an individual less loved, capable, or important. The language and examples we use in communications do not imply preference or suggest anyone is more deserving of praise, judgment, or service.

Represent God's children in many ways. Make efforts to include images, perspectives, and voices that feel inclusive. Consider diversity in race, gender, ability, body type, age, culture, and other ways that can help people feel a sense of belonging in Christ's Church.

Example

Portray a person with a wheelchair giving service instead of being the object of a charitable act.



Ask for input.

People don't intentionally create communications that make people feel left out or devalued. Because each of us sees the world from a single perspective, we may not be aware that content could be unintentionally hurtful or diminishing. Asking for input can help you identify a viewpoint you may not have thought about. The disability specialist in the Priesthood and Family department can offer insight and suggest subject matter experts who can help when developing content.

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