



Do people with intellectual disabilities automatically go to the celestial kingdom?

Jesus Christ ministered one by one to people who were “afflicted in any manner” (see 3 Nephi 17:9). Likewise, persons with intellectual disabilities should be regarded *individually*.

We know that children under eight years old have not reached the “years of accountability” (see Doctrine and Covenants 137:10; see also 68:25, 27) and therefore “need no ... baptism” and “are alive in Christ” (Moroni 8:11–12). Similarly, some people who have not developed language or intellectual skills to a sufficient level may not be accountable before the Lord. Families work with bishops to determine whether a person with intellectual disabilities should be baptized and receive other ordinances, considering the person’s own wishes, degree of understanding, and worthiness.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 210). This includes those with intellectual disabilities, who are here to gain their own experience and fulfill Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness for them. Like anyone else, they need to be taught the gospel and strive for personal growth in this life. Our job is to love and serve all of God’s children and help each other come closer to Christ. **NE**

More on Disabilities

For more information on people with disabilities in the Church, go to disability.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.