

# *At Ease*

## **WITH THE BLIND**



**Presented by**  
**Christian Record Services for the Blind**

# Christian Record Services for the Blind



and



## Mission Statement

*Christian Record Services provides free Christian publications and programs for people who are blind.*

# *At Ease* **WITH THE BLIND**

To be at ease with the blind and legally blind, we need both knowledge and experience.

The next few pages show how to interact with blind individuals. Combine this information with some experience and you will be ***at ease with the blind.***



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## **Becoming acquainted**

- When meeting a blind person for the first time, watch for an extended hand. Take hold of it and shake it, even though it may not be pointing directly at you. Be at ease; the blind person wants to be at ease with you.



## **Conversing**

- Talk directly to the blind person, rather than the accompanying person.
- Blind people may not be able to see you, but they can still listen and carry on a conversation. Use a normal speaking tone — many blind people can hear exceptionally well.
- It's all right to use words such as “look” and “see.”
- If you describe something to a blind person, try to paint a vivid word picture.



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## **Taking a walk**

- Always ask the blind person if they would like to take your arm. Never grab their arm.
- Whether a blind person has the assistance of a dog, a cane, or a sighted guide, most are taught to walk a little behind their means of assistance. This doesn't mean you need to walk any slower while you are assisting them. Walk at a speed that is comfortable for both of you.
- Be sure to pause slightly before ascending or descending stairs and curbs. Let them know if you will be going up or down stairs.
- Warn them of obvious obstructions such as low-hanging tree limbs, fences, or construction work.
- When squeezing through a narrow opening or around an obstruction, tell them so they can follow you with their hand still tucked in the crook of your arm. You may move your arm behind you slightly to signal the blind person to follow your lead.
- When you leave, be sure they know you are leaving. Always be polite and leave in a courteous manner.



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## **Crossing an intersection**

- When you see a blind person walking with a cane or with a guide dog, always give them the right-of-way.
- If they appear to be waiting to cross a street, make your presence known and ask if they need assistance. If they desire assistance, offer your arm.
- When you have reached the other side of the street, ask if they would like further assistance. If they don't, then leave in such a way that they know you are departing.



## **Walking with two blind persons**

Offer your assistance to both blind persons by extending both your right and left arms.

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## **Getting into a car**

- As you approach the car, tell the blind person whether they will be sitting in the front or back seat, or ask which they prefer.
- When you reach the car, place their hand on the top or side of the open door and let them seat themselves.
- Offer to help with the seat belt.
- Make sure they are sitting far enough away from the door that they will not be bumped when the door is closed.
- Upon arriving at your destination, carefully explain what the area will be like as they get out of the car.

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## **Visiting in your home**

- When a blind person visits your home, acquaint them with the position of furniture and where the rooms are.
- In the bathroom, explain where each item is, including towels and soap.

## **Seating and socializing**

- Place the blind person's hand on the back of the chair and allow them to seat themselves. It's helpful to explain the location of the chair in the room.
- Introduce others who may be present. If the occasion calls for sitting around a table, explain who is seated near them.
- If they aren't well acquainted with you, introduce yourself before conversing with them.



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## **Announcing the presence of others**

- Save your blind friend from embarrassment by introducing them to those in the room. If others come in after you, be sure to introduce them also.
- If a blind person is in the room, go up and introduce yourself. Make sure they know when you leave as well.
- If you haven't talked in a while, don't ask them to guess your name; tell them who you are.

## **Helping with money**

- Identify each denomination of bill you are working with. Blind people have their own system of identification once told what the bills are. Allow them to put their own money away as they wish.
- Coins are different sizes. There is no need to identify them.



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## **Dining**

- When you seat a person who is blind, tell them where the items are located on the table.
- Describe the various dishes of food and offer to help serve them.
- Tell them where each food is located on their plate, comparing the plate to a clock. For example, you could say, “the peas are at one o’clock”.
- If others are ordering seconds, ask if they would like anything more.
- When dining in a restaurant, read the menu to them and allow them to order their own food.



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## Participating in projects

Blind people like to participate and be part of the team. If you have a blind person on your committee, find something they can do to contribute. For example, they could phone each team member to remind them of the next meeting.



# Thank You!

# **Blind people face hidden barriers each day**

## **Inferiority**

Blind people are not inferior just because they have limited abilities. Give blind people the benefit of the doubt concerning their abilities.

## **Pity**

Blind people don't want you to feel sorry for them. What they are looking for is a chance to be independent.

## **Hero worship**

Some people treat the blind with special attention which they don't want. The blind don't desire a lot of attention. They want to lead a normal life.

## **Fear**

Many people are afraid they will do or say the "wrong" thing around a blind person. Because of this fear, they simply avoid the individual. Meeting and becoming friends with someone who is blind will enrich your life.

## **Stereotypes**

Many people believe blind individuals have a keener sense of smell and hearing. Others assume the blind can't speak for themselves or are also deaf and must be spoken to in a loud or overly distinct voice. Use a normal tone of voice when addressing blind people.





*The blind, who comprise nearly 1.5 million in the United States alone, desire nothing more than your compassion—understanding combined with knowledge. They are not looking for pity.*

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Christian Record Services for the Blind (CRSB) is helping the blind and legally blind in your community.

### **Camps for the blind**

Each year hundreds of blind people attend CRSB-sponsored camps spanning the United States (National Camps for the Blind).

### **Lending library and education**

Over 2,000 audio titles are available free to patrons throughout the United States. Braille, large-print, and audio magazines are also available.

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To learn more about blindness and the free services CRSB offers to those with visual disabilities, please contact us.



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