

***Worship: Leading & Preaching* | Overcoming challenges on the journey**

Rachael's Story

Hi, my name is Rachael, I am a Local Preacher in training and I have been on *Worship: Leading & Preaching* since it started about two years ago. My impairments that affect my preaching are I can't read small print and can't write and I am a wheelchair user. My local circuit have been very supportive and understanding with the practical side and they understand my need to pace stuff and I do things like sit on a stool so people can see me and I've got a music stand that I put my notes on. What I have noticed is that churches are more accessible to get into but they are not really designed for people to lead at the front – there are so many steps. So a few times now I have had to ask the steward to put a table at the front with a table cloth on so when it's the Offering I put it on the table so I don't have to go and put it on the communion table at the back.

The extra facilities that I found useful on the *Worship: Leading & Preaching* website - well for me the biggest is that it is online, that I can use it on my computer and I can also put it on my phone. I cannot get the Module Reader on my phone but I can get everything else, so I can read it whenever. I also like how I can change the font size on screen. At college I get a scribe¹ and a reader but it is just not available for this course so it means I have to rely on technology more which is quite harder to use. There is a screen reader on the website but I prefer to use my own. According to my computer the founder of Methodism is John 'Weasley' and that massively assumes me!

¹ See also pages 28 & 29 of the 'Additional Needs Guide'

The tips I give to someone who is starting the course with an impairment is be prepared, be organized, plan ahead. When you are going to a Church have a think about what you need to ask them to get ready, what worked for you previously, and also I would say do not be intimidated. There are some people in my group who really seem to find it so easy, but God can call anyone to preach, don't worry.

What I would like to see is people being asked when they start the course how they can be best enabled to become a Local Preacher and how to fulfill their calling – for everyone not just a disabled person, but I think that will be useful for everyone.

What I have most enjoyed are the discussions so far because my group is really diverse, we have got so many people and we have got so many different ways of looking at things, so we get some really interesting discussions and I have really enjoyed that.