

# LSS Sermon Starter Story

*March 15, 2026*

*You are welcome to use the following “sermon starter” content in your own sermon. Feel free to use content verbatim or edit as you see fit to adapt to your own voice and context. Names have been changed to respect client privacy.*

## **Readings** (Revised Common Lectionary)

- 1 Samuel 16:1-13
- Psalm 23
- Ephesians 5:8-14
- John 9:1-41 – *A man born blind receives sight*

At the core of this rich, multilayered story is a simple truth: Jesus has deep compassion for people who are pushed to the margins of society.

The story begins with a teaching moment after the disciples make a hurtful assumption about a man who had been blind since birth. They judge this man because he has a physical limitation. They assume his blindness has been caused by sin.

Jesus corrects them: Neither this man nor his parents sinned.

Jesus teaches the disciples to see differently. Instead of focusing on this man’s disability, Jesus sees a person who has a special gift. This man will help others to see how God is at work in the world.

I want to share a story with you today from Lutheran Social Services, which is often simply called LSS.

All across Wisconsin and upper Michigan, LSS works with families, couples, children, and individuals who are facing mental health challenges, recovering from abuse or loss of a parent, struggling with addiction, dealing with housing insecurity and financial hardship, or living with disabilities. In fact, by supporting Lutheran Social Services, you make a difference in the lives of 30,000 people every year.

The systems that are supposed to help us, systems like health care, long-term care, transportation, and housing are complicated on a good day. Now imagine trying to navigate all that while raising a child with a significant disability. LSS has a critical role at the intersection of personal need and public systems. LSS is there to walk alongside people, helping them understand complicated programs, paperwork, and policies, until what feels

like a maze starts to look like a map. Supporting this ministry is one of the ways we bear one another's burdens and look out for our neighbors in need.

Through a program called Children's Long-Term Support, Lutheran Social Services employs Care Coordinators who help children with disabilities access specialized support and services that allow them to thrive. The program helps children with substantial limitations in their daily activities get the support they need to remain in their home and community.

One of those children is Ben. Ben's mom was so enthusiastic to share this story with you.

"We are so grateful that this program exists in Wisconsin, and that we get to be part of it," she wrote in an email to LSS. "This program has helped my smart, funny, stubborn, ever-curious and ever-exhausted son Ben."

Ben was diagnosed with ASD and ADHD (Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder) shortly before starting kindergarten. He had an amazing talent for memorization, but he struggled socially and with some physical skills.

Take swimming lessons, for example. Group lessons just weren't clicking for Ben. Year after year, he struggled to pass out of the basic levels. On family waterpark trips, he watched glumly his younger cousins earn the special wristbands that allowed them to play in the deep end while Ben was stuck with the toddlers in the shallow water. And later, when Ben joined Boy Scouts, he learned that he couldn't go to Scout camp unless he took a swimming test.

Around this time, Ben's family learned about Lutheran Social Services from a school counselor. They applied to the Children's Long-Term Support program and were accepted, and this support has been transformational for Ben and his family.

Ben's adaptive swimming lessons were just the start. Right away, Ben's Care Coordinator connected him with a swimming instructor who was able to work with Ben one on one, slowly building his confidence. Ben found that treading water was actually pretty easy for him, and soon enough, he was swimming the backstroke and the front crawl as well. When the day of the Scouts swim test arrived, his swim teacher told him not to worry—he was ready. And she was right! He was out of breath and exhausted by the end ... but he had done it! He entered Scout camp that summer with the full "swimmer" classification, and he was able to take the water safety course in the lake with everyone else.

In addition to connecting kids like Ben with specialized supports that help them thrive, LSS Care Coordinators help to relieve the financial burdens families face in accessing special needs services. Ben's Care Coordinator helped his family fill out daunting paperwork and file the application to enroll Ben in supplemental Medicaid. Until then, therapies and

medications for Ben were costing the family thousands of dollars a year. When Ben's Forward card arrived, the family's medical expenses for Ben basically vanished. They can make care decisions based on what's best for Ben, without weighing and worrying about the costs.

Ben's mom explained the impact this has made for their family:

"We still had plenty of challenges to deal with, but that particular burden was simply lifted away. What a relief to know ... that someone cared enough to put this program in place to help. The many forms of support make life easier for families like ours as we face the ongoing challenges, intense effort, and occasional heartbreak of raising kids on the spectrum, as they learn to navigate a neurotypical world where almost nothing seems designed for them...We want to say thank you for everything you have done to help our family."

Your generous support for LSS ensures that all across Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, children with disabilities are able to get the support they need to thrive—at home and at school, in our churches and in our communities. Your support helps these kids reveal their special gifts.

Jesus teaches us a different way of seeing. When we see as Jesus sees, we do not allow our vision to be limited by labels and categories like "a child with a disability". We can see a neighbor who belongs among us. We can marvel at the good work God has begun in this sister or brother. When we see as Jesus sees, we see a child of God.

**Additional resources:**

- More information about the LSS Children's Long-Term Support program is available at <https://www.lsswis.org/services/children-and-families/clts/>
- PowerPoint slides to accompany this story can be found at <http://www.lsswis.org/toolkit>