

RESOURCE GUIDE:

Using a Social Story for Night to Shine

What is a Social Story?

A social story, or social narrative, is a tool designed to help individuals with disabilities understand and prepare for specific events or social situations. Social stories use clear, simple language and pictures or symbols to provide context for the event/situation. Social stories can outline what to expect, explain social cues, and describe appropriate responses or behaviors.

How Can a Social Story Support Night to Shine Participants?

- **Reduces Anxiety:** Social stories help participants feel more confident and prepared by giving them a clear idea of what to expect at Night to Shine.
- **Increases Understanding:** By breaking down the event into manageable steps, a social story can help participants understand what the event is and what it will be like.
- **Builds Familiarity:** Real photos and symbols in the social story make the event more familiar and less overwhelming.
- **Encourages Positive Experiences:** The social story paints a picture of an enjoyable experience that participants can look forward to attending.

Tips for Using the Night to Shine Social Story

1. **Share in Advance:** Send the social story to participants/parents/guardians before the event. This allows participants to review the social story multiple times and become familiar with the event details. **A sample e-mail has been included in this guide.**
2. **Families Use During Preparation:** Encourage families/guardians to read the social story with participants at home. They can:
 - Print a copy to read together.
 - Read a digital copy of the social story together on a phone, tablet, or computer.

3. **Revisit the Story Frequently:** Suggest reviewing the story daily in the week leading up to the event to reinforce understanding.
4. **Encourage Questions:** Guardians can use the social story as a conversation starter to address any questions or concerns participants might have about the event.

Interested in additional social stories to support individuals with disabilities at church services or special events?

Check out Awe & Wonder's resources at: www.specialneedsministryresources.com



SAMPLE E-MAIL

Sample Email to Guardians- PERSONALIZED

Subject: Prepare for Night to Shine with a Social Story

Dear [Guardian's Name],

We are so excited that [Participant's Name] has registered for this year's Night to Shine! We are so excited to host them for an unforgettable evening.

To help [Participant's Name] feel prepared, we have provided a social story that outlines the key activities that will happen during Night to Shine.

You can access the social story here: [Insert Link to Social Story or direct to attachment on the email]

How to Use the Social Story:

- Print a copy of the story or access it digitally on a device/computer.
- Read the story together with [Participant's Name] at home.
- Encourage [Participant's Name] to ask questions or share their thoughts about the event.

We recommend revisiting the story several times in the days leading up to Night to Shine to ensure [Participant's Name] feels confident and ready for the big night!

If you have any questions or need additional support, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at [Contact Information].

We can't wait to see [Participant's Name] at Night to Shine!

[Your Name]

[Your Role]

[Organization Name]

[Contact Information]

SAMPLE E-MAIL

Sample Email to Guardians- GENERALIZED

Subject: Prepare for Night to Shine with a Social Story

Dear Families,

We are so excited that your loved one will be joining us for this year's Night to Shine! It's going to be an unforgettable evening, and we can't wait to celebrate with everyone.

To help participants feel prepared, we've provided a social story that outlines the key activities they'll experience during Night to Shine.

You can access the social story here: [Insert Link to Social Story or direct to attachment in the email]

How to Use the Social Story:

- Print a copy of the story or access it digitally on a device/computer.
- Read the story together at home.
- Encourage your loved one to ask questions or share their thoughts about the event.

We recommend revisiting the story several times in the days leading up to Night to Shine to help your loved one feel confident and ready for the big night!

If you have any questions or need additional support, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at [Contact Information].

We can't wait to see everyone at Night to Shine!

[Your Name]

[Your Role]

[Organization Name]

[Contact Information]