

## Success Stories: Stroke Smart Faith Based Organizations



Faith based organizations, i.e., churches, temples, mosques, etc. can save lives by becoming Stroke Smart when their members are educated about the signs and symptoms of a stroke and when they know to call 9-1-1 without hesitation when they do spot a stroke.

Norfolk's Second Calvary Baptist Church became the FIRST Stroke Smart church in Virginia to adopt the Stroke Smart Virginia program. Their leadership distributed Stroke Smart memory aids to the congregation with the Stroke Smart training (pictures below) and created this [Stroke Smart presentation video](#) to showcase the event. While not every faith-based group will have the resources to put together such a fantastic video, a simple talk accompanied by the memory aid distribution is more than enough!

St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Rhode Island became the first Stroke Smart Church in the country, launching its educational outreach efforts with a [pronouncement video](#) of its intentions that included the simple Stroke Smart education.

**Action items for those wishing to make their faith-based organization Stroke Smart may be found by downloading our [Faith Based Tools handout](#).**



GOAL – The FBO saves lives by increasing stroke awareness and among their entire congregation.

### **Action Items**

To an audience of ministry leaders,

- Define/explain a stroke
- Teach 2 tests/5 signs
- Emphasize need to call 911 immediately
- Emphasize that death and disability can largely be avoided by getting the stroke patient to definitive treatment in a short time window
- Explain that ministry leaders and volunteers can incorporate this knowledge and training into their existing activities:
  - Teaching meal ministry recipients the tests and signs when dropping off food.
  - Teaching home bound parishioners the tests and signs when visiting.
  - Teaching students (adults and children) during catechesis classes.
- Provide posters, magnets, and wallet cards for display and distribution
- Ask for suggestions from audience about other ways to disseminate this knowledge throughout the congregation
- Ask each ministry leader to become a SS champion, teaching their group members this material
- Encourage recruitment of a steward to celebrate Stroke Awareness month every May

# Making Your Place of Worship Stroke Smart!

[THIS SHEET WOULD BE LEFT BEHIND AFTER PRESENTATION]

- 1) Display the Stroke Smart poster in your vestibule and activity centers/classrooms
- 2) Incorporate 2-minute Stroke Smart education into ministry activities (during food drop off, home bound visits, catechesis sessions, for example) using the following talking points:
  - a. Strokes are a medical emergency that can kill and disable you.
  - b. There are treatments to stop strokes IF they are accessed in time (within one hour is best).
  - c. There are five basic Symptoms and two simple tests for strokes.

## **Five Symptoms:**

- 1) Slurred speech, 2) Weakness/numbness on one side of the body, 3) Loss of balance, 4) Vision loss, 5) Sudden, severe headache

## **Two Tests:**

- 1) Ask the person to smile— facial drooping is a sign of stroke, and
- 2) ask the person to raise their arms— arm drift downward is a sign of stroke.

## **Call 911 if you suspect a stroke!**

- 3) Offer magnets and wallet cards during this training.
- 4) Ask each ministry member to become a Stroke Smart champion, teaching their community this material.