

**Ability Guidebooks
presents
Explore Helsinki!**



I Am Going To Helsinki Cathedral!
A Step-by-Step Guide On How To Visit The Famous Church.
by
Brett Bigham

The Helsinki Cathedral is a famous church next to Senate Square. People come from all over the world to see this beautiful neoclassical building.



Sometimes the Cathedral has scaffolding next to it for workers to stand on. Do not go by the scaffolding. That is for workers only.

The steps going up to the Cathedral are very steep. Be very careful on the steps. On a sunny day many people like to sit on the steps in the sunshine.



This is a good place to stop and rest.

You can look down on Senate Square from the steps. This is the oldest part of Helsinki.



You can't see it in this picture but the Government Palace is to the left, Sederholm House is across the square and the University of Finland is on the right. Sederholm House is the oldest building in central Helsinki!

This is the door at the top of the stairs. This is the door we are going to enter.



This man knows the rules about visiting the church. The first rule is you cannot run. We can only walk in the cathedral.

These people are all visiting the Cathedral. People like to visit this church.



Remember that we have to walk inside the Cathedral. I wonder if there are other rules.

Look! There is a sign right inside the door! What does it say?



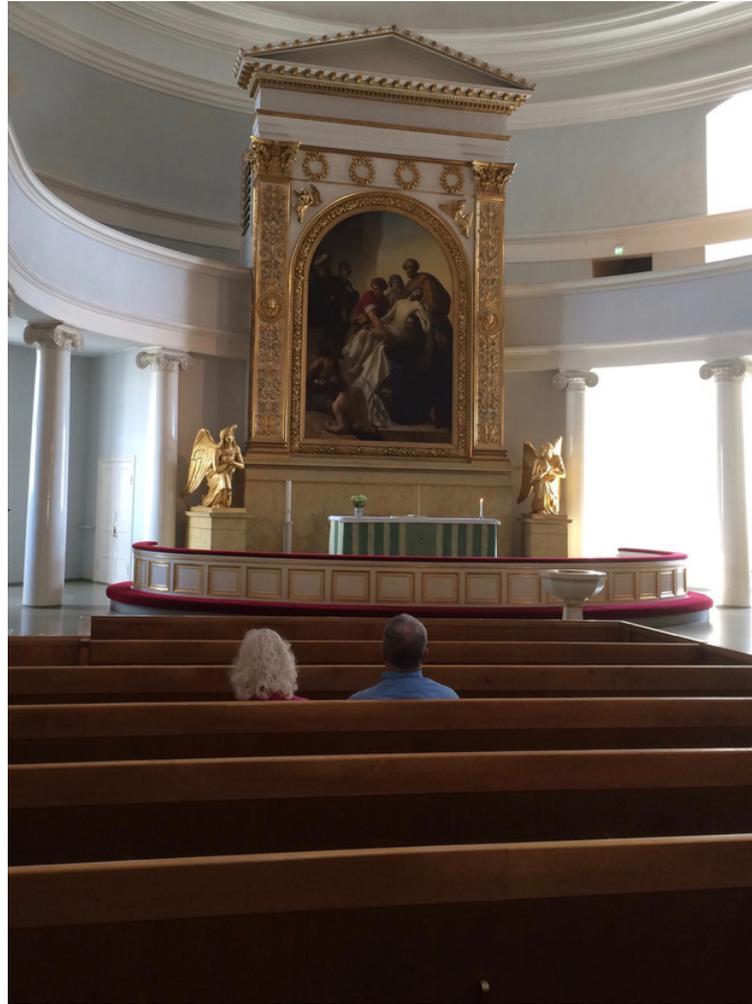
"Silence, Please!" The Cathedral is a very serious place and they want you to be as quiet as possible.

This is the inside of Helsinki Cathedral. These people all are being as quiet as possible.



Take time to look up at the ceiling and the beautiful chandeliers!

These people sat down so they could rest and look around the church. It is OK for you to sit in the pews at Helsinki Cathedral.



This is the altar painted by Carl Timoleon von Neff. Take a moment to sit and enjoy the painting.

There is a desk where you can ask questions about the church. You can also buy a postcard of the Cathedral. Shhhhh...remember to whisper!



Have a wonderful visit to the Helsinki Cathedral. I know you will have a good time.

Tips For Visiting Helsinki Cathedral and Senate Square

Senate Square is the center of old Helsinki. The street along the Cathedral is very steep. For easiest wheelchair access I would approach the Cathedral from the side opposite of Senate Square. There are cobblestone areas and stone sidewalks. These have gaps and spaces but overall are accessible if you have someone to help push on occasion.

If your student has difficulty in the community you might consider breaking this outing up into segments. Instead of visiting Helsinki Cathedral on the first visit, your first goal might be seeing the statue of Alexander II in Senate Square. The second outing might be climbing or sitting on the stairs for a snack. The final trip might include the Cathedral now that the student has shown they can successfully visit the area.

Visiting the Helsinki Cathedral is free. Check their website for information and hours of operation. The Cathedral is officially the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran cathedral and still a house of worship. The church is closed to tourists during services.

Ability Guidebooks are step-by-step instructions on how to access community destinations. For many people with autism and neuro-diversity, new situations can cause stress and discomfort. Ability Guidebooks help prepare people for new experiences. This is why I emphasize the places to sit and areas to relax.

This book will also help general ed teachers prepare their young students for a visit to the Cathedral.



Can You Translate?

If you can translate this book into Finnish or any other language I would love to hear from you!

Brett Bigham is the 2014 Oregon State Teacher of the Year and an NEA National Award for Teaching Excellence winner. Bigham is the first Oregon Special Education teacher to win these awards.

Bigham was named a Global Fellow by the NEA Foundation and traveled to Peru as an ambassador of that program. This allowed Bigham to create his first international Ability Guidebook for the Museo de Inka in Cusco, Peru. He has since made books for Greece, Italy, Croatia, Montenegro, Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Montenegro.

Text and Photos by Brett Bigham unless otherwise noted.

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