



A LIFE OF BEING A DISCIPLE LESSON 2 – TALENTS FOR OTHERS (LEADER GUIDE)

Opening Prayer

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Spiritual Gifts Draft: In Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4, God gives us a listing of spiritual gifts. Below is a sample listing of 12 of the more common gifts given to the members of Christ's Church.

Let's imagine for a moment that God is going to let you pick the gifts you can select for the members of your church. Of the 12, you get to select 6. With a partner, discuss the following:

- **Knowledge** – Able to understand deep biblical truth.
- **Wisdom** – Able to apply knowledge. (e.g., counselors)
- **Faith** – Incredible confidence in God's promises. (e.g., motivators)
- **Teaching** – Able to explain and apply God's Word in an understandable way.
- **Evangelism** – Eager and able to explain God's truth to those not yet part of the body of Christ.
- **Service** – Providing behind the scenes support.
- **Encouragement** – Has the exceptional gift to uplift and reassure.
- **Contributing** – "Extra" generous individuals.
- **Leadership** – Guiding and inspiring others to follow in a single direction.
- **Showing mercy** – Seeing those who need help and giving that help.
- **Administration** – The big picture person who can organize and delegate to get things done.
- **Pastor/Teacher** – Person who has been called to shepherd a group of Christians (Ephesians 4:12-13)

What are the 6 gifts you would select for your church?

Answers will vary.

Describe the characteristics of “your church” with concrete examples (the blessings as well as what your church lacks):

Likely, many will pick the gifts that directly pertain to the proclamation of the gospel, and that’s a good thing! However, without the other gifts the church might be a very cold/harsh place to be! The goal of this exercise is to illustrate the heading on the next page—“We need each other!” God designed us that way and we work best together when we complement and compliment one another.

God-willing, this exercise led you to see...

WE NEED EACH OTHER!

1. Each of you has been given spiritual gifts. Why are the underlined truths important to keep in mind as we use those gifts?
 - “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” (1 Corinthians 12:7)
 - “For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” (Romans 12:4-5)

Every person has been given gifts—find yours! In “Little League,” you don’t sign your child up for a particular position (otherwise you’d have an entire team of pitchers). No, the coaches try players at many different positions to determine their best fit. We all have gifts—find it by experimentation.

Our gifts are never to be used selfishly or for our own glory. Our gifts are designed to complement others. “I have no gifts” is false humility. On the other hand, by nature, we may think our set of gifts is better than someone else’s—that’s not true! Everyone’s gift is important to help the body function.

We are soloists by nature. We must learn the art of playing in God’s orchestra.

2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. Paul compares the church to a body. List at least 4 points Paul is trying to make with this comparison.
 - *There is nothing I want to sacrifice (e.g., pinky toenail unimportant? Rip it off and then answer!)*
 - *We have different gifts (e.g., if we were all eyes, we’d be a monster!)*
 - *The whole body suffers when we don’t work together and use gifts.*
 - *There is no need for jealousy. Since we’re part of the same body, your gift is actually mine as well!*
 - *Not every gift is glamorous. Do you think you’re the appendix of the body? You have a purpose, and it will be revealed in time!*
 - *We are equipped and directed by our head, Christ.*
 - With Paul’s points in mind, what are the dangers for our congregation?
Many possible answers. That we overlook people with gifts, look down on others’ gifts, get jealous of others, don’t support others in the use of their gifts, etc.
 - What are the blessings for our congregation when we realize that we are one body (i.e. the body of Christ)?
Many possible answers. Unity; less stress because no one feels the need to “prove” themselves; when one falls down, they won’t be ostracized but rather they will be built up; etc.

3. As we use our God given gifts to serve our neighbors in our lives, in what ways to these passages shape our attitudes?

Luther said, "The flesh always seeks to be glorified before its crucified; exalted before its abased." Like wanting to hear what they'd say at your funeral without going through the pain of dying! This is the way the world works. Your goal in using your gifts for others is to show how different you are from the world. Look to Jesus for forgiveness as he actively lived this way for you as well as an example.

How good of a day would it be if we were only concerned with how we could serve our neighbor? Maybe you've heard this, but we live in the land of "er." We want to be strong"er", pretti"er", smarter"er", etc. Instead, look to Jesus (refer to his active and passive obedience in the verses that follow) for forgiveness and then as an example. Whenever you walk into a room, remember, everyone here is better than you. And it's true. I don't know their sins as well as I do mine. It will help you serve them! It's one of the astounding things about Jesus—he did this even though he WAS better than everyone else. Remember that humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.

"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:25-28)

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:3-5)

GROUP ACTIVITY

- As a group, discuss your spiritual gifts. Each person needs to identify at least one gift in themselves and one gift in one of their tablemates. Come up with at least one way those gifts could be used to serve others, either in the church or in the community. These may be things that are already happening!

My spiritual gift:

How I could use that gift:

- Many times, congregations lament that there are not enough volunteers for the ministry opportunities before them. The reasons are many and varied: "I don't have time . . . scared of the unknown . . . had a bad experience in the past . . . don't have the skills . . . let the younger members chip in . . . don't want to serve until Jesus comes again!" Take 4 minutes at your table and brainstorm things that your church could consider doing to help recruit and retain volunteers.

Answers will vary.

Discussion leader – Appoint a recorder to take down the ideas. Ideas may include: Shadow day, ministry fair, making use of growth groups or confirmands, thinking tasks and not positions at first, assimilation workshop, spiritual gifts analysis/time and talents survey, personal invitation, time limits on service, staffing "burnout" positions, reminding of vision/mission constantly, creating

multiple teams for tasks, creating a good experience for volunteers, detailed job descriptions, volunteer coordinator, service celebration, etc.

- On the bottom half of this sheet of paper, take a minute and write down suggestions to your pastor(s) as to how your spiritual gift(s) could be used to serve others. Again, this area of service may be inside or outside of church. Perhaps, you are simply recording what you discussed in the first discussion question. Are your gifts not being used or do you think they could be used in a different way?

CLOSING ACTIVITY

Haiku!

Haiku are 3-line poems with the syllable structure of 5-7-5.

Take 3 minutes to write a Haiku illustrating truths about using our gifts to serve others.

Here's one:

Gifts used for the LORD

Abilities you're given

To God be glory.