



Gifts Discernment for Youth

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FIRST AND SECOND LESSONS – INTRODUCTION

STUDENTS SHOULD BE SEATED IN GROUPS OF 5-6 (5 TABLES). BE SURE TO USE NAMETAGS, SO YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ADDRESS STUDENTS BY NAME. THIS IS IMPORTANT! ALSO, BE SURE THERE ARE BIBLES ON EACH TABLE.

Introduction: **INTRODUCE YOURSELF FIRST.** As you probably know, some of us from Holy Souls Church have been teaching a course called “Discovering God’s Vision for Your Life” to adults. The purpose is to help people discover, develop, and use their spiritual gifts in service to the church, their families, their jobs, and their relationships. Your teacher wanted you to know something about this as well, especially since you will be doing community service. It will help you to know how God has fashioned you to help in His work. And we have all been fashioned by God for some purpose – we may not know it, but you can believe that God is working his plan through us.

I believe that all Christians want to do God’s will. But many of us have a hard time understanding what his particular will for us might be. Even older people have a problem with this. By understanding what the spiritual gifts are, we can better understand what he wants us to do. We can know his purpose for our lives, and better serve him in our life, our work, and our personal ministry.

Suppose you and two of your friends take a job as construction workers during the summer. One of you is given a paint brush, one a hammer, and the other a saw. Does this give you any idea of what your job will be? Because of the tools you are given, it becomes very clear who is supposed to cut, to nail, and to paint.

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The spiritual gifts God has given every one of us are the tools we are to use in 'building up the body of Christ.' Does anyone know what that means? Do you remember the prayer of St. Theresa of Avila we have been saying in church? (READ IT.)

Remember that these "gifts" are not talents or abilities, but are innate within you. They may grow and develop, or decay from misuse, but you always have them.

I have some scripture readings for you.

WRITE THE FOLLOWING REFERENCES ON OVERHEAD OR FLIP CHART. GIVE EACH GROUP ONE OF THE REFERENCES TO LOOK UP AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS. LIMIT THEM TO 10 MINUTES TO DO THE TASK. USE OVERHEAD FOR THE QUESTIONS.

Romans 12:3-8 1 Peter 4:8-11 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 1 Corinthians 12:27-30
Ephesians 4:11-16.

I want you to write down the answers to these questions, whichever apply:

1. Where do the gifts come from?
2. What are their purpose?
3. What are the gifts?
4. How are we supposed to use them?
5. Which gifts are the most important?
6. Who receives the gifts?

You only have 10 minutes to find the answers and write them down, so work quickly.



AT THE END OF THE TIME, STOP THEM AND ASK EACH GROUP FOR THEIR ANSWERS. RECORD THE ANSWERS ON FLIP CHART OR BLANK TRANSPARENCY.
SUGGEST THAT THEY TAKE NOTES AS WELL. – 7-8 MINUTES.

Notice that no one particular gift is better than the others, and that all are needed to build up “the body of Christ” – What does this phrase mean? It would be helpful for you to know your own particular gifts, but also those of others in your class so that you can encourage them to grow in those gifts and to use them in service to others. Right?

OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCY OF THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE GIFTS.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE EMPOWERING GIFTS WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO EMPOWER GOD’S PEOPLE TO ACCOMPLISH GOD’S WORK. (use overhead 2G)

LOOK AT THE LIST OF GIFTS. Some of these are pretty spectacular, and are meant to show the power of the Holy Spirit in our midst, such as tongues and miracles, We won’t deal with these in our lessons, since they don’t really relate to any of our ministries in our church as we know them. However, Paul says that ALL THE GIFTS ARE EQUAL – none are better than any others. So there is a place and a time for these gifts as well.

Are there other gifts not mentioned here? Probably – God can’t be limited. But these are the ones mentioned by Paul. We won’t have time to consider all the gifts, though, because some of the gifts require years of experience to develop. The ones I check will be the ones we will work with during this two weeks.

Now, I want you to take this little self-examination to see which of these gifts you already think you have. You should already have some idea. Remember, you can have more than one. Do this for homework and bring back to me tomorrow. Later on, we’ll see how your answers changed! Sign and date it. From here on out we’ll take each gift separately to learn about them.

PASS OUT QUESTIONNAIRE. END WITH A BRIEF PRAYER.



THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS:

- EACH PERSON HAS AT LEAST ONE
- THE GIFTS ARE UNIQUE FOR EACH PERSON
- EACH GIFT IS EQUALLY AS IMPORTANT
- YOU ARE BORN WITH THESE GIFTS – BUT YOU HAVE TO DEVELOP AND USE THEM
- THE GIFTS ARE NOT YOURS TO KEEP, BUT YOURS TO USE.
- THE GIFTS MUST BE USED WITH LOVE, OR THEY WILL BE ABUSED.

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A SELF-EVALUATION

Do the following self-evaluation before you go any further in our mini-study of spiritual gifts. Simply look at the name of each gift and circle the number that best shows your feeling about whether or not you have this gift. We will do this again at the end of the course after you have learned more about your gifts. A "1" means the gift is weak; and a "5" means the gift is strong. Sign and date the sheet, please.

HELPING	1	2	3	4	5
MERCY	1	2	3	4	5
GENEROSITY	1	2	3	4	5
TEACHING THE FAITH	1	2	3	4	5
LEADERSHIP	1	2	3	4	5
PROCLAMATION	1	2	3	4	5
DISCERNMENT	1	2	3	4	5
ENCOURAGEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
SHEPHERDING	1	2	3	4	5
FAITH	1	2	3	4	5

Signed: _____

Date: _____



QUESTIONS ON BIBLICAL REFERENCES

- Where do the gifts come from?
- What are their purpose?
- What are the gifts?
- How are they supposed to be used?
- Which are the most important?
- Who receives the gifts?



THIRD LESSON: HELPING 25 minutes

TAKE UP QUESTIONNAIRES THAT STUDENTS HAVE FILLED OUT FOR HOMEWORK. FINISH WITH 1ST LESSON INFORMATION IF YOU DID NOT HAVE TIME YESTERDAY TO FINISH.

Now we'll look at specific gifts:

HELPING: Does anyone know a good definition of helping?

Helping or serving others means that we help meet the practical needs of others, especially in time of crisis. We can often detect others' personal needs even if they don't tell us about them, and we are able to give aid. We have compassion for others, and a willingness to support them.

Can you think of any helpers in the Bible, or perhaps some saints you know about? Joseph of Aramathea, Barnabas, who led Paul to the apostles after he was converted, James who backed up Peter over the dispute over the Gentiles and the mosaic laws.

Does this seem too ordinary to be a spiritual gift? It's not high profile – doesn't get a lot of attention unless something is not getting done. It's sometimes undervalued, even by those who have the gift. But Paul did not undervalue it. And God valued it enough that he made it one of a select group of specific gifts and set people apart to serve and help by giving them this gift.

What are some ways that Jesus used this gift? Might some of you have this gift?

PASS OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON HELPING AND GIVE THEM A FEW MINUTES TO COMPLETE IT. THEN SAY:

If you have a lot of 4's and 5's, it means you may have that gift.



Any comments you want to make about the actions listed? All of us help at times, but to people with this special gift, helping brings them happiness. They also know just what kind of help is needed. It goes far beyond duty. Remember that just because you may not have this gift, it doesn't mean that you shouldn't help others from time to time. But it doesn't bring you special joy like it does someone who has the gift.

Look around your class – do you know anyone who may have this special gift? Let them know that you recognize their gift. Helpers often need encouragement to continue to do God's work. Your kind words may be just what they need to be re-energized.

What would be your responsibilities if you have this gift? How can you develop it? How can you use it in your school, your community, your family, your church? (visiting the sick, elderly, helping with yardwork, repair work, Helping Hand, etc.)

What kind of occupation or career might fit with the gift of helping?

END WITH A BRIEF PRAYER.



DO YOU HAVE THE GIFT OF HELPING/SERVING?

Circle the number that best describes how you feel about helping others in the sentences below. A “1” means the indicator is rarely in your life. A “5” means the indicator is strong in your life.

- 1 2 3 4 5 I take action to help others instead of merely thinking or talking about it.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am quick to see and recognize the needs of others.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am usually practical rather than emotional.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I would rather do the task myself than get someone else to do it.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I make an effort to help without being asked.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I like to help others, even when they don't seem to appreciate it.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I feel that it is more important to look after others than myself.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I will do almost anything to help my friends and/or family.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I like feeling useful by doing everyday tasks for others.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I don't mind doing routine chores if it helps other people.



FOURTH LESSON: MERCY – 25 minutes

Today we're going to talk about MERCY. How do we define 'mercy'? The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as 'forbearance and compassion on one who is in his power and who has no claim to his kindness; a disposition to show compassion or forgiveness.' What story in the Bible reminds you most of this gift?

How did Jesus show mercy? Jesus once told this parable: Read Matthew 18:23-34

In all these examples, there was someone in a position of power, who could make a decision about how a person might be treated. Perhaps the person in power had the right to punish or harm the other, but a decision was made to treat the weaker person kindly, with mercy. This is after all, how we were treated. Jesus' mercy, and his proclamation of mercy to sinners, was a core part of his ministry:

Matthew 9:10-12: While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' on hearing this, Jesus said, "it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick."

The people who sin against us or God need mercy, not the nice people who never bother us. And it is hard for many of us to treat those people with mercy and forgiveness. We know we are supposed to, and we may do the right things, but it is hard, and too often we fail.

But a few have the gift of mercy, that gift that flows naturally, that allows them to forgive and be gracious, even to those who have harmed them.

The scriptures abound with examples of mercy. Matthew 9:13 – *But go and learn what this means; 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*"

And again, Matthew 23:23 *'Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law –justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.'*

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Jesus placed mercy higher than the man-made laws and rules of the Jewish faith. All are called on to be merciful, but for some, it comes easier. They have the gift of mercy.

Let's see if you have the gift of MERCY.

PASS OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON MERCY

Mercy shown to a person can be what makes him finally look up to God – because you show mercy, another realizes that God is merciful and that he loves us. Think about ways you can use your gift in your school, your family, your church. What kind of lifetime work would be suited?
(Prison Ministry, mentoring, tutoring, RAIN, Helping Hand, Our house, etc.)

END WITH A BRIEF PRAYER.

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DO YOU HAVE THE GIFT OF MERCY?

Once again, THIS IS NOT A TEST. This is strictly a tool to help you discover if you have the gift of mercy in your life. The following questions are indicators of the gift of mercy. A score of one means this is rare in your life. A score of five means this is common.

- 1 2 3 4 5 It's easy for me to forgive others, even those who hurt me.
(Remember, forgiving is not the same as forgetting.)
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am able to see and understand other people's points of
view and feelings.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I don't like to take revenge on anyone, even if I've been hurt.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I like to show acts of kindness to others.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I usually give people the benefit of the doubt or another
chance.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I'm usually pretty good at picking up personal clues,
especially if a person is hurting emotionally.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I like being "a good Samaritan."
- 1 2 3 4 5 I don't mind visiting elderly, sick, or disabled people, and can
usually make them feel good.
- 1 2 3 4 5 When I talk to someone who has offended me, I try to make
peace, rather than confront them.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I have compassion for those who are hurting, even if what
happened to them was their own fault.



FIFTH LESSON: THE GIFT OF GENEROSITY 25 minutes

We don't need a definition of generosity, do we? Are you a generous person? Make a list of all the things that you have given in the last two weeks.

GIVE STUDENTS TIME TO WRITE DOWN A LIST OF WHAT THEY HAVE GIVEN.

Traditionally, you may think only of money. But that's not all, is it? Did anyone write down something other than material things? Such as what?

When we think of what God gives us, what do we think of? Make a list.

GIVE STUDENTS TIME TO WRITE DOWN WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN THEM.

Money is down pretty far on your list, isn't it? What God gives is most precious, and can serve as a reminder that giving involves much more than a check.

Is it hard to give? For some people, it is. Remember the story of the rich man in Matthew 19:20? Jesus told him that if he wanted to be perfect, he would sell all his possessions and give to the poor. Jesus did not routinely ask those who followed his way to give up everything. But when the things of life become a barrier to following God's way, it is time to shed them. But some people love to give. It gives them great pleasure. – they don't even care how the gift is being used – they give out of love rather than duty. Some give because we're told to and expected to. But this is a responsibility, not a gift. If you have the gift, you will give out of love and joy.

So how should we give? Read Matthew 6:2-3 "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by me. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."



Is it ever wrong to give? When Christ was tempted by the devil in the desert, Satan tried to give him the world if he would bow down and worship him. It was not his to give. And what about people who would not benefit from your gifts? Matthew 7:6 – “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces.”

Some will turn your gifts against you. This scripture seems to denote some responsibility in our giving, a responsibility to know when our giving will make a difference. Otherwise, the giving is simply throwing money away. (GIVE EXAMPLES FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE)

Take the short quiz. (PASS OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON GENEROSITY.) Do you have the gift of generosity? If so, what are your responsibilities? Even at your age now, how can you demonstrate the gift of generosity with your classmates, your school, in the community, your family? (Clothing, food drives, Helping Hand, Habitat for Humanity, Jenny Cia ministry)

END WITH A BRIEF PRAYER.



Do you have The Gift of Generosity?

Answer honestly just as you have been doing. The questions will tell you if you have the gift of generosity. A score of one means this is rare in your life. A score of five means this is common to you.

- 1 2 3 4 5 It gives me joy to give to people who need help.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I don't mind sharing my possessions with friends or family.
- 1 2 3 4 5 When I have some money of my own, I give part of it to my church.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I know that God will always take care of my needs.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I usually give more of my time to projects than is called for.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I feel good when people ask to borrow things from me.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am so grateful to have all I need, so that I can help others in need.
- 1 2 3 4 5 In fact, I will do without some things so that others may have them.
- 1 2 3 4 5 When I give money, help, or time to someone or something, I don't want
to be rewarded for it.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am able to sense just what a person needs in order to give them
the right things.



SEVENTH LESSON: THE GIFT OF TEACHING THE FAITH

We all speak of the gift of teaching – we usually think of good teachers as having an art and a talent for teaching besides having been trained. However, in this case, we're talking about **TEACHING THE FAITH – THE ABILITY TO CLEARLY EXPLAIN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND HELP PEOPLE APPLY IT IN THEIR DAILY LIVES.** Those who have this gift can communicate with both words and actions – they live what they teach. Communication is the key here – the readers or hearers understand clearly what is being taught. It's more than reading, memorizing, and reciting Bible verses. It includes careful and thoughtful study as well.

Remember that every teacher does not necessarily have the spiritual gift of teaching the faith. Right? In fact, you don't have to be trained as a teacher to have and to use this gift. But you do have to identify with the students you have on a personal level. A bond connects the teacher and the student to one another.

Persons with this gift delight in researching details, they are not lazy in preparations, they like to talk about teaching materials and why there are teaching. They don't accept anybody's opinions without carefully testing them out. It's not just done through a classroom, though, it's also through music, paintings, drama, and writing.

Can you think of anyone who is a good teacher of the faith?

Teachers with this gift use common life examples, they live what they believe, and teach so that others can use their gifts as well. They are good motivators. They don't present their own ideas, but teach scripturally based, practical truths. The responsibility is awesome, as James said, 'Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.' James 3;1

Let's do an experiment here. You are already divided into five groups. I'm going to give each group a different Bible story. As a group, come up with an example of how this applies to life today.



ASSIGN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BIBLE STORIES TO EACH GROUP. APPOINT A GROUP LEADER, A REPORTER, AND A RECORDER FROM EACH GROUP. ASK THEM TO REVIEW THE STORY AND DECIDE ONE OR TWO WAYS THAT THE STORY COULD APPLY TO LIFE TODAY. GIVE THEM ONLY 10-15 MINUTES TO DO THIS TASK. IF NECESSARY, REFER TO THE SPECIFIC SCRIPTURE, AS:

Prodigal son (Luke:15:11-32)
Good Samaritan (Luke10:29-37)
Man healed of blindness (Mark 8:22-26)
The foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)
The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

TAKE ANSWERS FROM EACH GROUP. THEN ASK, "WAS THERE ANYONE IN YOUR GROUP WHO WAS MORE ABLE TO DO THIS THAN THE REST? MAYBE HE/SHE HAS THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF TEACHING THE FAITH."

Otherwise, try this questionnaire. (PASS OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND GIVE THEM TIME TO COMPLETE IT.)

Why are teachers of the faith so valuable today? What kinds of ministry should you do if you have this particular gift?

ANSWERS SHOULD INCLUDE NOT ONLY TEACHING SCRIPTURE STUDY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, BUT HELPING WITH VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, THE NURSERY, THE SCOUTS, HELPING WITH CONFIRMATION AND FIRST COMMUNION CLASSES, VISITING THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND, PEER MENTORING AND TUTORING.

END WITH A BRIEF PRAYER.



DO YOU HAVE THE GIFT OF TEACHING THE FAITH?

Circle the letter in front of the statement that best describes whether or not it is true for you. A '1' means it is not true at all, and a '5' means it is true most or all of the time

- 1 2 3 4 5 I like to study and research new things
- 1 2 3 4 5 others tell me I am able to explain things clearly for them
- 1 2 3 4 5 I think I would enjoy teaching a class on spiritual topics.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I love to see the lights come on someone's face when they suddenly understand something difficult.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I feel a responsibility to help people learn things.
- 1 2 3 4 5 it's easy for me to tell others about the Bible and the Catholic religion.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I can always find the right words to use when I'm explaining things.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I have no problem applying the teachings of the Bible to everyday life.
- 1 2 3 4 5 Almost every time I listen to a speaker on a religious topic, I apply the lesson to myself and to my family.
- 1 2 3 4 5 When people ask me questions about my faith, I am able to explain it to them.



SIXTH LESSON: LEADERSHIP/ADMINISTRATION

Take a few minutes to write down the names of some leaders today you respect and are willing to follow. These don't have to be national, political, or religious leaders. These could be the people you come in contact with each day. Then write down what it is about them that makes you willing to follow them. Do they all do things the same way? Then what sets them apart? **ASK FOR ANSWERS FROM THE CLASS.**

Are all leaders spiritual? No, of course not. Then why do we consider leadership a spiritual gift? There is an intangible quality that sets a gifted leader apart. They touch something in our spirit that makes us willing to follow them, even anxious to follow them.

But we often misuse this gift, for it comes with a real temptation: power. There is a real temptation to think it is ours, not a gift from God. **IF POSSIBLE, GIVE SOME EXAMPLES HERE THAT THEY WOULD RECOGNIZE. HITLER MIGHT BE ONE!**

If we have this gift, we probably realize it. People come to you. People look to you for guidance, inspiration, direction and leadership.

Leadership can be of two different types: one is called 'visionary and managing leadership' (WRITE ON OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCY OR BLACKBOARD). This happens when a person can envision God's will and purpose for the church and has the ability to lead others to accomplish it. It includes the ability to handle details, and directing, governing, guiding, and setting a course. They keep congregations or groups on track and focused on their goals. They are able to delegate tasks and use organizational skills.

Another kind is called 'nurturing leadership' (ON OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCY OR BLACKBOARD)— and it's great when someone has both these as their gift of leadership. Those with nurturing leadership lead by guiding and watching over people and allowing them to grow. Jesus exemplified this style when he said about Jerusalem: "How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings." Matthew 23:37b.

Let's find out if you have this gift. Remember to answer honestly and thoughtfully.



PASS OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON LEADERSHIP.

If you have the gift of leadership, are you using it? How might you use it in your church? Family? What about in the future? What kinds of careers would be fitting? Who in your class has the gift of leadership? It's pretty obvious, isn't it? (Nursery, teaching, Vacation Bible School, CyM, Scouts, coaching, chairs of committees, etc.)

END WITH A BRIEF PRAYER.

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C R E A T I V I T Y , C O M M U N I C A T I O N A N D C L A R I T Y



DO YOU HAVE THE GIFT OF LEADERSHIP/ADMINISTRATION?

Circle the letter in front of each statement that best describes how much the statement is true in your life. A '1' means that it is not true at all; a '5' means that it is true all of the time.

- 1 2 3 4 5 I can usually select the right people to get the job done.
- 1 2 3 4 5 When I get in a group, I'm usually the one to take charge.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I like things to run smoothly and effectively.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I'm good at organizing people and/or things.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I motivate people to come together and work toward their goals.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I have no problem accepting responsibilities.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am usually very dependable.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I can usually see the whole picture as well as the details.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I often can come up with practical, effective solutions to problems.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I like to plan things in advance.



EIGHTH LESSON: DISCERNMENT 25 MINUTES

WRITE THE WORD “DISCERNMENT” ON THE BOARD.

Are you familiar with this word? Can anyone explain what it means to be able to discern? We sometimes call the gifts course, gifts discernment. Why?

One definition: (USE OVERHEAD) Discernment is the ability to differentiate between good and evil, right and wrong, and what is of God, human nature, or evil, and to use this knowledge for the protection and health of the body of Christ.

Why would discernment be especially important in this day and time? Did you know that a high percentage of people have this gift? Wonder why? Also that more women than males have this gift, and more lay people than priests and ministers! There are three forces that affect our thinking and behaving. One is of God, another is of the devil, and the third is of human nature. Paul writes of these in 1 Corinthians 2 when he refers to ‘the spirit of the world and the Spirit which is from God. WRITE THESE THREE FORCES ON THE BOARD OR BLANK TRANSPARENCY.

The Bible not only lists discernment as a spiritual gift, but talks about discernment throughout, in both the old and the new Testaments. Here are some instances:

Genesis 41:33 ‘And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt.’ Remember what this was about? Joseph has just explained Pharaoh’s dream. Dreams are perhaps the most illusive thing to discern. Some are just the imagination, a few may be prophetic, and even fewer may be visions.

Pharaoh’s reaction? “Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you.”

Another example: 1 Kings 3:9 “So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?” Who said this? Solomon in his prayer – he was given his choice of gifts, and he asked for discernment. And God granted his desire.

Another word for discernment then, may be JUDGEMENT. It focuses on knowing God, his will, his right and wrong, and his directions. It comes from the heart, not the mind. And it’s purpose is not to condemn anybody, but for the



protection and health of the body of Christ (his church).

People with this gift can see both sides of issues, and this seeing comes from deep feelings of good or bad, right or wrong. They are intuitive rather than logical.

What are some examples from the New Testament? When did Jesus use this gift?

GIVE THE QUIZ. THEN ASK: What are some ways this gift can go wrong? (jumping to conclusions, too judgmental, too righteous, being led astray by Satan.) people who have this gift should pray a lot. Helping seniors, praying for people, prayer groups, youth advisory board, mentoring, speaking, etc.

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C R E A T I V I T Y , C O M M U N I C A T I O N A N D C L A R I T Y



DO YOU HAVE THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT?

Circle the letter in front of the statement that best describes whether or not it is true for you. A '1' means it is not true at all, and a '5' means it is true most or all of the time

- 1 2 3 4 5 I can always tell the difference between what is right and what is wrong.
- 1 2 3 4 5 When I see someone heading off in a wrong direction, I warn them.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I can always spot a phony.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I have a real desire to protect people from evil.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am always aware of evil when it is present.
- 1 2 3 4 5 Something inside stirs me to question whether some things are from God, human nature, or Satan.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I understand the true motives of people who lead.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I get concerned when something seems wrong, and become happy when something seems right.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I know when someone is using religious for selfish reasons.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I can spot a troublemaker a mile away.



DISCERNMENT

IS THE ABILITY TO DIFFERENTIATE
BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL,
RIGHT AND WRONG,
AND WHAT IS OF GOD,
HUMAN NATURE, OR EVIL,
AND TO USE THIS KNOWLEDGE
FOR THE PROTECTION AND HEALTH
OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.

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NINTH LESSON: ENCOURAGEMENT/EXHORTATION

I know you know the meaning of the word, 'encouragement.' This gift is also called exhortation, which means (OVERHEAD)

'the ability to counsel, inspire, motivate, encourage, and strengthen others in and through their efforts to live out God's will and calling as Christians.'" So we always look at these terms in the light of being a Christian.

St. Paul especially used encouragers to shore up the various churches. His letters all seem to include encouragement along with instructions and warnings. He sent the apostles Barnabus and Tychus to different cities for the same reason.

The Old Testament includes many examples of encouragement as well. Joshua encouraged Moses. Caleb encouraged Joshua. We don't hear this used for Jesus, but can you give some examples of when Jesus was encouraging? (GIVE EXAMPLES, SUCH AS 'SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME TO ME.')

Early in his ministry Jesus encouraged disciples to preach and perform miracles in his name. He often encouraged those he forgave, and those who had faith. He often encouraged the lowly, poor and despised.

Now take a few moments to think: How have you been encouraged throughout your life? Think back not just on who encouraged you, but what they did that provided you with encouragement. (GIVE THEM 3-4 MINUTES TO THINK ABOUT THIS).

Now turn to a neighbor and take turns sharing your answers. Take about 3 minutes each. I will call time after 6 minutes and then ask some of you to share what you heard or said.

AFTER ALL HAVE SHARED AS PARTNERS, ASK WHO WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE ENTIRE GROUP. TAKE NO MORE THAN 5 MINUTES TO DO THIS.



Everyone needs encouragement. If you this is your gift, you do it naturally. Others have to plan for it. How can the gift be misused? (GET SOME ANSWERS FROM THE CLASS)

PASS OUT THE QUIZ. AT THE END, ASK:

Who thinks they have this gift? Are you using it? How can you develop it even more? Can you think of a job or service opportunity in which you can use this gift? (Stephen Ministry, mentoring, tutoring, writing articles, greeter, music ministry, prayer groups, writing skits, etc.)

ENCOURAGEMENT/EXHORTATION

IS THE ABILITY TO

COUNSEL, INSPIRE, MOTIVATE,

ENCOURAGE, AND STRENGTHEN

OTHERS IN AND THROUGH THEIR

EFFORTS TO LIVE OUT GOD'S WILL

AND CALLING AS CHRISTIANS.

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DO YOU HAVE THE GIFT OF ENCOURAGEMENT?

Circle the letter in front of the statement that best describes whether or not it is true for you. A '1' means it is not true at all, and a '5' means it is true most or all of the time.

- 1 2 3 4 5 I'm usually the one in the group who builds everyone up.
- 1 2 3 4 5 People think I'm optimistic.
- 1 2 3 4 5 If one of my friends is downhearted or depressed, I can usually cheer them up.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I tell people when they're doing a good job.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I can bring out the best in people.
- 1 2 3 4 5 People seem to come to me when they're down.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am genuine with my compliments.
- 1 2 3 4 5 My presence is comforting to others in trouble.
- 1 2 3 4 5 When others are hurting, I remind them of God's faithfulness and love.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am good at instilling hope.



TENTH LESSON: THE GIFT OF SHEPHERDING 25 minutes

Shepherding is sometimes called 'pastoring' or "ministry'. The Greek word for pastor means shepherd. This means to protect, to oversee, to care for, to feed. So this would be a good gift for a priest to have, wouldn't it? But not all priests have it.

Do you remember what a shepherd did in the Bible? The Good Shepherd, for instance?

(GET SOME ANSWERS). A shepherd can take care of a lot of people (lambs) at one time, and won't let any individuals stray from the fold. A Christian with the gift of shepherding gathers people together, demonstrates concern for their struggles and difficulties, protects them from trouble or harm, and keeps them close to Jesus. They look out for those under their care.

Jesus is the model. Jesus said, 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever.' (John 6:51a). Pastors (shepherds) feed those under their care with the Word of God, nurturing them in their faith. They are in charge of a flock.

READ ALOUD THE 23 RD PSALM AND DISCUSS IT BRIEFLY.

One thing we might think about here: spiritual gifts are not positions, such as pastor, or minister, or teacher. These are really job descriptions. It's easy to confuse the terms. Remember our definition of Spiritual Gifts from the first lesson?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE GOD'S EMPOWERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE TO ACCOMPLISH GOD'S WORK.

It would be nice if people in certain jobs have gifts appropriate with those offices, wouldn't it? But this is not always true. This is one reason why we're doing these classes with the parish.

Questions: What group in your school or your church has a shepherd at its head?

How does this person care for your spiritual welfare? If you find that you have this gift, what would be some of the job choices that might be appropriate for you?

Deacon, teacher, counselor, coach, youth leader, minister

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PASS OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

Do you see the difference between helping and shepherding? What is it? What would be some ways that this gift could be abused or misused?

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C R E A T I V I T Y , C O M M U N I C A T I O N A N D C L A R I T Y



DO YOU HAVE THE GIFT OF SHEPHERDING?

Circle the letter in front of the statement that best describes whether or not it is true for you. A '1' means it is not true at all, and a '5' means it is true most or all of the time

- 1 2 3 4 5 I enjoy working with groups of people, rather than one-on-one.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I take responsibility for looking after groups of people
- 1 2 3 4 5 I generally look after my friends who have trouble with their faith.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I defend and protect others when they get in trouble.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I have a special knack for guiding others in the right things to do.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I feel really good when someone I've helped solves a problem.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I can usually find a religious story that applies to a particular situation.
- 1 2 3 4 5 My friends know they can depend on me.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I like to work with the same groups of people over a long period of time.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I have special feeling for Christians who have strayed from their faith.



ELEVENTH LESSON: THE GIFT OF FAITH

Don't we all have faith? What is faith? A reliance or trust in God. But the gift of faith is different. A gift of faith is an UNSHAKEABLE TRUST AND A DEEP CONVICTION THAT GOD FAITHFULLY AND RELIABLY KEEPS PROMISES. The main difference is in degree. The gift of faith is not the saving faith that all Christians have. This is the specific gift of having a faith that moves mountains, an exceptional ability to trust. If you don't have this gift, it doesn't mean that you are less a Christian, just as not having any of the other gifts doesn't make you less of a Christian.

Remember, Paul said, "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."
Romans 10;9

Can you think of a story in the new Testament that demonstrated strong faith like this?

(The woman who was healed when she touched Jesus' garment – the centurion who asked for his daughter to be healed.)

Jesus said..Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt even if you say to a mountain, be lifted up and thrown into the sea, it will be done. Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive. Matthew 21;21-22. Christians with this gift deeply trust that god will hear and answer their prayers. They have a childlike faith; they believe something without questioning. They have a special sense or feeling about a things that it is the will of God. They believe that they can do all things through God, who strengthens them.

What do we trust God for?

1. Our physical needs. Matthew 6:28-30
2. We trust him to heal; Matthew 8:6-10
3. We trust him to give help in times of need Matthew 8;24

Notice that the disciples were in trouble beyond their ability to save themselves.



What would be the purpose of this as a spiritual gift? What might God be asking a person with this strong a faith to do in building up the body of Christ? Be an inspirational leader for the church – **channels for God’s miracles – a light that shines before men and women. They don’t have to find proof for God’s existence and interest in his creation. THEY KNOW God will answer their prayers.**

And what might be an abuse? Judging other’s faith – like Job’s friends in the Bible story; being afraid to tell others about their faith.

DO YOU HAVE THE GIFT OF FAITH? Take the questionnaire. If so, can you tell others about it?

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DO YOU HAVE THE GIFT OF FAITH?

Circle the letter in front of the statement that best describes whether or not it is true for you. A '1' means it is not true at all, and a '5' means it is true most or all of the time

- 1 2 3 4 5 I know that God can and does intervene in history.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I believe that there are no coincidences in life.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I do not lose my faith even when things are going badly for me.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I don't usually question what happens to me, I just know God is working things out.
- 1 2 3 4 5 After I pray about something, I am at peace trusting in God.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I can "hang in there" because God said to.
- 1 2 3 4 5 God gives me direction for my life.
- 1 2 3 4 5 God has a divine plan that includes me.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I always close my prayers with "God's will be done."
- 1 2 3 4 5 I know God is real; though things sometimes seem bad for me and for the world, I know that God is in charge.



TWELTH LESSON: THE GIFT OF PROCLAMATION

Proclamation is sometimes called “Prophecy.” This is confusing, because most of us think that prophecy means foretelling the future. This is not the meaning we’re after, however.

The spiritual gift of proclamation or prophecy means ‘FORTH-TELLING” – (OH) IT IS THE EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY TO LINK BIBLICAL TRUTHS WITH GOD’S WILL FOR TODAY’S LIVING AND TO BE AN INSTRUMENT FOR REVEALING OR INTERPRETING PREVIOUS OR CURRENT MESSAGES FROM GOD FOR RIGHTEOUS AND JUST LIVING IN TODAY’S WORLD.

Those gifted with proclamation are usually very articulate, and they are very familiar with the Bible. They have a broad view of God’s kingdom covering all life, not just spiritual concerns. Their emphasis is on making decisions based on what they know from God rather than from education or spiritual growth.

Sometimes they seem stubborn, or dogmatic, because they are so sure of what they’re saying. They are more interested in work than play and are results-oriented rather than process-oriented. They are able to relate everyday life, including world events, to the Bible, and they clearly communicate the meaning of these events to others.

Those with the gift of proclamation are God’s spokespersons. They are channels for God to speak to his people. Those with this gift see God’s footprints in various events and circumstances and reveal to people where God is leading.

This gift is related to the gifts of discernment, mercy, and teaching the faith, but people with the gift of proclamation are in tune with the CONDITIONS that cause evil and suffering. One example might be those people who truly believe that we are living in the end times and can show you the evidence to support their belief. But they do have compassion for victims of conditions – in fact, compassion is their basic motivation.

Do you know anyone like this?

They believe that nothing escapes the notice and judgement of Christ. READ MATTHEW 25: 31-46. They see the Antichrist as not a particular person, but any personification of evil, injustice, unrighteousness whether a nation, a community, an organization, or a philosophy.



How can this gift be used in your school? your church? In how many ways can you proclaim God's truth? Make a list. Some ideas: Writing letters, essays, poems, articles, or skits, teaching a scripture study, mentoring or peer tutoring, Speaking to groups, Leading a prayer group, Designing a web site for the church, Producing a video tape

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE THIS GIFT? TAKE THE QUIZ.

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C R E A T I V I T Y , C O M M U N I C A T I O N A N D C L A R I T Y



DO YOU HAVE THE GIFT OF PROCLAMATION?

Circle the letter in front of the statement that best describes whether or not it is true for you. A '1' means it is not true at all, and a '5' means it is true most or all of the time

- 1 2 3 4 5 I can be very persuasive when I want to.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I often think about giving sermons about God's word.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I see a lesson to be learned in everything that happens to me.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I have a special sense of right and wrong and can express it to others.
- 1 2 3 4 5 Sometimes I have a desire to warn others about evil in the world.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I understand what God is accomplishing in large and small events in the world and I usually tell others about this.
- 1 2 3 4 5 When people ask questions about things that confuse them, I can usually explain God's purpose to them.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I can read scriptural readings out loud with feeling and conviction.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I prefer to hear sermons that expose the evils of sin and warn of the judgment to come.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I fear sometimes that people don't understand how bad the world is becoming.



THIRTEENTH LESSON: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Hopefully you have discovered some of your particular spiritual gifts. Before we go any farther, go back to the self evaluation you did at the first of our lessons. See if anything has changed. Did you know you had the gifts you have found so far? Share with others at your table – what are your gifts, and how do you feel about each of them?

Now, we have a personal profile sheet for you to fill out that will bring together other aspects of your personality besides your gifts. All this works together to make you what God intended.

PASS OUT HANDOUT ON PERSONAL PROFILE

My top three gifts are:

The best feature of my personality is:

I think I am good at'

Others tell me I am good at

I am creative when it comes to

I think I work best with

Some jobs I have successfully completed are

Ways I can help 'BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST' are:

TURN IN TO YOUR TEACHER.

NOW, BEFORE WE COMPLETE THIS COURSE, LET'S REVIEW;

We have talked about responsibility for these gifts and some of the dangers as we went along. Are you aware of how your gifts can be abused?

1. We must use our gifts
2. We must not misuse our gifts
3. We must not overrate our gifts
4. We must not underrate our gifts.

THIS IS THE END OF THE COURSE. REMEMBER THAT YOU MAY HAVE OTHER GIFTS THAT WE HAVE NOT CONSIDERED, ALSO REMEMBER THAT AS YOU MATURE, OTHER GIFTS MAY SURFACE AS THEY DEVELOP. GOD HAS MADE YOU JUST THE WAY HE WANTS YOU – HE HAS A JOB FOR YOU. PRAY ABOUT IT, AND TRY DIFFERENT MINISTRIES/COMMUNITY SERVICES TO SEE WHAT FITS YOU BEST.

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MY PERSONAL PROFILE

**What you are is God's gift to you.
What you become is your gift to God.**

My name _____

Date _____ Grade _____

1. My top three gifts are: _____

2. The best feature of my personality is: _____

3. I think I am good at _____

4. Others tell me I am good at _____

5. I am creative when it comes to _____

6. I think I work best with (kinds or ages of people) _____

7. Some jobs I have successfully completed are _____

*. Ways I can help 'BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST: _____