

Discernment of Gifts

God is relational. People too, are relational. Every person is needed in order to best equip parish ministries. Knowing what ministries are needed or available in the parish or community can help on the journey. Also, each person knowing his or her Gifts certainly will help match giftedness to ministry, so using an inventory such as the one that follows can be beneficial.

Finding Your Spiritual Gifts

God has given each Christian two vitally important Gifts. The first is the Gift of faith in Jesus Christ, his work of redemption, and thus forgiveness of sin. The second is the Gift of one or more special abilities, which are to be used for the purpose of unifying the body of Christ and for the growth of God's Kingdom. These abilities are called Spiritual Gifts and they are received through our baptism.

Like other presents, it is impossible to fully appreciate and make use of our Spiritual Gifts until they have been opened. This tool will help you discover and begin to open and employ your Spiritual Gifts by guiding you through the following three activities: *Scripture References*, *Self Assessment* and *Exploration of Use*.

Highlighting *Scripture References* that both support the existence of Spiritual Gifts and identify those which are commonly found in service today gives a solid foundation for your discernment process.

Exploration of Use is suggestions for the various types of ministry you might be most effective in because of your Spiritual Gifts.

May the special abilities God has given you be deployed in areas of ministry where they will be most effective for the good of the entire Church Body. These Gifts should also be affirmed by the body and utilized by the one who is Gifted.

The Apostle Paul addresses the presence of Spiritual Gifts in three main sections of scripture: Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. Peter also verifies their existence in I Peter 4:10. Through these sections of scripture, we learn that all Christians have been given at least one Spiritual Gift. The purpose of Spiritual Gifts is twofold: (1) to unify Christians in their faith and (2) to produce growth within the church, both numerical and spiritual. These Gifts are to be used out of love for one another, and in service to one another.

We do not choose which Gifts we will receive. God bestows them upon us through the work of the Holy Spirit. Not all of the Gifts identified in scripture are used in this inventory. The spectacular Gifts (speaking in tongues, healing and miracles, prophecy, bold proclamation of God) and some of the non-spectacular Gifts (martyrdom, celibacy) have not been included. Although these Gifts exist, they are not commonly utilized in the mainstream of parish life. Since the objectives of Spiritual Gift deployment are to unify and produce growth through service, in today's church climate, only the service related Gifts have been included.

Administration: the Gift that enables a believer to formulate, direct, and carry out plans necessary to fulfill a purpose. Biblical References: I Corinthians 12:28, Acts 14:23.

Artistry: the Gift that gives the believer the skill of creating artistic expressions that produce a spiritual response of strength and inspiration. Biblical References: Exodus 31:1-11, Psalm 149:3a.

Discernment: the Gift that motivates a believer to seek God's will and purpose and apply that understanding to individual and congregational situations. Biblical References: John 16:6-15, Romans 9:1, I Corinthians 2:9-16.

Evangelism: the Gift that moves believers to reach nonbelievers in such a way that they are baptized and become active members of the Christian community. Biblical References: Matthew 28:16-20, Ephesians 4:11-16, Acts 2:36-40.

Exhortation: the Gift that moves the believer to reach out with Christian love and presence to people in personal conflict facing a spiritual void. Biblical References: John 14:1, II Timothy 1:16-18, III John 5-8.

Faith: the Gift that gives a believer the eyes to see the Spirit at work and the ability to trust the Spirit's leading without indication of where it all might lead. Biblical References: Genesis 12:1-4a, Mark 5:25-34, I Thessalonians 1:8-10.

Giving: the Gift that enables a believer to recognize God's blessings and to respond to those blessings by generously and sacrificially giving of one's resources (time, talent, and treasure). Biblical References: II Corinthians 9:6-15, Luke 21:1-4.

Hospitality: the Gift that causes a believer to joyfully welcome and receive guests and those in need of food and lodging. Biblical References: Romans 12:13, Romans 16:23a, Luke 10:38.

Intercession: the Gift that enables a believer to pray with the certainty that prayer is heard and when requests are made, answers will come. Biblical References: Matthew 6:6-15, Luke 11:1-10, Ephesians 6:18.

Knowledge: the Gift that drives a person to learn, analyze and uncover new insights with regard to the Bible and faith. Biblical References: I Corinthians 12:8; I Corinthians 14:6, Romans 12:2.

Leadership: the Gift that gives a believer the confidence to step forward, give direction and provide motivation to fulfill a dream or complete a task. Biblical References: Romans 12:8, John 21:15-17, II Timothy 4:1-5.

Mercy: the Gift that motivates a believer to feel deeply for those in physical, spiritual, or emotional need and then act to meet that need. Biblical References: Luke 7:12-15, Luke 10:30-37, Mt 25:34-36.

Music--Vocal: the Gift that gives a believer the capability and opportunity to present personal witness and inspiration to others through singing. Biblical References: Psalm 96:1-9, Psalm 100:1-2, Psalm 149:1-2.

Music--Instrumental: the Gift that inspires a believer to express personal faith and provide inspiration and comfort through the playing of a musical instrument. Biblical References: Psalm 33:1-5, Psalm 150, I Samuel 16:14-23.

Pastoring (Shepherding): the Gift that gives a believer the confidence, capability and compassion to provide spiritual leadership and direction for individuals or groups of believers. Biblical References: I Timothy 4:12-16, I Timothy 3:1-13, II Timothy 4:1-2.

Service (Helps): the Gift that enables a believer to work gladly behind the scenes in order that God's work is fulfilled. Biblical References: Luke 23:50-54, Romans 16:1-16, Philippians 2:19-23.

Skilled Craft: the Gift that enables a believer to create, build, maintain or repair items used within the church.

Biblical References: Exodus 30:1-6, Exodus 31:3-5, Ezekiel 27:4-11.

Teaching: the Gift that enables a believer to communicate a personal understanding of the Bible and faith in such a way that it becomes clear and understood by others. Biblical References: I Corinthians 12:28, Matthew 5:1-12, Acts 18:24-48.

Wisdom: the Gift that allows the believer to sort through opinions, facts and thoughts in order to determine what solution would be best for the individual believer or the community of believers. Biblical References: I Corinthians 2:6-13, James 3:13-18, II Chronicles 1:7-11.

Writing: the Gift that gives a believer the ability to express truth in a written form; a form that can edify, instruct and strengthen the community of believers. Biblical References: I John 2:1-6, 12-14, I Timothy 3:14-15, Jude 3.

With which Gifts have you been truly blessed? Discovering the answer to that question requires the following:

Prayer:

Seek the Holy Spirit's guidance while evaluating your Gifts.

Study:

Become familiar with the scripture references, definitions, and how each Gift functions within the Body of Christ. This will provide you with a solid foundation from which to further evaluate your Gifts.

Self-Examination:

Explore your feelings about each of the Spiritual Gifts in your cluster. Examples of how each Gift may be utilized in the church are provided below. As you read these examples, ask yourself how you feel about the types of ministry activity identified for the Gifts in your cluster. You may expect to feel fulfilled through the use of your Gifts.

Track Your Results:

As you use your Spiritual Gifts, pay close attention to the results produced through your efforts. You can expect to experience positive results from the use of your Gifts.

Listen For Affirmation:

As you use your Spiritual Gifts, listen for affirmation from other Christians. They will recognize and confirm your Spiritual Gifts, through genuine expressions of approval and thankfulness for a job well done!

Putting Your Gifts To Use:

All Christians are to work together, supporting one another. However, our Gifts make us better prepared and equipped to perform in some areas of ministry over others. A person who is working within a ministry area in which he or she is Gifted for, will be more effective in that ministry than one for which he or she is not Gifted.

In what types of ministry will you be most effective? A brief list of ministry examples follows. These examples have been provided merely as thought starters and should not be considered an exhaustive list. Use them as a starting point in exploring the possibilities for putting your Gifts to use within your parish and in your community.

Administration:

Parish Council, Finance Council, Catechetical Leader, Vacation Bible School Coordinator, Business Manager

Artistry:

Banner Making, Drama Club/Clown Ministry/Puppetry, Film/Photography Work, Crafts/Handicrafts, Decorating Team, Set/Props Design Team

Discernment:

Parish Council, Long Range Planning Team, Social Ministry Team, Peer Counseling, Support Group Facilitator

Evangelism:

New Parishioner Visitation, Evangelization Commission, Advertising and Marketing, Community Visitation

Exhortation:

Mutual Ministry Team, Hospital/Home/Institution Visitation, Telecare Ministry, Peer Counseling, Small Group Leader

Faith:

Parish Council President, Stewardship Committee, Long Range Planning Team, Teacher/Bible study leader

Giving:

Capital Campaign Steering Team, Stewardship Team, Volunteer Coordination, Giving Personal Testimony

Hospitality:

Greeter/Usher, New Parishioner Sponsor, In-Home Bible Study Host, Visitor Welcome/Information Center, Banquet Server, Fellowship Hour Host/Server

Intercession:

Prayer Chain, Prayer Partner, Prayer Families/Prayer Circles

Knowledge:

Parish Resource-Library Coordinator, Nominating Team, Long Range Planning Team, Parish Council

Leadership:

Catechetical Leader, Committee Chairperson (all types), Fellowship Activity Coordinator, Vacation Bible School Coordinator, Parish Council President, Speaker-Special Events

Mercy:

Home/Hospital/Institution Visitation, Transportation to Worship/Bible Study, Social Ministry Team, Support Group Leader, Telecare Minister

Music-Instrumental:

Band Leader/Member, Choir Pianist, Special Event Music, Substitute Organist, Vacation Bible School-Music Program

Music-Vocal:

Church Choir, Vocal Ensemble, Sunday School Song Leader, Vacation Bible School Song Leader

Pastoring (Shepherding):

Adult In-Home Bible Study Leader, New Parishioner Sponsor, Young-Adult Counselor, Small Group Leader, Telecare Minister

Service (Helps):

Computer Programmer/Data Entry, Newsletter Collation, P.A./Sound System Technician, Tape Recording
Worship Services, Child Care, Building/Grounds Upkeep, Kitchen Cleaning Team, Providing Transportation

Skilled Crafts:

Building Maintenance/Upkeep, Electrical/Masonry/Plumbing/Roofing, Mechanical Repair/Maintenance,
Audio/Visual Operator and Repair, Computer Maintenance, Web-Page Developer

Teaching:

Adult Bible Class Teacher, Sunday School Teacher, Teen Bible Class Teacher, Vacation Bible School
Teacher, Conference/Seminar Leader

Wisdom:

Long Range Planning Team, Parish Council, Peer Counselor, Support Group Leader, Mutual Ministry Team

Writing: Newsletter Article Writer, Newsletter Editor, Public Relations/Publicity Committee, Letter Writing

Exploration of Use

Your Spiritual Gifts do not appear and disappear as you pass through the doors of your church! The special Gifts God has given you are with you always. They are meant to also be used in your daily life to bring glory to God and serve the needs of others. In the spaces below, identify some of the ways your Gifts may be used for these purposes. Specific contexts have been provided as thought starters.

At home, with family.

(1)_____

(2)_____

(3)_____

(4)_____

(5)_____

At work, with colleagues.

(1)_____

(2)_____

(3)_____

(4)_____

(5)_____

Within your community.

(1)_____

(2)_____

(3)_____

(4)_____

(5)_____

1. Read the suggested scripture passages that refer to your gifts from the Called & Gifted Inventory

2. Which of the gifts from inventory were familiar to you? Which were surprising?

3. What ministries in the parish have you served in? Which have utilized these gifts?

4. Have you ever felt called by God or God and the church to a particular church ministry role? Describe that role. Why do you think you were called to it?

5. Pick one gift to practice using between now and the next gathering. How are you going to practice it in your life and/or ministry?

6. Write a one page reflection on your gifts and charisms - what are your gifts, how have you used them in your life and ministry, do you feel called to a ministerial role in the church? What role?