

youthESource Bible Study

Gifted

by Dean Nadasdy

Introduction to Three Studies

I had a teacher in high school who taught me something about myself. I learned at her encouraging that I could speak in front of a large group and not melt down, freeze up or put everybody to sleep. I cherish that teacher still today. In these studies you have an opportunity to make that sort of difference in a young person's life.

The studies that follow encourage young people to identify with a few spiritual gifts from a list of 15. Of course, the list could have been a lot longer. Some lists of spiritual gifts include such abilities as craftsmanship and music. Others include the early church gifts of healing, miracles, tongues and inspiration.

These studies, however, focus on 15 gifts that have clear application to specific ministries in the church. These are gifts in the strict sense of that word (charismata in Greek), identified clearly as gifts, not talents or abilities, in the New Testament.

It's important to remember that a list of spiritual gifts is perhaps never complete because the Holy Spirit graces and gifts His people as He chooses, not as our lists determine. It's also important to emphasize that spiritual gifts discovery and use is a lifetime journey and process. But what a journey!

Have fun with the study. Make it a celebration of gifts and of ministry within your group and congregation.

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Part One: Gifted!

A Bible Study Introducing Spiritual Gifts

Objectives

That, with the help of the Spirit, participants will...

1. establish an understanding of spiritual gifts and their importance for the ministry of the church;
2. gain an awareness of their own giftedness as ministers in the church;
3. recognize the variety of spiritual gifts and their purpose.

A Rabbit on a Swim Team?

1. Read aloud or ask one or two from your group to read the following story:

Once upon a time, the animals decided they should do something meaningful to meet the problems of the new world. So they organized a school.

They adopted an activity curriculum of running, climbing, swimming and flying. To make it easier to administer the curriculum, all the animals took the same subjects.

The duck was excellent in swimming; in fact, he was better than his instructor. But he made only passing grades in flying, and was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to drop swimming and stay after school to practice running. This caused his web feet to be badly worn, so that he was only average in swimming. But average was quite acceptable, so nobody worried about that—except the duck.

The rabbit started at the top of his class in running, but developed a nervous twitch in his leg muscles because of so much make-up work in swimming.

The squirrel was excellent in climbing, but he encountered constant frustration in flying class because his teacher made him start from the ground up instead of the treetop down. He developed charley horses from over-exertion and so got only a C in climbing and a D in running.

The eagle was a problem child and was severely disciplined for being a nonconformist. In climbing classes he beat all the others to the top of the tree, but insisted on using his own way to get there...

(From the Springfield, OR, public schools newsletter, as quoted in Charles Swindoll, *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life* [Portland: Multnomah Press, 1983, pg 312]).

2. If your group is larger than 10, divide it into smaller groups of five or six. Ask each group to develop a single-sentence moral for the story that answers the question, "What truth about people does this story about animals carry?" After a few minutes, listen to one person from each group read his or her response. You may wish to jot down the responses on newsprint. Hopefully, the responses will come close to this: God has created us with a unique set of gifts, and we will be most fulfilled in life when what we do matches our God-given gifts. The exercise emphasizes the importance of focusing on spiritual gifts.
3. Now, still in smaller groups, ask participants to share within their group a time when they felt like a rabbit on a swim team. In other words, when have they felt that they were involved in doing something for which they were not particularly gifted? Again, after all have shared their responses, ask for a few sample statements from each group. Then explain that one way we can find immense fulfillment in our lives as Christians is to be busy doing what God has gifted us to do. In the church God has gifted everyone to carry on a ministry effectively. These gifts for ministry are spiritual gifts, the subject of this Bible study and the two that follow.

Defining Spiritual Gifts

1. Give a little talk on the meaning of spiritual gifts.

Start by reading 1 Corinthians 1:4-9. After the passage is read aloud, point out how in verse 7 Paul writes, "You do not lack any spiritual gift." The church at Corinth had all the spiritual gifts it needed to carry on its ministries. Every Christian is gifted for a specific ministry, and every church has all the gifts it needs! What a deal! Allow the entire group a few minutes to brainstorm the names of specific people in their church who seem to be especially gifted for specific ministries. Help them out with a few suggestions, and see if they agree with your appraisal.

Next, talk through this five-point definition of spiritual gifts, writing it out so everyone can see:

Spiritual gifts are...

- Special gifts (not the gifts all Christians have, such as the gift of faith, Ephesians 2:8-9, but gifts uniquely suited to ministry).
- Given by the Holy Spirit (not earned but received by God's grace).
- To particular Christians (not gifts held by all, but by some; yet each Christian has at least one gift).
- So that they are enabled for ministry (gifts not to be hoarded but to be shared).
- And the church is built up and strengthened (gifts to build and strengthen, not to divide or cause jealousy).

This is clearly the most cognitive and heady part of the Bible study. Be sure that everyone understands each of the five points in the definition. If time permits, you may ask each group to illustrate all five points on a large piece of newsprint and share their drawing with the whole group.

2. It may be a good time now to take a little attitude check. Ask for the group to shout out descriptive words in response to each of these two questions:

How do you feel when I tell you that God has gifted you for carrying on effective ministry?

How do you usually see yourself when you think about being a member of your church? (lazy, inactive, overworked, just a kid, etc.)

Allow time for honest responses and discussion. Then take a quick 30-second stretch and song break.

Let's Get Specific

1. Many Bible passages talk about abilities and talents. These are very important. Four passages in the New Testament, though, actually use the word gifts. These four passages are what we will look at now as we identify 15 spiritual gifts. No doubt we could find more, and lists of spiritual gifts do vary in length. The Holy Spirit gives gifts as He pleases, for certain times and needs to those whom He chooses. Here, though, we will look at 15 gifts that were present in the New Testament church and that most Christians believe are still received by the church today.

Before the session begins, place on 15 sheets of newsprint the 15 gifts and their definitions below along with the Bible reference illustrating each one. Before your group arrives, post the 15 sheets of newsprint on the walls of the room where you are meeting. These 15 gifts all appear in the four passages to be read.

Here are the 15 gifts to be transferred to newsprint. By the way, get creative and celebrative in the way each appears on newsprint.

- Prophet
The gift of speaking for the Word of God for others so that it is communicated effectively. (1 Corinthians 14:1-5)
- Evangelist
The gift of presenting the good news of Jesus Christ to non-Christians so that they believe. (Acts 8:4-8, 26-40)

- Teacher
The gift of communicating the truth of the Scriptures so that others learn. (James 3:1-2)
- Encouragement
The gift of standing alongside fellow Christians and offering them strength, counsel and comfort. (Hebrews 3:12-15)
- Wisdom
The gift of understanding God's will and applying His divine principles to the living out of life. (James 3:13-18).
- Knowledge
The gift of having a firm acquaintance with the great truths of God's Word and what they mean for the church's life.
- Serving
The gift of seeking out the needs of others and acting humbly to meet those needs. (John 13:1-7)
- Helping
The gift of bearing the burdens of others so that they can perform more effectively. (Galatians 6:2)
- Leadership
The gift of motivating, inspiring, directing and delegating so that the church's work moves forward. (Exodus 18:13-26)
- Administration
The gift of keeping the church on course as a segment of its ministry as directed. (Acts 15:12-21)
- Giving
The gift of offering one's material blessings for the Lord's work with willingness, cheerfulness and generosity. (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)
- Showing Mercy
The gift of devoting time and energy to compassionately and lovingly caring for the suffering. (Colossians 3:12)
- Discerning the Spirits
The gift of distinguishing between what is of God and what is of Satan, what is God's will and what is not. (1 John 4:1-6)
- Faith
The gift of heroic trust in God, enabling one to face trial, persecution, suffering and death triumphantly. (Acts 6:8-15)
- Hospitality
The gift of opening one's home to others, especially strangers, with cheerfulness, warmth and a willing heart. (Acts 6:8-15)

1. With the 15 gifts surrounding your group, lead them through the following steps:
 - Ask four from the total group to read these four "gift lists" of the New Testament: Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-10, 27-30; Ephesians 4:7-13; and 1 Peter 4:7-13.
 - Explain that around the room there are 15 of the spiritual gifts listed in these passages. Explain that these gifts were present in the early church and, many believe, are still given by the Holy Spirit to Christians today. Ask participants to take one more look at Ephesians 4:7-13, especially verses 12 and 13. Ask, "What are the purposes of these gifts according to verses 12 and 13?" (Preparing Christians for ministry, building unity and growing to Christian maturity.)
 - Next, send everyone in your group around the room on a personal survey of spiritual gifts. Ask them to stop at each sheet of newsprint, read the gift and its definition, and look up the passage illustrating each gift. By the time they return to their small group, they should have identified at least three of the gifts that sound most like them. Assure them that this is a first try at identifying gifts that they may have. They can base their first try on how fulfilling the description sounds to them, how one or two others in the group respond to their choice and their own recent history. Allow 20 minutes for the around the room survey. Participants can start at different points around the room.
2. When participants return to their small groups, ask them to share with group members the three gifts they chose and to explain why those gifts, at first glance, seem to fit. Group members should be encouraged to ask questions and to respond to each person's choice. Would they have chosen the same gift(s) or others?
3. Close the Bible study with each person saying before the total group, "I am gifted for ministry the church, and here are three gifts that I continue to seek and develop..."

Devotion: Maybe I'm Gifted After All

Songs

Sing songs that emphasize the gifts we have to offer.

Reading

Ask three youth from your group to take parts 1, 2, and 3 in this reading, "Maybe I'm Gifted After All."

Leader: So, my friends, you are gifted.

Youth 1: Sure, I've heard that one before.

Leader: You are gifted.

Youth 1: I don't feel gifted. I feel like a talentless blob.

Youth 2: I agree.

Youth 1: What? That I'm a talentless blob?

Youth 2: No, that I don't feel gifted.

Youth 3: I'm gifted.

Youth 1: If you don't say so yourself.

Youth 2: Some gifted people I know are real klutzes.

Youth 3: I don't care what you say. I'm gifted.

Youth 1: Okay. Name one of your gifts.

Youth 3: I care about people who are needy.

Youth 2: People like us who don't feel gifted, for instance?

Youth 3: Sure, I care about you.

Youth 1: I'm not sure that qualifies as a gift.

Youth 3: It does. I'm gifted.

Youth 1: I wish you'd stop saying that. It sounds so...so...

Youth 2: Braggy and conceited?

Youth 1: Right.

Youth 3: Okay. (Pauses, mumbles quietly.) But caring about people with needs is a gift...(pause)...no matter what you say. (Pause.)

Youth 2: Maybe we don't feel gifted because we don't know what it means to be gifted.

Youth 1: It means honors classes, trophies, MVP awards, and applause.

Youth 3: Not always.

Youth 2: I don't know. If caring about people is a gift, maybe I'm gifted after all. (To leader) What do you think?

Leader: You are gifted. I am sure.

Scripture Reading and Personal Witness

Read James 1:16-18 aloud. Then talk about a gift you feel the Lord has given you, which was unknown to you at first but now discovered and used. Share with your group the impact the gift has had on the following: your self-image, your ministry as a Christian, your family and friends.

Prayers

On sheets of paper, write out prayer requests on the following topics and ask group members to volunteer to speak aloud a one-sentence prayer on each:

For pastors and teachers in the church

For a desire to discover our spiritual gifts

For a sense of being gifted

For an openness to helping others find their gifts

Song

Close with the singing of stanza 1 of "Amazing Grace" followed by the humming of one stanza.

Part Two: Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts

A Bible Study Helping Youth Discover Their Gifts for Ministry

Objectives

That, with the help of the Spirit, participants will...

1. affirm their commitment to discovering their unique set of God-given spiritual gifts;
2. discover their possible spiritual gifts by using an assessment tool, "A Spiritual gifts Inventory for Youth;"
3. receive and give affirmation of their gifts from and to others.

Review and Introduction

1. Before the session begins, post the 15 newsprint sheets from last session around the room. Review with your group how the 15 gifts around them are found in four "gift lists" of the New Testament. State also that there are other spiritual gifts, but we have chosen to focus on these 15, which relate so strongly to our ministry as Christians. It's important for your group to hear again, too, that every Christian receives gifts from the holy Spirit for doing ministry.
2. Next, distribute small adhesive notes to everyone in the group, three to a person. Ask participants to write their names on the three note sheets and then attach them to the three newsprint sheets which carry the specific gifts they first identified as theirs in the last session. If some time has elapsed since the last session, you may need to help a few group members remember the three gifts they chose. When all have posted their names on the appropriate gifts, take a minute to note whose name is on which gift and how the group is distributed among the gifts.
3. Now explain to the group that the Scriptures encourage Christians to discover and use their spiritual gifts. Ask members of the group to read the following passages aloud: 1 Corinthians 12:1; 12:3, and 14:1. Spend some time discussing these questions: Why do people in the church often ignore their spiritual gifts? Why do young Christians often feel ungifted? What are some good results of a Christian's discovery of his or her gifts? In other words, what are the benefits of Christians knowing and using their gifts? Explain that today we will be working at another step in the discovery of our spiritual gifts.

Discovering Your Spiritual gifts

1. There are several approaches to discovering one's spiritual gifts. It's important that your group understand their discovery of spiritual gifts to be a process, over time, with several aspects. Share with your group these important approaches to discovering spiritual gifts:
 - Understanding what spiritual gifts are as presented in the Scriptures (we worked at that in our last session).
 - Taking a spiritual gifts inventory.
 - Receiving an affirmation of our gifts from other Christians.
 - Praying for a God-pleasing identification and use of our spiritual gifts.
 - Seeking opportunities for ministry which allow us to try out and develop our possible gifts.
2. Explain that in this session each of us will take a spiritual gifts inventory as part of our discovery process. Note that it will be interesting to see how many of us stay with the first three gifts we chose in the last session (identified by the adhesive notes posted around the room): "After the inventory is completed by everyone, we'll see if any of us move our note sheets to different gifts."
3. Type out or make copies of "A Spiritual Gifts Inventory for Youth." Distribute one copy to each participant. Review the instructions on the inventory and allow participants about 15-20 minutes to complete it.

When all have completed the inventory, lead them through the following:

- Ask each participant to share the three gifts that surfaced for them in the inventory. Also ask that they share how they feel about those three gifts. Do they seem to fit?
- Invite participants to share their reactions to the inventory. Was it helpful? If so, in what ways?
- Next, ask participants to consider the results of the inventory compared with the three gifts they identified in the last session. Are they the same or different? Encourage them to settle on three gifts.

Then ask them, if necessary, to rearrange their note IDs so that their names are attached to the gifts on which they've settled.

Affirming Our Spiritual Gifts

1. Explain that an important aspect of spiritual-gifts ministry is the affirmation of our gifts received and given within the church. In a moment we will be affirming one another's gifts, but first we want to see how the Scriptures model gift affirmation. Divide the total group (if your group is larger than 10) into the same smaller groups from last session. Ask each group to read the following passages and identify what spiritual gift is being affirmed in each (note that in a few passages more than one gift is being affirmed): Acts 18:24-26; Romans 16:7, 23; Matthew 5:7; 1 Corinthians 16:15-18; Ephesians 6:21-22; Philippians 2:25-30; Philippians 4:14-19; Colossians 4:7-13; and 2 Timothy 1:3-12.

When all the groups have finished, you may want to see how their responses compare for each passage. Restate how Christ and the early church affirmed the gifts of others.

2. Ask each participant to go to the 15 sheets of newsprint and take down the three note IDs placed there by the person on his or her right. All are to return to their small groups with the three note IDs, and share the following:
 - A trait, activity, or talent of this person that exemplifies the presence of this particular gift in the person's life. (For example, if one of the gifts is encouragement, a response could be, "Sheri always says things that make me feel good about myself.")
 - A prayer for the development of this gift in the person's life. (For example, "Lord, bless Carl with many chances to use and develop this gift of service.")

Be sure each person in your group is affirmed, and that each person receives the ministry of prayer. Close by giving participants an opportunity to respond to the affirmation in the total group and with a final affirmation yourself such as, "You are, indeed, a gifted group of Christians!"

Affirming Our Spiritual Gifts

Songs

Sing a few songs about giving and receiving.

Scripture Reading and Personal Witness

Read aloud Philippians 3:1-11. Then talk about the need to do what Paul does here and to evaluate what is most important in our lives. Share some things you now count as "rubbish" (v. 8, NIV) next to the greatest value in your life, Christ. Inventories like Paul's help us set our priorities, recognize our gifts and set a course for our lives. Personalize that from your life story, naming values that have been reordered under Christ in your life.

Prayers

Lead a "Listing Prayer." You prompt each petition as follows, inviting members of your group to speak single words or phrases that list out the item mentioned:

- Lord, help us to throw away the garbage of our lives, such as...
- Lord, help us to find and to celebrate our many blessings, such as...
- Lord, help us to take an inventory of our gifts right here in our group, such as...
- Lord, when our inventories are taken, help us to see that as Christians you want us to accomplish such things as...

Song

Close with "We are Brothers and Sisters in Christ" (Singing Saints Songbook).

A Spiritual Gifts Inventory for Youth

Instructions: Read each statement below and respond as follows: 5=Strongly Agree; 4=Agree; 3=Undecided; 2=Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree. When you have completed your responses, fill in the same numbers on the "Gifts Composite" until you have responded to all the statements.

	5	4	3	2	1
1. I enjoy putting my faith into words.	---	---	---	---	---
2. I have a deep concern for those who do not believe in Christ.	---	---	---	---	---
3. When I've tried helping another person learn, it's been fulfilling for me.	---	---	---	---	---
4. When my friends or family hurt I want to be at their side.	---	---	---	---	---
5. I like to put what I hear in sermons to work in my life.	---	---	---	---	---
6. I'd do pretty well if we'd play Bible Trivia.	---	---	---	---	---
7. I don't mind getting my hands dirty if I can improve another's life.	---	---	---	---	---
8. Hey, if I can make someone's load easier, I'll lend a hand.	---	---	---	---	---
9. If I look behind me, there is usually someone following my lead.	---	---	---	---	---
10. My desk, dresser drawer, and locker say I'm pretty well organized.	---	---	---	---	---
11. I feel good about contributing money for the Lord's work at church.	---	---	---	---	---
12. My heart aches when I see pictures of hungry people.	---	---	---	---	---
13. I can usually figure out if something is good or bad.	---	---	---	---	---
14. If someone at school ridicules or questions my faith, I'll take a stand.	---	---	---	---	---
15. When I have my own home, I hope it can be used to entertain many guests.	---	---	---	---	---
16. I'm not afraid to speak up for Christ.	---	---	---	---	---
17. If someone asked me, "How do you get to heaven?" I'd enjoy giving an answer.	---	---	---	---	---
18. Teaching Sunday school appeals to me.	---	---	---	---	---
19. I like building up my friends.	---	---	---	---	---
20. I can usually find something in a Bible study that applies to my life.	---	---	---	---	---
21. My friends at church seem to respect what I know about God and the Bible.	---	---	---	---	---
22. I'd say I'm humble (without being proud about it).	---	---	---	---	---
23. I enjoy working toward a goal even if I don't get much credit.	---	---	---	---	---
24. At school and at church, I like to take on a lot of responsibility.	---	---	---	---	---
25. In conversations, meetings, and classes, I usually stay on track.	---	---	---	---	---
26. Where money is concerned, giving appeals to me more than receiving.	---	---	---	---	---
27. If our youth group was planning to visit a nursing home, I'd love to go.	---	---	---	---	---
28. It's usually easy to know if something is God's will or not.	---	---	---	---	---
29. Others may give up, but I'm usually the one who trusts God and hangs in there.	---	---	---	---	---
30. I want to help people, even if I've never met them before.	---	---	---	---	---
31. I'll tell my friends the truth, even if it hurts.	---	---	---	---	---
32. I love inviting friends to church.	---	---	---	---	---
33. When I learn something new about God, right away I want to share it with others.	---	---	---	---	---
34. I think I know how to comfort someone who's hurting.	---	---	---	---	---

	5	4	3	2	1
35. I like using a Bible passage in trying to help a friend.	---	---	---	---	---
36. I usually can explain my church's teachings on a subject.	---	---	---	---	---
37. I'd give up a vacation in Hawaii to rebuild a poor family's roof in Appalachia.	---	---	---	---	---
38. I'm a team player.	---	---	---	---	---
39. I think I'm able to bring out the best in others.	---	---	---	---	---
40. I like to plan what I do and stay with the plan.	---	---	---	---	---
41. I really do see all my money as belonging to God, so I don't really mind giving Him back a lot of it.	---	---	---	---	---
42. I am honestly deeply frustrated that I can't do more to help the poor.	---	---	---	---	---
43. My friends often ask me for my opinion on a decision they're making.	---	---	---	---	---
44. I'll move ahead confidently, even if I'm not sure of the outcome.	---	---	---	---	---
45. If I had my way, we'd have a homeless person in our home once a week.	---	---	---	---	---
46. I'm usually the one to bring up talk about God, faith, or church.	---	---	---	---	---
47. I pray often for the Holy Spirit to bring particular people to faith.	---	---	---	---	---
48. I think it would be easy to teach a youth Bible study.	---	---	---	---	---
49. I go out of my way to say good, positive things to people.	---	---	---	---	---
50. My friends seem to respect me enough to follow my advice.	---	---	---	---	---
51. I know my way around the Bible.	---	---	---	---	---
52. Whatever it takes to relieve someone's suffering, I'll do it.	---	---	---	---	---
53. I don't mind playing second fiddle.	---	---	---	---	---
54. If I need help tackling a big task, I'll ask for it.	---	---	---	---	---
55. Words like loosey-goosey, free spirit, and unstructured don't apply to me.	---	---	---	---	---
56. If I were to win a \$1 million sweepstakes, my first thought would be, "Wow, can I further God's work now!"	---	---	---	---	---
57. Sometimes I cry for the unborn who die in abortions and wonder what I can do to help.	---	---	---	---	---
58. I don't hesitate to say, "I'm convinced this is right!"	---	---	---	---	---
59. In hard times, my Christian faith has been as solid as ever.	---	---	---	---	---
60. I wish we would open our home to guests more often.	---	---	---	---	---

Gift Composite

Now that you have responded to all 60 statements, transfer the number value you gave each statement to the chart below. Total the four values for each gift and circle the three gifts that receive the highest composite.

Gifts				Total		
1. Prophet	1 ___	16 ___	31 ___	46 ___ =	___	___
2. Evangelist	2 ___	17 ___	32 ___	47 ___ =	___	___
3. Teacher	3 ___	18 ___	33 ___	48 ___ =	___	___
4. Encouragement	4 ___	19 ___	34 ___	49 ___ =	___	___
5. Wisdom	5 ___	20 ___	35 ___	50 ___ =	___	___
6. Knowledge	6 ___	21 ___	36 ___	51 ___ =	___	___
7. Serving	7 ___	22 ___	37 ___	52 ___ =	___	___
8. Helping	8 ___	23 ___	38 ___	53 ___ =	___	___
9. Leadership	9 ___	24 ___	39 ___	54 ___ =	___	___
10. Administration	10 ___	25 ___	40 ___	55 ___ =	___	___
11. Giving	11 ___	26 ___	41 ___	56 ___ =	___	___
12. Showing Mercy	12 ___	27 ___	42 ___	57 ___ =	___	___
13. Discerning the Spirits	13 ___	28 ___	43 ___	58 ___ =	___	___
14. Faith	14 ___	29 ___	44 ___	59 ___ =	___	___
15. Hospitality	15 ___	30 ___	45 ___	60 ___ =	___	___

Part Three: Gifts and Ministries

A Bible Study on Putting Our Gifts to Work

Objectives

That, with the help of the Spirit, participants will...

3. understand the relationship between gifts and ministries;
4. begin discovering ways in which they can put their gifts to work;
5. complete a spiritual gifts covenant, establishing a plan for using their spiritual gifts.

Review and Introduction

1. Review with the group the five approaches to discovering one's spiritual gifts as outlined in the last session. Mention that so far we have tried to gain an awareness of our gifts by understanding what the Scriptures teach about gifts; by taking an inventory; by receiving an affirmation of our gifts; and by praying with our spiritual gifts in mind. In this session we will talk about discovering and developing our spiritual gifts by being involved in hands-on ministries.
2. Ask participants to share with the total group gifts and skills that can only be discovered and developed by using them. (A great gift for playing the piano, for instance, may never be discovered if one never has a chance to play!) Encourage the group to recall times when doing something helped them discover they could actually do it well. Explain that spiritual gifts are like this. They are gifts meant to be opened and presented by doing ministry.
3. As a total group, ask participants to respond to each of these statements when they are read aloud in the group. Each concerns people's perspectives on youth and ministry in the church, for better or for worse.
 - Youth are the church or the future. Until they grow up, they are better off learning about ministry rather than becoming involved in it yet. They will have enough time for that later.
 - Young people have the energy, the gifts, and the commitment to be a major force for ministry in the church. They are the greatest untapped source of spiritual power on earth!
 - Some youth are gifted for ministry. Some are not. Not everyone is a varsity football player, and not everyone is a minister.

When the group has evaluated the three statements, be sure to affirm these two truths: 1) Everyone in the church, including youth, is gifted by the Holy Spirit. 2) The gifts young people have are meant to be used in ministry now.

Gifts and Ministries in the New Testament

1. If your group is larger than 10, divide into the same smaller groups of the last two sessions. Introduce this part of the study by saying that we'll now look at how gifts were used in specific ministries in the New Testament. In small groups, participants are to identify the gift or gifts displayed in each of the passages below and the ministry that shows the gift at work. You may wish to put the passages on newsprint. Ask each group to appoint a recorder who will take notes and report to the total group. Here are the passages with the person spotlighted in each: Acts 2:1-41 (Peter); Acts 4:1-20 (Peter and John); Acts 6:1-4 (the seven); Acts 28:7-8 (Publius); Philemon (Paul); Hebrews 5:1-4 (the elders); 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (Paul).

Allow 15-20 minutes for this task. Then ask each group to report its findings. No doubt the groups will differ on the specific gift or gifts at work in each instance. The exercise should show how a variety of gifts can feed a ministry.

2. Any discussion of spiritual gifts must include a look at the fruit of the Spirit. Gifts relate to our activities as Christians. The fruit of the Spirit, on the other hand, relates to the attitudes with which we approach our gifts and ministries. Ask each small group to look at Galatians 5:22-23. As they consider the nine spiritual fruits listed there, each participant is to answer the following: What spiritual fruit do I really need to improve as I think about being in ministry? Which of the nine spiritual fruits do I appreciate most in others in the church right now?

Finally look at 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 with the total group, focusing on Paul's heavy emphasis on needing the fruit of love as we use our gifts in ministry.

My Gifts and Ministry

1. Assign to pairs (if your group is small) or to your ongoing small groups four or five of the 15 spiritual gifts discussed in the last two sessions. Each pair or group is to consider each gift and list on a sheet of newsprint specific ministries, activities, and tasks that put the gift to work. For example, if the gift is showing mercy, visiting a shut-in would be a ministry putting mercy to work. Encourage the pairs or groups to build as long a list as possible. Use a separate sheet of newsprint (or two) for each gift.

When their sheets are complete, ask each group to present their lists to the total group. Then post each gift-and-ministry list around the room. (Note: Be on hand to answer questions regarding the definition and focus of each of the 15 gifts. Be ready to offer a few examples such as the gift of teacher being exemplified in midweek school teaching or the gift of administration being exemplified in retreat planning.)

2. Now ask participants to recall their respective three gifts identified at the end of the last session. Provide each with paper and pencil and ask them now to make their own list of ministries attached to their gifts. Encourage each to have at least seven hands-on activities by which they can continue to discover, use and develop each of their three gifts. They may use the sheets posted around the room as a resource. Allow time for them to share at least one of their lists with their group. Also encourage groups to comment on how well the ministry seems to apply to the gift and how practical such a ministry is for youth involvement in the church today.

A Spiritual Gifts Covenant

This final segment of the Bible study will provide an opportunity for each participant to pull things together and to make some commitments toward the future. Allow about 10 minutes for each participant to complete the Spiritual Gifts Covenant at the end of this study.

When all have completed the form, allow time for each member of your group to read aloud his or her covenant. (Note: Be sure to allow time for each participant to line up a partner with duties as outlined on the form.)

Finally, see if you can find a place in the youth room or even in a more conspicuous place to display the covenants. It's a great affirmation of the giftedness and commitment to ministry of your church's youth.

Devotion: Excuse Me, but I Am the Church, Too!

Song

Sing "We Are the Church," striking the devotional theme of being the church together now.

Reading

Recruit four adult counselors or church members to speak the four parts as they stand surrounding the group.

Voice 1: Aren't they nice? I like young people.

Voice 2: I like them some of the time—when they behave themselves.

Voice 3: You mean, when they act like adults.

Voice 2: Correct.

Voice 4: Let us not forget that what we have here is the future of our church.

Voice 1: Aren't they just wonderful? Don't you just love the pretty little songs they sing and how they all seem so close and everything?

Voice 2: This is getting a little too heavy for me.

Voice 1: Oh, I think they're just...just...peachy, that's it.

Voice 2: Peachy. Okay.

Voice 4: Let us not forget that what we have here is the future of the church.

Voice 2: Ah, yes, right.

Voice 3: I think the future looks bright.

Voice 1: Very bright. In fact...

Voice 2: Peach, I bet just peachy keen.

Voice 3: I wonder when the future kicks in for these kids.

Voice 2: What do you mean?

Voice 3: If they're the future of the church, when does that future happen?

Voice 2: Not for a while, I hope.

Voice 3: I think the future begins, well, in the very next moment. I think their future is the next thing they say, the next thing they do.

Voice 2: An interesting idea, but hardly practical.

Voice 3: What do you mean?

Voice 2: We can't expect them to, ah, be the church already, can we?

Voice 3: Why not?

Voice 1: Yes, why not? They're so nice. I love young people.

Voice 2: But, ah, they're not ready. Are they?

Voice 3: Depends on what you mean by "ready."

Scripture Reading and Conversation

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. Ask participants to respond to the attitudes they heard expressed in the reading. What adult-to-youth perspective did they hear? How do they respond to those perspectives?

Talk about your personal appreciation of the variety of gifts and ministry carried on by your group and your church and the need to celebrate our variety of ages, gifts, and ministries.

Song

A Spiritual Gifts Covenant

By grace, God's people have been gifted by the Holy Spirit for ministry in His church and in the world. Following a study of the Scriptures, a personal inventory, prayer, and affirmation of my friends, I now make the following commitment:

I will do all that I can, by God's power working within me to seek, develop, and use the following three gifts:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Over the next year, I will strive to use these gifts in the following practical ministries (at least three):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

To encourage and pray for me as I develop and use my spiritual gifts, _____ has agreed to be a partner with me in this covenant, speaking frequently with me about my progress and growth.

Signed this day, _____

(your signature)

(your partner's signature)