**Topic: Spiritual Gifts**

**Bible Passage: 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 12-20; 27**

**Activity: Made for a Purpose**

Give each small group a shoebox and a pen. Instruct the group to write possible uses for the shoebox on the outside of the box. Encourage the group to be creative. After a few minutes, have the group share their responses. They will come up with some practical and some crazy uses for the shoebox. Praise them for their “creativity” and then remind them that the shoebox can be used for many different things but it was made for one purpose: to hold shoes.

**After the activity, say:** There are hundreds of uses for a shoebox, but really it was created for one purpose and one purpose only. While the other uses are helpful or may be even funny, it will always be best used to hold shoes!

God has created us for a specific mission and He has given us spiritual gifts to help us accomplish that mission. God has called us to love Him and love others. He wants us to share His love with those around us, but how do we do that?

**Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 12-20; 27**

Do you remember the shoebox that we talked about earlier? While the shoebox had many purposes, its primary purpose is to hold shoes. That is what it was created for.

Likewise, we have been given spiritual gifts. These gifts can be used in many ways for many good purposes. However, they were given to us for the purpose of expanding the Kingdom of God. If we do not use them in God’s service, we are like a body part that is missing. As we serve together and use the gifts that God has given to us, we see how God can use us to be His hands and feet.

**Read 1 Peter 4:10**

When these gifts are used to serve God and His purpose, we discover that they are powerful and effective tools that help us to accomplish the mission He’s given to us. But to better use these gifts, we need to understand them a little bit. Let’s take a few minutes to talk about exactly what is a spiritual gift.

A spiritual gift is a God-given capacity that helps you to serve Him and expand His Kingdom. God gives a spiritual gift when you place your faith in Him. This means that there are no Christians without spiritual gifts. God gives these gifts so that His followers will have the power and tools necessary to spread His love. It’s also important to understand that there are different kinds of gifts, and God gives us all different ones so that we can work together to accomplish His will.

In small groups, we’re going to take a short test that will help you to discover the gifts that God has given you. The test that we are going to use will focus on 10 different spiritual gifts. While there are additional spiritual gifts that God may give, these 10 are the most likely to be present in your life at this age. As you grow and mature, it will be a good idea to continue to take these types of tests to discover how God is leading you to serve Him.

**Optional Teaching:**

Before you take the test, let me explain each of the 10 gifts that we’ll be talking about. (Used from the **Involvement/Spiritual Gifts Perspective** that coincides with the Gifts inventory by Ray Johnston)

**EVANGELISM**

Abilities: Comfortably share the gospels with results.

Opportunities: Visitation, Outreach, Missions.

Warning: Don’t think everyone should be as dedicated to evangelism as you are.

Reward: Leading people to Christ glorifies God.

Prayer: *“Dear God, increase my vision for the lost, while helping me to understand why others do not share my burden.”*

**Scripture References:** Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:5; The Book of Acts—especially Acts 8 & 21:8; 1 Corinthians 12

**EXHORTATION/ENCOURGEMENT**

Abilities: Share practical steps of action

Opportunities: Counseling, Crisis Center, Evangelism.

Warning: Choose words wisely.

Reward: Seeing people respond to your advice and helping them through problems.

Prayer: *“Dear God, use me to say what you would have me to say, not what I feel at the moment.”*

**Scripture References:** Acts 11:23-24; 1 John 2:1; 1 Corinthians 12

**FAITH**

Abilities: Unique ability to trust God and His Word for the impossible

Opportunities: Prayer, Counseling, Finances.

Warning: Believe, as everything depends upon God, but work, as though everything depends upon you.

Reward: Influencing others to increase their faith

Prayer: *“Dear God, increase my faith, while I increase my work for you. Don’t let me become lazy.”*

**Scripture References:** 1 Corinthians 12; Proverbs 29:18

**GIVING**

Abilities: Using stewardship to further God’s Kingdom.

Opportunities: Finance or Planning Committee

Warning: Don’t use money to control others

Reward: Knowing you contributed to the advancement of ministry without personal recognition.

Prayer: *“Dear God, use my success with finances to bless the ministry and others.”*

**Scripture References:** Romans 12:8; Acts 4: 32-35; 1 Corinthians 12

**HOSPITALITY**

Abilities: Welcoming people into their home.

Opportunities: Homeless, Encouragement, Housing.

Warning: Balance your family and personal needs with constantly inviting people to your home.

Reward: Giving others a comfortable rest and time of fellowship.

Prayer: *“Dear God, help me to work as hard as being close to you as I do at being hospitable.”*

**Scripture References:** 1 Corinthians 12

**LEADERSHIP**

Abilities: Obvious influence to motivate others.

Opportunities: Men’s or Women’s ministries, discipleship, support groups.

Warning: Lead by example, not just motivation.

Reward: Developing leaders to take over what you have done.

Prayer: *“Dear God, make me a strong and sensitive leader. Help me to be a well-balanced leader!”*

**Scripture References:** Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12; 1 Timothy 5:17

**PASTOR/SHEPHERDING**

Abilities: Ministering to groups of needing leadership.

Opportunities: Committee Chairperson, Visitation.

Warning: Don’t get discouraged with those who don’t follow.

Reward: Seeing the ministry improve.

Prayer: “Dear God, help me be patient with those who are apathetic or spiritually weak.”

**Scripture References:** Isaiah 40:11; John 10:11; 1 Corinthians 12

**SERVING/MINISTRY/HELPS**

Abilities: Serving behind the scenes

Opportunities: Nursery, Sunday school, Ushering.

Warning: Don’t become weary in doing well.

Reward: Knowing you make a difference doing what no one else may want to do.

Prayer: *“Dear God, Thanks you for appreciating my labor of love, regardless of what others may fail to appreciate.”*

**Scripture References:** 1 Corinthians 12; Acts 6; Acts 9; 1 Corinthians 16

**SHOWING MERCY**

Abilities: Giving sympathy and/or empathy to the hurting.

Opportunities: Hospital, Benevolence, counseling/

Warning: Don’t be a sucker to everyone.

Reward: Knowing you helped those who no one else would help.

Prayer: *“Dear God, use me to not only help people by showing care, but also sharing truth and TOUGH LOVE when necessary.”*

**Scripture References:** Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12

**TEACHING**

Abilities: Clarify truth/Insights as to why facts are true.

Opportunities: Teaching, Training, Library.

Warning: Don’t neglect other responsibilities.

Reward: Knowing people learn the truth.

Prayer: *“Dear God, help me to be practical, not just impart truth.”*

**Scripture References: 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11; Romans 12:7**

**Small Group Activity: Spiritual Gifts Inventory**

Break preteens into small groups and have them complete the 50-question spiritual gifts inventory by Ray Johnston from Developing Student Leaders. The inventory can be found at <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/5330065/spiritual-gifts-test>.

After preteens have completed the inventory and scored their responses, give them each a 3x5 index card and have them write their top 3-5 gifts. Lead them in a discussion to brainstorm ways they could use those gifts to serve. Have them write those responses on the index card as well. End the small group time by praying for preteens and the mission that God has called them to complete. Encourage each of them to look for ways to use the gifts God has given them.