



Free the gifts
Share the Word



Archdiocese
of Gatineau

DISCERNMENT OF GIFTS

DEAR FRIEND,

If you attend Sunday Mass regularly, you will have heard the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). In it, Jesus tells how a wealthy man, on the point of taking a trip, entrusts his property to three stewards: five talents to the first, two talents to the second, one talent to the third. The first two exploit these large sums during the absence of the owner, so that on his return they can give him back twice what he had entrusted to them. But the third, out of fear, only buries his talent to preserve it without making it bear fruit. Obviously the owner is deeply disappointed in his decision and rebukes his servant, reminding him that he could at least have invested it in the bank in order to generate a little interest on the capital.

Typically, the homily you hear on the day of this reading invites you to recognize the talents that God has entrusted to you and to share them with others, both inside and outside the Christian community. Perhaps the homilist points out connections with the passage from the first letter to the Corinthians (12:7), where Saint Paul teaches that the Holy Spirit distributes charisms or gifts among Christians in order to build the Body of Christ, the Church. It may be that in listening to this teaching, you said to yourself. "But I have no particular talent, I don't have any charism of the Holy Spirit. I'm an ordinary person, in what way can this parable of Jesus concern me? How can this teaching of Saint Paul apply to me?"

The document you have in hand has one purpose only: to help you discover and identify what might be your talent, your charism. It is a very simple tool - you just have to evaluate the relevance of forty statements, compile the results and think about it a little. Maybe it will help you see how the Word of God applies to you, and to what service or commitment the Lord is calling you.

Obviously, every tool has its limits, and this one is no exception. It is not very scientific, some distinctions are debatable and the questionnaire itself could probably be improved. Above all, you should not feel boxed in by the result of the exercise, as if you only had the talents identified by your score. That being said, this exercise can help you think about your capacities, strengths and abilities. Above all, it can help you get involved where you would find the most interest and joy. That's important!

So, welcome to the discernment of spiritual gifts. Have fun answering the questions, but think hard about what they reveal about you. You will find your place in building up a more vibrant Christian community and a more beautiful world!

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INSTRUCTIONS

For each of the following 60 questions, circle the number that best describes how you perceive yourself.

You could also ask someone who knows you well to answer the questionnaire with you or for

you. His or her perception of your strengths will help you identify the gifts with which you have been truly blessed. After answering each question, go to the scoring grid on page 6 to calculate your results.

0 - Never or I can't	1 - Rarely true	2 - Sometimes true	3 - Often true	4 - Always true	
1. When I am presented with an objective to be realized, I immediately think of the steps I will have to take in order to achieve the desired result.	0	1	2	3	4
2. I like to express myself artistically.	0	1	2	3	4
3. My faith leads me to seek the will of God in all the circumstances of my life.	0	1	2	3	4
4. I am able to speak of the Gospel to non-believers so that they understand easily and are touched.	0	1	2	3	4
5. I am concerned about those who are insecure in their faith because of trials or conflicts.	0	1	2	3	4
6. I am continually aware of the presence of God in my life and in the lives of others.	0	1	2	3	4
7. I am continually blessed by God and respond to these blessings by giving of my time and sharing my resources.	0	1	2	3	4
8. I like to meet new people and get to know them.	0	1	2	3	4
9. I believe that God hears and responds to my daily prayers.	0	1	2	3	4
10. I have a strong desire to deepen my knowledge of the Bible and the Christian faith.	0	1	2	3	4
11. I willingly accept responsibilities. When people work with me, they know we will reach the goal.	0	1	2	3	4
12. When I see someone in need I feel compelled to help.	0	1	2	3	4
13. I like to sing and I like to inspire others by my singing.	0	1	2	3	4
14. I find joy in expressing myself by playing a musical instrument.	0	1	2	3	4
15. I am motivated to offer spiritual accompaniment to people who walk in faith.	0	1	2	3	4
16. I prefer to work discreetly when I want to contribute to the success of a project.	0	1	2	3	4
17. I like to work with my hands in activities that require some experience to be well done.	0	1	2	3	4
18. I like to communicate the meaning of the Bible in such a way that it becomes alive and understandable to others.	0	1	2	3	4
19. When a challenge arises, I am usually able to identify the correct solution.	0	1	2	3	4
20. I am able to articulate an idea or reflection and to express it in writing in a clear and inspiring way.	0	1	2	3	4

21. I like to organize ideas, thoughts, hopes and dreams to formulate a concrete plan of action.	0	1	2	3	4
22. I can translate into artistic forms what I perceive in my imagination.	0	1	2	3	4
23. I have already helped people discern the will of God in the decisions they had to make .	0	1	2	3	4
24. I like to work with non-believers and I appreciate the opportunity to engage with them in dialogue about faith and commitment.	0	1	2	3	4
25. When I realize that someone is facing a crisis, I feel compelled to give them my help and support.	0	1	2	3	4
26. My confidence in the Spirit's presence in the midst of a personal crisis is a testimony to others.	0	1	2	3	4
27. I organize my time and resources in order to share with church groups or community organizations.	0	1	2	3	4
28. I often welcome people to my home for small group meetings or social gatherings.	0	1	2	3	4
29. It often happens to me that I am so deeply inhabited by the presence of God in my prayer that I do not hear what is going on around me.	0	1	2	3	4
30. My day would not be complete if I did not find time to read the Bible.	0	1	2	3	4
31. When I am in a group, others often turn to me for advice, clarification or solutions.	0	1	2	3	4
32. I have a great desire for justice with regard to homeless people, people who do not have the resources to feed themselves and those who are in distress and do not find comfort.	0	1	2	3	4
33. I have sung during group activities and felt the presence of God at that time.	0	1	2	3	4
34. When I play music, it often happens that inspiration arises in me and that others feel it too.	0	1	2	3	4
35. I have accepted the responsibility of spiritually accompanying one or more persons in their faith journey.	0	1	2	3	4
36. People recognize that without the tasks I accomplish and go unnoticed, their work would be more difficult.	0	1	2	3	4
37. I am skilled in the construction, repair or restoration of objects and I enjoy it.	0	1	2	3	4
38. I express my faith by helping others to discover the power of the truth found in the Bible.	0	1	2	3	4
39. People come to me to find help in living the Christian faith and Gospel values in their lives and personal situations.	0	1	2	3	4
40. I feel compelled to express my thoughts and feelings in writing so that others may find meaning in life.	0	1	2	3	4
41. I have had success in organizing, directing and motivating people who are trying to achieve a goal.	0	1	2	3	4
42. My artistic work gives spiritual strength to both believers and non-believers.	0	1	2	3	4
43. In my parish, I am often asked whether a project that is being considered is consistent with the mission of the Church.	0	1	2	3	4
44. I find it easy to share with unbelievers what Jesus represents for me.	0	1	2	3	4
45. People who struggle with existential issues come to me for help.	0	1	2	3	4

46. I see that beautiful things are happening in our parish and I keep my optimism despite the pessimism of others.	0	1	2	3	4
47. When I receive money that I did not expect to receive, I often think of sharing this gift with the Church.	0	1	2	3	4
48. I like to receive guests and help them feel at ease.	0	1	2	3	4
49. Believers have asked me to pray for a healing in their lives and have spoken to me about the effect of my prayer.	0	1	2	3	4
50. My study of the Bible allows me to help others in their own faith journey of faith.	0	1	2	3	4
51. People tell me that they like to work with me because they know the task will be completed successfully.	0	1	2	3	4
52. People are surprised at the ease with which I work for those who suffer in their minds or in their bodies.	0	1	2	3	4
53. I feel small and grateful at the thought that my singing has inspired others and revived their hope in life.	0	1	2	3	4
54. Others have told me that they were touched by my way of playing a musical instrument.	0	1	2	3	4
55. People come to me for spiritual help, leading to a long-term relationship.	0	1	2	3	4
56. When I turn off the lights, put up the tables, work in a kitchen or put the chairs back, I feel that I have done service to the Lord.	0	1	2	3	4
57. My knowledge of construction, maintenance, or repair has been of great value to my parish and to others.	0	1	2	3	4
58. People have told me that I have the gift of taking difficult ideas or concepts and making them understandable.	0	1	2	3	4
59. When questions or answers are needed at work or in my parish, my opinion is often sought.	0	1	2	3	4
60. My written texts have helped others to better understand their own lives.	0	1	2	3	4

SCORING GRID

For each set of three questions, write on the following lines the number (either 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4) that you circled for each one. Add them up and enter the total on the last line. For example, if you circled 2, 4 and 3 for questions 1, 21 and 41 in the "administration" category, write these results on the respective lines, add 2 + 4 + 3 for a total of 9 and enter 9 on the last line.

The most obvious gifts will usually have a total of 7 or more. If you have more than one gift with a total of 7 or more, all these gifts can serve to

identify a 'cluster of gifts'. Notice how each gift in the cluster can complement and support the others. Each of the gifts in such a cluster should be developed in order to properly identify your charism.

This inventory will help you discover and free your gifts. Remember that this is not a scientific instrument. Your perceptions will be validated by others and confirmed in prayer and by their use over time.

ADMINISTRATION

Questions 1, 21, 41

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

ARTISTRY

Questions 2, 22, 42

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

DISCERNMENT

Questions 3, 23, 43

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

EVANGELIZATION

Questions 4, 24, 44

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

EXHORTATION

Questions 5, 25, 45

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

FAITH

Questions 6, 26, 46

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

GENEROSITY

Questions 7, 27, 47

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

HOSPITALITY

Questions 8, 28, 48

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

INTERCESSION

Questions 9, 29, 49

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

KNOWLEDGE

Questions 10, 30, 50

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

LEADERSHIP

Questions 11, 31, 51

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

MERCY

Questions 12, 32, 52

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

VOCAL MUSIC

Questions 13, 33, 53

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Questions 14, 34, 54

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

PASTORING

Questions 15, 35, 55

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

SERVICE

Questions 16, 36, 56

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

SKILLED CRAFT

Questions 17, 37, 57

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

TEACHING

Questions 18, 38, 58

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

WISDOM

Questions 19, 39, 59

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

WRITING

Questions 20, 40, 60

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

RESULTS

Circle the five highest totals (those with a total of 7 or more). Transcribe these spiritual gifts on the lines below starting with the gift that received the highest total. In case of a tie, choose the gift that you think has been the most successful in the past or that you think will be the most fruitful in the future.

This group of gifts forms your "cluster of gifts".

What gift has been given to you? Delve into the question using these three approaches:

1. PRAYER:

Seek the help of the Holy Spirit to evaluate your gifts.

2. THE STUDY:

Familiarize yourself with the definitions of the various gifts and suggestions for commitment offered for each gift. This will give you a solid foundation to identify your own gifts.

3. PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Identify the feelings associated with each gift in your cluster. By reviewing the proposed commitment suggested for each gift, ask yourself how you would feel in exercising the various types of ministries corresponding to gift in your cluster. The exercise of your gifts should be a source of joy for you.

NOTE YOUR RESULTS.

By exercising your spiritual gifts, be attentive to the results produced by your efforts. Using your gifts should yield positive results in your community and around you.

PAY ATTENTION TO AFFIRMATION.

Be aware of the affirmation you receive from members of your family, your friends and members of your community. They will acknowledge and confirm your gifts by their congratulations and their expressions of gratitude for a job well done.

EXERCISE YOUR GIFTS.

All Christians must work together and support one another, recognizing the diversity of gifts. Our gifts allow us to be better prepared and equipped than others to serve in particular areas. Those who serve in areas for which they have received a gift will be more efficient and joyful than when they engage in areas for which they have not received a gift.

***SUGGESTED AREAS OF INVOLVEMENT
CORRESPONDING TO EACH GIFT***

In what kind of service will you be most effective? The following examples are presented as a starting point and should not be considered as an exhaustive list. You can use it to begin exploring ways to exercise your gifts in the service of your parish and community.

ADMINISTRATION:

Parish pastoral council, finance committee, fabrique assembly, coordinator of catechesis, parish coordinator, chief financial officer, team leader.

ARTISTRY:

Making of banners, theatre club, puppetry, video and audio productions, photography, crafts, decor team, design team.

DISCERNMENT:

Parish pastoral council, long-term planning team, social action team, peer counselling, facilitator of a support group.

EVANGELIZATION:

Reception of new parishioners, evangelization committee, communication and publicity, parish visitation.

EXHORTATION:

Peer-ministry team, visiting hospitals, homes or institutions, ministry by phone, peer counselling, small group facilitator.

FAITH:

Chair of parish pastoral council, long-term planning team, leader of Bible study group, teaching.

GENEROSITY:

Fundraising, stewardship team, volunteer coordination, personal witnessing.

HOSPITALITY:

Ministry of welcoming, sponsorship of new parishioners, host for home Bible study group, reception or information centre, meal service, catering during fellowship meetings.

INTERCESSION:

Prayer chain, prayer partner, family prayers, praise and worship services, healing Masses.

KNOWLEDGE :

Coordinator of the library or parish resource centre, nomination committee, long-term planning team, parish pastoral council.

LEADERSHIP:

Coordinator of catechesis, charring committees of all kinds, coordinator of social activities, coordinator of a summer Bible school, chair of the parish pastoral council, speaker at special events.

MERCY:

Home visits, visits to hospitals and other institutions, transportation to parish activities, social action team, head of the support team, telephone ministry.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC:

Orchestra member, accompanist of the choir, music for special events, organist, music programs during various activities.

VOCAL MUSIC:

Parish choir, vocal ensemble, leader of son for the children's liturgy of the Word, liturgical animator.

PASTORING:

Facilitator of home Bible study groups, outreach to new parishioners, counselling for youth or adults, animation of small faith teams, telephone ministry.

SERVICE:

Computer data entry, gathering news for the parish bulletin, sound system technician, liturgy recording, caring for children, maintenance of buildings or grounds, cleaning of the kitchen, transportation.

MANUAL SKILLS:

Maintenance and cleaning of buildings, electrician, mason, plumber, maintenance and mechanical repair, oper-

ation and repair of audio-visual system, computer maintenance, webmaster.

TEACHING:

Animation of a Bible study group for adults, liturgy of the Word for children, catechesis for adolescents, lecturer, leader of extracurricular activities for young people.

WISDOM:

Long-term planning team, parish pastoral council, peer counselling, leader of a support group, peer support team.

WRITING:

Author of articles for the parish bulletin, publisher of the parish bulletin, webmaster, public relations, advertising committee, letter writing.

CONTEXTUAL COMMITMENTS

Your spiritual gifts do not appear and disappear as you cross the doors of your parish church. The gifts God has given you are always with you. They are also given to serve in everyday life to give glory to

God and serve others. Take time to identify how your gifts can be used in the various contexts identified below.

AT HOME, WITH FAMILY

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

AT WORK, WITH COLLEAGUES

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

IN THE COMMUNITY

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Adapted from a document prepared by the Diocese of Cleveland. Inspired from an inventory written by Neal Boese and Patricia Haller and published by Division for Congregation Ministries, ELCA.