

DISCOVERING YOUR **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**





DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

The United Methodist Church

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

You may use this booklet as an individual or with a group. If you are using this booklet as an individual, prayerfully read through each section and take the Spiritual Gifts Assessment to gain an understanding of how God has gifted you for ministry.

If you are using this booklet as a group, use the group study guide, which is found on page 14.



INTRODUCTION

Each of us is a unique person, created by God with particular personalities, physical attributes, and talents. We have likes and dislikes. Why do some people love spicy food and others hate it? Because each person's taste buds react to different kinds of food. A food choice doesn't make someone better or worse than another; it's just part of who that individual is.

Spiritual gifts are another aspect that makes us distinct. They enable followers of Jesus Christ to play important roles in the life of their church through the use of their particular mix of spiritual gifts.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NRSV) says, "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

We are given these gifts for the benefit of others: our families, our friends, our work, and our church. As a result, it's important to discover your spiritual gifts and the spiritual gifts of others.

The Spiritual Gift Assessment Tool is designed to help you and people in your ministry to discover spiritual gifts. Here are three ways spiritual gifts affect the whole community of faith:

1. The use of spiritual gifts provides life and vitality to individuals and to the congregation. By using your spiritual gifts, you are contributing to the spiritual health of the church.
2. When an individual neglects to use his or her spiritual gifts, the whole community suffers.
3. When an individual is doing ministry in an area he or she is not gifted for, this leads to dissatisfaction and hurts the whole community of faith.



WHERE DO SPIRITUAL GIFTS COME FROM?

In Acts 2:38, Peter responds to the people who ask what they must do to be followers of Jesus. He says, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

In this statement, we find a fantastic promise: When we give our lives to Jesus Christ, we receive more than forgiveness and eternal life. We also are filled with the Holy Spirit, whose role in our lives is to provide us with guidance and power for living this life. As a result, we are given spiritual gifts that allow us to find our place in God’s community of faith. As we employ these gifts in daily living, we find fulfillment and purpose in our relationship with God and with others.



SPIRITUAL GIFTS HELP YOU LIVE OUT YOUR CALL

The Wesleyan understanding of faith centers on the idea that life is an ongoing process of conversion that is highlighted by responding to these four calls:

**GOD CALLS US TO BE IN A RELATIONSHIP
(PREVENIENT GRACE)**



**JESUS' CALL TO FOLLOW LEADS TO NEW LIFE
(JUSTIFICATION)**



**THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TO RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SERVICE
(SANCTIFICATION)**



**WE ARE CALLED TO LOVE OTHERS IN THE NAME OF JESUS
(LOVE)**

When we discover our spiritual gifts, each of us is given the power to live into God's call as the Holy Spirit shapes our understanding of ourselves. Because conversion is the process of *letting go* of the things that hold us back and *putting on* the spirit of God that renews and gives life, the use of our spiritual gifts is life changing.



HOW DO I DISCOVER MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

First, you need to know what they are. The Spiritual Gifts Assessment in this booklet covers twenty of the spiritual gifts found in Romans 12:6-8, I Corinthians 12:7-11, and Ephesians 4:11-13. Spiritual gifts are not limited to the ones used in this assessment. Gifts like hospitality, music, and others can be found in the Bible. The more you learn about your gifts, the better you are able to use them. Most important, you will discover those gifts that do not fit you, which means you need others who can work with you and support you.

Second, you need to have your gifts confirmed by the community of faith to see how your gifts benefit the whole congregation.

Third, you have to try out your gifts. That's where our energy for ministry comes from. Growing communities of faith give people multiple opportunities to find where their gifts best fit to build up the whole church. (See "Trying Out Your Gifts.")



WHAT ARE PRIMARY GIFTS AND SUPPORTING GIFTS?

Your spiritual gifts are not set in stone. We all have a mixture of gifts that work together and give each of us a unique way to contribute to ministry. The primary gift is your strongest gift and oftentimes the one people will most easily confirm. The supporting gifts are attributes we can explore. In many instances, they become the most important ways we contribute to the work of the whole ministry.



SPIRITUAL GIFT ASSESSMENT TOOL

Use the Spiritual Gift Assessment Tool on the next page to get you started. This is meant as an introduction to the topic of spiritual gifts. Those of you who have taken spiritual gift inventories before may use this as a quick refresher. For those new to the idea of spiritual gifts, this will get you started exploring this whole area of your spiritual life.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Prayerfully read through the descriptions of spiritual gifts from Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, and Ephesians 4:11-13.
2. List two gifts from each category that best describe you and write them in the boxes that are provided.
3. Prayerfully look at the eight gifts you selected in Step 2, and put the one gift that best describes you in the #1 box below. This is your primary gift. In the other three boxes, list the next top three gifts that best describe you. These are your supporting gifts.
4. Share your results with people who are close to you and see what they think. There are numerous books and websites that you can use to learn more about this important topic (see “Additional Resources”).
5. Explore and discover your gifts as you use them in ministry settings or family life (see “Trying Out Your Gifts”).

SPIRITUAL GIFT ASSESSMENT TOOL

Follow Steps 1, 2, and 3 as you discern your spiritual gifts.

ONE: PRAYERFULLY READ THROUGH THESE DESCRIPTIONS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS AS FROM ROMANS 12:6-8, 1 CORINTHIANS 12:7-11, AND EPHESIANS 4:11-13.

SUPPORTING GIFTS: GIFTS THAT ARE USED TO SUPPORT OTHERS IN MINISTRY		TWO: LIST TWO GIFTS FROM EACH CATEGORY THAT BEST DESCRIBE YOU.
GIVING	I love to generously give of my financial resources to support ministry that transforms lives.	
ADMINISTRATION	I enjoy overseeing the overall aspects of a project or a task	
HELPS	I receive satisfaction in assisting the work of others	
SERVICE	I find fulfillment in helping hurting people	
FAITH	I have an unshakable belief that God is in the midst of what is happening	
LEADERSHIP GIFTS: GIFTS THAT PROPEL THE VISION AND VALUES OF A MINISTRY		SUPPORTIVE
PASTORING	I enjoy giving direction to the spiritual life of a group of people so they grow in faith	1.
TEACHING	I am able to share the truths of the gospel so they are easily understood	2.
PREACHING	I share the gospel in such a way that people grow into the vision and values of the congregation	LEADERSHIP
LEADING	I know how to motivate and bring people together to achieve common goals	1.
APOSTLE	I find fulfillment in leading and overseeing a group of faith communities	2.
		COMPASSIONATE

COMPASSIONATE GIFTS: GIFTS THAT MINISTER TO THE PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND MENTAL NEEDS OF PEOPLE		1. 2.	THREE: WRITE YOUR TOP GIFT, YOUR PRIMARY GIFT, IN BOX #1. LIST YOUR NEXT TOP THREE, YOUR SUPPORTING GIFTS, IN THE BOXES BELOW.
HEALING	I have the ability to bring together all that is needed to heal people		
MERCY	I have great compassion for people who are hurting		
MIRACLES	I recognize God's intervention in a situation		
DISCERNMENT	I am able to help people make sense of difficult situations and give spiritual direction		
EVANGELISM	I enjoy sharing the gospel in a way that naturally leads people to have faith in Jesus		
SPIRITUAL LIFE GIFTS: GIFTS THAT ENHANCE THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE MINISTRY		#1 PRIMARY GIFT SUPPORTING GIFTS	1. 2. 3.
WISDOM	I have the ability to say the right thing at the right time to enable people to move forward in their lives		
KNOWLEDGE	I have great insight that comes from a close relationship to God		
PROPHECY	I am able to share God's call for a specific people that connects with their context		
TONGUES	I easily speak in languages that are different from my native language and effectively connect with people of different cultures		
INTERPRETATION	I am able to help people express their deep feelings about their faith		



MORE ABOUT GIFTS

GIVING: Those who possess the gift of giving have the ability to find and direct new sources of money, time, and energy to various ministries. Common skills for those with this gift are money management, grant writing, and seeking and cultivating donations.

ADMINISTRATION: Administrators are natural organizers. They are good with details and know how to help the members of a group work together to achieve goals. People with this gift often seek or are placed in positions of authority. Nominating committees should consider people with these gifts to chair various other committees within the church.

HELPS: Helpers tend to be “behind-the-scenes” people. They love to serve and support others in ministry and mission.

SERVICE: Similar to those with the gift of “helps,” those who possess the gift of service tend not to seek recognition, but work tirelessly to help and serve others.

FAITH: Those with the gift of faith have the confidence that God works all things for the good and that people of faith can rise above any obstacle.

PASTORING: Pastors are called to direct the spiritual formation of a group of people. They value working with people at every stage of spiritual development, from seekers to leaders.

TEACHING: Teachers help people transform information into knowledge. Good teachers “transform more than they inform” (www.umc.org).

PREACHING: The gift of preaching enables the preacher to share the gospel and hold forth the vision and values of the congregation.

LEADING: Leaders help others move forward. They are future-oriented. They motivate others to work together to achieve more than one person could alone.

APOSTLE: This gift inspires people to reach out to unfamiliar people to invite them into relationship with God. Apostles share the story of faith in other lands. Oftentimes, apostles are missionaries. However, according to Dan and Barbara Dick, “The United States of America is fast becoming a mission field of many languages and cultures. It is no longer necessary to cross an ocean to enter the mission field. Even across generations, we may find that we need to ‘speak other languages’ just to communicate” (Dan and Barbara Dick, <https://equippedforeverygoodwork.files.wordpress.com>).

HEALING: Healers seek to be present with those who suffer. They pray for those who suffer, visit those who are in the hospital or who are sick, and do what they can to provide comfort.

MERCY: Those with the gift of mercy or compassion are characterized by kindness and sensitivity to the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of others. They work with the poor, the bereaved, the ill, and the prisoners. Their ministries will tend toward working with shut-ins, visiting hospitals and funeral homes, delivering food to those in need, and providing prison ministry.

MIRACLES: Those with the gift of miracles do not perform miracles, but perceive the miracles of the power and presence of God in creation. They can perceive the miraculous in the ordinary. They see God in nature, in kindness, and in love; and they are able to help others perceive God in these ways.

DISCERNMENT: Those with discernment have great intuition and insight. They can easily separate truth from fiction.

EVANGELISM: This is the gift of faith sharing and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. Gifted evangelists build relationships with others and invite them to make a decision for Christ.

WISDOM: Wisdom enables people to apply their knowledge, beliefs, and experience to every-day situations. Those gifted with wisdom may be able to understand root causes or problems and conflicts. People with wisdom help others clarify their options and make better decisions.

KNOWLEDGE: The gift of knowledge enables people to convert facts, data, and information into useful knowledge. People with knowledge learn in a variety of ways, have a strong desire to learn more, and seek ways to deepen their understanding of God.

PROPHECY: Prophets speak or interpret God's word to others. They do not predict the future, but offer insight on current conditions and how things might happen if changes aren't made. Prophets understand things that others often do not, and they must have the courage to speak.

TONGUES: The gift of tongues allows people to speak foreign languages and convey concepts they may never have formally studied. People with this gift have the ability to communicate across barriers of language, culture, age, or physical limitation. Some people with the gift of tongues work with the hard of hearing or visually impaired.

INTERPRETATION (other assessments call this gift shepherding): This is the gift of guidance. Interpreters or shepherds nurture others in the Christian faith and provide a mentoring relationship to those who are new to the faith.

Sources for "More About the Gifts":

UMC.org's What We Believe, Spiritual Gifts (<http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/spiritual-gifts>)

Dan and Barbara Dick, <https://equippedforeverygoodwork.wordpress.com/>

*Bruce W. Black, *The Spiritual Gifts Handbook: The Complete Guide to Discovering & Using Your Spiritual Gifts* (Loizeaux, 1995)*



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do you use the gifts you have identified at home, at work, among friends?
2. How might you use these gifts most appropriately in the church?
3. What gifts best complement yours and help you increase the value and impact of your own gifts?
4. How can you improve the use of your gifts?
5. Where do other people see evidence of these gifts in your life?



TRYING OUT YOUR GIFTS

Now that you have identified your gifts, you have an opportunity to try them out. Work with the leaders of your congregation to discover where your gifts, passions, and skills will best fit with the mission and ministry of the church. The following are a few suggestions to stimulate your thinking.

GIVING: Consider volunteering as a fundraiser for one of your church's outreach ministries.

ADMINISTRATION/LEADING: Organize part of an annual project, such as a Sunday school picnic, an advertising campaign, or some other special church event.

HELPS: Ask those in ministry areas what "behind-the-scenes" tasks need to be done, then volunteer! You might help with filing, preparing mailings, or preparing crafts for children's Sunday school classes.

SERVICE: Volunteer to work in your church's community outreach ministry, whether that may be tutoring children, working in a feeding program, or sorting clothing for a clothing drive.

FAITH: Consider volunteering for a prayer ministry within the church. Keep a journal detailing the experience.

TEACHING: Teach a Sunday school class, in an after-school program, or in a prayer meeting.

PREACHING: Consider becoming a Certified Lay Minister. Read about the process at www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/certified-lay-minister.

APOSTLE/EVANGELISM: Volunteer to visit a nursing home, rescue mission, prison, or other facility where people need to hear the gospel.

HEALING/MERCY: Volunteer to visit church members in the hospital. Comfort those who have lost loved ones by visiting the funeral home.

MIRACLES: Help others see God in creation. If you have a green thumb, help your church start a community garden. Encourage recycling. If you are a photographer, use that skill to highlight God's work in the world.

WISDOM/KNOWLEDGE/DISCERNMENT/PROPHECY: Speak, write, act, serve on a church committee!

TONGUES: Volunteer to work with those in your church who are hearing impaired or visually impaired.

These are just some suggestions to get you started. You might want to keep a journal of your experiences to help you assess how well you think you are using your gifts.



THE ROLE OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

While each of us has a particular spiritual gift mix, each of us also has the opportunity to live out of the fruits of the spirit. Galatians 5:22-26 (NRSV) says, "By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another."

This passage from Galatians gives us great insight into how the Holy Spirit desires us to support one another and to take on characteristics that enhance one another's ability to be successful. Notice the corrective in the last sentence – the use of spiritual gifts is not a competition to see who is the most spiritually adept. Instead, as we live out of the fruit of the spirit, we support one another because we know all things come from God.



GROUP STUDY: SPIRITUAL GIFTS HELP YOU WORK WITH OTHERS

Divide into groups of five to six persons. Provide copies of this booklet.

Give people in each group time to do the Spiritual Gifts Assessment. After filling out the assessment, each person should be able to identify his or her primary gift and three supporting gifts.

Note that in the Spiritual Gifts Assessment, the gifts are organized in four areas: Leadership Gifts, Compassionate Gifts, Spiritual Life Gifts, and Supporting Gifts.

Ask group members to circle their primary gift from the Spiritual Gifts List on the following page. Next, have them find their supporting gifts and put check marks next to those.

SUPPORTING

- Giving
- Administration
- Helps
- Service
- Faith

SPIRITUAL LIFE

- Wisdom
- Knowledge
- Prophecy
- Tongues
- Interpretation

LEADERSHIP

- Pastoring
- Teaching
- Preaching
- Leading
- Apostle

COMPASSIONATE

- Healing
- Mercy
- Miracles
- Discernment
- Evangelism

As group members look at the results, have the individuals answer these questions for themselves:

- How are my gifts distributed in the chart?
- Do my gifts tend to fall more into one area than another? What does this tell me about which is my strongest area?
- How do my primary and supporting gifts work together?
- When I think of working with others on a ministry team, what gifts of others will complement my gift mix?

On a whiteboard, blackboard, or newsprint, make a copy of the Spiritual Gifts List (do this before the group session). Have each person look at how his or her gifts are distributed on his/her own list. Next, have each person in the group share his or her primary gifts and identify these on the big chart by circling the gifts that were identified. Once that's done, have each person in the group share the supporting gifts and identify them by using a checkmark.

ASK:

1. What do the results say about the strengths as a group?
2. What does this say about how the group could best work together?
3. What are the gaps on the chart? (For example, if everyone is mostly in Compassionate and Supporting, what does this say about Leadership and Supporting?)
4. How can we work together to make sure each person is using his or her spiritual gifts to the greatest potential?



QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

1. What happens when a person is using his or her spiritual gifts for a particular ministry in a church?
2. What happens when someone is mismatched for the work he or she is asked to do?
3. What's the most positive aspect of using our spiritual gifts?

WHERE DO SPIRITUAL GIFTS COME FROM?

1. What do you think of the idea that when we repent and are baptized, we also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?
2. Share examples of when the Holy Spirit has guided you or given you wisdom in a time of need.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS HELP YOU LIVE OUT YOUR CALL

1. Typically, we think only ordained ministers are living out God's call. But by virtue of being filled with the Holy Spirit at our baptism, each of us who believe in Jesus is called by God into service on behalf of others. What do you think of the idea that everyone is called by God?

2. As you reflect on the four calls detailed on page 3, which call are you living out today? Do you agree with the statement that “the spiritual life is an ongoing process of conversion”?

THE ROLE OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

1. Why is it important to realize that everyone is to live out of the fruit of the spirit?
2. How can competition or envy undercut the ability of people to fully use their spiritual gifts?
3. How does avoiding conceit remind us that all gifts come from God?
4. What are some of the best ways to support one another as we discover and try out our spiritual gifts?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

***Discover Your Spiritual Type* by Corinne Ware** (Alban Institute, 1995) | Corinne Ware provides a framework for people to name and understand their spiritual experience—in much the same way the Myers-Briggs typology provides a framework for understanding personality types. Readers explore four spiritual types—head, heart, mystic, and Kingdom—and exercises allow individuals and groups to assess their type.

***Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts: A Personal Inventory Method* by Kenneth Kinghorn** (Zondervan, 1984) | This volume features an inventory of spiritual gifts designed to be taken either in a group or privately.

***Equipped for Every Good Work: Building a Gifts-Based Church* by Barbara A. Dick and Dan R. Dick** (Wipf & Stock, 2011) | This is a four-tool process that can help you discover and develop the spiritual gifts, spirituality types, interaction styles, and working preferences of each person in your congregation. A special website (equippedforeverygoodwork.wordpress.com) provides access to handouts, presentation materials, reference materials, and interpretive aids.

Leadership from the Heart: Learning to Lead with Love and Skill (Abingdon Press, 2004) | Leadership from the Heart is a 10-week study resource for small groups, designed to recruit active volunteers to step up and become lay leaders by promoting the concept of “Servant Leadership.”

***Serving From the Heart: Finding Your Gifts and Talents for Service* by Church of the Resurrection** (Abingdon Press, 2002) | Serving from the Heart has helped over 40,000 people find their gifts, purpose, and passion to serve God through the church. When believers find their gifts and God-given passion and give them to the service of the church, ministries thrive.

***Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts: Building Up the Body of Christ Through the Gifts of the Spirit* by Charles V. Bryant**

(Upper Room Books, 1991) | A practical look at how the gifts of the Holy Spirit can renew the lives of individuals and revitalize the church's ministry.

***Spirit Gifts (Group Study)* by Patricia Brown** (Abingdon Press, 1996) | This dynamic group experience builds community as participants share together in study, reflective exercises, discussion, worship, prayer, music, and group activities. This workbook includes spiritual gifts survey, personal inventory worksheets, Bible studies, key content summaries, and songs.

***Team Spirituality: A Guide for Staff and Church* by William J. Carter** (Abingdon Press, 1997) | This book may be used as part of a church staff retreat or whenever the staff gathers together to explore its effectiveness in serving God and loving others.

***The Innovative Leadership Project* (www.ILPUMC.com)** developed by Craig Kennet Miller offers tools to help develop leaders in the congregation. Among its tools is a free gifts assessment, "Discovering My Spiritual Gifts."

***The Spiritual Gifts Handbook: The Complete Guide to Discovering & Using Your Spiritual Gifts* by Bruce W. Black** (Loizeaux, 1995) | This handbook is a "how-to" that demonstrates why spiritual gifts are vital to the life of the church, explains what spiritual gifts are, and offers suggestions on ways to use spiritual gifts.

www.umc.org/what-we-believe/spiritual-gifts | Website offering a spiritual gifts assessment, information about exploring spiritual gifts, and additional resources.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Craig Kennet Miller is the Director of Congregational Development at Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church. He is author of numerous books including, *iKids: Parenting in the Digital Age* and *Boomer Spirituality: 7 Values for the Second Half of Life*, and he is the creator of the *Innovative Leadership Project*. He is an elder in the Cal-Pac Conference, and he has a Doctor of Ministry Degree from Fuller Theological Seminary.

The *Spiritual Gifts Assessment* in this booklet was developed for the Innovative Leadership Project and has been used by a wide variety of congregations to develop leadership.