

Faith Alive!

In Gifts and Mission

**For an Adult Faith Formation Session
Appropriate for use as an RCIA Session**

by

Living Faith at Work

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Faith Alive! In Gifts and Mission

Gifts and Mission

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Notes for the Session Coordinator

- *Within this planned session, there are a number of activities. In addition, there is an alternative activity made available in the pages after the planned session. The session coordinator and/or the team should feel free to choose among the planned and alternative activities. The point is to adapt the session to the particular needs of the group expected to participate in this session.*
- In preparation for the session, read over the session agenda and all the session elements and note the materials needed for the session. Obtain the materials and arrange them for use as planned in the session elements.
- Use your usual meeting place. If this includes a special space for prayer, use that for the opening and closing prayers for this session.
- We suggest allowing between 1½ and 2 hours for the session. This allows for some choice in what you include or remove from the session according to the needs of those anticipated to be participating.
- Some of the activities are presented here as small group (5 or 6 members) activities and others as whole group activities. If your participants number less than 9, treat all activities as whole group, adjusting as necessary for that situation.
- Where small groups are able to be utilized, try to separate the groups with enough space to avoid distractions caused by overhearing what is being said in the other groups.
- The timeframes given on the working agenda are all inclusive, that is, they include the time that must be allowed for moving the participants into and out of small groups and the various locations utilized for the sessions. The teaching-learning activities ought not be scheduled or allowed to run through all the allotted time in each segment. People, especially adults, will dawdle as they move between activities or locations—the greater the distance the more they are likely to dawdle.

- Determine who will be the Prayer Leader or person responsible for conducting the prayer services during the session. Give them the prayer service materials in time to prepare for the planned rituals.
- For these sessions, it is important that the participants see work broadly rather than as only a job for pay. As part of the introduction for the session, it would be helpful to make a few comments about what work is.

Very broadly Living Faith at Work defines work as any productive activity. This would include children whose work can be that of students and stay-at-home parents whose work is housekeeping and child rearing. It is also worthy of note that each person may function in several different jobs or work efforts in the course of a day. An adult might work-for-pay with an employer, work at home on house cleaning or yard maintenance, and work at parenting with his/her children. We humans also experience different work over our lifetimes from student, to employee, to parenting, and to grandparenting and supporting our adult children and grandchildren in many, varied ways.

- The Introductory Learning Experience activities included for this session should fit easily within the allotted 15 minutes. If the charades activity goes slowly and you wish to allow it to play out, use the alternative reflection activity.
- For the reflection part of the Learning Experience, the process can be speeded up by having 2 people ready to write the ideas on each flip chart.
- Allow more time for the Teaching Witness than for the Personal Witness as the Personal Witness tends to be shorter. Allow more time for the reflection activities than for the witness talks. Recommended times are 15-20 minutes for each of the two reflection sessions, 15 to 20 minutes for the teaching talk, and 8-10 minutes for the personal witness talk. Shorten the talks rather than the reflection time.
- An outline for the teaching witness, “Gifted to Do Jesus’ Work,” is included in the documents. The outline is not intended to be delivered in totality. Rather the person giving this talk should select the ideas and method of presentation that would best fit the needs of the anticipated group. The preferred deliverer of this talk would be a priest or deacon of the parish. Alternatively, a pastoral minister who is not a cleric could give the talk. A DVD with a video of the teaching witness is available from Living Faith at Work.

- The Personal Witness talk, Using God’s Gifts, is intended to be a sharing of one person’s efforts at recognizing and accepting the place of our Faith’s teachings in his/her daily life. In the documents is a sheet with some ideas to help shape the presentation, but the key is the personal story of the speaker. A polished oration is not expected and probably would be less effective than the rougher texture of a personal, conversational sharing of the speaker’s efforts and feelings.
- The givers of both talks are strongly encouraged to practice their talks in advance with a fellow team member offering feedback and suggestions for improvement in delivery and for keeping the talks within the time limits.
- When the reflection questions for the teaching and personal witness talks are given out, it is very important to give the participants time to reflect privately and even write out a few notes about their personal reflections before asking them to share their thoughts. The first sharing should be in a pairing of two or three people. Such a small group serves three purposes: (a) it is easier to try out one’s ideas with just one or two other people than the full group, (b) it is harder to avoid sharing when there are only one or two others in the group, and (c) once a person shares an idea in a small group, the person is more likely to share it with a larger group.
- When bringing the entire group back together for the Sharing of Learning Reflections and Applications, lend some importance to the action by capturing the ideas in public writing.
 - We recommend having at least two writers, preferably three, equipped with markers (water based).
 - Space and equipment permitting, have chart paper ready on two or three stands and a writer/scribe next to each stand.
 - If space and/or equipment do not allow for chart paper on stands, tape chart paper sheets to the walls in two places (one place for Reflections/Learnings and another for Applications).
 - Prepare the writers/scribes in advance to capture the speakers own words in so far as possible. Avoid summarizing and/or paraphrasing.
 - Put headers on the chart paper sheets to clearly identify them as “Reflections & Learnings” and “Applications.”
 - As the session coordinator solicits statements of Reflections and Learnings, assign them to a writer/scribe in rotation. Do the same for the Applications when they are given.

- Use no more than 10 minutes for capturing Reflections and Learnings, then move on to the Applications.
- Be sure to give time for private consideration and jotting of notes about the application before soliciting ideas for capture on the chart paper.
- Consider taking the last minute or two of time allotted for this activity to summarize briefly the Reflections and Learnings and the Applications.
- Save the chart papers for posting in the meeting space for the next session.
- In dismissing the group at the conclusion of the final prayer, encourage the participants to share a greeting of peace and thanks with several of the people around them. Allow time after the session and before closing the facility for participants who wish to continue talking with each other.

Faith Alive! In Gifts and Mission

Gifts and Mission

15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Gathering and Opening Prayer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Registration & Hospitality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcoming statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Greetings b. Identify key people of the session's program B. Group Formation C. Opening Prayer Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move the people to the Prayer Space. It should be prepared in your customary way or, if preferred, with a crucifix, a bowl of water, a small glass of oil, a loaf of unsliced bread or pita bread, and a lighted candle. 2. See separate file for the prayer experience "Sent to Love and Serve"
15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> II. Introductory Learning Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Serving the Least: Charades and Reflection
70 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> III. In-Depth Learning Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Teaching Presentation: Gifted to Do Jesus' Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whole group presentation 2. Optional use of Checklists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Natural Gifts b. Spiritual Gifts 3. Distribute reflection questions at the end of the talk while giving directions for reflecting. B. Reflection on Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal and private first 2. Shared in dyads within the small groups C. Witness Presentation: In the Footsteps of Jesus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whole group presentation 2. Distribute reflection questions at the end of the talk while giving directions for reflecting. D. Reflection on Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal and private first 2. Shared in dyads within the small groups 3. Shared with entire small group

15 minutes	<p>IV. Sharing Learning Reflections & Applications</p> <p>A. Whole Group Sharing & Reflection</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring the whole group back to together and invite them to share some of the reflections they gave or heard in the small groups. 2. Have several team members write the reflections on chart paper as they are given by group members. 3. Suggest having the at least three sheets of chart paper taped on to walls and one writer at each sheet taking turns writing the reflections. <p>B. Reflection—Application Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After about half the time is up or when reflections stop flowing, pose a new question for the entire group, “How can or will you apply the ideas brought forward today?” or “What commitment(s) are you willing to make about improving your relationship with Jesus Christ?” 2. Allow about 2 minutes for private consideration and note taking. 3. Solicit volunteers to state their responses to the question(s) and put them on chart paper as with the reflections. Do not attach names to the commitments.
5 minutes	<p>V. Closing Prayer Service</p> <p>A. See file for Closing Prayer Services</p>

Faith Alive!

Fundamental Purposes of Faith Alive! Sessions

- To strengthen the **connection** between people's faith and work. (Work is defined as any productive activity we do.) [**Connection could be interpreted as interaction, interrelationship, and/or interdependence.**]
 - To enhance parishes as formation centers which affirm, equip, challenge, and support believers in their daily life mission to live the gospel, especially at work
- I. An examination of why our commonly understood Catholic Christian vision, at the grass roots level, needs further development for integrating faith and work.**
- A. Dualistic thinking
 1. sacred vs. secular **or** spiritual vs. material [This issue has existed throughout human history. Today's materialistic culture makes the issue particularly relevant for Catholic Christians today.]
 2. separating the divine from the human
 3. misunderstanding the American concept of separation of church and state
 - B. Tendency to view spirituality as fundamentally an interior, contemplative experience.
 - C. Failure to take seriously one's own ordinary life events including work as a way of encountering the divine.
 - D. Too much emphasis upon mission and ministry being directly related to internal church work or parish commissioned responsibilities.

E. Lack of recognizing one's work as a possible "religious" vocation, an opportunity to strengthen the connections between God, oneself, and others.

- Again, Mission has a church. The church belongs to the mission. The church equates to “the people gathered.”
- “Call” equals desires, gifts, talent, interests, skills. All God given for one’s unique piece of the mission. We are stewards of what God has given—the call and the mission. The mission is born of us. The church is the vehicle.

II A realization we, as church, are forming people as disciples in the world. The Faith Alive! Retreat builds upon the foundation belief that together we can continue to strengthen our focus upon the vocation and mission of the laity in the world.

- A. Emphasis upon forming people for volunteer or paid "inner/ecclesial church life and work" needs to be extended to formation for daily life and work.
- B. Recognition that the average lay person would benefit from learning more about recent church teachings on the role of the laity in the world, the call of lay people to be Christian influences in the social, political, military, economic, educational, medical, cultural, etc., spheres of life
- C. Need to foster approaches in Christian formation that are life and work-centered, that foster faith-inspired reflection, decision-making, and action in the midst of the marketplace (we can infuse much of this into what is already going on in parish formation of people).
- D. An opportunity to encourage believers to find meaning, value, and creativity in their work, experiencing their labor as God-centered, as a vocation, as kingdom building, as responsible and honest stewardship.
- E. A call to lay people to further develop and deepen their own unique spirituality rooted in who they are and what they do, a stewardship of God’s gifts integrating personal growth and concern for the common good, grounded in scripture and Catholic Christian tradition.
- Integrating personal and social moral growth based on scripture and Catholic Church tradition.

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OPENING PRAYER SENT TO LOVE AND SERVE

Opening Song: *All Are Welcome* (#753 in *Gather* hymnal, #406 in *Today's Missal Music Issue 2005*)

Leader: Let us pray.

All: Dear God, you have gifted us with faith, washing us with the waters of Baptism, strengthening us with the oil Confirmation, and feeding us with the bread of Eucharist. These gifts have brought us into the Body of Christ.

We give thanks for these wondrous gifts. As members of the Body of Christ we are called to bring his Good News, his love, to the world.

Help us to remember that you are revealed when we love one another. Help us to act with love toward even those we do not like.

We ask all in the name of Jesus, the Lord. Amen.

Reading: *James 2:14-17*

My brothers, what good is it to profess faith without practicing it? Such faith has no power to save one, has it? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and no food for the day, and you say to them, "Good-bye and good luck! Keep warm and well fed," but do not meet their bodily needs, what good is that? So it is with the faith that does nothing in practice. It is thoroughly lifeless.

Leader: Let us consider the settings in which we are called to give life to our faith in Jesus.

As members of a family living in a home:

All: *God has committed some work to me that He has not committed to another. I shall do his work. I shall do good.*

Leader: As a person who works at home, in school, or a workplace:

All: *God has committed some work to me that He has not committed to another. I shall do his work. I shall do good.*

Leader: As a person who plays and has fun:

All: *God has committed some work to me that He has not committed to another. I shall do his work. I shall do good.*

Leader: As a person who is not able to provide for all my own needs, still:

All: *God has committed some work to me that He has not committed to another. I shall do his work. I shall do good.*

Leader: As a person who has others depending on me to provide for some need that they feel:

All: *God has committed some work to me that He has not committed to another. I shall do his work. I shall do good.*

All: Holy Spirit we thank you for the gifts you have given us including this time with you today. Help us to recognize the work you have committed to us that we may do your work in the world. Help us to love and serve as Jesus taught us. Amen.

Directions for Opening Prayer

Directions

Gather the participants in the space designated and decorated as the prayer space for the meeting. Have the participants take the provided hymnals or song sheets with them. If the *Gather* hymnal is not available, use what you have and select the listed songs or ones similar to them.

Prepare the prayer space. Use your customary decorations for the space. If there is not a customary decoration, we suggest a table covered with a cloth and holding a cross, a bowl of water, a small glass/cup of oil, a loaf of unsliced bread or pita bread, and a lighted candle.

Gather the participants in the space designated and decorated as the prayer space for the meeting. Provide them with copies of the prayers to be recited.

For added effect, have the participants assemble around the cloth covered table and have the cross, water, oil, bread, and candle carried to the table in procession by members of the session's team. The leader may note, if necessary, that the processors are bringing in the symbols of our salvation—the cross, our baptism—the water, our confirmation in the faith—the oil, the nourishment of our spiritual life, the Eucharist—the bread, and the mission to be light to the world—the lighted candle.

Once all are gathered and the prayer space set up, begin the prayers.

Materials needed

Copies of the prayer to be read by all or of the entire set of prayers.

Optional for setting up the prayer space

Table covered with a cloth

Cross

Bowl of water

Glass or cruet of oil

Loaf of bread, unsliced, or piece of pita bread

Candle

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Introductory Learning Experience

Serving the Least: Charades and Reflections

After the Opening Prayer, have the participants gather in their groups. Each group should have its own table or space with a set of charade topics in a cup or small bowl.

If the group members do not know each other already, they should introduce themselves, giving their names and the type of work they do. Remind the participants that work is not limited to work-for-pay but includes any productive activity. For example, for children in school, school work is their work; for stay-at-home parents, homemaking is their work, for caregivers, attending to the physical and spiritual needs of a loved one is their work, for the infirm, being a patient, a recipient of services from others, is their work.

CHARADES. The session facilitator calls the groups to attention, introduces the activity, and gives them directions. The facilitator identifies the first person to act out the charade by age, the youngest or the oldest; by birth date, closest to today's date; by height, shortest or tallest; by physical position, closest to the facilitator or the prayer space, or by whatever will easily and quickly identify a first actor for the group.

The identified first actor picks a charade topic [the list of topics is on the next page] out of the container and acts it out until someone guesses the topic. The person who first guessed the topic then picks a topic out of the container and becomes the actor for the next topic. This is repeated until all topics have been acted out or until time is called by the facilitator.

REFLECTION. After about 8 minutes of charades, the facilitator can call "Time" and start the reflection. The facilitator introduces the reflection by noting, "Mother Theresa taught us that people are poor in many ways besides just lack of money or possessions. In the same way let us consider ways that people can be hungry, or thirsty, or ill, and so forth beyond the ordinary meaning of the words."

Ask the participants to call out ways people can be hungry beyond lacking food. On a flip chart labeled “HUNGRY,” list the ideas called out. The process can be speeded up by having 2 people ready to write the ideas on each flip chart.

Repeat this for THIRSTY, ILL, IMPRISONED, NAKED, STRANGERS as time allows. When time is up, encourage the participants to feel free to add additional thoughts to the flip charts when they have the opportunity before they leave for the evening.

Transition to the first talk.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

If the charades do not go quickly or if your preference is to focus on the activity of the charades, you may utilize most of the time allocated for the All Persons Learning Experience for the charades. Then give a short reflection on the idea that there are many kinds of hunger, thirsty, illness, prison, being a stranger, and being unclothed. Christ’s admonish to serve the least has been taken by the saints to embrace all the various ways people might be hungry, thirsty, ill, imprisoned, and so forth.

Materials needed for the Introductory Learning Experience

- Tables for the groups or space for a circle of chairs.
- A set of charade topics on separate pieces of paper for each group.
- The charade topics are:
 - Feed the hungry
 - Gave drink to the thirsty
 - Welcome strangers
 - Comfort the ill
 - Visit those in prison
 - Clothe the naked
- A set of flip chart sheets labeled HUNGRY, THIRSTY, ILL, IMPRISONED, STRANGERS, NAKED

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Gifted to Do Jesus' Work

Outline of Ideas for the Teaching Witness

A note before beginning: This outline is not meant to be totally incorporated into the Teaching Witness talk. It contains many ideas from which the witness can choose those most appropriate for the expected participants and the witness. Leave time and space in the talk for personal touches. Be aware of the time limitation necessary for the session and limit the content to fit the time.

Introduction

- Note that the charades were based on the Matthew's account of the last judgment.
- Interestingly the last judgment account comes immediately after the parable of the Silver Pieces wherein three men were made stewards of silver pieces (gifts or talents) from their master. Two of the men used the silver pieces to make more and were praised and rewarded for that. The third man buried his silver pieces and was reprimanded and tossed into the darkness for that. (Matthew 25:14-30)
- These passages speak to living a life that goes beyond attending church on Sundays. They speak to using one's gifts in the service of others.

1. The mission for Christians: Treat others with love.

- Jesus told his disciples to love another
- Jesus told his disciples make disciples of all nations
- When we treat others with love, we are preaching the good news of Jesus Christ.
- Our actions speak louder than words. The actions may well make the words optional.

2. As stewards of God's gifts, we are to use our gifts in the treatment of others, to be God's love present in the lives of those with whom we live and work.

- We are to recognize our gifts and talents.
- In thanksgiving for those gifts, we are to use those gifts to better the part of the world in which we spent our daily lives.
- As good stewards, we are to recognize the limits of our gifts and talents and support those who have other gifts in the use of their gifts.
- If we recognize and use our gifts with love for those in our lives, we will meet the challenge of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46)

3. Let us consider gifts we have received. There are natural or physical gifts and spiritual gifts.

- (It may be useful to hand out the Natural Gifts and Gifts of the Spirit checklists included after the notes for this talk.)
- Natural or physical gifts: These are the abilities and talents that came with the birth of our physical bodies and were developed in the course of our lives.
 - Examples include our personalities, our physical capabilities, our skills, our interests, and the length of our lives.
 - In a sense, they also include our family and cultural backgrounds, our life experiences, and our education.
 - They include the material possessions that we acquire in the course of our lives
- Spiritual gifts: These are gifts for us to give away; gifts that enable us to serve others.
 - In a sense they are personal inclinations that go beyond abilities and talents.
 - Each spiritual gift is an extraordinary ability to express Christ's love to and for those with whom we come into contact.
 - Most do not require specific invocation of Christ beyond the witness that our actions give. They are more about the way we live and work than about the words we say.
 - In general these include:
 - Exceptional abilities to provide service for the common good. Examples include exceptional abilities to organize, to give in relief, to welcome strangers, and help others in their work.
 - Exceptional abilities to give voice to Catholic values. Examples

include exceptional abilities to teach, that is, to bring others to understand and be inspired by truth, and to motivate others to live lives that are spiritually good.

- Exceptional abilities to give witness to the love of God through the surrender of personal goods and acts of personal sanctification in all the settings of one's life. Examples include exceptional abilities in prayer, chastity, charity, suffering, craftsmanship, and living a life unencumbered with material responsibilities.
- Exceptional abilities to lead, to influence and direct, others in the pursuit and accomplishment of God's will on earth. Examples include exceptional abilities in administration, discernment, inspiration, and mentoring.

4. Concerning the last judgment, Jesus is quoted as saying that at the end all will be separated into two groups, the Inheritors of the kingdom and the Condemned. Tellingly, the separation is based on caring for others. In telling the stories of the Pieces of Silver and the Last Judgment, Jesus is inviting us to action.

- He invites us to live our love for him by feeding the hungry whether that is a hunger of the body or any of the forms that hunger of the soul might take.
- He invites us to live our love for him by giving drink to the thirsty whether that is a thirst of the body or any of those forms that thirst of the soul might take.
- He invites us to live our love for him by welcoming strangers whether the person is a stranger to our community or estranged from the love of God and/or his fellow humans for whatever reason.
- He invites us to live our love for him by clothing the naked whether the nakedness was of the body or the extreme sensitivity of the bared soul.
- He invites us to live our love for him by comforting the sick whether the illness is of the body, the mind, or the soul.
- He invites us to live our love for him by visiting those who are imprisoned whether in the physical confines of a jail or in whatever way the soul may be confined and held captive.

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What spoke to me personally concerning this teaching *Gifted to Do Jesus' Work*?
2. Why is it important to understand the ways that love can be expressed for our neighbors in the global community?
3. How does the concept of being sent into the world as a steward of God-given gifts affect my daily life? How do I think it ought to affect my life?
4. What if I sought to act at work based on the based on demonstrating Jesus love for all people? What changes, if any, would this require of me? What impact might this have on one person in my workplace? On the workplace in general?

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Gifted to Do Jesus' Work

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What spoke to me personally concerning this teaching *Gifted to Do Jesus' Work*?
2. Why is it important to understand the ways that love can be expressed for our neighbors in the global community?
3. How does the concept of being sent into the world as a steward of God-given gifts affect my daily life? How do I think it ought to affect my life?
4. What if I sought to act at work based on the based on demonstrating Jesus love for all people? What changes, if any, would this require of me? What impact might this have on one person in my workplace? On the workplace in general??

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Natural Gifts Checklist

Directions for Self: Quickly read the list of gifts. Underline those gifts or activities that you like to do, do well, and/or that others say you do well. Add your own ideas to the list as you think of them.

Accounting	Desktop Publishing	Leading exercises	Running
Acting	Driving	Legal Counseling	Running errands
Answering telephone	Electrical work	Lobbying civic leaders	Selling
Baby-sitting	Ethnic heritage	Mailing	Serving Meals
Baking	Evaluating	Mechanical work	Setting Up
Body movement	Facilitating discussions	Money	Sewing
Bookkeeping	Facilitating meetings	Operating copy machine	Stuffing envelopes
Budgeting	Filing	Operating printing machines	Telling Stories
Carpentry	Financial counseling	Pain & suffering	Telephoning
Cleaning	Flower arranging	Painting (art)	Time
Cleaning up after activities	Gardening	Painting (rooms, buildings)	Typing
Coaching	Hand-eye coordination	Photography	Videotaping
Computer operation & usage	Health	Physical exercise	Visiting shut-ins
Cooking	Health counseling	Physical strength	Visiting the sick
Counting money	Illness	Plumbing	Walking
Dancing	Ironing clothes	Possessions	Washing clothes
Data entry	Lawn mowing	Reading aloud	Word processing
Decorating			Writing

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Checklist: Gifts of the Spirit

Directions for Self: Quickly read the gift and definition. Put a check in the **left** margin for those 1, 2, or 3 gifts that you think might be special gifts you have received and are using.

Gift	Definition	
Charity/Love	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring God's love to life among those with whom you live and work.
Chastity	an extraordinary ability	to express and publicly live a chaste lifestyle.
Community builder	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring about unity of purpose and caring.
Compassion or Mercy	an extraordinary ability	to feel and respond to the suffering of others.
Counseling	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring guidance and advice to others.
Craftsmanship	an extraordinary ability	to combine skills and materials to create artifacts or services that nurture faith and love.
Detachment from material goods	an extraordinary ability	to live without attachment to material possessions.
Discernment	an extraordinary ability	to identify and publicly express the truth and the good.
Empathy	an extraordinary ability	to feel and be affected by the suffering of others.
Endurance of suffering	an extraordinary ability	to bear hardship, pain, and worry in witness to faithfulness to God.
Exhortation/motivation	an extraordinary ability	to inspire and encourage others in need.
Government	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring structure and organization to group efforts.
Hospitality	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring welcome to strangers and others in need.
Humor	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring laughter and a sense of joy to those around you.

Gift	Definition	
Imagination	an extraordinary ability	to conceive of and publicly express that which does not yet exist.
Joy	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring a sense of delight and happiness to those around you.
Kindness	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring gentleness and thoughtfulness.
Knowledge	an extraordinary ability	to discover, organize, and publicly share information and ideas.
Leadership	an extraordinary ability	to bring people together to identify and accomplish goals for the common good.
Music of the soul	an extraordinary ability	to use music to express and share publicly the message of God.
Obedience	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring submission to the will of God into your personal situation.
Organization	an extraordinary ability	to take action to bring resources and people together to accomplish goals.
Prayer	an extraordinary ability	to express publicly blessings & adoration, petitions, intercessions, praise, and thanksgiving to God.
Prophecy	an extraordinary ability	to identify and publicly express God's truth and will for today's world.
Reliability	an extraordinary ability	to do your work—both assigned and voluntary—dependably and consistently.
Service, Helpfulness or Assistance	an extraordinary ability	to identify work that needs to be done for groups or individuals and to do that work voluntarily.
Teaching	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring others to comprehend and be inspired by the truth of God
Thanksgiving	an extraordinary ability	to express and publicly give appreciation and credit to God for the gifts or graces He has given.
Wisdom	an extraordinary ability	to express and publicly apply insights from God's truth to the complexity of life.
Witness	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring public affirmation to the teachings and values of God.
Gift of:	An extraordinary ability	to

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Using God's Gifts

A note before beginning: These potential starting points are not meant to be totally incorporated into the Witness talk. They contain many ideas from which the witness can choose those that best tell the witness' personal story about striving to identify, accept, and use his/her God given gifts in Jesus' work. Be aware of the time limitation necessary for the session and limit the content to fit the time.

1. Reflect on the meaning of gifts, stewardship, and mission.
2. Reflect on how and when you came to realize that you were gifted with some natural gifts. And again, how and when you came to realize one or more of your spiritual gifts.
3. Talk about your growing awareness of the duty of a steward of God's gifts to use those gifts in an unselfish way (the parable of the silver pieces and the description of the last judgment in Matthew's Gospel, 26:14-46).
4. Offer examples of identifying and using your one or two of your natural gifts
 - a. At home, in your family.
 - b. At school or work.
 - c. In your parish community.
 - d. For some part of the common good in your community.
5. Offer examples of realizing and using your one of your spiritual gifts
 - a. At home, in your family.
 - b. At school or work.
 - c. In your parish community.
 - d. For some part of the common good in your community.
6. Encourage participants to look within themselves and accept the fact that they are gifted by God and are missionary stewards of those gifts.
7. Talk about how you have sought to give thanks to God for the gifts, natural and spiritual, that he has given to you.

8. Encourage participants to look for a way to return to give thanks for the gifts they have received. They can look within the various parts of their lives (home, work, community) and identify just one place or way that their gifts can help to make better.
9. Identify the first step you took in seeking to be the good missionary steward and utilize your gifts. Ask the participants to consider and decide the first step they will take.

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What valuable reminder, insight, or challenge did I receive from experiencing this presentation? What especially impressed me? Why?
2. What natural gifts have I recognized as given to my stewardship by our creator? What spiritual gifts?
3. How have I been using the gifts I have received? How could I improve my stewardship of these gifts?
4. How would my life be different if I take that first step to return part of my gifts as a missionary doing God's work in my home, workplace, or community?

Faith Alive! In Gifts and Mission

Using God's Gifts

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What valuable reminder, insight, or challenge did I receive from experiencing this presentation? What especially impressed me? Why?
2. What natural gifts have I recognized as given to my stewardship by our creator? What spiritual gifts?
3. How have I been using the gifts I have received? How could I improve my stewardship of these gifts?
4. How would my life be different if I take that first step to return part of my gifts as a missionary doing God's work in my home, workplace, or community?

Faith Alive! In Gifts and Mission

Prayer Experiences

Closing Prayer

(In the meeting room at the space designated for prayer rituals)

Opening Prayer

Leader: O God, come to my assistance.

Response: Lord, make haste to help me.

All: Glory be to the Father....Amen.

Reading by two groups

Matthew 25:31-40

Group one: When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels of heaven, he will sit upon his royal throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him.

Group two: Then he will separate them into two groups as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The sheep he will place on his right hand, the goats on his left.

Group one: The king will say to those on his right: "Come. You have my Father's blessing! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world.

Group two: For I was hungry and you gave me food,

Group one: I was thirsty and you gave me drink.

Group two: I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

Group one: naked and you clothed me.

Group two: I was ill and you comforted me,

- Group one:** in prison and you came to visit me.”
- Group two:** Then the just will ask him: “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or see you thirsty and give you drink?”
- Group one:** When did we welcome you away from home or clothe you in your nakedness?
- Group two:** When did we visit you when you were ill or in prison?”
- All:** The king will answer them: “I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.”

Closing Prayer I

Leader: Let us pray.

All: Jesus, our brother, today we have considered our relationship with you and those with whom we work, and we thank you for this Faith Alive! experience. As we go forward from this session, we have made commitments to be good missionary stewards, to share the treasure of love you have given us. Help us keep these commitments so that the water of faith, the oil of loving commitment, and the bread of everlasting life may touch and act upon every aspect of our lives.

We ask this in your name. Amen.

Needed resources

- Bible marked for the reading unless the closing prayer is copied in total.
- A Reader for the bible reading
- Copies of the prayers and reading for all participants

Faith Alive! In Gifts and Mission

Materials List

For the Gathering and Opening

- Sign-in sheet (if desired)
- Name tags and markers (if desired)

For Prayer Space

- Bowl of Water
- Cruet of oil
- Loaf of bread
- Music Stand
- Cloth
- Bible
- Candles

For the Opening Prayers

- Copies of the Opening Prayer, “Sent to Love and Serve,” for each participant.
- If individuals will be reading the various parts of the prayer rather than the group, identify them and be sure they are ready and willing.

For the Introductory Learning Experience

- Tables for the groups or space for a circle of chairs.
- A set of charade topics on separate pieces of paper for each group.
- The charade topics are:
 - Feed the hungry
 - Gave drink to the thirsty
 - Welcome strangers
 - Comfort the ill

- Visit those in prison
- Clothe the naked
- A set of flip chart sheets labeled HUNGRY, THIRSTY, ILL, IMPRISONED, STRANGERS, NAKED

For the Teaching and Personal Witness talks: copies of the outlines and related information about the talks.

For the Reflections

Copies of the reflection questions
Pencils

For the Sharing of Learning Reflections

Chart paper (use Post-it chart paper or have masking tape available to tape the paper to the walls)
Markers (water based so they do not bleed through the chart paper)

For the closing Prayer Ritual

- Bible marked for the reading unless the closing prayer is copied in total.
- A Reader for the bible reading
- Copies of the Closing Prayers that will be read by all.

Faith Alive! In Gifts and Mission

ADDITIONAL OR ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITY

Utilize and expand the use of the two gifts and talents checklists.

Natural Gifts

- **Talent checklist activity: What talents and natural abilities do you have?**
 - [It is important to keep the teaching activity within the timeframe. So, it might be necessary to skip the partnering and giving and receiving feedback with another. A shorter version would be to mutually select partners and share with the partner your thoughts about your own gifts.]
 - Before considering your own gifts, partner up with another person in your group with whom you would be willing to give and receive feedback about personal gifts. If the partner knows you well, the feedback may go into gifts that are not immediately obvious to others. If the partner does not know you very well, the feedback will probably be about the most noticeable of your and his/her gifts.
 - In doing the gifts checklist, you will do your own first. Then, you will identify the gifts you have seen your partner use. [Partner forms follow.]
 - After doing the checklist privately, meet with your partner and share the gifts that each of you have seen in the other.
 - Compare your list and the list your partner gave you. What thoughts does the comparison bring to you?

Spiritual Gifts or Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Talent checklist activity. What extraordinary ability or abilities do you have?**
 - [It is important to keep the teaching activity within the timeframe. So, it might be necessary to skip the partnering and giving and

receiving feedback with another. A shorter version would be to mutually select partners and share with the partner your thoughts about your own gifts.]

- Before considering your own gifts, partner up with another person in your group. It may be the same person as before but does not need to be.
- In doing the gifts checklist, you will do your own first. Then, you will identify the gifts you have seen your partner use. [Partner forms follow.]
- After doing the checklist privately, meet with your partner and share the gifts that each of you have seen in the other.
- Compare your list and the list your partner gave you. What thoughts does the comparison bring to you?

Faith Alive! In Gifts and Mission

Natural Gifts Checklist

Directions for Group Partner: Think about the person for whom you are doing the checklist. Quickly read the list of gifts and mark in the **left** margin those gifts that person clearly has. Feel free to add other gifts to the list.

Accounting	Desktop Publishing	Leading exercises	Running
Acting	Driving	Legal Counseling	Running errands
Answering telephone	Electrical work	Lobbying civic leaders	Selling
Baby-sitting	Ethnic heritage	Mailing	Serving Meals
Baking	Evaluating	Mechanical work	Setting Up
Body movement	Facilitating discussions	Money	Sewing
Bookkeeping	Facilitating meetings	Operating copy machine	Stuffing envelopes
Budgeting	Filing	Operating printing machines	Telling Stories
Carpentry	Financial counseling	Pain & suffering	Telephoning
Cleaning	Flower arranging	Painting (art)	Time
Cleaning up after activities	Gardening	Painting (rooms, buildings)	Typing
Coaching	Hand-eye coordination	Photography	Videotaping
Computer operation & usage	Health	Physical exercise	Visiting shut-ins
Cooking	Health counseling	Physical strength	Visiting the sick
Counting money	Illness	Plumbing	Walking
Dancing	Ironing clothes	Possessions	Washing clothes
Data entry	Lawn mowing	Reading aloud	Word processing
Decorating			Writing

Faith Alive! In Gifts and Mission

Checklist: Gifts of the Spirit

Directions for Group Partner: Think about the person for whom you are doing the checklist. Quickly read the definitions and mark in the **right** margin those 1, 2, or 3 gifts that person most clearly has and used.

Gift	Definition	
Charity/Love	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring God's love to life among those with whom you live and work.
Chastity	an extraordinary ability	to express and publicly live a chaste lifestyle.
Community builder	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring about unity of purpose and caring.
Compassion or Mercy	an extraordinary ability	to feel and respond to the suffering of others.
Counseling	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring guidance and advice to others.
Craftsmanship	an extraordinary ability	to combine skills and materials to create artifacts or services that nurture faith and love.
Detachment from material goods	an extraordinary ability	to live without attachment to material possessions.
Discernment	an extraordinary ability	to identify and publicly express the truth and the good.
Empathy	an extraordinary ability	to feel and be affected by the suffering of others.
Endurance of suffering	an extraordinary ability	to bear hardship, pain, and worry in witness to faithfulness to God.
Exhortation/motivation	an extraordinary ability	to inspire and encourage others in need.
Government	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring structure and organization to group efforts.
Hospitality	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring welcome to strangers and others in need.
Humor	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring laughter and a sense of joy to those around you.

Gift	Definition	
Imagination	an extraordinary ability	to conceive of and publicly express that which does not yet exist.
Joy	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring a sense of delight and happiness to those around you.
Kindness	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring gentleness and thoughtfulness.
Knowledge	an extraordinary ability	to discover, organize, and publicly share information and ideas.
Leadership	an extraordinary ability	to bring people together to identify and accomplish goals for the common good.
Music of the soul	an extraordinary ability	to use music to express and share publicly the message of God.
Obedience	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring submission to the will of God into your personal situation.
Organization	an extraordinary ability	to take action to bring resources and people together to accomplish goals.
Prayer	an extraordinary ability	to express publicly blessings & adoration, petitions, intercessions, praise, and thanksgiving to God.
Prophecy	an extraordinary ability	to identify and publicly express God's truth and will for today's world.
Reliability	an extraordinary ability	to do your work—both assigned and voluntary—dependably and consistently.
Service, Helpfulness or Assistance	an extraordinary ability	to identify work that needs to be done for groups or individuals and to do that work voluntarily.
Teaching	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring others to comprehend and be inspired by the truth of God
Thanksgiving	an extraordinary ability	to express and publicly give appreciation and credit to God for the gifts or graces He has given.
Wisdom	an extraordinary ability	to express and publicly apply insights from God's truth to the complexity of life.
Witness	an extraordinary ability	to express and bring public affirmation to the teachings and values of God.
Gift of:	An extraordinary ability to	

Faith Alive! In Gifts and Mission

Gifted to Do Jesus' Work

Abstract

1. The mission for Christians: Treat others with love.
2. As stewards of God's gifts, we are to use our gifts in the treatment of others, to be God's love present in the lives of those with whom we live and work.
3. Let us consider gifts we have received. There are physical gifts and spiritual gifts.
 - a. Natural or physical gifts: These are the abilities and talents that came with the birth of our physical bodies and were developed in the course of our lives.
 - b. Spiritual gifts: These are gifts for us to give away; gifts that enable us to serve others.
 - c. Review the checklist for the natural or physical gifts and the checklist for spiritual gifts.
4. At the last judgment, Jesus is quoted as saying at the end all will be separated into two groups, the Inheritors of the kingdom and the Condemned. Tellingly, the separation is based on caring for others. In telling the stories of the Pieces of Silver and the Last Judgment, Jesus is inviting us to action.

<http://www.livingfaithatwork.org>

The Living Faith at Work website [<http://www.livingfaithatwork.org>] contains more information, individual activities, and small group activities.

There you will find

- Materials for use by individuals. These may also be used in small groups as discussion starters.
- Materials for facilitators of small groups including some suggestions on facilitating small groups. Abstracts and reflection/discussion questions for several books related to living our faith in our daily lives are included.
- A list of suggested readings.
- A PowerPoint slide show about Living Your Faith at Work.
- Homilies or homily notes for the Sundays before St. Joseph the Worker and Labor Day from the past several years.
- Information and Internet links related to Catholic Social Teachings.
- Contact information for Living Faith at Work.
- Internet links to a variety of websites that contain information, prayers, reflections, activities, and even more Internet links related to living a life faithful to the Catholic Faith.

<http://www.livingfaithatwork.org>