

One Body: Many Gifts



The Body of Christ

St. Paul calls us the parts of the single "Body of Christ," the Church. We are many parts of that same body, the one body of Christ. It has many parts but is seen as one. As infants we were baptized and made members of that body and with the sacrament of chrismation we received the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Through the sacraments we gained our identity as members of the Church. Every member is endowed with special graces or gifts and these gifts differ in nature. They are bestowed upon us in a mysterious way through the energy and power of the Holy Spirit. This is how each of us is given proof of the Spirit's presence for the good of all men and women.

Read together the following prayer excerpted from the sacrament of Holy Orders (ordination) which describes the "seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit."

Shower down upon them plentifully the grace of the Holy Spirit with the seven-fold gifts of truth, wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of fortitude, of knowledge, of piety, and of thy fear.

The gifts enumerated here are bestowed upon not only an ordained priest but upon all Christians. The following words taken from the sacrament of chrismation talk about those gifts in more specific terms (as the nine parts of the body are anointed).

- a. Sweet ointment, in the name of Jesus Christ, is poured upon thee as a seal of the incorruptible heavenly gifts.
- b. This seal, in the name of Jesus Christ, enlightens thine eyes that thou may never sleep unto death.
- c. This holy anointing be unto thee for hearing divine commandments.
- d. This seal . . . be to thee a sweet smell from life unto life.
- e. This seal . . . be to thee a guard for thy mouth and a strong door for thy lips.
- f. This seal . . . be to thee cause for good works and for all virtuous deeds and conduct.
- g. This divine seal establish within thee a pure heart and renew within thee an upright spirit.

- h. This seal . . . a shield of strength to thereby quench the fiery darts of the Evil One.
- i. This divine seal direct thy goings unto life everlasting that thou mayest not be shaken.

Now try to match up the gifts mentioned in the ordination prayer with the gifts given at chrismation. Place the correct number (in column with letters).

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| 1. Truth | a. _____ |
| 2. Wisdom | b. _____ |
| 3. Understanding | c. _____ |
| 4. Counsel | d. _____ |
| 5. Fortitude | e. _____ |
| 6. Knowledge | f. _____ |
| 7. Piety or Fear (Respect) | g. _____ |
| | h. _____ |
| | i. _____ |

Now share your answers.



THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

The gifts which we receive from the Holy Spirit do not depend upon our personal capabilities or intelligence. They are mystery (Christ revealed); they are powers of the Spirit. The disciples of our Lord were simple men. But when they received the power of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they were able to witness to the risen Lord and in his name evangelized the world.

The power of the Spirit transforms the ordinary person into a Spirited "powerful" person bearing witness to Christ the Lord. It also endows each of us with special powers which would not be accessible otherwise.

Each one of us has received the gifts of the Spirit and each of these gifted persons adds to the Church. Each is a valuable part which makes the whole body perfect.
Read Mark 25:14-30.



What Are My Gifts?

When I look at myself and think about the things I can do, I'm amazed at how much I see!

My gifts are

(list things you can do)

- 1. Friendship
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____

I'm a good listener and I care.

"Using one's gifts for the benefit of all (the Church) is the true expression of love. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us let us use them . . . he who contributes (ideas, money, time, labor), in liberality, he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; love one another with brotherly affection."
(Romans 12:6-10)

Looking at Our God-Given Resources

We call our spiritual gifts by many names: talents, arts, resources. As a church we should not only be able to see our own but those gifts in others.

We should try to put all of the gifts of the Church together.

Plan a religious event in which it will be necessary to use all the gifts, resources, talents of the community to make it successful.

Theme:

Date:

Place:

Time:

Event:

Outline (remember to include as many human resources as possible):

Session 2—One Body, Many Gifts

Key Concepts

1. The Church is one body with many gifts.
2. The Holy Spirit transforms the ordinary capacities of a person into personal/spiritual power.
3. The Church is a body, and each member has his/her unique gifts.
4. The Holy Spirit clarifies and helps us understand how to use our gifts for God's glory.

Objectives

Students will

1. Define the Church as a body of individuals, filled at baptism with the power of the Spirit.
2. Explore their own capabilities and recognize their own contributions as members of the Church.
3. Read how the Holy Spirit transforms ordinary abilities into divine power (in Scripture).
4. Plan an event using their gifts of the Spirit.

Background for Teacher

We are the one body of Christ, mystically bound together by and through his Holy Spirit. The perfection and unity of the body depends upon every individual member of the whole making his or her own valuable contribution. Their personal offerings are a sharing of the "gifts of the Spirit" bestowed upon them at the time of their formal entry into the church through the sacraments.

St. Paul teaches that the church is one body of many parts (members) and that each part alone is not whole and cannot function successfully. He says we all need one another, and through each other our talents and gifts are perfected.

The purpose of this lesson is to emphasize that the wholeness of the Church is only realized by the individuals themselves. The mission of the church is similarly dependent upon the use of the spiritual gifts of each member.

Students will look at these gifts as they are presented through the sacraments, and also discover their own particular spiritual gifts and how they add to the one body of Christ, the Church.

Materials Needed

- Bibles

Procedure

1. Welcome your class. Begin by reading I Corinthians 12:12-26. Briefly discuss the points of this scriptural passage with them.

Ask: What is St. Paul trying to stress? (Every part is important; each has a special function; each alone is unique but cannot remain alone; one part completes and complements the other.) (10 min.)

2. Read "The Body of Christ" on page 103, and discuss the church as the mystical *body* of Christ. What makes up the church? What groups complement or complete the whole body? What might each bring to the "ultimate good" of the entire church? (5 min.)

3. Read together from their student text the prayer from the ordination service concerning the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit and the chrismation gifts.

Have the students complete the short exercise, "What Gift—What Part?"

Answers (actually, almost all gifts apply):

- a. 1, 2, 6—know the truth, wisdom.
- b. 3, 1, 6—always understand, see the truth, know what's right.
- c. 3—always understand.
- d. 7—always full of faith.
- e. 5, 4—protection, fortitude, give sound advice.
- f. 7—in faith and respect to do God's work.
- g. 7, 3—to be faithful with understanding and compassion.
- h. 5—strength.
- i. 7, 1—with respect and faith, to follow the truth.

Assuming that we all have possible gifts, ask:

"With which of these spiritual gifts can you identify? What are your own contributions?" (10 min.)

4. Read Mark 25:14-30, the parable of the servants. Discuss the message in this story about our gifts and how we use them. The difference between the people in the story is that one used the gift received for the glory of God while the other neglected his gift and wasted it. God calls us to use our gifts for his glorification. (10 min.)

5. We call our spiritual gift by many names. Have students read "*The Gifts of the Spirit*" and then do "What Are My Gifts?" (10 min.)

6. Plan an event in the church community using the "resources" available from within the church. Think of people in class, in the entire church who have unique talents, think of your own talents. (15 min.)

Session 3—The Authority of Christ

Key Concepts

1. Christ is the head of the Church and establishes a hierarchy and order of authority.
2. Christ's authority ensures our individuality and freedom.
3. The authority of the church defines and clarifies the roles of her membership.

Objectives

Students will

1. Discuss and define the meaning of authority.