

Spirit Gifts – An Introduction for Children on Spiritual Gifts

Introduction for Teachers and Parents

(Read: 1 Corinthians ch. 12-13, Ephesians 4:11-13, 1 Peter 4:10-11 and Romans 12:4-8)

All people have God-given natural gifts, talents, or abilities. Some of us excel in sports, music, the visual arts, or writing. And some of us have abilities or talents that are not as evident; such as the ability to be a good listener, a good organizer, a good student, or a good friend to others. These natural abilities are important and useful whether a person is a believer in Jesus or not. However, the Gifts of The Spirit are different; they are supernatural gifts, which God gives to his children. The sole purpose for these Spiritual gifts is to help the rest of the body of believers, the church, to grow in their faith and to walk more closely with God.

Understanding the Gifts of the Spirit is the objective for these lessons. Spiritual Gifts are not to be confused with Spiritual Fruit. (Allow me to digress for a moment.) The Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, are the internal changes that occur in our lives once we receive the *gift of faith*. These Christ-like virtues don't happen all at once, nor are they always evident. They *are* in fact produced by the indwelling Holy Spirit as a believer learns to walk in the Spirit. (See Galatians 5:22-25, and Romans 8:9-11)

On the other hand, the Gifts of the Spirit are the outward manifestations of the Fruit of the Spirit. In other words, the Spirit Gifts are *Jesus living in you and through you—becoming his hands and feet!* Once a person has received the Gift of Faith, namely salvation, God gives that person certain gifts. The Bible says it like this, “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit...to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” (See 1 Corinthians 12:4-31). The Bible makes it clear that we don't all receive the same gifts. In fact, we don't get to decide which gift or gifts God gives us—he alone chooses the Spirit gifts we are to have!

The body of Christ is made up of many parts. Each of the parts, and each person, has been given a gift, or gifts, that are useful for furthering God's kingdom. These gifts are not given to us so we can say, “Look how great I am, because God has given me this wonderful gift.” No! The gifts are given to believers so they may be useful to God, sharing his love with others. Furthermore, if our gifts are used without love, the Bible says we gain nothing. Our gifts are worthless if we don't use them in love! (See 1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

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Spirit Gifts—An Introduction for Children on Spiritual Gifts introduces and explains the BODY OF CHRIST, and the following gifts of the Spirit: FAITH, WISDOM, MIRACLES, HEALING, GIVING, MERCY, SERVING, and EVANGELISM.

The lessons are reinforced with a craft, game, memory verse, and song-time suggestion. If you use both the craft and game for each session, it will take nine, two-hour sessions to complete the book. However, if you split each lesson into two sessions (recommended), whereby you present the lesson, memory verse, song, and craft in the first session, and the game with lesson review, memory recitation, and song in the next session, it will take eighteen, one-hour sessions to complete the book.

At the back of the book, you will find the patterns and templates to accompany the craft and game ideas.

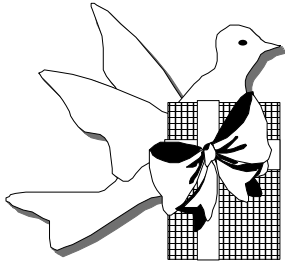
God bless you in your ministry to children!

S. A. Keith

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SAMPLE

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Lesson 1: Receiving the Gift of Faith

Song-Time (Choose from the song time suggestions or from one of your own.)

Enrichment Idea: You will need a wrapped present, with the lid wrapped separately from the box, and candy, such as M&M's or Skittles, placed inside the box.

Ask the class, "Who would like this gift? In a moment, some of you will have the opportunity to receive a free gift; so listen carefully to what I have to say! How many of you like receiving gifts? Have you ever turned down a present with your name on it? No, that never happens! We are always excited to open a present with our name on it. Right?"

(Call a child up to receive a free gift from you. Allow the child to open the gift and take one, two, three or four pieces of candy out of the box, according to your instruction. Call two or three more children up to receive a free gift. You might even choose a child who hasn't been listening, or who has been misbehaving, making the point even more clearly that it is by grace and not works that the gift is received. Alternately, have children sit in a circle and pass the gift box around while music is played. When you stop the music, the child holding the box may open it, but may only take out of it, per your instruction, one, two, three or four pieces of candy. Continue playing for a few more turns.)

Ask the children, "Did anyone have to do anything to receive the gift? No, the gift was given freely. Right? It wasn't given because you were doing anything special, or working hard to be good. No, the gift was completely free.

The Bible tells us that God has a free gift for each of us too! In the book of Ephesians 2:8-9, we read (open Bible to read the passage), "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-*and this not from yourselves, it is a gift of God-not by works*, so that no one can boast." What God wants you and me to know is that the gift of faith is free, and we must receive it. We cannot do anything to earn it! We can never be good enough, smart enough, talented enough, or pretty enough to earn God's gift of FAITH (Salvation). It is completely free! He gives it to you and me because he loves us.

The next part of the Bible verse says, "For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10).

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This means that God has chosen “good works” for you and me to do in our lives. In addition, even these “good works” are gifts from God. God calls them the *Gifts of the Spirit*; they are given to God’s children, those who believe and trust in Jesus.

Over the next several weeks, we will learn about the various gifts God gives. He doesn’t give us all the same kinds of gifts, just as some of the kids who received candy didn’t receive the same amount. God gives us gifts that are best suited to do the good works he has planned for our lives!

Do you know not every child or adult has received God’s gift of faith? In fact, there might be someone here, who hasn’t received God’s gift. I would like to pray now, so with everyone’s head bowed and eyes closed, I want to ask, “Who would like to receive God’s free gift? If you’ve never received God’s gift of faith, or are not sure if you have, pray this prayer quietly along with me: ‘Dear Jesus, thank you for dying for me. Thank you for your free gift of faith. Today I want to receive this gift from you. Please help me to learn about the other gifts you have planned for me, and help me to use them to help others. Amen.’”

Craft: Bible Memory Verse

(Children can assemble their own Memory Card booklets. Patterns are at the back of the book.)

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God...” Ephesians 2:8

Explain the words:

Grace = God’s gift, not earned or deserved.

Saved = Rescued from punishment for sinning, wrongdoing.

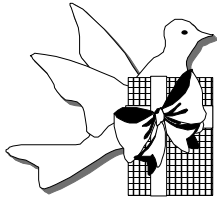
Faith = Trusting in, believing in God.

As you say the memory verse, make up hand motions or use sign language to reinforce the words. You can find more memorization techniques by using the search tool at SundaySchoolNetwork.com.

Craft: Mercy Mission Gift Baskets

Available with book purchase

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Lesson Review

(To be used when dividing the lesson into two sessions)

Song Time (Choose from the song time suggestions or from one of your own.)

Recap the Lesson (Allow children to retell the lesson in their own words.)

Enrichment Idea: You will need a white t-shirt, a washable marker, a large, plain colored and clean, long-sleeved button down shirt and a wrapped present (from the first part of the lesson). Place the long-sleeved shirt into the gift box. Have a volunteer put on the white t-shirt.

Review memory verse. Our memory verse says we are *saved* by grace. What are we saved from? (God's punishment for sinning against him. Sinning is doing wrong, disobeying God's commands.) Ask children to name sins. (As children name sinful things, write them on the t-shirt using the washable marker.) Repeat memory verse and emphasize the following "...and this not of yourselves it is a gift of God". (Have the volunteer open the gift box and put on the long-sleeved shirt over the t-shirt.) As he or she buttons it up, say, "When we receive the Gift of Faith, we put on Jesus, sort of like putting on a clean piece of clothing! God no longer sees our sin. Now he sees Jesus' goodness." (See Galatians 3:26-27, Colossians 3:9-10.)

Game: Receiving the Gift-Relays

Available with book purchase

Review Memory Verse (Score children's progress by placing a sticker on the page of the memorized verse.)

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God..." Ephesians 2:8

To get the book, follow this link:

<http://www.sundayschoolnetwork.com/curriculum-Spirit-Gifts.html>