

Gifts of our Community

Sunday Morning Education Series

Learning Objectives

1. Introduce the concept of gifts.
2. Introduce the concepts of ministry, call, and vocation.
3. Begin to discern individual gift packages.
4. Develop and deepen community bonds within Youth & Family program participants – parents, youth (grades 6-12), leadership, team members, and staff.
5. Facilitate spiritual and gifts conversations between young people and their parents at home.
6. Begin to reflect on where God may be calling us individually, as a program of the church and as a wider community.

Sunday Morning Session #1, 10:00 am to 11:00 am, “What me? Gifted?”

Introducing the concepts of gifts and gift packages.

- 10:00 Welcome, Introductions and Ground Rules
- 10:15 Definition and theology of gifts and assets
- 10:30 Groups divide – adults in gathering room, youth in youth room
- 10:35 Complete handout, Assessment for Knowledge, Skills and Interest
- 10:40 Discuss handout in small groups
- 10:55 Questions and preview of next Sunday
- 11:00 Conclude with prayer

Sunday Morning Session #2, 10:00 am to 11:00 am, “A Gift is Not Just a Sweater”

Considering our individual gifts for ministry.

- 10:00 Welcome & review from previous week
- 10:05 Complete handout, Assessment for Gifts of Dreams and Passions
- 10:25 Complete handout, Assessment for Gifts of Your Physical Body
- 10:45 Discuss handouts in small groups
- 10:55 Questions and preview of next Sunday
- 11:00 Conclude with prayer

Sunday Morning Session #3, 10:00 am to 11:00 am, “It’s mine! Or is it? Sharing our Gifts”

Viewing ourselves as gifted people and beginning to explore how we share our gifts with the world.

- 10:00 Welcome & review from previous week
- 10:05 Explain mandala project
- 10:10 Mandala creation, sharing our choices as we create
- 10:50 Concise theology of asset-based ministry, call, and vocation – how we share our gifts – segue into inviting participants to complete the final gift inventory, Bringing It All Together, at home
- 11:00 Conclude with thanksgivings and prayer – participants depart with evaluations to complete and return

Design Rationale

I have chosen to do the gifts discernment series in three parts to work within the current belief among parents and families that they do not have much time to give to the church. The youth group generally meets from 10 to 11 every Sunday so the young people and their parents will already be in the building. I would keep the youth and parents together for the first discussion about gifts and theology and then divide them – youth in one group, adults in another – at 10:30 am in the first meeting and for the entirety of the second meeting. On the third Sunday, the groups would be back together for the mandala exercise.

Because time is short, I would create and distribute a booklet with all of the handouts and reading materials during the first session. Before the second and third sessions, I would ask them to complete the materials before they arrive. The reflection materials would be tailored to meet the needs of each age group.

Hoping to discern as much variety as possible, I have tried to vary the activities. I believe that the first week is more focused on intellectual and skill-based learning that might be more attractive to logical and practical learners. The second week involves more focused interior conversation. The third week ties it all together.

Although the scope of this project is small, I have some hope that the energy we generate will be contagious within the church and inspire some members of the leadership to want to participate in some type of similar exercise.

Explaining the Mandala Project

I have actually used a modified mandala project in several settings to promote individual consideration of gifts. Using clay and mosaic tiles, participants create personal mandalas. The whole of the mandala represents the whole of themselves; the tiles represent their gifts.

In this exercise, participants flatten clay into a small circle. They they find tiles to represent their various gifts and place the tiles in the clay in a pattern that makes sense to them.

Mandalas are an excellent way for participants to consider their gifts and to begin feeling comfortable talking about their gifts in community. Often it is easier for people unaccustomed to these conversations to represent their gifts visually and discuss their creation. It also gives participants something tangible to take home and continue gifts conversations among themselves. This project has always been well received, both by adults and young people (even children).