

Isa. 62:1–5
Ps. 36:5–10
1 Cor. 12:1–11
John 2:1–11

In One Spirit

**Goal for
the Session**

Children will rejoice that they receive gifts from the Spirit.

■ P R E P A R I N G F O R T H E S E S S I O N

Focus on 1 Corinthians 12:1–11

WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Troy Miller

The idea that governs the remainder of the passage (vv. 4–11) is the need for and value of a diversity of spiritual gifts, though still within a unity. Prior to moving into a more detailed explication of this diversity and unity, though, Paul establishes the theological context in which his teaching is grounded. For Paul both the *unity* of source and purpose and the *diversity* of expression for spiritual gifts come from the Godhead, which he distinctly articulates in Trinitarian form. God is diverse and the diversity of the “gifts” (*charismata*, v. 4) given by the Spirit testify to that.

WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Lee C. Barrett

Those who truly are in the Spirit will speak and act in ways congruent with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Paul suggests that the Holy Spirit is not some generic mystical principle. The reference to the phrase “Jesus is Lord” points to Paul’s reliance on the simple and most essential confession of the early church. Because Jesus alone is worthy of trust and obedience, no other political, cultural, or religious lords can be the focus of the Christian’s spiritual interest. All who can confess that Jesus is Lord do indeed share this indwelling of the Spirit. Because the persons of the Trinity always act together, where the second person is so too is the third person.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Karen Stokes

All of this discernment, all of these gifts, services, and activities are activated by God for a purpose. Each person, Paul says, is given a manifestation of the Spirit to be used for the *common good*. In the culture that surrounds the church today, and often even within the church, individualism has been exalted to such high status that the phrase “common good” has nearly vanished from the lexicon. Paul’s words offer a refreshing, even shocking reminder that faith, while personal, is never private, and that the gift each person has been given is meant to be shared.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” Raewynne J. Whiteley

Many of our churches struggle with issues of unity and diversity. This text addresses one aspect of diversity, that of the gifts exhibited in a community. Such gifts can be a source of disunity when they become the criteria for determining different ranks in the church, leading to a hierarchy of holiness. Here we are reminded that because the gifts have a single source, they are meant to be things that unite the community of faith. Gifts are used for the common good.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians
12:1–11

Focus on Your Teaching

The children in your group probably belong to a wide variety of groups, from their families to sports teams to choirs. They may not have considered how they contribute to the common good of any of these groups or what special abilities they have to offer. In this session, the children have the opportunity to think about what they do well and how those abilities can contribute to make a group better. However, children also live in a competitive world. Do as much as you can to affirm each child's gifts.

God of creation, may I have fresh eyes to look at each child this week to see the gifts of the Spirit each one has received. Amen.

YOU WILL NEED

- green cloth
- white battery-powered candle
- offering plate
- Bible, bookmark
- Resource Sheet 1, 2
- Color Pack 1, 15, 29
- scissors
- 1" x 8½" green paper strip, paper chain started Dec. 2
- tape
- Singing the Feast*, 2018–2019; CD player

For Responding

- option 1: Color Pack 16, tissue paper, tape
- option 2: copies of Resource Sheet 3, pens or pencils, Color Pack 17
- option 3: small gift boxes with lids, mirror tiles, glitter glue, glue, colorful paper
- option 4: Color Pack 29; *Singing the Feast*, 2018–2019; CD player

LEADING THE SESSION

GATHERING

Before the session, cut apart the gift cards on Resource Sheet 2 (Gift Cards) for Exploring. For option 1 in Responding, construct the cubes. Stuff them with wadded tissue paper for stability. For option 3, glue mirror tiles in the bottom of the gift boxes.

Greet each child. Invite early arrivals to help you set up the worship center with a green cloth, a white battery-powered candle, the paper chain started December 2, an offering plate, and a Bible open to Luke, with a bookmark at 1 Corinthians.

When everything is ready, have the children sit around the worship center. Point out the green cloth and explain that green is the color for the weeks in the church year that we call Common Time or Ordinary Time. (Some churches call this the Season after the Epiphany.) There are no special days in these weeks, but the green reminds us that we continue to grow in faith as we study God's Word. Light the candle as a reminder of Jesus' promise to be with his followers. Lead this litany:

Leader: Jesus has come.

All: Rejoice, rejoice!

Leader: Today we light the white candle, a symbol of Jesus.

All: Rejoice, rejoice!

Leader: We want to follow Jesus,

All: Rejoice, rejoice!

Leader: We pray for the light of Jesus to show us the way. Amen.

Ask a child to pass the offering plate and then place it next to the candle. To make the children aware of the groups to which they belong, ask:

- ✠ What are some groups that you take part in?
- ✠ What do you do to help those groups be better?

Explain that the Bible story for today is about members of a church many years ago who were not getting along with one another.

EXPLORING

Have a child retrieve the Bible from the worship table. Point out that it is opened to the Gospel of Luke. Ask:

- ✪ Who do we read about in the Gospel of Luke?
- ✪ What stories about Jesus have we studied this year?

Some Bibles title this book First Corinthians. If yours does, explain that after the Gospels and Acts come many shorter books that were letters to churches.

Then have the child turn to the bookmark. Read the title of this book: First Letter to the Corinthians. Find Corinth on Color Pack 1. Notice that it is on the water and was an important port city where ships from many countries brought all kinds of things to sell.

Tell the story on Resource Sheet 1 (Many Gifts, One Spirit). Ask:

- ✪ What did you learn about the church in Corinth from the story?
- ✪ Why do you think Paul told the church about the gifts of the Spirit?

To help the children understand the gifts named in the letter, distribute the cards from Resource Sheet 2 so that each child has one half of a word. The children are to move around to find the matching half. When the pairs are matched, have the children read the word and description to the group. Then invite the pair to select a photo on Color Pack 15 that illustrates that gift.

This conversation will prepare the children for the options in Responding.

RESPONDING

Offer at least two options so children have a choice. One might be more challenging to interest older children who can work on their own.

**EASY
PREP**

- 1. Gifts Game** This game will give the children practice in identifying gifts of the Spirit that might be helpful today. Show the group the two cubes that you constructed from Color Pack 16. Point out that one cube has places where they might be; the other cube, what they might use of their God-given gifts. The question mark on each cube means the person can select whatever she or he wishes. Invite two volunteers to play the game. Each one rolls a cube. Then they name the images that are face-up and how a gift might be used in that place. For example, for “hands” and “home,” one answer could be to help a younger sibling learn something. Continue until each one has had a turn. After the game, ask each child to name his or her favorite way to use his or her gifts.

If your group enjoys acting, the children could act out their answers for the others to guess.


 EASY
 PREP

2. **Gifts Inventory** This option will encourage the children to think about their own gifts of the Spirit. Introduce this activity by reminding the group that a variety of gifts is important. Ask the children to think about how boring a potluck supper would be if everyone brought the same casserole. The same is true of the gifts of the Spirit. Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 3 (Gift List) and pens or pencils. Together, read each gift and explanation. Then have the children work on the list individually. Older children can probably proceed on their own, but be ready to assist younger children. When all have finished, ask them to think about the gifts they discovered in themselves. Then have them fold their papers and place them around Color Pack 17 in the worship space. Pray:

Gracious God, thank you for all these gifts from the Spirit. May we use these gifts to make our church better and to be good followers of Jesus. Amen.

3. **Gift Boxes** These boxes will remind the children that they are gifts of and gifted by God. Give each child a prepared box. Provide markers for them to write inside the lid: I am a gift of God! Set out colorful paper, glue, and glitter glue for the children to decorate their boxes. Encourage them to include symbols of the gifts of the Spirit they may have. Be sure the boxes are dry before you send them home.

4. **Joyful Song** The song “Shalom Havarim” (Color Pack 29; track 14 on *Singing the Feast*, 2018–2019) will be used in Closing from this session through Lent. Although the children may have sung it on December 30, they will become more familiar with it now. The Hebrew words, pronunciation, and translation are:

“Shalom havarim” (*shuh-LOM khah-vair-EEM*) means “Peace, friends!”

“Lehitraot” (*luh-heet-rah-AUT*) means “Hope to see you soon.”

Practice saying the Hebrew words with the group. Then sing that stanza. Explain what they mean.

CLOSING

Gather around the worship space and light the candle, if necessary. Add a green paper link for Ordinary Time (or Season after the Epiphany) to the church year paper chain.

Sing together “Shalom Havarim” (Color Pack 29; track 14 on *Singing the Feast*, 2018–2019).

Pray aloud:

God, thank you for many kinds of gifts from the Spirit. We want to use our gifts for the good of the church and our group. Amen.

Invite the children to respond: *Thank you, God.*

Say to each child, “(Name), you are a gift from God and you have gifts of the Spirit to use.”

Many Gifts, One Spirit including 1 Corinthians 12:1-11



James watched his mother getting the basket of fruit ready to take to the meeting of Christians. He heard his parents talking about a letter from Paul. James didn't remember Paul, but all the grown-ups talked about him a lot. He knew that Paul had begun their church. They met in the courtyard of a house that was much bigger than the one he lived in. All the people who came wouldn't fit in his house.

Everything was ready and off they went. As they walked past the dock, James saw ships from other places and heard men talking in languages he couldn't understand. It must be exciting to travel to strange places, he thought.

He hoped there were still some of those yummy dates when they got there. The last time the dates were all gone by the time his family arrived.

It was hot walking in the sun. He would be ready for a drink of water when they got to the house.

Going to the meetings of Christians was fun. He saw friends he didn't see otherwise. Sometimes, though, the people talked too long and James got bored and sleepy.

When they arrived at the house for the meeting, James was glad to see the dates weren't all eaten. People were already eating, so James and his family joined the meal.

After they sang hymns and prayed, the leader of the church stood to read from the letter from Paul. It began like this:

From Paul
To God's Church in Corinth

I never stop thanking God for you.

^{12.1}My friends, you asked me about spiritual gifts. ²I want you to remember that before you became followers of the Lord, you were led in all the wrong ways by idols that cannot even talk. ³Now I want you to know that if you are led by God's Spirit, you will say that Jesus is Lord, and you will never curse Jesus.

⁴There are many different kinds of spiritual gifts, but they all come from the same Spirit. ⁵There are different ways to serve the same Lord, ⁶and we can each do different things. Yet the same God works in all of us and helps us in everything we do.

⁷The Spirit has given each of us a special way of serving others. ⁸Some of us can speak with wisdom, while others can speak with knowledge, but these gifts come from the same Spirit. ⁹To others the Spirit has given great faith or the power to heal the sick ¹⁰or the power to work mighty miracles. Some of us are prophets, and some of us recognize when God's Spirit is present. Others can speak different kinds of languages, and still others can tell what these languages mean. ¹¹But it is the Spirit who does all this and decides which gifts to give to each of us.

Scripture taken from
Contemporary English
Version.

The reader continued, but this was all James heard. His head was on his mother's lap, and James was fast asleep. Perhaps he was dreaming about the gifts the Spirit would give him.



Gift Cards

Wisdom

**having good ideas and the
ability to make good choices**

Knowledge

**ability to learn new things
and explain them to others**

Prophecy

**ability to tell
others how to live
in God's ways**

Healing

**ability to help people feel
better physically and to
comfort hurt feelings**

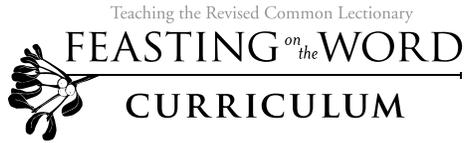
Languages

**ability to understand what
people are saying and explain
their words to others**

Faith

**trusting and believing in
God's love for the world**

January 20, 2019
In One Spirit



Multi-Age
Resource Sheet 3

Gift List

	Not at All Like Me	Sometimes Like Me	A Lot Like Me
Give wise advice. My friends come to me when they aren't sure what to do.			
Given special knowledge. Sometimes I know an answer, but I don't know how I got it.			
Great faith. I often am confident enough to make an important decision without much fear.			
Ability to help others heal. When someone is hurting, I usually know what to do or say to help him or her feel better.			
Perform miracles. I have helped someone in a way I never imagined I could.			
Ability to understand how actions today influence tomorrow. I often see the connection between what I choose to do today and what may happen tomorrow.			
Ability to sense why people do what they do. I know people do what they do for different reasons, and I can often sense what that reason is.			
Speaking in ways that others understand. I can find the right words to say, so that others understand what needs to be done.			
Explaining things to others. When a friend is confused by something, I can help him or her understand.			
Other gifts:			