



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH



BWACHA MISSION DISTRICT



Mukobeko South Youth Department

SEMINAR 8

SERVING

The Way to success

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MUKOBEKO SOUTH SDA CHURCH

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SERVING

Spiritual Giftedness and Service

1. INTRODUCTION

The Lord has a special gift for every youth. From the bestowal of the gifts to the discovery, use, and the upkeep of the gifts, is a special journey that youth leaders are privileged to walk through by the sides of their youth. It is the responsibility of the leader to grow the church youth program by proactively reaching out to youth within the church and partnering with them to assess their spiritual gifts. They can encourage them to participate in local and conference-wide activities like Bible bowl, mission trips, global youth day and week of prayer, but the real focus is how these gifts can be expressed at the local church.

What opportunities are available for each gift? Who are the key people in the journey? What is the role of the nuclear family and the church family? How can these gifts be used to encourage maximum involvement of the youth?

Why should the gifts of the youth be recognized and embraced?

As a disciple of Jesus Christ, every Adventist youth can be sure that he or she has full access to God through the Holy Spirit daily. It is this Spirit that guides us into all truth and brings all things to our remembrance. God the Holy Spirit also distributes gifts to the church for works of service, and to build up the body of Christ (Eph. 4: 12). Every disciple of Jesus, including the youth, has this asset available to him or her for service.

2. SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

In this module, we will develop an appreciation for Spiritual Gifts in Youth Ministry, establish a theological basis for Spiritual Gifts, demonstrate the relevance of identifying and utilizing Spiritual Gifts in young adults and teens, understand how to conduct a Spiritual Gifts Inventory, and learn how to recognize and affirm spiritual gifts and use them in building up the church of God on earth.

3. SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN MINISTRY

Theological Foundation: Joel 2: 27 – 29; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12: 4 – 11; and Ephesians 4:1-13.

THE PROMISE

Jesus made a promise to His disciples before leaving this world, that He would send them another Comforter, whom He identified as the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is functional and operational in the daily life of everyone, whether we recognize Him or not. Once we do recognize and welcome His presence, one role of the Holy Spirit is to give gifts to God's children. These gifts will vary according to our abilities and Christian maturity. All the gifts are given to build up God's church and to equip each disciple for service. "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:27, NIV)

Scripture and the church's expectation often seems at odds with each other. At first glance, it would seem that the congregation is deprived of gifts, while Scripture says, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us" (Romans 12:6). If we take God at His word, then we must believe that He not



only gives us the gifts, but he gives to each of us a measure of faith as well. Yes, He has given each local church all the gifts it needs for life, health, growth, and ministry.

THE PROPHECY

The prophet Joel foresaw an unprecedented manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the last days. “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit” (Joel 2: 28, 29).

Amazing and exciting exhibitions of talent will take place when the young and old experience the outpouring of God’s Spirit as prophesied in this passage. Unprecedented talents, gifts, and abilities will be demonstrated in those who are so gifted by God. According to the prophet, young people will have enhanced visions and revelations of what God’s purpose is for their lives. This will be affirmed and endorsed through the wisdom given to older Christians in dreams.

THE FULFILLMENT

This prophecy was cited by Peter as having a partial fulfillment at Pentecost, but like many other Bible prophecies, it has dual application and is very relevant and applicable for these last days. The apostle Paul affirmed the role of the Holy Spirit in the equipping and distributing of gifts in God’s church. In Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4 he outlines a variety of gifts that are given to Christian believers by the Holy Spirit. These include gifts such as teachers, government leaders, pastors, and helpers, among others.

Ellen White writes:

“God has set in the church different gifts. These are precious in their proper place, and all may act a part in the work of preparing a people for Christ’s soon coming” (Gospel Workers, p. 481).

It is very clear from scripture that God never intends for all of the spiritual gifts to reside in any one individual. Similarly, it is absolutely clear that God desires and ensures that all who have been born again by His Holy Spirit become beneficiaries of one or more spiritual gifts. All gifts, including the gifts of faith and grace, are given to humankind by the Holy Spirit of God. It is our privilege to receive them and to use them for the purposes God intended. As Christian disciples, all Adventist youth can be assured that this gift is as readily available to them as it is to every other Christian, young or old, mature or immature.

EXPLORE

List five gifts that God’s spirit has given to the church

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.



4. THE GIFTS DEMONSTRATED IN BIBLE HISTORY

Through all ages God's children have relied on the Holy Spirit for counsel, wisdom, and direction. Daniel and his friends in Babylon understood the need for complete reliance on the Holy Spirit: "In acquiring the wisdom of the Babylonians, Daniel and his companions were far more successful than their fellow students; but their learning did not come by chance. They obtained their knowledge by the faithful use of their powers, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They placed themselves in connection with the Source of all wisdom, making the knowledge of God the foundation of their education" (PK 486).

This is the key for those who work with the young generation. We not only seek to teach them mere life skills, which are critical and important, but encourage the youth to rely fully and completely on the Holy Spirit as they make the best of those skills. We have the faithful examples of the past. We see the difference it made for David, when he followed the voice of the Holy Spirit while using his skill and experience to defeat an indignant Goliath. We see the very opposite in David's predecessor, King Saul, who was blessed with amazingly awesome gifts and abilities but relied on his own power, to his demise and defeat.

Jesus was very clear when responding to the stubbornness of the Jews, "It is the Spirit which quickens: the flesh profits nothing, the words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63, ERV).

Ruth was "only a girl." That's what her society would have said, and many of our contemporary societies say the same. Her Jewish neighbors could have added, "only a pagan girl." But Naomi took her on as a young apprentice in the wise ways of being a godly wife. As a result, Ruth stayed with Naomi even after there was no relational call to do so. Back in Naomi's hometown of Bethlehem, Ruth's spiritual gifts of helpfulness, faith, and generosity glowed in contrast with those around her, and in the end, she became a wife again, a mother this time, and—little though she knew it—ancestor of Jesus!

Esther was well-taught and obedient but destined for a future that probably shocked her. Instead of being wife and mother to a godly Jew, as she must have expected and perhaps longed to be, she was taken from her home into the harem of an ungodly pagan king and made queen. Obedient to Mordecai, the father figure in her life, she did not reveal her Jewishness—which must have meant foregoing ceremonies and celebrations that would have let the secret out. Did she secretly manage to keep Sabbath holy? We have many questions which will never be answered until we can ask her in person. However, we can imagine that she must have spent many a night in prayer, wondering what God's plan for her was. Yet in the end, her clear gifts of wisdom and discernment, gained through prayer and fasting, saved her whole nation.

Solomon was very young when the mighty responsibility for the guidance of God's nation fell on him. Overwhelmed by this prospect, Solomon no doubt fell asleep thinking, pondering, worrying...and God sent him a dream. In the dream, God asked, "What shall I give you?" Little did Solomon know this was a test which would reveal his untried character. Solomon passed the test by begging God to give him wisdom—and became a king who is famous all over the world to this very day for his wise use of the gift God gave him by His Spirit. Solomon's life is also a cautionary tale—being spiritually gifted will not protect us if we persist in making unwise choices. This is what we strive to teach our youth in all the areas of life covered in this seminar, and more. They must be well-rounded and whole when they come to adulthood. They must make wise choices.

Our youth today may have a quiet destiny like Ruth's, an unlikely one like Esther, or a noble one like Solomon's, but as we near the end of earth's history, we will no doubt be astonished at what God has in mind for them.

EXPLORE

Can you identify the specific gift or talent in these bible characters?



MUKOBEKO SOUTH SDA CHURCH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Compiled by Clinton Mbase
+260975273790 +260968084570



1. Samson
2. Solomon
3. Hosea
4. Ruth
5. Esther

DISCUSSION:

Choose your favorite bible personality and share in small groups the spiritual gift or talent you admire most in him or her.

5. SPIRITUAL GIFTS TODAY

Faithful men and women in all ages have understood the benefits of living by the Holy Spirit. Far too many others have been too independent and too impatient. One young man was amazingly gifted and talented but had serious character flaws. While this young man was a member of the church, it happened that he ran afoul of the law and had a criminal case pending in court. The senior church leader offered to pray for God's intervention in his case, to which the young man replied, "I'm fine, God works too slowly."

The rich young ruler who met Jesus was much the same. He may have been extremely gifted and talented and accomplished much but did not see the need for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in his decision making.

One of the great advantages youth leaders have is to utilize the trust which the youth have in them to inspire and motivate them to develop their God-given gifts and talents. While working and interacting with young people, youth leaders have a VIP advantage in their lives and can make this a positive partnership to help to identify and encourage these gifts. Many talents remain unused and dormant simply because they were never identified or encouraged.

An insightful and observant youth leader will engage youth in the development of these gifts. This must be a deliberate and intentional process. The following steps are not linear; they are circular. Once you have gone through steps one through five, you are back at one again to start over. Young people grow up and move out of your program, and others come in all the time. If we want our young people to be active and productive and stay in church, we must continually help them discover and develop their gifts.

STEP ONE: CONDUCT A SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY

You will find the link for the Adventist Youth Ministries Spiritual Gifts Inventory at the end of this module, but it would be helpful to be familiar with the general categories of gifts as given in the Bible. It should also be understood that the lists in Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Ephesians are not exhaustive. God, as anyone who is even a little familiar with the Bible knows, gives whatever gifts He wants to whomever He wants to give them to, whenever He chooses to give them! It is enough to ask, will this gift or ability build the church up in love, to know that it is from God. That said, here are the main categories in the Bible. It can help to envision them as a diagram of the Body of Christ. (You will notice that some gifts are in more than one category.)

- "Head" gifts: wisdom, discernment, knowledge, teaching, administration, and leadership, intercession
- "Mouth" gifts: preaching, teaching, exhortation, prophecy*, evangelism
- "Heart" gifts: faith, giving or generosity, hospitality, pastoring (chaplaincy, etc. also fit in here), mercy, intercession



- “Hands” gifts: helps, mercy, hospitality—people who like to make things should read Ex. 28:3; 31:1-6: God also gives those “crafting” gifts as spiritual gifts, and we under-utilize them in our churches.
- “Feet” gifts: apostleship (planting new churches), missionary, helps

*Prophecy: We tend to think of this as a rare gift, one who sees the future in dreams and visions, and so on. God does sometimes work this way, as He did in Ellen White’s life (starting when she was only 17, by the way), and according to Joel, He will again. But the gift of prophecy is actually defined as someone who “speaks for God.” In a sense, preachers, teachers, and evangelists have this gift in some measure, but many, many of us, even while young, have received impressions of something God wants us to share with someone, and that is the gift of prophecy at work.

STEP TWO: IDENTIFY THE GIFTS AND ABILITIES OF THE YOUTH

You and your young people will enjoy the exploration and study of spiritual gifts. An important thing you will see happening is them encouraging and affirming each other. One will shyly think they don’t have a gift, but the inventory shows they do. A friend, or several, chime in--” Oh, yes, you do! Remember that time when you---?” Of course, you will help them to understand that one of the important steps of discerning a gift is that it is affirmed by others when it is exercised. Many, if not most gifts will be affirmations of something the young person already feels an attraction to, but some will be surprises. And remind them these can change over their lifetimes. At 80, Moses certainly didn’t expect to be suddenly given any new gifts, let alone be called to lead the people out of Egypt!

STEP THREE: ENCOURAGE THOSE GIFTS AND TALENTS

No matter how much the youth encourage each other, it will be your task as leader to be the head cheerleader. You don’t want to give the impression that the young person gets any credit for whatever gift God has bestowed, as if they are somehow special above the others and “deserve” this gift somehow. But you certainly do want to affirm and encourage. If a young person feels she cannot do the thing God seems to be calling her to do, you can say that God wouldn’t ask it if He didn’t believe in what this young person can do with His help, and that God never calls us to do anything on our own. If another seems to be feeling proud or acting conceited about his gift(s), remind the group that no gift is greater than another, and nobody simply sprouted his own gift; they all came directly from God and should be used humbly and for His purpose.

True Maria. God doesn’t take back the gift. But I don’t see where that fits here. In fact, be sure to round out your spiritual gifts Bible study with 1 Cor. 13, which shows the “more excellent way” of the greatest gift of all. It’s not any of those listed above—it’s Love. True love, the kind that only comes from God, and with it enthroned in our hearts we can’t be either too humble or too proud.

STEP FOUR: ENGAGE OR UTILIZE THESE GIFTS AND TALENTS IN MINISTRY

Here is where “the rubber meets the road.” Spiritual gifts are given for very specific purposes, and we don’t need to guess or figure out what those purposes are. They are listed very plainly in the same scriptures that list the gifts. They are for strengthening disciples, building up the body of Christ, His church, and reaching out to share His love outside our walls.

So, once you have a list of the gifts within your group, you are ready to put your young people to work, and they will be much more inclined to help, because they will be doing things they are good at, which God is calling their hearts to do. This is when you create the plans we have talked about at other points in



this seminar and mobilize your energetic young “army” for Jesus. Great things will happen, and then you will come together, evaluate, take note of changes you want to make next time, and yes, comfort each other for mistakes made and encourage each other to try again, with your hands in God’s.

STEP FIVE: AFFIRM THOSE GIFTS CONSTANTLY

As a youth leader, you know, yourself, how easy it is to get discouraged, or simply drift away and forget your calling in the midst of life and its stresses. For young people, this is even more true. Their friends are making fun of their attempts to use their gift for evangelism. Or their parents don’t understand their desire to be hospitable or generous. The “old people” (that’s us!) in the church don’t like the way they do ministry. Or the youth are “just too busy” with school and work and fun. Constant, mutual encouragement will go a long way toward helping all of you move ahead on the journey God is leading you on, to become fully committed disciples of Jesus.

EXPLORE

List at least five (5) gifts or talents you have identified in the youth in your local congregation?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

5. CONCLUSION

It cannot be overemphasized how important it is for youth leaders to help young people discover their spiritual gifts, and then to provide or create opportunities for them to use them for God. Every local congregation has youth who are extremely gifted. It takes a spirit filled and attentive youth leader to identify and encourage the gifts in our youth. All Christians have full and complete access to the Holy Spirit at all times and are beneficiaries of the gifts which He bestows. It is the privilege of every youth to be a recipient of one or more of these gifts. A proper understanding of the role of spiritual gifts in ministry is a necessity for every youth leader. Youth leaders have a unique privilege and opportunity to encourage young people to identify and develop their spiritual gifts. This task will be made much easier if the youth leader is equipped with the tools to identify their own gifts and to ask God daily to assist them in developing and utilizing them in ministry.

6. ACTIVITIES

- A. List at least five (5) gifts you have identified in the youth in your local congregation.
- B. Course leader will lead participants in completing the Spiritual Gifts Inventory on the Youth ministries website (youth.adventist.org). This is a major portion of the evaluation process.

