



LESSON 6
PREPARATION NOTES

Gifts and
Fruits

GIFTS AND FRUITS IN BRIEF:

The gifts and fruits of the Spirit are available to all believers as special helps and signs of the Holy Spirit's activity in our lives.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- This lesson will likely require extra preparation time as you familiarize yourself with the gifts and fruits.
- This lesson is a direct follow-up to last lesson's challenge to embrace docility. We discuss how the gifts and fruits of the Spirit help us live a life of docility. The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are listed in Isaiah 11:2. It is not necessary to look up this verse with your group. Note that the Church adds piety to the list in Isaiah 11:2. Confirmands are given all these gifts as they receive the Holy Spirit in the sacrament. Take time to seriously reflect on the definitions given for each of the gifts under Question 3.
- After reading the definitions of the gifts, we will look at case studies which demonstrate how we can experience these gifts in our lives.
- A variety of spiritual gifts (also known as charisms) are found in the New Testament epistles. Jot them down as you read the Scripture selections (1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 1 Corinthians 12:28-31, Romans 12:4-8, Ephesians 4:11-13).
- Unlike the sevenfold gifts, we do not receive all these charisms, nor does Scripture present us with an exhaustive list of them. All these charisms allow us to serve and minister to others.
- The Holy Spirit gives people particular gifts that suit their unique vocations.
- We can certainly ask the Holy Spirit to give us the specific charisms we desire. With docility, we trust that if God wants us to have a particular charism, we will receive it.
- Many of these charisms seem quite ordinary, while others are more supernatural or miraculous. The latter include: healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and discernment of spirits. Do not hide these gifts from *Source* participants, but be prudent when sharing them. Speak of them in a simple, non-sensationalized way. A thorough study of these charisms may not be suited to those who are new in embracing and practicing their faith.

- You may feel ill-equipped to field questions about supernatural charisms and experiences—remember that you do not have to undertake a deep discussion on this topic. Present the charisms simply and matter-of-factly. They are scriptural, and tens of millions of Catholics today are inflamed by the Holy Spirit with these charisms (the ordinary and extraordinary ones). The charisms are much more common than most people realize. Your comfort with this topic will set the appropriate tone for participants to learn about them and be open to them.
- You can also consult or refer others to people who are more familiar with these gifts or with the Charismatic Renewal.
- Although we have given a more detailed explanation on the charisms here to best prepare leaders, it is *not* necessary to give them greater emphasis in the lesson.
- The fruits of the Spirit are connected to the narrative from John 15 (the vine and the branches). Carefully read this narrative and prepare to present and answer the questions.
- Invite all participants to meet with you after this lesson for the *Source* one-on-one follow-up. You will have an opportunity in this one-on-one meeting to discuss their docility and openness to the Holy Spirit.

RECOMMENDED READING:

- CCC 799-801

NOTES ON GIFTS AND CHARISMS:

The following is a brief explanation of some of the extraordinary charisms, should participants ask about them.

- **Speaking in tongues.** This first happened in Acts 2:1-13. The Holy Spirit descended on the apostles in a powerful way and they found themselves speaking in other languages. People exercising this gift pray in a language which they do not understand. Romans 8:26 explains it this way: “Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.” The gift of tongues can also help us when we earnestly want to pray for an intention but do not know what to ask of God.

- **Prophecy.** This charism is *not* fortune-telling! It allows a person to be aware of the truth that God wants to communicate to a person, a community or the world. Discernment is needed to communicate God's truth authentically, sensitively, lovingly and according to his timing.
- **Interpretation of tongues.** This happens when someone prays in tongues and the Holy Spirit enables another person to interpret what was said.

RESOURCES:

- *Catholic Spiritual Gifts Inventory* (www.siena.org to order). This tool helps people identify some of their spiritual gifts. Occasionally parishes or dioceses host workshops on the spiritual gifts as well.
- *Your Life in the Holy Spirit*, Dr. Alan Schreck
- *Sober Intoxication of the Spirit*, Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa
- *Call to Holiness: Reflections on the Charismatic Renewal*, Archbishop Paul Josef Cordes
- *In the School of the Holy Spirit*, Fr. Jacques Philippe



LESSON 6

Gifts and Fruits

1 Share how you experienced the Holy Spirit acting in your life since the last lesson.



Introduction



Docility allows the Holy Spirit to take an even more active role in our lives. When he does, his presence is evident within us.



Today, we will look at some special ways we can recognize the Holy Spirit's work in us. These telltale signs are the gifts and fruits of the Spirit. They are accessible and freely given to all through Baptism and Confirmation. These gifts and fruits are both a support to our ongoing docility and a wonderful blessing in our spiritual lives; through them, our relationship with God matures and we grow in holiness. By using the gifts of the Holy Spirit and manifesting his fruit, we become authentic witnesses of God's love to others.

We will begin this lesson by looking at the seven gifts we receive at Confirmation.

The Seven Gifts of the Spirit



“ The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are permanent dispositions which make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations. ”

CCC 1830-1831

2 What does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tell us about the purpose of these gifts?

ANSWER: They give us help, stability and the ability to follow God.

These themes are the subject of Lessons 3-6. We are called to make an effort to follow God, to reject sin and to pursue righteousness. As we make these efforts, we demonstrate to God that we are ready and willing to follow his lead—ready to cooperate with the Spirit. The Spirit, through the gifts he gives us, perfects our efforts by helping us to be more receptive to grace. Through these gifts, the Holy Spirit works in our souls and prompts us to be docile to God’s will. We become aware of the Holy Spirit’s guidance in our lives.

These gifts are already present within us—we just have to use them. Think back to the chocolate milk and computer analogies in Lesson 1, where so much potential lies dormant if we do not put the gifts of the Holy Spirit to use.

3 The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are listed below, followed by three situations in which they could be used. Discuss which gifts apply to each situation, and how they enable us to be more open to the Holy Spirit.

LEADERS: Since wisdom, counsel, understanding and knowledge are very similar, they have been grouped together to help distinguish their differences.

Wisdom: Our hearts desire and long for spiritual and eternal things, instead of the things the world has to offer.

Understanding: We can understand the meaning and deeper truths of Scripture and Church teachings.

Counsel (also called right judgement): We are able to decide the right thing to do, particularly in difficult situations. It is a kind of supernatural intuition. Acting as Jesus would (asking ourselves “What Would Jesus Do?”) demonstrates counsel.

Knowledge: That which informs our consciences with specific knowledge of morality, so that we know what to do to please God, follow his will and avoid moral danger.

Strength (also called fortitude): We are given supernatural courage to act decisively in the face of difficulty or obstacles and to patiently endure trials or persecution.

Piety (also called reverence): We respect and love God so much that our love overflows into a life of prayer and obedience.

Wonder and Awe (also called holy fear): We are filled with a healthy respect for the majesty and sovereign power of God; it makes us dread, above all things, offending him. This is not a fear of being punished by God; it is a kind of love.

LEADERS: The answers provided below are only suggestions—other gifts may also apply.

Situation 1—Discerning God’s plan for your future.

ANSWER:

- **Wisdom:** to consider your future in light of God’s plans and purposes; to understand his calling in your life based on your giftedness and where you are best suited to serve him in the world. (As opposed to only considering your future as to where you can achieve the most worldly success or riches; or conversely where not much will be expected or demanded of you).
- **Counsel:** to be completely willing to follow where God leads.
- **Strength:** to face the challenges of discerning and living out your vocation.
- **Wonder and Awe:** you take the discernment of your life’s calling seriously out of great reverence for God, and in the humble knowledge that you have a role to play in his service.

Situation 2—Choosing to go to Mass every Sunday.

ANSWER:

- **Wisdom:** to see the eternal value of keeping the Lord’s Day and celebrating the Eucharist.
- **Understanding:** to understand the deeper meaning of what happens in the Mass.
- **Knowledge:** to know that keeping the Sabbath holy is one of the Ten Commandments, and that to deliberately miss Mass on Sunday is a serious sin.
- **Strength:** to make the effort to go to Mass on a Sunday morning, when it would be much easier to sleep in.
- **Piety:** our great love for God draws us to pray and meet him in the Eucharist.
- **Wonder and Awe:** out of reverence for the Eternal King, we respond to the invitation to his banquet.

Situation 3—Sharing with your friends what God has done in your life.

ANSWER:

- **Counsel:** to know how to approach your friends appropriately.
- **Strength:** to be bold enough to speak of your experience in the Spirit, even if your friends do not understand at first.
- **Wonder and Awe:** the beauty of your experience of God creates in you a desire to share his love with others.

A Variety of Gifts

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The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are a rich blessing that each of us receives at Baptism and Confirmation. But there are more! Scripture mentions a wide variety of other gifts or charisms that the Spirit can give us. These charisms are not all given to every person—rather, the Spirit distributes unique gifts to each of us. The Church encourages us to desire these gifts and to be open to receiving them.



“ Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well. ”

CCC 800

“ Upon all of you I invoke an outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit, so that in our time too, we may have the experience of a renewed Pentecost. Amen! ”

Homily given by Pope Benedict XVI, June 3, 2006

Let us learn more about these gifts.

4 Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 1 Corinthians 12:28-31, Romans 12:4-8, and Ephesians 4:11-13. Before we list them off, what is the overarching purpose of all these gifts?

L LEADERS: Have pairs look up one verse each.

A ANSWER: The purpose of the gifts is for God to work through us as instruments of his grace and love in order to bless, serve and help others and the Church.

LEADERS: Read the following quote to the group:

“ Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world. **”**

CCC 799

5 List the variety of gifts you found.

LEADERS: Point out to your group that the gifts of the Holy Spirit can be manifested and applied in an infinite number of ways. Their use is not restricted to people who are in ministry but is available to everyone. Ask, “How could the gifts of the Holy Spirit be active in the lives and actions of people who are not officially apostles, prophets, evangelists, etc.?” For example, artists, musicians, librarians and engineers can build up the Body of Christ and help advance his mission in the world.

As your group looks at these gifts, point out that some will seem more ordinary and others extraordinary (in keeping with CCC 799). You could ask, “Which gifts seem more ordinary or extraordinary (i.e. natural or supernatural)?” Explain that the ordinary gifts are those which help us fulfill our vocations—gifts which help us to be good teachers, good parents, good priests, etc. Our vocations and gifts are given to us so that we can be a blessing to others.

The extraordinary gifts are more supernatural or miraculous. These gifts include: healing, speaking in tongues, performing miracles and prophesying.

Be sensitive to your group’s reaction to these gifts. At the same time, be confident that these charisms, even the “extraordinary” ones, are not rare or limited to biblical times. In fact, faithful Catholics (and many other Christians) all over the world still experience these gifts today (perhaps more commonly than we would imagine). Many saints received these gifts. They are a source of great spiritual blessing, which builds up the body of Christ, meets the needs of individuals and serves the world (for example, the gift of healing is a source of incredible blessing for others).

If participants express particular interest in these gifts, arrange to talk to them after the study. At that time, you could offer to connect them with a local Catholic charismatic prayer group.

The Fruits of the Spirit



The Holy Spirit gives gifts to help us grow in holiness and more effectively perceive and serve the needs of others. We can ask the Holy Spirit to activate these gifts within us daily so we can love God and others better.

Another sign of the Holy Spirit's activity in our lives is the presence of spiritual fruit. We will now identify these fruits and look at how to foster their growth in our lives.

6 Read Galatians 5:22-23a. What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

GALATIANS 5:22-23A

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

7 Read John 15:1-17. What does the fruit indicate?

JOHN 15:4

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

ANSWER: Fruit is a sign that we are disciples of Christ and empowered by God; on our own, we would not produce this kind of fruit. As Jesus tells us in this discourse, it is God who produces fruit in us when we are connected to him. This is for the Father's glory and is a sure sign that we are Jesus' disciples.

8 What does Jesus say is necessary in order for us to bear fruit?

ANSWER:

- A**
- Abide in him by keeping his commandments (in the same way Jesus abides in God the Father).
 - Become his disciple.
 - Love one another as he loved us, by laying down our lives.

L **LEADERS:** Although this passage does not directly mention the Holy Spirit or the fruit of the Spirit, it does not exclude them. We can see the Holy Spirit's attributes in this narrative, and the fruit of which Jesus speaks could certainly be considered fruit of the Spirit (as well as fruitfulness in ministry).

Verse 1 says that Jesus is the vine and the Father is the gardener. Following this image, the Holy Spirit would be the sap flowing through the vine. The fruits of the Spirit are signs that the Spirit is at work in the life of a Christian.

Other actions of the Holy Spirit to which this verse alludes:

- A**
- Inviting us to call God Father and friend (15:14-15) (Romans 8:15).
 - Purifying, cleansing (15:2-3) (Matthew 3:11).
 - Indwelling: Jesus' command to abide in him (15:4) is fulfilled through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).
 - Jesus' sending forth of his disciples to bear fruit is fulfilled through the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (15: 16) (Acts 1 and 2).

L LEADERS: The following quotes lead into the next question.

“By this power of the Spirit, God’s children can bear much fruit. He who has grafted us onto the true vine will make us bear “the fruit of the Spirit . . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” “We live by the Spirit”; the more we renounce ourselves, the more we “walk by the Spirit.”

CCC 736

“He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.”

John 15:2

9 Why does being pruned and renouncing ourselves enable us to bear more fruit?

ANSWER: Jesus tells us that this principle is at work in nature. Pruning allows for nutrients to be concentrated and directed toward keeping the plant healthy. This also enables the plant to bear more fruit.

A

This principle applies to our own lives as well. When we eliminate bad habits or behaviours, or even unnecessary ones, we have more time, energy and focus to flourish in our areas of giftedness.

LEADERS: Here you could share the image of our souls as drinking glasses. If we imagine vice as rocks, the more rocks there are in our cup the less room there is for life-giving water. We need to intentionally remove the rocks for the glass to be full of water.

10 Which of the gifts or fruits would you like to ask the Holy Spirit to make more noticeable in your life?

LEADERS: There are two ways to approach this question.

(1) Participants could ask the Holy Spirit to stir up gifts they already possess, enabling them to use these gifts more effectively.

Some people may feel uncomfortable acknowledging their gifts, thinking it is proud to do so. Reiterate that it is God who gives us these gifts—we do not create them ourselves. Using our gifts shows our gratitude and gives glory to God. In order to use them, we need to acknowledge that we have them.

Remind participants that once they have asked the Holy Spirit to stir up their gifts, they must step out in faith and put their gifts to use. By doing this, they are cooperating with the action of the Holy Spirit.

Exercising our gifts could be compared to building muscle: we need to use the muscles we have in order to develop them and make our bodies stronger.

(2) Participants could ask the Holy Spirit to sow new gifts or fruit in their lives.

We can certainly ask the Holy Spirit to give us the specific gifts or fruits we desire. We already have the seven gifts, and the other charisms can certainly be requested. With docility, we trust that if God want us to have a specific gift or fruit, then we will receive it.

Summary

As we allow the Holy Spirit to move in our hearts, we will see his influence bring about positive changes and growth. His supernatural gifts and fruits will be made manifest in our attitudes, behaviours and interactions with others.

Living It Out

CHALLENGE

Pray in faith for God to stir up the gifts and fruits of the Spirit in your life. Be confident that the Spirit is working in you and continues to strengthen you with his gifts.

MEMORIZE JOHN 15:4

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

Your Feedback

Be part of the community of people who have participated in CCO faith studies. Let us know how you are growing as missionary disciples. Please give us your feedback by visiting cco.ca/faithstudyfeedback.

LEADERS: Be sure to encourage your participants to fill in the quick survey at cco.ca/faithstudyfeedback. This feedback gives us good information to help refine our faith studies and future editions of *Source*, and gives participants an additional chance to reflect on their relationship with God and what God has done for them over the course of the study.

Leader's Journal



Take 15 minutes as soon as possible after finishing the lesson to reflect on how God moved during your study and how your small group participants responded.

1 Thanksgiving

Reflect and say a prayer of thanksgiving for specific ways the Holy Spirit was present in that small group.

- a. How did you experience the Holy Spirit helping you to lead the lesson?

- b. How did you experience the Holy Spirit moving in the small group today?

- c. What were the positives from today's group?

- d. What were areas for improvement?

2 Prophetic Listening

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you review the lesson. Think about each person in your small group as you prayerfully reflect on these questions.

- a. What are some indications that each participant caught the main points of this lesson?

- b. If you noticed gaps in any participant’s understanding of the main points, is the Holy Spirit inviting you to do anything over the course of this week to help this person better understand?

- c. Are there any other ways the Holy Spirit is inviting you to intentionally care for or nurture your individual small group participants?

- d. Is there anything you want to remind yourself from what played out in this lesson for when you sit down to prepare the next lesson?

3 Intentional Accompaniment

Write down a plan to intercede for your small group participants based on the specific insights above, including how you will reach out to them and/or tailor the next lesson’s introduction based on your reflections.