

Sharing our gifts

TALKING AND DOING:

Explain that we are going to think about and discuss the gifts that each of us has been given by God.

Ask the children if they think a tree has gifts to give. To help answer this question either read or show *The Giving Tree*. (Available in book or video, see the materials list.)

After reading the book or viewing the video, pause and tell the children that you would like them to listen to a story about someone you know who lives life like the "Giving Tree."

Tell a very short story from your own experience of a priest, brother, sister or deacon who has given much to you or who gives much to your parish or to the community. Limit the story to one specific person so that children can remember it. Then mention that our Church has many religious people who spend their lives giving to others. For instance, if you have told the story of a deacon then mention that there are also sisters, brothers and priests who live lives of giving.

Tell the children that you would like them to think of a gift or talent that they have and that they can share with others.

For kindergarten and first grade: Pass out half sheets of white paper (5 1/2" x 8 1/2"). Ask children to draw a picture (with felt tip markers or crayons) of a gift or talent they have. Explain that they can show themselves being friendly and helpful to friends and family; playing a musical instrument; playing a game or sport; telling a story; taking care of a baby brother, sister or cousin; showing a smile to others; caring for a pet; praying in church or at home; doing schoolwork or whatever other talent they may have.

After you have collected all the drawings pick four or five which clearly illustrate distinct gifts or talents. Help children to discuss how this particular talent or characteristic is a gift to others — how it fills a need in the family or community. Do not mention any names since children may become embarrassed. If possible display all drawings on a poster or bulletin board with the title, *Thank You, God, for our gifts of giving*, or other appropriate title.

For second and third grade: Pass out index cards and ask the children to write

down a gift or talent they have. Tell them not to write their name on the card.

When they have done this, collect the cards in a basket or box. Then pass the basket, and ask each child to pick out a card. If a child gets his or her own card, it should be returned and another card chosen.

Have the children take turns reading the cards they have picked. As each card is read, ask the children to describe how that gift or talent might be used in service to others. Do not mention children's names so they are not embarrassed.

Continue until each child has had a turn. Return each card to the basket after it has been read.

Acknowledge how wonderful all their gifts are. Then invite the children to the prayer center.

PRAYING:

Lower or turn out lights. Gather in the prayer center. Light a candle (if permissible).

(For second and third grade place the basket with the cards containing the children's gifts in the prayer center.)

Dear God, you have created each one of us. You have made each of us different from everyone else. You have given each of us special talents or gifts. Please help us to share our unique talents and gifts with others now and when we are grown up. Thank you, God, for Father _____, Sister _____ (name parish religious or ordained people) who share their gifts with our community. (Might mention by name priests, brothers, sisters, or deacons that we know in family, parish, etc.) Help us to see that we might use our gifts serving as a priest, sister, brother or deacon.

We offer this prayer as always in the name of your son, Jesus.

All: Amen.

Conclude with the song "Love That Is Kept Inside" and/or "We Are The Body Of Christ"

SCRIPTURE SPOTLIGHT:

Ephesians 4:7, 11-12

