


LESSON 4: Gifts and Fruits

CONTENTS OF LESSON:

1. The first and greatest gift the Holy Spirit brings is the love of God. God's love brings us forgiveness, heals our wounds and brings us life. [CCC 733-34]
2. The 7 gifts of Isaiah 11 make us holy, Christ-like, because they describe Christ. They are wisdom, understanding, counsel, might (fortitude), knowledge, fear of the Lord and piety. *(Piety was added by the Church.)* [CCC1831]
3. The 'charisms' (meaning 'favour') are graces of the Holy Spirit which are meant for others: for building up the Church and for the needs of the world. They are given as the Spirit wills and are not for our own glory. [CCC 779-800, 2003]
4. Some charisms are extraordinary: Word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, discernment, tongues, interpretation of tongues. Others are ministerial gifts: Prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, giving (contributing), leading, compassion (mercy).
5. The fruits of the Spirit are what the Holy Spirit forms in us. He is the 'sap of the Father's vine which bears fruit on its branches.' There are traditionally 12 fruits: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, modesty, chastity. Love is the greatest of these. [CCC 800]
6.  *We gratefully accept the gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit, especially seeking those that make us holy. We recognize the 'fruits' formed in us by the Holy Spirit and ask Him for those that we lack.* [CCC 965, 1302]

REFERENCES: Isaiah 11:1-2; John 15:5,16; Romans 5:5, 8; 12:6-8; 1Cor 12:4-11; Gal 5:22-25.

Gifts and Charisms, Roman Catholic Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts; Small gifts for all the students (E.g. pens, sweets, bookmarks).

I. STARTER:

[Divide the class into groups. Give one student in each group a box containing small gifts. Ask him/her to open it; then take one and distribute the remaining to his/her group. Instruct the leaders not to offer, but distribute.]

- Can anyone guess why we began the class in this way? (It's NOT my birthday!!) It has something to do with the Holy Spirit. *[Bring out:]*
- The Holy Spirit is the divine gift of God to us. When he comes, he gives us many gifts. Like in the starting activity, some gifts are for us personally, and some are for us to use for others.
- Imagine for a moment that you are a little child again. (Maybe it will help if you close your eyes.) Imagine you are at a Christmas party and Santa comes in with a sack of toys. As you watch other children getting packages of different shapes and sizes you guess, "That's a ball!" "That's a book!" You wait eagerly to see what he will give you. You may hope for something in particular...
- Today we will be looking at the different gifts the Holy Spirit gives. Let us be open to receive whatever he gives us, and recognize the gifts we have already received.

II. DEVELOPMENT:

- Before we look at the 2 kinds of gifts, let's look at the greatest gift the Spirit gives us. It actually covers all the other gifts. Any guesses? Look up Romans 5:5. *[The love of God.]*
- What does God's love do? See Romans 5:8. *[It brings us forgiveness, heals the wounds caused by sin and brings us back to life.]*

- Let us now examine the 2 kinds of gifts. One list is found in Isaiah 11. These gifts are for making us holy, for making us like Christ, because they actually describe Christ himself.
- The other list contains gifts called ‘charisms’ which means ‘favours’. Some are simple and humble; others are extraordinary and exciting. But all are given for others: For building up the Church and for the needs of the world. All these gifts are to be used as a way of loving others, NOT for our own benefit or glory.

[Give out the handouts. The students work on the ‘GIFTS’ section. They look up the Bible references, circle or strike out the words in the grid and list them under the appropriate heads. After they have found all 22 words review the lists. Ask the students to try to explain the meaning of each gift. Bring out the following:]

GIFTS THAT MAKE US HOLY:

1. WISDOM: It helps us to see everything with God’s eyes, and to make judgements according to God’s will. Eg. Wisdom will help me choose whom I should spend time with.
 2. UNDERSTANDING: Helps us to understand the truths about God, especially the Bible. Eg. As we read the Bible I understand what it means for me in my life.
 3. COUNSEL: Helps us accept and give good advice and discern what is right and wrong. Eg. If someone asks me for help in a problem, I am able to guide them in God’s ways.
 4. MIGHT: (It’s also called FORTITUDE) Gives us courage to face difficulties and temptations.
 5. KNOWLEDGE: We know that God is real and so we trust him.
 6. PIETY: (Also called the spirit of adoption) Helps us to see that God is our Father and to behave like a true child of God.
 7. FEAR OF THE LORD: Fear here doesn’t mean to be frightened, but it means having respect for God, which prevents us from doing wrong. We become ‘God-fearing’.
- All these gifts are given to us at our Confirmation and are specially mentioned by the priest as he prays for us.

CHARISMS:

‘Extraordinary gifts’:

1. Word of KNOWLEDGE: To know by God’s power something that we could not know normally. Eg. A person with this gift may know that, at a certain moment, God is healing someone of cancer.
2. Word of WISDOM: To be able to sense by God’s special power, what God wants. Eg. I may sense that God wants everyone to ask forgiveness of each other.
3. FAITH: This is faith to work wonders and miracles. Eg. Jesus said “If you had the faith of a mustard seed, you would say to this mountain, ‘Get up and go into the sea!’ and it would obey.”
4. HEALING: Bringing physical or even mental healing by God’s power.
5. MIRACLES: Bringing down God’s power to do something supernatural. E.g. Jesus turned water into wine.
6. DISCERNMENT: To be able to know if someone is speaking in God’s name, or if he is moved by an evil spirit.
7. TONGUES: Speaking in a language or just sounds we don’t understand, moved by the Holy Spirit.
8. INTERPRETATION of Tongues: When someone gives a message in tongues, to be able to know what the person is saying, even if you don’t know the language.

Ministerial gifts: These are gifts to help those who are caring for a Christian community.

9. PROPHECY: To speak inspired by God.
10. MINISTRY (service): It means to serve the community.
11. TEACHING: It helps a person to share the truths about God with others.
12. EXHORTATION: This means encouraging. We are able to encourage others to keep following God.
13. GIVING: Contributing money, time, talents etc
14. LEADING: A person with this gift can organize, lead, govern well.
15. COMPASSION (mercy): Showing kindness and mercy. This gift helps us to feel others’ pain.

- Look at 1 Corinthians 12:7. All charisms are given according to God's wisdom. We cannot demand any special gift but thankfully accept what he gives us. (Just as we could not demand any special gift from Santa!) We realize that these charisms are not for our own glory but for the common good.
- Let's look now at the Fruits of the Spirit. There are traditionally 12 fruits.

[Students look up Galatians 5:22-25 and fill in the 9 fruits of the Spirit in the grapes. They are:]

LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GENEROSITY, FAITHFULNESS,
GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL, GOODNESS, MODESTY, CHASTITY.

(The last 3 are added to make the complete number of 12.)

- What do you think is the difference between Gifts and Fruits? [Accept suggestions and bring out:]
- Gifts are something we receive; Fruits are something that the Holy Spirit forms in us. We are like branches of a grape vine and the Holy Spirit is like the life-giving sap flowing through us to form fruit.
- The charisms don't mean we are specially holy, just as wearing a bride's dress and veil doesn't make you a bride. But fruits show in our actions and come from God's life flowing through us. St. Paul himself says that gifts are good, but fruits are better.

III. INTERIORISATION/PRAAYER:

- Look at all the fruits of the Spirit. One of the fruits actually sum up all the others.. And that is? LOVE.
[Students look up John 15 verses 5 and 16 and fill in the missing words.]
- What is so important about bearing fruit? *[Jesus said that he has appointed us to bear fruit. He also says that if a branch doesn't bear fruit, the gardener cuts it off and burns it. That means if we don't bear fruit, our lives have been useless.]*
- Spend a few moments prayerfully looking at the 12 fruits. Shade the ones you feel you do have, even if just partially.
E.g. If you have learnt to be patient when there is a delay shade PATIENCE.
-If you are ready to share what you have with someone in need, shade GENEROSITY.
-When you have a job to do, of you do it faithfully; Or if you are loyal to your friends, shade FAITHFULNESS.
-If you are able to respect your sexuality and express it in the right way, shade CHASTITY.
- When you have done this, share what you have shaded and thank God aloud for these fruits he has already been forming in you.
- Next choose any 2 fruits you feel you are lacking in. Ask your neighbour to pray for you to grow in those fruits.

[Students share and pray for each other in pairs.]

HOME ASSIGNMENT: ⇨ Read the handout.