

# Spiritual Gifts Discovery Facilitators Guide





# Leadership and Ministry Development Resources

## Spiritual Gifts Discovery Guide

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Please note that all Internet links were current as of February 2015.

# Unity Worldwide Ministries Leadership and Ministry Development Resources

*Welcoming System Guide*

*Spiritual Gifts Discovery*

*Sacred Service Ministry Guide*

*Emotional and Spiritual Maturity Development Guide*

*Leadership Development Guide*

*Future Planning 1 Guide*

*Future Planning 2 Guide*

All resources available in 2015 as downloads at  
[www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org/Guides](http://www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org/Guides).

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# Introduction

## *The Context of a Spiritual Gifts Process within Sacred Service Ministry*

Thriving spiritual communities intentionally engage members in growing and evolving spiritually and relationally through sacred service. This is far beyond mere volunteering.

Sacred Service Ministry results from a spiritual community culture that places a high value on individual and collective spiritual development, and sacred service that transforms lives within the spiritual community and beyond. People embody these teachings and measure their success by serving in ways that maximize their gifts and callings.

*(See the Appendix or Sacred Service Ministry Guide (p.3) for a more detailed explanation of Sacred Service Ministry.)*

### Goals of Sacred Service Ministry

- Prepares people to understand their gifts and live out their calling in every area of their lives.
- Helps individuals mature spiritually by using their gifts to serve each other and the community, so that the entire spiritual community can attain maturity of Spirit.

*The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teacher, to equip the saints for the work of ministry.—Ephesians 4:11-12*

## *Spiritual Gifts Discovery Process Intention*

Just as fingerprints are unique, so too are our soul prints, meaning each human soul has an individual mark that it leaves behind on everyone it touches. Our goal with this curriculum is to support individuals as they:

- Delve deeper into their **True Self** (who they have come here to be—their **Being**), and
- Experience their **unique expression** (what does “who they have come here to be” look like **In Service—Doing**)

This experience and process flows from the unique perspectives, passions and purpose we each hold in life.

Because we are intentionally creating thriving ministries, it is important to keep in mind that your community, even our global community, needs people: who are on an ongoing spiritual journey of discovering their gifts for sacred service, and who see themselves as stewards of those

gifts. Discernment of an individual's gifts provides meaning and purpose. It becomes the mooring for living in alignment with the values of the individual as well as the values of the spiritual community.

We are in the midst of unprecedented change, personally, community-wide and globally. By guiding an individual to their inner compass, creative solutions to challenges arise and we put feet to our spiritual gifts!

## *Spiritual Gifts Discovery Scheduling*

This process is designed as a ten-hour program (recommended: five sessions, approximately two hours each, over five weeks) and a follow-up session with the Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator. Some activities may be started during a session and completed in between sessions. The program is ideal for both people new to your spiritual community and those who have been involved for years.

**The goal is to have most of your community participate** because it connects individuals to each other and to your spiritual community. This is designed to be a foundational program that can create strong bonds that evolve over years. (Field-testing hint: If you train several facilitators, you can offer this more often to benefit more people.)

## *Guiding Philosophy from the Unity Worldwide Ministries' Enlightened Leaders Visionary Statement*

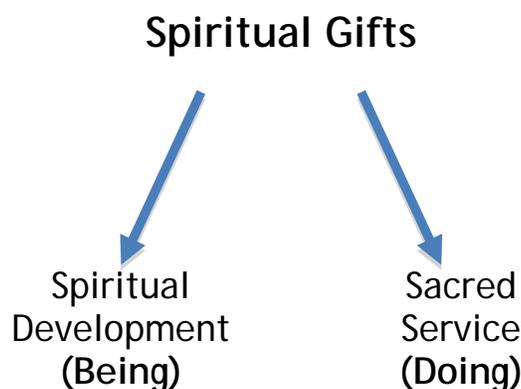
Enlightened leaders foster transformation. They ignite the fire of Spirit and creative flow within people, maximizing their capacity to grow and thrive. They act as the catalyst to help others remember who they already are. It is a gift to seek and find the treasures within people; indeed it is a sacred privilege. Enlightened leaders mine the treasures within others and create environments in which others can shine and put their gifts and passion to good use. They serve as coaches and mentors as they inspire, guide and support people to find and respond to their inner call to serve and take action.



## *Spiritual Gifts as a Two-Fold Path*

Think of spiritual gifts as a two-fold path:

1. It begins with the journey of **discerning the gifts**—an essential piece of our spiritual development, or how **we are *being***, and
2. then invites a person into **being a steward** of those gifts by creating ways to ground their gifts into their lives, or **how we are *doing***, that engages five forms of service:
  - Service to the Divine
  - Service to yourself as an instrument of the Divine
  - Service to sentient beings in your life
  - Service to your local community
  - Service to the global community



## *General Elements of Spiritual Gifts Discovery Process Curriculum*

The Spiritual Gifts Discovery Process is divided into **5 weekly sessions** made up of **small groups with 6-8 people in a group**. Within the 5-week program, individuals will be introduced to the ideas of True Self and its unique expression, their “Spiritual Gifts” and how that connects in a greater context to core values, sacred service and spiritual development—maximizing each person’s capacity to grow and thrive.

While this is the recommended process, please tailor it to your community or group. A rich resource of materials is included that easily fills the time allotted. Some activities are designed to be completed by participants between sessions.

## *Outcomes*

Everyone, including the facilitator, is on the journey of discovery together! The outcomes of the program are to:

- **Reconnect with the True Self**—who I have come here to be
- **Identify one’s unique expression**—What does the True Self look like in service when I am expressing “who I have come here to be”?
- **Create core values and personal purpose statement**
- **Gain clarity on what awakens passion** within a person **and connect** that to community and world needs
- **Discern individual gifts** for sacred service and **see ourselves as stewards** of these gifts
- **Help individuals mature spiritually** by using gifts to serve each other and the community
- **Continue their spiritual awareness and development** for self and others
- **Support people in discovering** what their passions, not skills, are and what their growing edge is personally and within their relationships in the community

## *Definitions*

**True Self:** Our True self is like an enjoyable home—the place of our greatest potential. Think of our True Self as our Christ nature, our God-self.

**Unique Expression:** Unique Expression is not merely ego or personality. It is the essence that lies beneath and beyond your personality. More precisely, it is **the personal face of your True Self**. It is the unique God-spark living as you. Your Unique Expression is the infinite love intelligence living in you, as you, and through you—putting feet on the True Self.

## *Basic Facilitator Training*

Appendix One contains all the handouts for the five sessions of classes. Appendix Two contains training curriculum for those facilitating this program. Even experienced facilitators are encouraged to study this material, as some portions are specific to this program.

Facilitation is crucial for this program. It is important to both understand the material and to support the group process. It is helpful to remember this is not counseling! **There is a lot of sharing so keeping the right flow of the activities is vital.**

# Session 1: Who Have I Come Here To Be?

## *Session Intention*

To discover who we have come here to be.

## *Objectives*

- To define True Self and its unique expression
- To identify **Who have I come here to be?**
- To examine and share our life journey through journaling, discussion, and reflection.

## *List of Materials*

*Facilitator Note: Throughout all sessions, items/information to be put on flip charts may be put on PowerPoint slides, if preferred.*

- Paper for journaling and index cards
- Pens
- Name tags
- Flip chart paper and markers (to list the group agreements)
- Copies of Activity Sheets—See Appendix
  - *Session Intention and Overview* handout—Appendix: page 55
  - *Who Have I Come Here to Be? Activity Sheet*—Appendix: page 57 (used with permission from The Q Effect LLC)
  - *Unfolding of My Life Path Activity Sheet*—Appendix: page 58
- Song “Holy Holy Holy” from Karen Drucker’s *Songs of the Spirit II*
- Music player

## *Gathering*

### **Welcome** (1 minute)

Greet participants with eye contact and a friendly word at the door and invite them to make a name tag. It is nice to have upbeat music playing to set a fun tone.

When it is time to start, take a moment to introduce yourself and what your role will be during this 5-week class. (Example: “My role is to support your journey of self-discovery.”)

## Centering Prayer (2 minutes)

**Lead** the following heart-centered prayer or share one of your own.

**Say:** I invite you to settle into your seat, close your eyes, if that is comfortable for you, and begin focusing on your breathing as we join together in prayer. Take a few slow, deep breaths to relax and to release any tension you may be feeling. As you continue to focus on your breathing, move your attention to your heart and imagine breathing right into your heart space. Activate a feeling of appreciation by bringing someone or something into your mind's eye that you are grateful for. Let that feeling grow and expand until it fills your body and radiates out. Blessed Spirit, we give thanks for this time of sharing and exploration as we discover and express our inner gifts to bless our world. For the opportunity to serve the Divine, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

## Overview of Five Sessions (3 minutes)



**Distribute:** *Session Intention and Overview* or use a PowerPoint slide

**Say:** For the next 5 weeks we will be discovering our spiritual gifts and how they connect us in a greater way to our core values, sacred service, and spiritual development—maximizing our capacity to grow and thrive. We are all on this journey of discovery together!

The outcomes of the program are to:

- Reconnect with what we call the True Self which is “who we have come here to be.”
- Identify our unique expression of “who we have come here to be” in service. It is the “doing.”
- Explore our life journey and connect it with the True Self.
- Define our core values and create a personal purpose statement.
- Discover what awakens passion within us and connect that to the world's needs.
- Discern our individual gifts for sacred service and take stewardship of them.
- Help us mature spiritually by using our gifts to serve each other and the community.
- Continue our spiritual awareness and development.
- Discover our passions, as opposed to skills.

This week we will explore reconnecting with our True Self, identify our unique expression of the True Self and start to discover our life journey.

## Introduction Activity (10 minutes)

Have each person share their name and tell what he or she is hoping to gain from taking this class. Invite them to be brief and succinct.

## Group Heart Agreements (10 minutes)

**Say:** In order to share with each other in a way that feels comfortable and safe, it is important for us to come to an agreement about some of the guidelines for our group. To facilitate this process, think about what it takes to be in community—honoring and respecting one another. These agreements would also help things to run smoothly and create a safe environment for sharing.

Here are some examples you might consider for discussion and adoption.

- **Confidentiality:** I will keep anything that is said strictly confidential.
- **Attendance:** I give priority to the group meetings for the agreed number of weeks.
- **Acceptance:** We accept each other unconditionally. We are not here to “fix” each other.
- **Feelings:** We respect each other’s feelings.
- **Okay to Pass:** No one is required to share.
- **Okay to Disagree:** I accept that others may not hold the same view.
- **Participation:** I speak for myself only and I listen to others attentively.
- **Balance:** We seek a balance in our sharing times. Everyone is welcome to share and no one dominates.



Using the flip chart, have a participant list the agreements people suggest. Having the group discuss and agree on which ones to adopt will create a community environment. **Post the agreements each week for the class to review.**

# Discovery and Exploration

## Activity

**Activity #1: Who Have I Come Here to Be?\*** (20 minutes)

\*adapted and used with permission from *The Q Effect LLC*

### Materials

- *Who Have I Come Here to Be? Activity Sheet*
- Pens or pencils and index cards

**Purpose:** For each person to discover their core attributes of the True Self.

**Say:** Some of you may have done this activity before and I invite you all to do it again to gain a fresh look. We will use this information in future sessions.



**Distribute:** *Who Have I Come Here to Be? Activity Sheet*

**Lead the group** through the following steps:

- **Say:** Make a short list of individuals—personal heroes or persons you admire. They may be living or dead, historical or fictional. Each must possess qualities that you value or attributes you wish for yourself.
- **Say:** Beside each person, briefly list the qualities you admire in them. These identify **why** this person is on your list.
- **Say:** Use one word or two word phrases, such as, *compassionate, faith-filled, or trustworthy*, to identify the attribute or quality you see in each person. For example, if one of your heroes is Superman, beside his name you might list *strong, courageous, heroic*, etc.
- **Say: Circle up to six themes** you notice in the Attributes and Qualities column.
- **Say:** For instance, you may have the word “compassion” listed several times. Compassion represents a theme. Or you may notice one word that jumps out at you, something unexpected yet you resonate with the word.
- **Say:** Place the themes representative of your list in the space provided on the worksheet.
- **Say:** On the top of an index card, write your name and the words, “This is who I have come here to be,” then transfer the themes to the card.
- When everyone has completed filling in their cards, have each person choose a partner and share his/her list with each other by stating, “This is who I have come here to be,” then share the themes they have chosen. After each partner

has had a chance to share, change and find a different partner. Repeat the exercise until each person has shared with three different people.

- **Debrief the Activity:** Upon completion, invite the group to return to their seats to discuss the following questions:

*Say:*

- What did you notice about this exercise?
- How did it feel to share who you have come here to be?
- Was anyone's card different from another person?

The reason we can claim these attributes as our own is because if we did not have them within us, we would not recognize them in someone else. When we are being “on our card,” expressing attributes that we see mirrored in others that we admire, we are being “who we came here to be”—our True Self.

## Lecturette (5 minutes)

*Facilitator Note:* Each main point below is **bolded** and followed by a detailed explanation.

*Say:*

1. **There is a True Self (who you have come here to be) from which comes your unique expression of the True Self (what you've come here to do).**

**Say:** Just as fingerprints are unique, so too are our soul prints, meaning each human soul has an individual mark that it leaves behind on everyone it touches.

Our goal with this process is geared to support you in delving deeper into your **True Self**, (who you have come here to be—Your Card—Being), and then experience your **unique expression** (what does who you have come here to be look like In Service—Doing), which flows from the unique perspectives, passions and purpose you hold in life.

2. **We come with gifts to share because we are an interconnected web of life. Our spiritual community supports the discovery and use of those gifts to the betterment of all.**

Because we are intentionally creating a thriving ministry, it is important to keep in mind that our community, including our global community, needs people like you who are on an ongoing spiritual journey of discovering your gifts for sacred service; and for you to see yourself as a steward of those gifts.

Discernment of your gifts provides meaning and purpose, and becomes the mooring for living in alignment with your values as well as the values of our spiritual community, local community and the world.

**3. When we understand our True Self and unique expression, we can creatively deal with all the change we experience in our lives, our communities and the world through the use of our spiritual gifts.**

We are in the midst of unprecedented change, personally, community-wide and globally.

By pointing individuals to their inner compass, creative solutions arise. Spiritual Gifts are discerned through an understanding and connection with our True Self and then made manifest as Sacred Service. Sacred Service provides you and our community with a system of practices to support the transformative change already in process. Sacred Service is the expression of the True Self.

**4. Our spiritual gift work follows a two-fold path: The first is *discerning your spiritual gifts (Being)* and the second is *using them (Doing)*.**

- 1) It begins with the journey of discerning your gifts—an essential piece of your spiritual development or how you are **Being**, and
- 2) then invites you into being a steward of those gifts by creating ways to ground your gifts into your life. **Doing**. According to Andrew Harvey, there are five forms of service:
  - Service to the Divine
  - Service to yourself as an instrument of the Divine
  - Service to sentient beings in your life
  - Service to your local community
  - Service to the global community

We will learn more about these five forms of service in the fifth class session.

**Break** (5-10 minutes)

**Lecture** (5-8 minutes)

**Purpose:** Using your journey to help you reconnect with your True Self.

**Say:** *Two or three things I know for sure, and one of them is that to go on living I have to tell stories, that stories are the one sure way I know to touch the heart and change the world.*—Dorothy Allison

**Say:** Our journey is built upon story. It is a primary vehicle for evaluating and interpreting thoughts, beliefs and experiences in our lives. Stories help us deepen our understanding of who we are and why we are here. It becomes the building blocks of knowledge and the foundation of memory and learning.

**Say:** Stories are a basic form of human communication. We live in our stories as they connect us to our humanness and teach us through our experiences, linking past, present and future. When we share our story we better understand ourselves and each other. We may affirm them or even view them in new ways.

*(Note: If your community has not done Genogram work, feel free to leave the next statement out.)*

**Say:** Just as a spiritual community can tell its “life” story through the “Genogram,” so too must we as individuals tell *our* story and discover personal prouds, sorries and unresolved issues.

**Say:** Storytelling offers us:

- **a context or framework to understand what is alive within an experience.** Context is the understanding of what the story means and helps us to connect with what is alive underneath the story. It takes into consideration the time and place of the experience.
- **the opportunity to see the story as the interplay of people within a situation.** Everyone and everything in our story is in relationship with us.
- **the ability to change our behavior as we identify with and evaluate the actions and reactions of the people in the story.** When we put ourselves into the story, we identify with the person who behaves most like we would behave or want to behave, and are critical of the one who behaves differently. Learning from another’s experience aids us in changing our own behavior.
- **the power of being in service.** When we become consciously aware of who we really are and the story we are creating, there is an innate desire to express our True Self through sharing our unique expression.

**Say:** Storytelling becomes a way of activating us into service with a greater awareness of the context of our lives in the spiritual community and the world. We can choose new stories and act on them to uplift us and those around us.

## Activity

### Activity #2: Unfolding My Journey (25 minutes)

#### Materials

- *Unfolding of My Life Path Activity Sheet*
- Pens/pencils
- Journal paper

**Purpose:** To wake up to the journey of your life

**Say:** The purpose of this activity is to wake you up to the journey of your life. The questions are designed to bring back to memory the past, present, future/where have I come from, where am I now and where am I going.

**Say:** Please be mindful that this is not designed to be therapy, rehashing or dragging up the past but it may bring up uncomfortable feelings. It is just information helping us to wake up to the journey of our life—and acknowledging that is it a good journey.



### **Directions**

**Distribute:** *Unfolding My Life Path Activity Sheet*

**Say:** Spend 10 minutes *briefly* journaling answers to three of the questions from the activity sheet.

- Imagine a conversation with a grandparent or elder who is no longer around. What questions would you ask? What do you wish you knew?
- Describe a typical family dinner while you were growing up. Use all of your senses to describe the scene. Do you have fond or painful memories? How are you carrying this forward in your family?
- Describe a world event that changed you. How did the world look to you before it happened? How did the world look to you after it happened?
- Describe what you would put in the earth, as a treasure, for the future to find. What items would depict the life you know today? What would your treasures tell the people of the future?
- What would you like others to remember about you? Create a journal entry that contains information you would want to leave behind to be found when you are gone.

**Feedback:** At the end of the allotted time, have the group divide into dyads or triads. Invite the participants to spend 10 minutes discussing any recurring patterns or themes in their responses. Encourage them to *use active listening with no commenting or fixing*. The listeners' jobs are just to listen.

Invite participants to revisit any questions left unanswered for homework during the upcoming week.

### Activity #3: Movement: Where Do You Feel the Journey in Your Body?

(5 minutes)

#### Materials:

- Karen Drucker's song "Holy Holy Holy" from *Songs of the Spirit II*
- Music player

**Purpose:** to have the whole body involved in the journey—physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally.

**Say:** We've talked about our journeys, now let's get in touch with how they might be living in our bodies through a movement activity. Our bodies can be a rich source of information for us.

**Say:** I'd like to invite you all to put down anything you may be holding, push your chairs back and stand up where you are. Take a few moments to let whatever energies are moving through you move you, quite literally—perhaps you'd like to shake your arms and legs, hop up and down a little bit, massage your head or shoulders or chest or belly or legs or arms. (Allow time for this.)

Let's all take in a few deep breaths together and let out a loud sigh as we exhale—just let your breath out fully with as much sound as feels good to you—don't hold back—just let it go. Inhale ... and ... AHHH ... exhale ... two more times....

Now, do any last shaking or shimmying or jiggling you feel you need to do and begin to settle down. Feel your feet solidly on the ground, ensuring that your feet are at least hip-width apart for stability. Bend your knees just slightly so you can feel the ground more fully. Let your hands rest at your sides, and simply allow yourself to feel whatever it is you are feeling right now.

Is there a story in the feelings? Where are those feelings in your body? If you want to draw your hands to a certain part of your body, whether that's your belly or your heart or your head, please do. And then simply draw your attention to your breath ... inhaling ... and exhaling.... Now direct your breath to the place in your body where the feelings are being held.

Continue breathing...notice any change in your body as you breathe. Try not to control your breath to become how you think it "should" be. Simply let it be.... Just as you are letting whatever feelings you are having be what they are. Breathe in the truth that underneath every feeling and every story is the divine essence of wholeness. Continue breathing as we affirm our wholeness and holiness together.



(Play “Holy Holy Holy” and invite participants to join in the singing when they are ready.)

When the song is finished, invite participants to bring their attention back to the room anchored in the breath and ready to move into a time of reflection.

## Closing

### Reflection Time (15 minutes)

Give a brief review of this session and then ask participants the following questions:

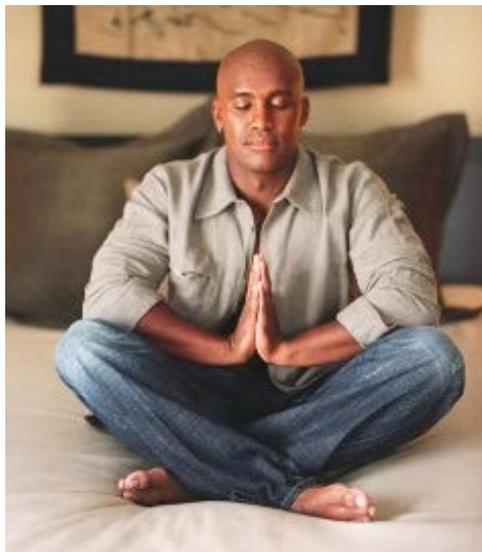
- What was the experience like today in examining your life journey?
- What surprised you?
- What did you learn or become aware of from this session?
- What additional work do you want to do prior to next week?

### Closing Prayer (1 minute)

Lead the following closing prayer or choose your own.

**Say:** Blessed Spirit moving in and through us, thank you for this time as we have awakened our story to mine its treasures. Each one of us is here to share our gifts and make a difference in our lives and the lives of others. We are grateful for the discoveries and blessings that have come forth tonight and those that are yet to come. We affirm that Spirit is ever present in us as we continue to walk this journey. In this truth, we are blessed. Amen.

**Facilitator Note:** Before participants leave, remind them of any homework they are to do and to **bring previously completed materials back with them** to refer to in the next session.



# Session 2: Life Journey and Path

## *Session Intention*

To continue to explore our life journey by looking at our life path, then use the experiences of our lives to help identify our spiritual gifts.

## *Objectives*

- To identify patterns in our life journey
- To identify times in our lives when our card qualities were being developed, strengthened or called upon
- To examine and share our life path and patterns through journaling, discussion and reflection

## *List of Materials*

- Copy of group agreements and “this is who I came here to be” card from Session 1
- Name tags
- Paper and pens for journaling
- Flip chart paper and markers
- Prepared flipchart pages or PowerPoint containing:
  - Questions from “**Discussion**” written on them (page 25)
- Copies of Activity Sheets—See Appendix
  - *My Life Path Timeline Activity Sheet*—Appendix: page 60
  - *Reflection: My Life Path Activity Sheet*—Appendix: page 61
- Music for meditation with music player

## *Gathering*

**Welcome** (1 minute)

Welcome everyone to this session on exploring their spiritual gifts.

**Say:** Tonight’s gathering will support us continuing our journey telling and in looking more deeply into our own life path to identify our spiritual gifts.

## **Optional Music**

“Witness” by Daniel Nahmod from *Sacred Love 2*

## Centering Prayer (2 minutes)

**Lead** the following heart-centered prayer or share one of your own.

**Say:** I invite you to become still and bring your attention to your breath. Allow the day's activities to fall away and become comfortable in your seat. As you breathe, release any tension that you are holding in your body and allow yourself to relax.

Focus your awareness on these words of affirmation:

- I am one with Divine Presence.
- I am open to allowing that presence to express through my life story.
- My true nature is being revealed to me in all that I experience.
- I am connected and aware of my spiritual gifts in this now moment.

We are blessed. Thank you, God. Amen.

## Review of Group Agreements (1 minute)

- Before class begins, post the group agreements from Session 1.
- Have group review agreements before starting.

## Reflections/Check-In (5 minutes)

Use the following questions to help participants reconnect:

- What thoughts/comments came up for you during the week about our last session?
- What new insights/learning came to you during the week?
- Did anyone do any additional work this week on your life story? If so, what, if anything, would you like to share about what you did and your experience with it?

## Overview of Session (3 minutes)

**Say:** My object in living is to unite  
My avocation and my vocation  
As my two eyes make one in sight.  
Only where love and need are one,  
And the work is play for mortal stakes,  
Is the deed ever really done  
For Heaven and the future's sakes.

—Robert Frost

**Say:** The more we explore our life journey, the more we can identify significant moments on our path that might reveal our spiritual gifts and passions. We will look at times we expressed ourselves in ways that reflected who we came here to be and also look at the challenges and adversity that might have brought out something we didn't realize was there. There are innate spiritual qualities that you come in with and that are unique to you. They are often fun and effortless and we usually discount them until some adversity in our life makes us recognize and use them.

In this session we will do a number of activities, including a meditation and discussion time, which will support you in rediscovering and claiming those abilities and qualities.

By the end of this class session you will be able to identify the places in your life where your gifts revealed themselves and be better able to recognize them going forward.

## *Discovery and Exploration*

### Activities

#### **Activity #1: My Life Path** (10 minutes)

##### **Materials**

- *My Life Path Timeline Activity Sheet*
- Pens/pencils

**Purpose:** For each person to discover how their gifts were being revealed to them at various points on their life path.



**Distribute:** *My Life Path Timeline Activity Sheet*

##### **Activity**

**Say:** We will begin an exercise in which we will look at the significant events of our lives.

Using the timeline form, place an “X” on each significant event that happened during that ten year time frame. Next to the “X” put an identifying word or phrase by it, like “we moved,” so you know what happened during that time. Look for significant events like moves, changes in schools or jobs, development of a new skill, changes in your physical appearance or body, relationships that moved into or out of your life.

You might also consider:

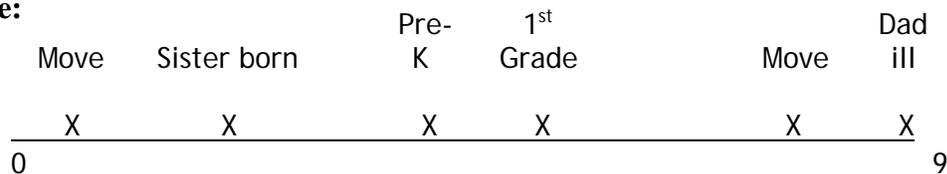
- periods of loss or great surrender
- times that something you read, studied or heard significantly altered your path
- times you became involved in a group or community, worked for a cause or made major life decisions
- lessons you learned the “hard way”
- things you have done that made you really proud

**Say:** **It important to note—you are not reliving these.** You are simply recording these almost as observer. If you are starting to relive feelings, move on to another timeframe. This activity needs to move along to keep it meaningful without stress.

*(The example below may be used on a flip chart.)*



**Example:**



## **Activity #2: Reflection: *My Life Path Activity Sheet*** (30 minutes)

### **Materials**

- **Reflection: *My Life Path Activity Sheet***
- Paper and pens/pencils
- Flip chart with an example as a model

### **Activity**

**Say:** Reviewing your overall timeline, answer the following questions using the **Reflection: *My Life Path Activity Sheet***.

**Question #1:** Do you see any patterns in your life journey?

For example, did you see several times when a similar feeling, emotion, experience or response showed up? Details may be different, but try to identify the underlying experience.

Can you point to anything that is repeating in your journey?

You might see numerous times you experienced compassion, spiritual interventions, a desire for belonging or acceptance, a tendency to give up your power for approval, etc. Or you may identify patterns of betrayal, abandonment or issues around safety.

Can you see where a gift or talent or strength got you through?

If the patterns you identified represent times your True Self (your Divine nature) was trying to reveal itself, what do you see?

**Question #2:** Choose **two** of the events you have marked on your timeline, **one that was a positive experience** and **one that was challenging**. For each event, answer the following questions:

- In what way were you strengthened by these experiences?
- In what way were you being called to a higher expression of yourself?
- Do you see any spiritual lessons or opportunities for growth showing up?
- Do you see how you may have been a teacher to others?
- Did your understanding or experience of God/the Divine shift in any way?

**Question #3:** Look at your card and the qualities you identified in Session 1.

- Where in these experiences were these qualities trying to express?
- How were they being developed?
- How did they support you?

During the coming week, I invite you to take a look at other experiences you identified on your timeline and explore them further.

## Break (5-10 minutes)



*Facilitator Note: During break, set up flip charts with the pre-written Discussion questions.*

## Discussion (10 minutes)

Motion to the flip charts with the questions below written on them.

**Say:** Break into groups of two and share the following questions.

- What did you learn about yourself in doing this exercise?
- Did anything surprise you?



## Meditation (20 minutes)

- Provide paper and pencils to each participant.
- Play meditation music softly underneath.

Speak each question below, slowly, and repeat it a second time. Allow at least one minute of silence between each question.

**Say:** The purpose of this meditation is to connect what you have discovered in today's exercises, your journey, life path, how your gifts and who you came here to be was being revealed during significant times along the way. This meditation is an invitation to see how **all** the elements of our life path, the celebrations and sorrows, awaken us to being on our **Card**, to being more closely aligned with our True Self. The meditation serves as a conduit to beginning to see ways our True Self is expressed, uniquely, through us.

I've given you a piece of paper and pen/pencil. I invite you to keep them nearby in case you choose to write anything down. Now settle back into your chair and allow your eyes to gently close, take a breath and let it out. Again, take a breath and slowly release it allowing your body to relax and sink into the chair. (Pause.)

Take a moment now to connect with the timeline we just worked on and appreciate the journey you have been on. (Pause.) Looking back over your life path and the points along the way that you have been exploring, rest your awareness on one particular point along that path—an age, an experience you would like to explore further. Take a few minutes in the silence to really begin to connect to that time as if it was now. Where are you? What are you wearing? Who are you with? What are you feeling? Let's pause while you step fully into that time.

**(Silence)**

Now, imagine that you are in a room with two chairs. You sit in one and invite your younger self to have a seat across from you. Create a space in your mind and heart where this younger self feels safe and welcome. Look with loving eyes and an open presence. Send the energy of loving compassion into the space between you. (Pause.)

Now, I will ask several questions. When I do, take a moment to repeat the question to the self that is sitting across from you. We will pause after each one, so you can listen for an answer. If you choose to, you can write down the response you "hear." Take another breath and let's begin.

What are you dreaming about at this point in your life?

**(Silence)**

Where have you had to compromise or give something up?

**(Silence)**

What qualities have you called upon to support you in moving through this experience or this time in your life?

**(Silence)**

What gift do you bring to my present day life?

**(Silence)**

Is there anything else you need to say?

**(Silence)**

**Say:** Now, looking again upon your younger self with an open, compassionate heart, take a minute to say “thank you,” to speak how brave and wise and insightful you are.

**(Silence)**

Now, step into this now moment, back into your adult self, bring your attention back to your breath. Begin to move your fingers and toes and feel the seat beneath you. Take a breath and then gently open your eyes.

## **Closing**

### **Reflection Time** (15 minutes)

**Say:** You’ve done some really great work tonight. Remember that you are a brave and courageous soul because you come here willing to explore your past and see what it can teach you and explore where your gifts are being revealed within your journey.

- What was the experience like today in examining your life journey?
- What did you learn or become aware of from this session?

### **Closing Prayer** (1 minute)

Lead the following heart-centered prayer or share one of your own.

**Say:** At this time we simply breathe and step into the energy of gratitude for all that we have discovered this evening. We know that the insights will continue as we move into the rest of our week and we remain open to them. We embrace all the points on our path, knowing they have allowed us to come to this moment in time and have made us who we are today. We look forward to the continued blessing of discovery and affirm that the living Spirit of God moves through us, revealing our true nature in all that we say, do and are this week. And so it is. Amen.

**Facilitator Note:** Before participants leave, remind them of any homework they are to do and to **bring previously completed materials back with them** to refer to in the next session.



# Session 3: Core Values and Life Purpose

## *Session Intention*

Connect what have learned from our journey and life path with core values and life purpose.

## *Objectives*

- To identify our core values
- To create a life purpose statement

## *List of Materials*

- Copy of group agreements from Session 1
- Name tags
- Flip chart paper, markers
- Handouts containing **Your Spiritual Community's Core Values: page 30**
- Prepared flipchart pages or PowerPoint containing:
  - Terms and questions from **Flip Chart Activity #1: Create Meaning, Rationale and Action Steps: page 32**
  - Wording from **Flip Chart Activity #2: Create Meaning, Rationale and Action Steps: page 33**
  - Questions for **Partner Share Activity: page 33**
  - Questions for **Large Group Debrief: page 33**
  - Questions for Verb List Activity **Step 1: page 35**
  - Questions for Verb List Activity **Step 2: page 35**
  - Examples from Verb List Activity **Step 3: page 35-36**
- Copies of Activity Sheets—See Appendix
  - **Personal Core Values Checklist Sheet: Appendix—page 62**
  - **Being to Doing—Core Values Action Sheet: Appendix—page 63**
  - **Verb List Activity Sheet: Appendix—page 64**
- Blank paper
- Pens/pencils

## Gathering

### Welcome (1 minute)

Greet participants with eye contact and a friendly word at the door and invite them to make a name tag.

### Centering Prayer (1 minute)

Lead the following heart-centered prayer or share one of your own.

**Say:** I invite you to become still, close your eyes, if that is comfortable for you, and begin to focus on your breath. Take a few slow, deep breaths—relax and let go of any thoughts, cares or worries that you may have brought with you. Just settle your breath. Bring your attention to your heart and imagine breathing right into that space. Bring into conscious awareness a feeling of appreciation for someone or something for which you are grateful. Let that feeling grow and radiate, filling your body and beyond. Blessed Spirit, we give thanks for this time of growth as we discover and express our values and purpose for being. For this opportunity to serve the Divine within and without, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

### Review of Group Agreements (1 minute)

Before class begins, post the group agreements from Session One. Have group review agreements before starting.

### Reflections/Check-In (10 minutes)

- What new awareness or insights came to you during the week?
- What excites you about what you are discovering?
- In what ways do you feel challenged by what you are discovering?
- In one word, describe your feelings about working on personal mission and values.

### Overview of Session (1 minute)

**Say:** During the first two sessions we looked at our personal history, we told our journey and reviewed our life path. Our stories have power. They can limit us, define us, lift us up, inspire us or keep us stuck. Stories can be a window to help us look at how we've formed our beliefs and what is important to us. Everything that happens in our life is information that has helped to construct "who I've come here to be."

In this session we will take what we've learned and discovered through journey-telling and our life path, and connect that to our core values and life purpose. These become the

focal point for discerning specific action steps to fulfilling our calling and being in alignment with our Spiritual Gifts.

## *Discovery and Exploration*

### Lecturette: Core Values and Life Purpose Statement (3 minutes)

*Say: As you learn to see the fullness of God's life and love and power and substance in others, you will know that you need not pour out your own for them. You will have the knowledge and the light to call their attention to what they have and prompt them to use it.—Myrtle Fillmore*



#### **Distribute: Your Spiritual Community's Core Values** handout

*Say:* Think about the Core Value work we, as a spiritual community, have already done. These are our ministry's core values developed by the community.

How are they demonstrated and how are you embodying them in the community? *(Take a brief time to discuss.)*

Our congregation has already gone through the process of discerning the community's Core Values, Vision and Mission. Now it is time for us, as individuals, to engage in a similar process.

**You will identify the top five qualities/characteristics from your heart** and the **Personal Core Values Checklist** and then delve deeper into them to create your core values.

During this session, core values will be developed from your top three qualities/characteristics through discussion, journaling and identifying specific action steps for each. You will use the same process to develop core values for the other two qualities/characteristics as homework.

Then, using and reflecting on the work of Laurie Beth Jones in *The Path*, **each of you will create a Life Purpose statement.**

In her book, Laurie Beth Jones mentions research that shows the number one fear of people is "Having lived a meaningless life." Finding one's purpose and then fulfilling it is a vital life enhancing process.

Identifying core values and creating a Life Purpose statement will both help point to clarity around spiritual gifts.

## Activities

### **Activity #1: Personal Core Values Checklist Activity** (15 minutes)

#### Materials

- *Personal Core Values Checklist*
- pens/pencils



#### Distribute: *Personal Core Values Checklist*

#### Say:

- You may use your own ideas/words or the ones in the **Personal Core Values Checklist**. If you use the Checklist, **circle the top ten (10) words** that reflect what is **most important to you**. You may like many more, yet the ones you select are more important to you than the others. Your values reflect what you decide is more important to you.
- After choosing your top ten (10) words, **refine your list to your top five (5)**. All may be important, yet you are choosing what is most important in guiding your life. Values clarification always involves **deciding what you will give up in order to keep what is most important**.

### **Activity #2: Heart-Centered Meditation** (3 minutes)

Lead a 3-minute heart-centered prayer and meditation time to discern the top three (3) values from their **Personal Core Values Checklist**.

*Facilitator Note: When leading the meditation, pause between each sentence to allow the participants to enter into that action before adding another.*

**Say:** Now, we are going to go through a time of silence to call to mind your top 5 values.

So, let us take the time to turn within and enter the stillness.... I invite you to close your eyes. Take a few slow, deep breaths and become present to this place and space.... Gather any thoughts or feelings that have scattered into the room and bring them back into your being.... Breathe into them and let them settle into this now moment.... As you continue to breathe slowly and evenly, following your breath in and out, focus your attention on your heart.... Imagine breathing right into your heart-space.... If you choose to, place your hand on your heart to help center your attention there.... Now bring forth the feeling of appreciation for someone or something for which you are grateful.... As we remain in this place of heart-centered breathing, we call on the deep intuitive understanding of Spirit, that place of infinite wisdom, divine guidance and unconditional love.... in this place, we invite Spirit to bring into our awareness the values that are seeking to be expressed right here and right now. We open our minds to discern the top three values

that speak to our highest expression at this time of our life. What guides us in our life? As we enter a time of silence and listen to our hearts, we allow Spirit to speak.

In the silence. (1-2 minutes)

Taking a deep breath, bring your attention back to this time and place, feeling your breath through your body. Within you, feel the gratitude in your heart for the guidance and wisdom of Spirit. We are blessed. Amen.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

**Say:** Write down your top three (3) core values at the bottom of the **Personal Core Values Checklist**.

### **Activity #3: Defining Our Core Values** (30 minutes)

#### **Materials:**

- Prepared flipchart pages or PowerPoint containing:
  - Terms and questions for **Flip Chart Activity #1: Create Meaning, Rationale and Action Steps**
  - Example for **Flip Chart Activity #2: Create Meaning, Rationale and Action Steps**
  - Questions for **Partner Share Activity**
  - Questions for **Large Group Debrief**
- *Being to Doing—Core Values to Action Steps Activity sheet*
- pens/pencils



**Distribute:** *Being to Doing—Core Values to Action Steps Activity sheet*

**Say:** **Only three qualities** will be completed during this session. You may choose to complete the rest of your top five (5) core values on your own.

You'll have **25 minutes** to work through this for your top three core values. Are there any questions before you begin?

Walk around and support participants in completing this work.

**Facilitator Note:** *Have the 3 terms and key questions on Flip Chart Activity #1 (page 33) on a flipchart and refer to them. Have another flipchart page up with the wording from Flip Chart Activity #2-Example (page 33). Leave up while the participants are working on this activity.*



### Flip Chart Activity #1 - Create Meaning, Rationale and Action Step

**Meaning:** What does *[fill in the core value here]* mean to you? How would you define it? Do this for each of the three values.

**Rationale:** Why is the value, *[fill in the core value here]*, important to you? Do this for each of the three values.

**Action steps:** To enable you to “walk the talk,” it is important to develop actions that you will take to demonstrate the core values in different areas of your life: work, home, church, friends, etc.

- What behaviors demonstrate this value?
- How do you know when you’re exhibiting that behavior?
- What behaviors are counter to this value?
- How do you know when it’s not happening?



### Flip Chart Activity #2 - Example:

**Core Value:** Spirit Led

**Meaning:** I turn within to Spirit for guidance and active communication.

**Rationale:** I create order, peace and harmony in myself and others when I align my daily actions with Spirit’s guidance.

**Action:** I have a daily spiritual practice that keeps me conscious of Spirit at work in my life. I complete classes and workshops that support my spiritual growth.

### Partner Share (10 minutes)

**Say:** Please find a partner and share the following with them:

- Your top three (3) values
- What you wrote for meaning, rationale and action steps for the top value

### Large Group Debrief (5 minutes)

- What was it like to identify your core values?
- What’s the benefit of having done this exercise?
- How will you use this information?

**Say:** This is an essential piece of our spiritual development and how we are Being. From here we move into being stewards of those gifts by creating ways to ground these gifts into our lives, Doing this engages five forms of service, which we'll discuss in Session 5.

For today's next step, pick one of your top three values. You will be able to repeat the next activity for all three on your own, but for today you will focus on just one.

## Break (5-10 minutes)

### Activity #4: Beginning Your Life Purpose Statement (25 minutes)

#### Materials:

- *Verb List Activity Sheet*
- Paper and pen/pencils
- Prepared flipcharts (or slides) with:
  - Questions to ask about each verb in Step 1 and Step 2—page 35
  - The *Purpose Statement Example* in Step 3—page 35



**Distribute:** the *Verb List Activity Sheet*, paper and pens/pencils

#### Overview of Activity

**Say:** Every mission or life purpose requires action, and action words are verbs. Without action, a life purpose is just a formless concept, just a word. It's what you **do** with that concept that makes it a mission or purpose.

Review this list of verbs and identify any verbs/actions that appeal to you. You can also use other verbs/actions that aren't on the list.

1. Select three (3) verbs from the handout (or from your own list) which most inspire or excite you. Which words are the most meaningful and purposeful for you?
2. Describe what that action/verb might look like when executed by you. What does this action mean to you?
3. Describe how you feel looking at the verbs you selected.
4. Did any of your choices surprise you? Do you feel validated or recognized when you apply them to yourself?

**Say:** Now it's time to **combine your selected verbs with the Core Value you chose as valuing most**. Give yourself time to thoughtfully complete these exercises without distraction. Remember, an initial Life Purpose statement is a work in progress and should be viewed as an evolutionary process. Still, you want to make it as accurate and as clear as possible.

**Say:** Now we're going to create your initial Life Purpose statement.

**Step 1:** Write each verb, one at a time, in a sentence with your core value. Repeat the sentence out loud, and ask yourself these questions:



1. What about this verb or core value do I like?
2. Is this what I really do or want to do (i.e., am I passionate about this)?
3. Is this really what I'm about?
4. Does this ring true for me?

**Say:** This is a time to be patient. Do not rush through this step by simply picking verbs you think make a good impression on others. The verbs you select will define actions you expect to take. They are words you believe help define your unique abilities, your spiritual gifts. These speak to your passion or what makes you feel

If your answer is an unqualified “yes” to these questions, continue to the next step, which is a honing process.

**Step 2:** Using each verb/core value combination, ask the question,

**“Can I (verb) (core value)?”**



For example, one individual selected “kindness” as a core value. The chosen verbs were “consider”, “demonstrate,” “inspire.” The question was asked three times.

1. Can I *consider* kindness?
2. Can I *demonstrate* kindness?
3. Can I *inspire* kindness?

After this exercise, the individual decided the word “consider” was too passive and did not truly reflect the intent. The word “encourage” was chosen to replace “consider.”

**Step 3:** Create your purpose statement by filling in the blanks from your selected choices.



**My life purpose is to [verb]\_\_\_\_\_, [verb]\_\_\_\_\_, and [verb]\_\_\_\_\_ [core value].**

As you begin to apply your purpose statement to your life and job, you may find you want to clarify a value or sharpen a verb.

### Examples:

“My life purpose is to appreciate, choose and nurture authentic relationships.”

“My life purpose is to facilitate, nurture and restore hope through service.”

“My life purpose is to seek, model and foster simplicity in my daily endeavors.”

**Say:** You'll have **15 minutes** to work through this for your top core value.

Are there any questions before you begin?

**Facilitator Note:** *Walk around and support participants in completing this work. It is possible that only one statement may be done in class. The other two can be done at home.*

## Closing

### Reflection Time (10 minutes)

Give a brief review of today's session and then **ask the following questions...**

- What was the experience like for you today to define your Core Values and write your life purpose statement?
- What reactions did you notice in yourself?
- Are these consistent with your Who I Came Here to Be card?
- How has it been beneficial to you?
- What work do you want to do during the week to wrap this up?

### Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

**Facilitator Note:** *Start the circle by speaking your purpose statement.*

**Say:** For our closing prayer, we will open with a blessing and then each person is invited to stand and speak their purpose statement. Following each statement, we will hold the silence for a few moments. I will start our sharing with my own purpose statement. (*Continue as stated.*)

Blessed Spirit, expressing as us, we are grateful. Awakening to our life purpose, we eagerly share our unique expression of the one presence and one power that indwells every heart. We now declare our divine purpose holding that vision with and for each other.

Your life purpose is both blessed and a blessing. And so it is. Amen.

**Facilitator Note:** *Before participants leave, remind them of any homework they are to do and to bring previously completed materials back with them to refer to in the next session.*

# Session 4: Identifying Spiritual Gifts

## *Session Intention*

To begin the process of identifying your spiritual gifts

## *Objectives*

- To identify our joys, the needs of our world or our community, and where the two intersect.
- To employ our intuitive nature.
- To describe the distinction between our well-developed skills and how we are called to serve through using our spiritual gifts.

## *List of Materials*

- Copy of group agreements from Session 1
- Name tags, if needed
- Pre-write the 3 columns on a flip chart as an example for *What Makes You Come Alive: Appendix—page 64*
- Copies of Activity Sheets—See Appendix
  - *What Makes You Come Alive? Activity Sheet: Appendix—page 65*
  - *Popcorn Conversation Activity Sheet: Appendix—page 66* (cut questions into slips of paper)
  - *Popcorn Conversation Follow-Up Questions Sheet: Appendix—page 68* (cut questions into slips of paper)
  - *Spiritual Gifts Identification Activity Sheet: Appendix—page 69*
  - *Spiritual Gifts Possibilities: Appendix—page 70* (several copies—not for whole group)
- Pens/pencils
- Basket, bag or bowl
- *Called to Be* CD by Faith Rivera
- Music player

## Gathering

### Welcome (1 minute)

**Say:** Welcome back, everyone! I trust you had a great week, especially since you now know what your life's purpose is. This week we will delve into more detail about your specific gifts and how you can express them in your life, in your community, and in the world.

### Centering Prayer (2 minutes)

**Say:** Let's begin today's session with prayer. If you are comfortable doing so, please close your eyes. The work we are doing is allowing us to go deep and to honor who we have come here to be, to honor why we are here in this human experience. We are here as a group to support one another, to guide each other, and to allow ourselves to be supported and guided. We open our minds and hearts to give and to receive. We are ready to be a blessing and we are ready to be blessed.

Your gifts are unique to you and so your life matters because only you can share your gifts in your way. Your very nature blesses others in a way that no one else can. Think about your core values and life purpose for a moment. *(Pause.)*

Together we give thanks for our unique gifts. We agree with Psalm 139 that we are "wonderfully made." Yes, we are! We claim this now and say Amen. *(Pause.)* When you are ready, open your eyes.

### Review of Group Agreements (1 minute)

Before class begins, post the group agreements from Session 1 and have the group review agreements before starting.

### Reflections/Check-in (2 minutes)

**Say:**

- How did your week go? Did anyone do additional work on your core values or purpose statement?
- What shifts in your thinking are you beginning to see?
- What's the value of knowing your core values?"
- What's the value of having a personal life purpose statement?

### Overview of session (2 minutes)

#### Why Are We Here?

**Say:** So far we have explored our life journey and life path and determined our personal core values and life purpose statement. In this session we are going to take the wisdom of

those activities and begin to discern how we can step up in ways that are authentic to “who we have come here to be.” Today we start to put feet on our passions and values and see where they take us. We begin to move from **Being** to **Doing**.

## Discovery and Exploration

### Activities

#### **Activity #1: What Makes You Come Alive** (30 minutes)

##### Materials

- Prepared flipchart pages or PowerPoint containing:
  - Three columns from *What Makes You Come Alive? Activity Sheet*
- Copies of *What Makes You Come Alive Activity Sheet*
- Pens/pencils

##### Purpose of Activity

**Say:** We will now begin to more specifically identify who we have come here to be. We will do this through a process which helps us identify our joys/passions *and* what we perceive to be the needs of our world or our community. Then we will explore the connection between our joys and what we may be called to do in the world.

##### Instructions



#### **Distribute: *What Makes You Come Alive? Activity Sheet***

Give the following instructions:

**Say:** The top portion of this handout explains the activity. You will use the bottom portion to answer the questions on the top portion.

- First focus on the four questions in the **left-hand column**. These questions are **designed to help us identify the joys in our life**; what “juices” you; what you are really passionate about. Take time to quietly ponder these four questions.

Write your answers in the bottom portion of the left-hand column.

- Next move to the far **right-hand column** and **answer these three questions**. Again, take time to quietly ponder these three questions.

Write your answers in the bottom portion of the far right-hand column.

- Finally, move to the **center column**. This focuses on the action that is needed to **make the connection between a specific joy and what is needed in the world** or in your community. Where you **find a possible connection** or overlap **between the two lists, draw a line connecting them**. Consider if there is an action that could fulfill that connection. This would be an action that could unite what you love to do with what you see as being needed in the world.

When you have identified what the action might be, write it along the line you have drawn between the two columns.

**Say:** The center column may help you see more clearly what your role is, what your unique contribution can be.

Write **one** example on the flip chart to demonstrate the process. Here is one option:



What makes me come alive? (my joys)	Intersection Where my joys connect with what is needed in the world or in my community	What is needed in the world or in my community? (needs)
Teaching / training  Writing		Lack of joy  Kids needing healthy role models

You'll have **20 minutes** for this activity. Are there any questions before you begin?

**Facilitator Note:** Walk around and support participants in completing this work. It is likely many will complete this later at home; this time will give them a great beginning.

**Partner Share** (10 minutes)

To wrap up this exercise, have participants form partner groups.

**Say:** You'll have 10 minutes for your group to share your experience or vision that has been revealed to you through this exercise.

**Break** (5-10 minutes)

## Activity #2: Popcorn Conversation with Follow-Up Questions (35 minutes)

### Materials

- Copies of *Popcorn Conversation Activity Sheet* and *Popcorn Conversation Follow Questions* cut into strips. (See instructions below and in Appendix.)
- Pens/pencils

### Purpose of Activity

To allow our intuition to “pop out” our answers and guide us to our spiritual gifts. By being spontaneous, we make an end-run around our logical, left-brain processing.

### Instructions for Facilitator

- Copy the statements on the *Popcorn Conversation Activity Sheet* and cut into strips. Place strips in a basket, bag or bowl.
- Copy the questions on the *Popcorn Conversation Follow-Up Questions* Activity Sheet and cut into slips (with two items on each slip) so that each partner group gets a copy of two bulleted items.
- After the initial Popcorn Conversation, distribute slips of the follow-up questions to each partner group.

### Instructions to Participants

**Say:** This next activity is “Popcorn Conversations.” We have a bag (or bowl) of questions here. These questions are adapted from Gregg Levoy’s Enlightened Leader’s webinar work and book, *The Call to Leadership and Stewardship*. I will pick the first slip of paper, choose someone to answer and read the question to them. They will answer with the **first thing** that comes to mind. They pick the next paper, chose someone and read the question.

The idea is to randomly and **quickly** go around our group, asking a question of someone who has not yet answered, including me. Let’s make this fun by blurting out whatever comes to mind. We are not trying to be logical here, but intuitive. It helps to be as specific as possible with your answer. Go with your gut, have fun and see what wisdom shows up. We will stop when the questions run out or when **15 minutes** is up, whichever comes first.

## Popcorn Conversation Follow-Up Questions

To wrap up this exercise, have everyone choose a partner and distribute copies of the questions on the *Popcorn Conversation Follow-Up Questions Activity Sheet*.

**Say:** You'll have **10 minutes** as a group to share your answers to these questions:

- What am I called toward right now? What do I think wants to emerge in my life?
- What is the most consistent message or urging I have heard/felt in the past year related to a change that wants to happen in my professional life? Personal life?

### Activity #3: Identifying Your Spiritual Gifts (25 minutes)

#### Materials:

- Copies of *Spiritual Gifts Identification Activity Sheet*
- Copies of *Spiritual Gifts Possibilities Sheet*
- Pens/pencils



**Distribute:** Pens and the *Spiritual Gifts Identification Activity Sheet* (Have the *Spiritual Gifts Possibilities* list available for reference.)

**Say:** We will now review the first three sessions and today's session with the intent of identifying your Spiritual Gifts. Remember that many of us have well-developed skills that we use frequently, but these may *not* be our *Spirit-given* gifts. For example, I might be highly skilled with computers and work with them frequently, but not feel energized and fulfilled while I am using these skills. When we use our gifts, we may be tired, but we will also have a sense of satisfaction and contentment; whereas, with skills, we are often just left tired.

As you review the themes and patterns from your work in all of our sessions, keep the importance of energy and fulfillment in mind, as an indicator of a possible spiritual gift. Even if you don't use a gift frequently or well, the fact that they infuse you with energy is noteworthy. Your responses to the *What Makes You Come Alive?* activity might be strong indicators of possible spiritual gifts.

Using the *Spiritual Gifts Identification Activity Sheet*, make a list of all of the Spiritual Gifts that make you come alive or you are passionate about. You are encouraged to call them whatever comes to your mind. Some of you may be familiar with Spiritual Gifts inventories. These inventories give names for certain Spiritual Gifts. I encourage you to come up with your *own* names. If you are finding this difficult, I do have a list of some Spiritual Gifts possibilities that I can share with you.

**Say:** You'll have **20 minutes** to work through this for the **top three** core qualities from your card and your **top three** core values. Are there any questions before you begin?

**Note to Facilitator:** *If people are having a difficult time coming up with words or names to call their Spiritual Gifts, provide them with a copy of **Spiritual Gifts Possibilities** as ideas. Encourage them to use this only as idea starters. They are free to come up with their own words.*

**Say:** Now that you are complete, what do these gifts suggest? What is a new path to explore or a way to evolve further? These may be things you have done or have never considered or they may be the next stage in your journey. The actual manner in which these show up may be known or waiting to be discovered.

### Homework Assignment

**Say:** During the week, consult with one or two people who know you well and whom you trust. Ask them whether they have observed these gifts in you and would agree that each one you have identified is one of your strengths, passions or callings.

Ask them which of the Spiritual Gifts you've identified is your strongest. Why? Are there other gifts they have observed in you that you do not have listed? If so, add them in the place indicated in the **Spiritual Gifts Identification Activity Sheet**. In what order would they rank your gifts? Do you agree?

Finally, consider all of this, and complete the sheet, ranking your top three to five Spiritual Gifts.

Please bring this sheet with you to our next session. We will work further with it then.

## Closing

### Meditation (3 minutes)



**Say:** Let us take a moment to relax, breathe and reflect that each of us is called to be here in the world.

If you are comfortable doing so, please close your eyes and open your heart as you listen to Faith Rivera's song, "Called to Be."

### Reflection Time (5-10 minutes)

- What did you become aware of today that surprised you?
- What delighted you?
- What challenged you?
- What do you want to work on during this next week to help you complete this?

## Closing Prayer (3 minutes)

**Say:** As we close today's session with prayer, let's acknowledge and give thanks for allowing ourselves to be open to stretching into new and deeper ways of being. We affirm that we have unlimited potential. Our potential shows up in ways that are unique and specific to use at this point in our lives.

Let's go around our circle and claim the wisdom that we have learned today. Let's say, "I am excited to explore the gift (or gifts) of \_\_\_\_\_." (*Allow time to go around the circle.*)

What wonderful gifts we all have to share! The world needs us to be the hands, feet and mouth of God. As you thoughtfully do your homework assignment this next week, I want you to remind yourselves just how special you are. Your life, your words and your work affects those around you in ways that you cannot fully see or realize. You are a blessing, and we give thanks for each of you. So it is and so we let it be. Amen

**Facilitator Note:** *Before participants leave, remind them of any homework they are to do and to bring previously completed materials back with them to refer to in the next session.*



# Session 5: Connecting Spiritual Gifts

## *Session Intention*

Identify specific ways we can engage our Spiritual Gifts through sacred service, in areas of our spiritual community, as well as our greater community.

## *Objectives*

- To identify your top 3 spiritual gifts which bring you joy when you share them
- To describe the blessings of engaging your gifts in service
- To examine ideas of where to use your gifts in service
- To prepare for conversation with the Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator, by identifying sacred service opportunities in our spiritual community or the greater community that you are drawn to and that seem to match your Spiritual Gifts

## *List of Materials*

- Flipcharts, markers
- Participants will need to access their completed *What Makes You Come Alive? Activity Sheet* from the previous session.
- Prepared flipchart pages or PowerPoint containing:
  - Selected spiritual passages that refer to Spiritual Gifts and sacred service—*see list in Lecturette section below—page 48*
  - List from *The Five Forms of Service Sheet*
  - Questions from *Engaging Your Spiritual Gifts Questions* text box—*page 52*
  - Instructions for small group work during the **How Do I Serve? Part 2** section of this session—*page 51*
- Copies of Activity Sheets—See Appendix and your Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator
  - *The Five Forms of Service Activity Sheet: Appendix—page 71*
  - *Engaging Your Spiritual Gifts Summary Sheet: Appendix—page 72*
  - The **list of Sacred Service Opportunities** in your spiritual community—your Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator will provide this list: *See sample in Appendix—page 73*
- Sign-up sheet for follow up appointment with Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator

**Facilitator Note:** *If possible, arrange for your Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator to be present during your session to answer questions about the Sacred Service Ministry opportunities in your spiritual community and share facilitation for the second half of this session.*

## Gathering

### Welcome (2 minutes)

Welcome everyone to this session where they will look at specific ways to engage their Spiritual Gifts.

### Centering Prayer (2 minutes)

Lead the following heart-centered prayer or share one of your own.

**Say:** I invite you to settle into your seat, close your eyes, if that is comfortable for you, and begin focusing on your breathing as we join together in prayer. Take a few slow, deep breaths to release any tension you may be feeling. As you continue to focus on your breathing, center your awareness on Spirit, the energy of life and love in which we live, and move, and have our very being. Allow yourself to relax into your awareness of this Divine Energy and Love, for a moment, in the Silence. From this awareness, we call forth or inner Divine wisdom and give thanks for its guidance and clarity as we discern ways to engage our spiritual gifts in service. We are grateful for the opportunity to share together in this sacred work. And so it is. Amen.

### Review of Group Agreements (1 minute)

Before class begins, post the group agreements from Session 1 and have group review agreements before starting.

### Reflections/Check-In (5 minutes)

**Ask** any or all of the following questions:

- How did your week go? Anyone do additional work?
- What shifts in your thinking are you beginning to see?
- What insights did you notice emerging from last week's conversations?
- Did anything unexpected come up in connection with our work together so far?

### Optional Music

“Gifts of the Spirit” by Karen Drucker on *Songs of the Spirit II*

## Overview of Session (1 minute)

**Say:** During the last four weeks, we have explored “Who We Have Come Here to Be,” our life story and life path. We looked for patterns and used what we learned to identify our core values and life purpose. We also explored what makes us come alive and possible callings. Lastly, we began to identify our Spiritual Gifts.

In this session we will finish our time together by looking further at your Spiritual Gifts and specific ways you can engage your Spiritual Gifts through sacred service. Outcomes from this last session are:

- Identify your top 3 spiritual gifts.
- Describe the blessings of engaging your gifts in service.
- Examine ideas of where to use your gifts in service.
- Prepare for conversations with the “Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator” (this title may be different in your spiritual community), by identifying sacred service opportunities in our spiritual community that you are drawn to and that match your Spiritual Gifts.

## Discovery and Exploration

### Lecturette (10 minutes)

#### Materials

- Prepared flipchart pages or PowerPoint containing:
  - Selected spiritual passages that refer to Spiritual Gifts and sacred service—page 48
  - List from *The Five Forms of Service Sheet: Appendix*—page 71
- Copies of Activity Sheets—See Appendix and your Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator
  - *The Five Forms of Service Sheet: Appendix*—page 71

**Facilitator Note:** Each main point below is **bolded** and followed by a detailed explanation.

**Say: Why engage our Spiritual Gifts in service?**

There are many spiritual passages that refer to Spiritual Gifts and sacred service.

**Facilitator Note:** Show the selected passages below on prepared flipchart. **Don’t read aloud**—have participants look at these as you show them on flipchart or PowerPoint slide.



### Spiritual Gifts and Sacred Service Passages from Spiritual Leaders

- *Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God.* 1 Peter 4:10 Good News
- *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.* 1 Corinthians 12:7 NIV
- *Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.* Romans 12:6 RSV
- *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only.* James 1:22 RSV
- *Be the change that you wish to see in the world.* Mahatma Gandhi
- *Everybody can be great ... because anybody can serve.* Rev Martin Luther King, Jr
- *I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy. I woke and I saw that life is all service. I served and I saw that service is joy.* Kahlil Gibran

**Say: The evidence seems clear. We are created, called and prepared to express our True Self, in sacred service, as an expression of who we are here to be.**

Once we have discovered our unique calling and gifts, we are meant to share them, to use them on behalf of others. We are called to intentionally involve ourselves in ongoing acts of creative love in the whole spectrum of our lives' activities. Part of our wholeness is to be in service to our selves and to others.

**Andrew Harvey**, an internationally acclaimed mystical scholar and spiritual teacher and Founder/Director of the Institute for Sacred Activism, **has identified five areas of service that are essential for an integrated engaged, spiritual life.**



**Distribute: *The Five Forms of Service Sheet*** from Andrew Harvey and show flipchart or PowerPoint.

**Say: In his book, *The Hope*, Andrew Harvey asks, "How exactly do you become a midwife in the rebirth that is now beginning in our world?"**

By making a steady commitment to combine five interlinked forms of service:

- Service to the Divine,
- Service to yourself as an instrument of the Divine,
- Service to all sentient beings in your life,
- Service to your local community and
- Service to the global community.

Think of these five forms of service as the five fingers of your hand stretched out to bless and help the world with your spiritual gifts.

In addition, working with this model can deepen your spiritual maturity. Each form of service may be considered as a required step before fully realizing the next form. As we look at these, you may notice how each depends on the development of prior forms of service. Thus, this is an evolutionary model of our maturing spiritually. It may assist you in focusing on your present call to serve.

In other words, discern where you are now and let that guide you in choosing how you will serve next.

***Facilitator Note:** Ask for volunteers to read each of the forms of service from the handout. Pause for a moment after each one.*

**Service to the Divine**—Without constant Divine help, grace, illumination and strength, no one can serve, especially in a world as challenging as ours. So turn to the Divine and serve in devotion and gratitude; asking constantly and humbly to be illuminated, to keep your heart compassionate and to fill you with sacred energy.

**Service to Yourself as an Instrument of the Divine**—We need to be as healthy and strong as possible to serve. This means looking after the soul through spiritual practice, looking after the mind through constant inspiration, looking after the heart and its emotions by deep shadow work, and looking after the body by diet, exercise and sufficient rest.

**Service to All Sentient Beings in Your Life**—Everything would change if only we could treat every single being we meet, animal or human, as who they really are—a disguise of God.

**Service to Your Local and Spiritual Community**—Modern life separates us from each other, and this increases suffering immeasurably. Our communities reflect the problems of the larger world. Think globally, but act locally. Determine which one of all the causes in the world really breaks your heart. Once you have identified this cause, act immediately in your local and spiritual community, so your heartbreak becomes a living force of practical compassion in your daily world.

**Service to the Global Community**—Each choice we make affects everyone else. The only possible response to this acute interconnectedness is what the Dalai Lama calls “universal responsibility”; the decision to be conscious at our core of the effect all our choices have on every other being, and so to make all of our choices congruent with our most compassionate beliefs. As we become more congruent with our choices, our sense that conditions in the world can be transformed can be restored.

## Activities

### Activity #1: How Do I Serve? Part 1 (30 minutes)

#### Materials

- Participants will need to access their completed *What Makes You Come Alive Activity Sheet* from the previous session.
- Copies of Activity Sheets—See Appendix and your Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator
  - The **List of Sacred Service Opportunities** in your spiritual community—your Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator will provide this list: *See sample in Appendix—page 73*

**Say:** Now that we have looked at the five (5) forms of service we are called to engage in, we will gain clarity on our own next steps.

I invite you to continue exploring how you might engage your spiritual gifts in all five forms of service. You can **review the middle column** of the **What Makes You Come Alive? Activity Sheet** you completed in our last session for ideas of your callings in these forms of service.

While your next calling may be outside our spiritual community, we will first explore **Sacred Service Ministry** and assist you and other members of our spiritual community in finding fulfilling ministry as a way of engaging your spiritual gifts in service and as part of your own spiritual journey.

Our Sacred Service Ministry supports us all in deepening our awareness of the Divine, growing in spiritual consciousness and furthering our experience of helping to shape our lives, the lives of those around us and the world.



#### **Distribute: Your spiritual community's list of sacred service opportunities**

*(Your Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator or Administrator will provide this list.)*

#### **Individual Reflection Time** (10 minutes)

**Say:** For the next ten minutes, **review your top three to five spiritual gifts** on your *Spiritual Gifts Identification Activity Sheet* from our last session. Then read over the sacred service ministry descriptions and consider where your top spiritual gifts might engage. Notice which service opportunities you are drawn to. You might mark them in some way. Note any questions you have and the Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator will be here to answer your questions at the end of your reflection time.

#### **Question Time** (15 minutes)

Invite the Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator to answer participant's questions about existing sacred service ministries in your spiritual community.

**Facilitator's Note:** *Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator can stay and answer questions during break. They can also support the facilitation of the second half of the session and present the Next Steps section.*

## **Break** (5 - 10 minutes)

**Facilitator's Note:** *Divide participants into triads. If it is not possible due to the number present at this session, have them break into groups of two. It is important not to have any groups larger than three, so that each person has adequate time to share and explore.*

### **Activity #1: How Do I Serve? Part 2** (30 minutes)

#### **Materials**

- Prepared flipchart pages or PowerPoint containing:
  - Questions from *Engaging Your Spiritual Gifts Questions* text box: page 52
- List of your spiritual community's **Sacred Service Opportunities** from your Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator
- *Engaging Your Spiritual Gifts Summary Sheet: Appendix—page 72*
- Sign-up sheet for follow-up appointment with Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator

#### **Small Group Work**



#### **Distribute:** *Engaging Your Spiritual Gifts Summary Sheet*

Have the following instructions on flipchart or PowerPoint and refer to them as you explain the group work.

#### **Instructions:**

- You will gather in triads (groups of three).
- Each triad will move to one corner of the room.
- Each person in the triad will have 10 minutes to respond to and discuss the six questions posed on the flipchart/PowerPoint (*see text box below*).



### Engaging Your Spiritual Gifts Questions

- What do you consider your **top 3** spiritual gifts?
- What excites you about using these gifts?
- What sacred service ministries are you drawn to?
- How do you see these ministries as a way to engage your top spiritual gifts?
- Are there other forms of service you feel called to? If so, what are they?
- How will you and others be blessed when you use your spiritual gifts?

- As appropriate, and as time allows, triad members ask questions that might help each participant gain more insight into his/her spiritual gifts and/or how to use them in service within and outside the ministry.
- As each person becomes clear on his/her top three (3) spiritual gifts and three (3) possible sacred service ministries, he/she will add them to the appropriate areas of the *Engaging Your Spiritual Gifts Summary Sheet*.
- There will be three (3) rotations.

*Suggest that the groups take a minute to pray, ground or center before each rotation.*

Monitor the groups' progress for each 10-minute rotation, visiting groups as needed. **After every 10 minutes, ring chimes or use a different signal to switch the focus to a different participant in the triad.**

#### **Large Group Debrief** (12 minutes)

- Have participants stay in their groups but turn their chairs to face into the room.
- Starting with one triad and working around the room, invite each participant to share their 3 Spiritual Gifts and the ministries to which they feel called. Each participant will have 1 minute to share this.
- Be aware of the pacing of this exercise. While it may be necessary to clarify or refine individual responses, be aware of group energy. Should an individual answer require more than the 1 minute allotted, suggest s/he take their *Engaging Your Spiritual Gifts Summary* and *Sacred Service Ministry List* home for further reflection.

## Next Steps

### Conversation (Interview) with a Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator

(5 minutes)

*Before session, the facilitator will need to discuss the following with the Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator:*

- *What these conversations/interviews are being called in your spiritual community*
- *Who will be conducting the interviews (Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator or Sacred Service Guide)*
- *How each participant will be contacted*

*Share the contact information and explain this next step, as indicated below, using the information learned from the Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator or, if the Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator is present, have them share the Next Steps.*

**Say:** Please bring your **Engaging Your Spiritual Gifts Summary** sheet to your conversation/interview with our Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator, Coordinator's name. Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator's name will help you review this page, talk with you about your spiritual gifts and callings and help you explore the Sacred Service Ministries you feel drawn to inside *and* outside this spiritual community. S/he will help you discern the best match of Sacred Service Ministry opportunities and provide you with a connection with the ministry area you want to explore further.

**Facilitator Note:** *Share how participants will be contacted to set up an interview time and/or pass around the appointment sign-up sheet to set a time to meet with the coordinator.*

### Dedication Service

*Use this part only if your spiritual community is holding a dedication service for participants.*

**Say:** A Dedication Service will be held following our Spiritual Gifts Discovery process after the connection and placement process is complete. This service celebrates and honors all those stepping into service and offers the spiritual community's blessing and support.

## Closing

### Reflection Time (Closing Circle) (5 minutes)

*Say:* What is the one insight or blessing you received through these five sessions?

### Final Quote (1 minute)

*Yes, we do have roles  
and tasks in this world,  
but finally they are  
all the same –  
to uniquely be divine love  
in a way that no one else  
can or will.*

Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality*

### Closing Prayer (1 minute)

Lead the following closing prayer or choose your own.

Blessed Spirit, we are grateful for the deep sharing and exploration we have experienced on this spiritual journey of discovering our True Self and our gifts for sacred service. We are richly blessed as we end this part of our journey and move forward in engaging our gifts in service in this spiritual community.

We affirm that Spirit is ever-present in us as we give and serve in Love. So it is. Amen.



# Appendix One

## Session Handouts



# Spiritual Gifts Discovery—Session One

## *Intention and Overview*

### **Session Intention**

To discover who we have come here to be.

### **Objectives**

To define the term, *True Self*, and its unique expression

To participate in the card activity of **Who Have I Come Here to Be?**

To examine and share our life journey through stories, discussion and reflection

### **Key Concepts about Spiritual Gifts**

- **There is a True Self (who you have come here to be) from which comes your unique expression of the True Self (what you've come here to do).**

Our goal is supporting **you** as you delve deeper into your True Self (who you have come here to be - Being), and then experience your **unique expression** (what does it look like when you are In Service - Doing), which flows from the unique perspectives, passions and purpose you hold in life.

- **We all come with gifts to share because we are an interconnected web of life. Our spiritual community supports the discovery and use of those gifts to the betterment of all.**

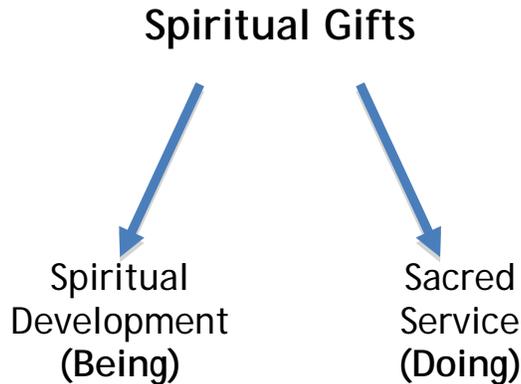
Our community, including our global community, needs people who are on an ongoing spiritual journey of discovering their gifts for sacred service and for people to see themselves as stewards of those gifts. Then we are living in alignment with our values.

- **When we understand our True Self and unique expression, we can creatively deal with all the change we experience in our lives, our communities and the world through the use of our spiritual gifts.**

We are in the midst of unprecedented change—personally, community-wide and globally. By pointing an individual to their inner compass, creative solutions arise. Spiritual gifts are discerned through an understanding and connection with our True Self, and then made manifest as Sacred Service. Sacred Service is the expression of the True Self.

- **Our spiritual gifts work follows a two-fold path: the first is discerning our spiritual gifts (Being) and the second is using them (Doing).**

Think of spiritual gifts as a two-fold path:



**According to Andrew Harvey, there are five forms of service.**

- 1) It begins with the journey of discerning the gifts—an essential piece of our spiritual development or how we are **Being**; and
- 2) Then invites a person into being stewards of those gifts by creating ways to ground their gifts into a regular routine. **Doing** engages five forms of service:
  - Service to the Divine
  - Service to yourself as an instrument of the Divine
  - Service to sentient beings in your life
  - Service to your local community
  - Service to the global community

We will learn more about these five forms of service in our fifth session.

## Who Have I Come Here to Be? Activity Sheet—Session 1

**Step One:** Make a list of individuals—they can be heroes, people you admire, respect, mentors, etc. They could be living or dead, historical or fictional. Each must possess qualities that you value, or attributes you admire, respect and appreciate.

**Step Two:** Beside each person, list **three qualities** you admire in them. The quality answers why this person is on your list. For example, if one of your heroes is Superman, beside his name you might list strength, champion, etc. *Use one word to identify the attribute or quality*, e.g. compassionate, faith-filled, trustworthy, spirit-led, loving, creative, humorous, transformative, intelligent, etc.

	Name	Attributes and Qualities		
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

**Step Three:** Circle up to seven themes you notice in the Attribute and Qualities column. For instance, you may have the word compassion listed several times. Compassion represents a theme. Or you may notice one word that jumps out at you, something unexpected yet you resonate with the word. Place up to 6 themes representative of your list in the space provided below.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
 4) \_\_\_\_\_ 5) \_\_\_\_\_ 6) \_\_\_\_\_

There are many ways to work with these qualities so that you truly inhabit your wardrobe. Start by committing them to memory. Use them in your prayer and meditation time. Say out loud as you are dozing off at night, “I have come here to be \_\_\_\_\_” and name your qualities. You may even wish to transfer them onto a small card that you can carry in your purse, pocket or wallet. Having this tangible reminder of who you have come here to be can be extra helpful in challenging circumstances. Try posting them on your mirror. Get creative.

Adapted and used with permission from *The Q Effect LLC*

# Unfolding of My Life Path Activity Sheet—Session 1

Spend 10 minutes **briefly** journaling answers to these questions.

1. Imagine a conversation with a grandparent or elder who is no longer around. What questions would you ask? What do you wish you knew?
2. Describe a typical family dinner while you were growing up. Use all of your senses to describe the scene. Do you have fond or painful memories? How are you carrying this forward in your family?
3. Describe a world event that changed you. How did the world look to you before it happened? How did the world look to you after it happened?
4. Describe what you would put in the earth as a treasure for the future to find. What items would depict the life you know today? What would your treasures tell the people of the future?
5. What would you like others to remember about you? Create a journal entry that contains information you would want to leave behind to be found when you are gone.

## My Life Path Timeline Activity Sheet—Session 2

Each of the lines below represents a ten-year period of life. Place a dot above the line to indicate a high point in your life or below the line to indicate a low point. The distance of the dot from the line will indicate the degree each event has affected your life. Choose a word or phrase to identify these major events and mileposts that have marked each phase of your life journey. Write the word or phrase next to the dot. Connect the dots with a line signifying your life path.

\_\_\_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_\_\_ 9

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 \_\_\_\_\_ 19

\_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_ 29

\_\_\_\_\_ 30 \_\_\_\_\_ 39

\_\_\_\_\_ 40 \_\_\_\_\_ 49

\_\_\_\_\_ 50 \_\_\_\_\_ 59

\_\_\_\_\_ 60 \_\_\_\_\_ 69

\_\_\_\_\_ 70 \_\_\_\_\_ 79

\_\_\_\_\_ 80 \_\_\_\_\_ 89

\_\_\_\_\_ 90 \_\_\_\_\_ 99

## Reflection: My Life Path Activity Sheet—Session 2

Reviewing your overall timeline, answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper:

- 1. Do you see any patterns in your life story?** For example, are you able to see several times when a similar feeling, emotion, experience or response showed up? The details of the event may look different, but try to identify the underlying experience and see if you can point to anything that is repeating in your story. You might see numerous times you experienced compassion, spiritual interventions, a desire for belonging or acceptance, a tendency to give up your power for approval, etc. Or you may identify patterns of betrayal, abandonment or issues around safety. You may see where a gift or talent or strength got you through.

If the patterns you identified represent times your True Self/Divine nature was trying to reveal itself, what do you see?

- 2. Choose two of the events you have marked on your timeline, one that was a positive experience and one that was challenging. For each event, answer the following questions:**

- In what way were you strengthened by these experiences?
- In what way were you being called to a higher expression of yourself?
- Do you see any spiritual lessons or opportunities for growth showing up?
- Do you see how you may have been a teacher to others?
- Did your understanding or experience of God/the Divine shift in any way?

- 3. Looking at your card and the qualities you identified:**

- Where in these experiences were these qualities trying to express?
- How were they being developed?
- How did they support you?

During the coming week, take a look at other experiences you identified on your timeline and explore them further.

## Personal Core Values Checklist—Session 3

Select the **ten** that are most important to you. Then choose the **top five** that you value most.

Acceptance	Excitement	Leadership	Risk Taking
Achievement	Fairness	Learning	Routine
Adventure	Fame	Loyalty	Security
Altruism	Family	Meaningful work	Self-expression
Arts	Financial Security	Merit	Self-respect
Authenticity	Financial Success	Money	Serenity
Autonomy	Freedom	Making a Difference	Service
Beauty	Friendship	Nature	Sharing
Belonging	Fun	Nurturing	Spirituality
Challenge	Growth	Order	Stability
Change	Harmony	Peace	Status
Community	Health	Personal Growth	Success
Compassion	Helping	Physical Challenge	Supervising Others
Competence	Honesty	Pleasure	Teaching
Competition	Humor	Power	Teamwork
Cooperation	Imagination	Privacy	Tolerance
Contribution	Independence	Productivity	Tradition
Creativity	Influence	Public Service	Travel
Democracy	Integrity	Relationships	Trust
Ecological Awareness	Intelligence	Religion	Variety
Equality	Involvement	Responsibility	Wealth
Ethical Practices	Kindness	Reputation	Wisdom
Excellence	Knowledge	Results	Zest

Now select three that you most desire to keep:

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## Being to Doing: Core Values to Actions—Session 3

<b>Core Value</b>	<b>Meaning (Definition)</b>	<b>Rationale (Why important)</b>	<b>Action Steps (Behaviors)</b>

## Verb List Activity Sheet—Session 3

accomplish	defend	generate	nurture	return
acquire	delight	give	open	revise
adopt	deliver	grant	organize	sacrifice
advance	demonstrate	heal	participate	safeguard
affect	devise	help	pass	satisfy
affirm	direct	hold	perform	save
amplify	discover	host	persuade	sell
appreciate	discuss	identify	play	serve
ascend	distribute	illuminate	possess	share
believe	dream	implement	practice	speak
bestow	drive	improve	praise	stand
brighten	educate	improvise	prepare	summon
build	elect	inspire	present	support
call	embrace	integrate	produce	surrender
cause	encourage	involve	promise	sustain
choose	endow	keep	promote	take
claim	engage	know	provide	tap
collect	engineer	labor	pursue	touch
command	enhance	launch	realize	trade
communicate	enlighten	lead	receive	translate
compel	enlist	light	reclaim	travel
compete	enliven	live	reduce	understand
complete	entertain	love	refine	use
compliment	enthuse	make	reflect	utilize
compose	evaluate	manifest	reform	validate
conceive	excite	master	regard	value
confirm	explore	mature	relate	venture
connect	express	measure	relax	verbalize
consider	extend	mediate	release	volunteer
construct	facilitate	model	rely	work
contact	finance	mold	remember	worship
continue	forgive	motivate	renew	write
counsel	foster	move	resonate	yield
create	further	negotiate	respect	
decide	gather	nourish	restore	

## What Makes You Come Alive? Activity Sheet—Session 4

(1) What makes me come alive? (my joys)	(3) Intersection Where my joys connect with what is needed in the world or in my community	(2) What is needed in the world or in my community?
<b>Joy</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Needs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is it that I love to do?</li> <li>• What lights me up, gives me energy, or ignites my imagination?</li> <li>• What projects, passions, expressions or interests give me lasting satisfaction?</li> <li>• What am I doing when I feel most fully alive?</li> </ul>	<p>What action is needed to make the connection between a specific joy and what is needed in the world or in my community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the world really need right now?</li> <li>• What does my community really need right now?</li> <li>• Where do I hurt over what is happening to others, what's happening to my community, or my world?</li> </ul>

## Popcorn Conversation Activity Sheet—Session 4

**Facilitator Instructions:** Copy the following statements and cut into slips of paper. Place in a basket, bag or bowl.

-----

What is the experience, about which you can unequivocally say, “I’ve been there!” It doesn’t matter whether you’ve got degrees, certificates, diplomas or plaques on the wall, or even if it’s your work 9-5. **This subject you know from the inside out.**

-----

What section of the bookstore do you typically spend the most time in when you’re perusing?

-----

If you’ve ever thought that someday you might like to write a book, what would be the subject of that book?

-----

Imagine you’re standing at a crossroads and there are two signs in front of you, pointing in different directions. What word or short phrase is written on each of the signs?

-----

If you were to go back to school, what subject(s) would you most want to study, just for your own fascination?

-----

If you could test-drive any other profession than the ones you’ve been in, what would it be?

-----

When were you the happiest you’ve ever been? What was (or is) going on in your life that made it (makes it) the happiest?

**Popcorn Conversation Activity Sheet (continued)**

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Many people encounter a crossroads in life when they have to decide which of several directions to go. *For example*, coming out of marriage or out of college: Do you pursue your music or get an MBA? Do you go into business for yourself or work for someone else? Do you jump into the job market or get an advanced degree?

If you've ever come to such a juncture and chosen a path, **what was the road *not* taken?** What arena or passion or profession or direction did you leave behind in making the choice you made?

-----

What can you talk about for *hours*?

-----

Name a decision that needs to be made in your life right now (not put on the back-burner for another month or another year). What is some issue that's hanging over your head now, waiting for resolution?

-----

If you were granted an hour of prime-time television—international audience, no commercial interruption—what subject would you talk to the world about?

-----

If I were to say to you, "Just go for *it*," what would the "*it*" be for you right now?

-----

What is the most important thing *missing* from your life right now?

-----

If you weren't worried about the consequences, what act of chaos or boat rocking, what affirmative departure from the status quo, could you introduce into your life right now that would shake it up and help it evolve—challenge and stimulate it?

## Popcorn Conversation Follow-Up Questions—Session 4

**Facilitator Note:** Copy this sheet as many times as needed. Cut into slips so that each partner group gets a copy of the two bulleted items following the Popcorn Conversation activity.

-----

- What am I called toward right now? What do I think wants to emerge in my life?
- What is the most consistent message or urging I have heard/felt in the past year related to a change that wants to happen in my professional life? Personal life?

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- What am I called toward right now? What do I think wants to emerge in my life?
- What is the most consistent message or urging I have heard/felt in the past year related to a change that wants to happen in my professional life? Personal life?

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- What am I called toward right now? What do I think wants to emerge in my life?
- What is the most consistent message or urging I have heard/felt in the past year related to a change that wants to happen in my professional life? Personal life?

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- What am I called toward right now? What do I think wants to emerge in my life?
- What is the most consistent message or urging I have heard/felt in the past year related to a change that wants to happen in my professional life? Personal life?

-----

- What am I called toward right now? What do I think wants to emerge in my life?
- What is the most consistent message or urging I have heard/felt in the past year related to a change that wants to happen in my professional life? Personal life?

-----

- What am I called toward right now? What do I think wants to emerge in my life?
- What is the most consistent message or urging I have heard/felt in the past year related to a change that wants to happen in my professional life? Personal life?

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## Spiritual Gifts Identification Activity Sheet—Session 4

**Direction:** After prayerfully reflecting on all of the sessions of the Spiritual Gifts Discovery Process, list in the first column below what you have identified as possible spiritual gifts.

During the next week, consult with one or two people who know you well and whom you trust. Ask them whether they have observed these gifts in you and would agree that each gift you have identified is one of your strengths, passions or callings. If so, place a check in the right column by that gift. Ask them which of the Spiritual Gifts you have identified is your strongest? Why? Are there any other gifts they have observed in you that are not listed? If so, add them in the space indicated below. In what order would he/she rank your gifts? Do you agree?

Spiritual Gifts I Identify	Affirmed by Others
	<b>Additional Gifts Observed by Others</b>

Now, review the above and list what you think are your **top three to five (3-5) Spiritual Gifts:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## Spiritual Gifts Possibilities—Session 4

### **Activism**

Working non-violently to create social, environmental and political changes to benefit all

### **Administration**

Organizing information, resources and people to work effectively to accomplish goals

### **Artistic**

Expressing spiritual ideas and feelings through words, music, drawing or other art outlets

### **Assisting**

Providing practical help, often behind the scenes, to support others in accomplishing their tasks

### **Centeredness**

Maintaining an even state of being, whatever the circumstances, enabling you to be a calming non-anxious presence

### **Collaboration**

Working constructively with others and shaping your personal interests to the common good

### **Compassion**

Recognizing your shared humanity and kinship with all creation and responding with kindness toward yourself, others and the earth. A characteristic of love and mercy prompted by an understanding heart.

### **Creativity**

Bringing the vision or possibility that you perceive into being

### **Enthusiasm**

Projecting your excitement and energy about something you value

### **Faith**

Trusting deeply in a life-giving yet hidden order active in all circumstances. Deep inner knowing that that which is sought is already ours for the taking.

### **Generosity**

Contributing wholeheartedly to the well-being of others

### **Healing**

Opening to divine energy to improve the well-being mind, body and spirit of self, others and the planet

### **Hospitality**

Making others feel welcome, included and comfortable

### **Humility**

Appreciating your gifts and limitations

### **Joyfulness**

Delighting in life and its many blessings

### **Leadership**

Engaging and inspiring others to create a desired future

### **Maintenance**

Caring form restoring or enhancing the integrity and aesthetics of physical property

### **Moral Integrity**

Living your life in congruence with your highest self

### **Open-mindedness**

Honoring differences

### **Peacemaking**

Listening deeply to promote understanding and reconciliation among those in conflict

### **Prayer**

Intentionally seeking communion with the Divine for the benefit of self and all creation

### **Public Communications**

Creating and delivering compelling messages about the relevance and distinctiveness of an organization's vision and mission

### **Teaching**

Organizing and communicating ideas and information to others, either formally or informally, in ways that assist them to learn and contribute to their growth

### **Wisdom**

Bringing to a situation insight that creates a deeper understanding

## The Five Forms of Service—Session 5

**Service to the Divine**—Without constant Divine help, grace, illumination and strength, no one can serve, especially in a world as challenging as ours. So turn to the Divine in whatever way you imagine it and serve in devotion and gratitude, asking constantly and humbly to illuminate your mind, to keep your heart compassionate, and to fill you with sacred energy.

**Service to Yourself as an Instrument of the Divine**—We need to be as healthy and strong as possible to serve. This means looking after the soul through spiritual practice, looking after the mind through constant inspiration, looking after the heart and its emotions by deep shadow work, and looking after the body by diet, exercise and sufficient rest.

**Service to All Sentient Beings in Your Life**—Everything would change if only we could treat every single being we meet, animal or human, as who they really are—a disguise of God.

**Service to Your Local and Spiritual Community**—Modern life separates us from each other, and this increases suffering immeasurably. Our communities reflect the problems of the larger world. Think globally, but act locally. Determine which one of all the causes in the world really breaks your heart. Once you have identified this cause, act immediately in your local and spiritual community, so your heartbreak becomes a living force of practical compassion in your daily world.

**Service to the Global Community**—Each choice we make affects everyone else. The only possible response to this acute interconnectedness is what the Dalai Lama calls “universal responsibility”; the decision to be conscious at our core of the effect all our choices have on every other being, and so to make all of our choices congruent with our most compassionate beliefs. As we become more congruent with our choices, our sense that conditions in the world can be transformed can be restored.

From Andrew Harvey, *The Hope: A Guide to Sacred Activism*, Hay House, Inc., 2009

## Engaging Your Spiritual Gifts Summary Sheet—Session 5

Please bring this page to your conversation with your Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator.

**Name:**

**Date:**

### **Spiritual Gifts**

1.

2.

3.

### **Possible Sacred Service Ministries**

1.

2.

3.

Please bring this page to your conversation with your Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator. The coordinator will help you review this page and talk with you about your spiritual gifts and callings and help you explore the Sacred Service Ministries you feel called to. He/she will help you discern the best match of Sacred Service Ministry opportunities and provide you with a connection with the leader of the area you want to explore further.

## Sample List of Sacred Service Opportunities –Session 5

**Facilitator Note:** Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator or minister will need to prepare this list for *your* community. **This is only a sample.**)

**AV Team** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Sound – Back up Sound Tech when needed.

PowerPoint – Use laptop to play slides on Sundays.

**Bookstore/Lending Library** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Offer a wide range of books to enhance an individual's personal and spiritual growth.

**Chaplain Team** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Provide prayer support and wellness calls for congregants – application, acceptance & training required.

**Conscious Giving/Finance Team** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Review income and expenses weekly and make decisions.

**Education Team**

Youth – Oversee and teach in Youth & Family Ministry. (Leader's Name and Phone)

Adult – Give input on classes/offerings. (Leader's Name and Phone)

**Facilities Team** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Recommend and oversee projects, plus conduct a green facilities assessment.

**Hospitality Team** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Assist in providing refreshments for fellowship.

**Marketing/Branding Team** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Plan ways to get Unity's name/offerings to members/the public, coordinate with Newsletter Team.

**Music Team** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Assists the minister in continually improving Sunday and other services

**Newsletter Team** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Writers, photographers, artists, editors all share their talents to publish a monthly newsletter.

**Prayer Team** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Provide affirmative prayer for those names placed in prayer box – for selected members with strong prayer consciousness.

**Social Action Team** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Define and organize meaningful community service projects.

**Website** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Give input on our website.

**Welcome Team** (Leader's Name and Phone)

Serve as Greeters/Ushers, plus define new ways to welcome people, receive and count offering, and be Ambassadors.

# Appendix Two

## Facilitator Training and Guide

# Basic Small Group Facilitation Training

## *General Small Group Information*

Small groups contribute to a learning environment in a way that enables all participants to feel appreciated and welcomed with opportunities to connect. The goals of cultivating a shared ministry of small groups are to enhance spiritual growth and interpersonal bonding, and to meet new friends. They also provide ongoing new connections and service to the larger Unity communities. Small groups provide a flexible way to focus and harness member's interests, passions and desire to grow and to serve.

## *Roles and Accountabilities of the Spiritual Gifts Discovery Facilitator*

The facilitator empowers the participants in reaching the goals of the group and program. At the same time, the facilitator is aware of individual needs and desires and guides the group toward supporting each individual, when appropriate.

**Reports to:** Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator and/or Minister

### **Skills Needed:**

- Understanding the purpose of the Spiritual Gifts Program and intended outcomes
- Leading sessions while supporting both individuals and the group
- Having knowledge of the ministry and its various programs and services

### **Qualifications:**

- Is a member of the ministry

### **Accountabilities:**

We count on our Spiritual Gifts Discovery Facilitators(s) for:

- Gathering and preparing materials for each session
- Preparing him/herself to facilitate each session
- Opening and closing sessions on time
- Guiding each group into creating group agreements
- Holding group accountable for using group agreements
- Creating a safe environment to allow people to express their feelings
- Inviting members to participate at their own comfort level
- Creating an environment for spiritual growth

- Respecting and valuing each person unconditionally
- Maintaining awareness of Spirit's presence
- Facilitating prayer and meditation
- Maintaining an atmosphere of love and acceptance
- Demonstrating non-judgment and allowing differing comments
- Encouraging participation of everyone in the group
- Assuring that no one individual dominates the discussion
- Utilizing good coaching skills such as listening, acknowledging and inquiring
- Facilitating community building
- Keeping a session on track
- Managing time or enlisting a separate timekeeper

## *Components of a Small Group Session*

Some things to consider as the Facilitator of a small group:

### The Gathering

- **Intention/Welcome:** Intention shapes the group (circle) and determines who will come, how long the circle will meet and what kinds of outcomes are to be expected. The facilitator spends time articulating intention. These intentions may become part of Group Agreements. Some intentions might be:
  - Responsibility is shared for the quality of experience
  - Reliance is on wholeness, rather than on any personal agenda.
  - To speak with intention: noting what has relevance to the conversation in the moment.
  - To listen with attention: respectful of the learning process for all members of the group.
  - To tend to the well-being of the circle: remaining aware of the impact of our contributions.
- **Welcome:** Once participants have gathered, it is helpful for the facilitator to begin the circle with a gesture that shifts people's attention from social space to group space. This gesture of welcome may be a moment of silence, reading a poem, or listening to a song—whatever invites centering.
- **Opening Centering Prayer:** Renews group's connection with God.

- **Check-In/Greeting:** Check-in helps participants move into a group frame of mind and reminds everyone of their commitment to the expressed intention. It ensures that participants are **truly present**.

Brief verbal sharing weaves an interpersonal net. Check-in usually starts with a volunteer and proceeds around the circle. If an individual is not ready to speak, the turn is passed and another opportunity is offered after others have spoken. Sometimes people place individual objects in the center as a way of signifying their presence and relationship to the intention.

- **Small Group Agreements:** The use of agreements and guidelines allows all members to have a free and profound exchange, to respect a diversity of views, and to share responsibility for the well-being and direction of the group. Agreements often used include:
  - We acknowledge that all information shared is confidential.
  - We recognize that love is listening; we agree to listen with an open heart, to give mutual support and to practice nonjudgmental listening and sharing.
  - We are not here to give advice or to change anyone's beliefs or behavior.
  - We share from our own experience. By risking and exposing our own emotional state, we find common experience that allows joining.
  - We respect ourselves and each other as unique; we recognize that each person's progress is important and that we know ourselves better than anyone else.
  - We support each other's inner guidance. We let other people find their own answers.
  - We practice being fully present in each moment.
  - We listen to each other with compassion and curiosity.
  - We ask for what we need and offer what we can.
  - We agree to employ a group guardian to watch our need, timing and energy.
  - We agree to use economy in our sharing, while sharing fully, being mindful of the need for all to participate, and mindful when someone is or is not complete with their shared feelings.
  - We agree to support another's process by refraining from interrupting or touching.
  - We have the freedom to pass or to share on any level we are comfortable with.

As a facilitator, you will want to draw these agreements from the participants in your circle group, rather than come in with a list yourself. Having the group discuss and agree on which

ones to adopt will create a community environment. You can have some of the above agreements in mind to suggest as possibilities for your group to consider.

## Discovery and Exploration

This is the heart of the group session and, in the Spiritual Gifts Discovery Process, involves lecturesses, engaging activities and small group discussion.

## Closing

- **Check-Out:** At the close of a circle meeting, it is important to allow a **few moments** for each person to comment on what they learned, or what stays in their heart and mind as they leave. Closing the circle by checking out provides a formal end to the meeting, a chance for members to reflect on what has transpired.
- **Closing Prayer:** A brief closing prayer completes the session.

## *Preparation for the First Meeting*

### Things You Will Need:

- Name tags and markers for at least three meetings
- Contact information for Sacred Service Ministry Coordinator and your own contact information to provide to participants
- A copy of group register and contact information for each person (for your own use, not to give out to the group)
- Attendance form
- Paper, pens, pencils for writing needs
- Flipchart and flipchart markers
- Music player and music, as noted in each session
- Supplies specific to activities and content of each session, including activity sheets and setting up sacred space

### Prior to the First Meeting

- Contact each group member as soon as you receive their registration. Email or call participants individually:
  - Confirm their spot in the group.
  - Confirm the dates, time and place of the first session.
  - Confirm the dates for the other four sessions.
  - Invite them to be in touch if something comes up before the first session.

- Pray for your group. Affirm the highest and best for the group and for each individual.
- Study and review the agenda, program content, activities, and your responsibilities as facilitator. Practice facilitation as needed to be comfortable with your readiness and presence.
- Be clear on how to lead the recommended agenda and suggested time recommendations.
- Collect items needed:
  - For sacred space: cloth or placemat; items from nature, i.e. shells, flowers, plants; unscented candle; arrival or meditation music
  - Name tags, attendance sheet
  - Handouts for group

## *How to Facilitate Questions*

- Review questions before facilitating. If necessary, reword any that are not clear. **Good questions are open-ended**, providing opportunity for a statement rather than a one-word answer. If during discussion a question isn't working after restating, go on to another question.
- Make plenty of eye contact with your group members.
- Expect more than one individual to respond to each question. Draw them out with questions like: How do the rest of you respond to this question? Make it okay for participants to have differing answers.
- Make it okay for individuals to pass.
- Avoid acknowledging something as the right answer. When a response is given, acknowledge that person by nodding your head or saying "okay" or "thank you" or "That's insightful. Who else has something more to add?"
- When someone asks the facilitator a question, feel free to turn to the group and ask others to respond to the question. If no one knows the answer, offer to look it up or ask for a volunteer to do so and report back next week.
- Avoid answering your own question. When no one answers immediately, allow at least five seconds before restating the question. People may need time to process the question.
- Keep the group on topic. Keep the discussions relevant to those present. Extended discussion about irrelevant individuals or issues should be lovingly interrupted and the discussion redirected to the lesson focus. "Let's return to the original question."

- If a few people dominate the discussion, say something like “I’d like to hear from others of you on this question.” Or “Who else would like to share about this question?” Another approach is to preface the next question with, “As we discuss our next question, let’s start with someone who has not yet shared this evening.”
- Maintain a safe space for sharing by reminding the group of the agreements at the beginning of the meeting and again at the end, if appropriate.
- Be open to a “sacred” moment. Sometimes an individual experiences an “aha” or breakthrough that benefits from a momentary special focus. As facilitator, respond by acknowledging the individual. The group could affirm that person by a blessing: “We love you, we bless you, and we behold the Christ in you.” A brief affirmative prayer by the facilitator could be given at the moment. Occasionally, the entire meeting content may need to be pre-empted because of a special situation. If this occurs, rely on your inner resources as you utilize facilitation skills, ask open-ended questions to guide the group discussion, include prayer, and conclude with a “care and closing” experience.
- **Remember that no one has all the answers. Small group ministry is a shared responsibility. Facilitators are just that, not an authority on the topic.**

## *Facilitating Guidelines*

### **Effective Facilitators Do:**

- Assist to make the Spiritual Gifts Discovery Process easy for participants.
- Monitor the group energy field.
- Take control when needed to keep the process moving.
- Pray for their group daily.
- Express empathy.
- Model the group agreement components.
- Monitor and manage the group process.
- Act in integrity and tell the truth.
- Positively represent the ministry.
- Prevent personal animosity from infecting the group.
- Facilitate moving on when one person dominates the group.
- Encourage open, safe, loving interaction.
- Honor the Christ essence in all.
- Familiarize themselves with the Facilitator's Guide.
- Encourage and recruit others to move into leadership.

### **Effective Facilitators Do Not:**

- Lead or teach.
- Sympathize. If someone starts to cry, *do* let them be in their emotions without touching, hugging or interfering. Have a box of tissues ready, if needed.
- Judge or make negative qualitative statements.
- Give advice, rescue, fix or impart personal wisdom; allow members to fix others.
- Share personal drama.
- Allow one person to dominate allotted time.
- Intellectualize, generalize, gossip, or live in the past.
- Violate any aspect of the group agreement.
- Engage in business networking in the group or permit others to network.

## *Encouraging Participation*

It is the facilitator's responsibility to start the discussions and to keep them going. Because **small group ministry is not teacher-led** but rather based on the premise that everyone has worthwhile insight and wisdom, **consider these ways to encourage participation by everyone.**

- **State a question and then direct it to an individual.** Use their name whenever possible. Stating the question first allows everyone time to think about an answer. Then direct the question to someone who is ready to respond. Allowing a brief time for thinking can be very useful for many people.
- **When asking for a response, state it in a neutral way.** Avoid challenging an individual's opinion or evaluating the response. (Effective: How has that shown up in your life? Not: Why would you think that?)
- **When answers are short or few people respond, probe for more information by asking a related question.**
- When responses become too generalized or not related to the topic, encourage individuals to **tell what they personally think.**
- **Whenever possible, invite everyone to respond if they wish.** Sometimes time will not allow all to speak to every question, nor will it be necessary. How can you move them on?
- **Help others to participate.** Sometimes draw out timid participants. Although we honor the individual's right to not respond, sometimes a timid or non-assertive person does not participate until called on. Be alert to this and invite their opinion at least once or twice during the meeting.
- **Keep communication channels open.** Listen carefully to what is being said. Direct remarks to the entire group. Check to see that you have been understood.
- **Maintain the discussion focus.** When the group begins to stray from the subject, briefly recap and repeat the question.
- Model and encourage good listening skills. **Listen with full attention, looking at the person speaking.** Listen for feelings as well as facts by observing the nonverbal communication. Avoid anticipating what the person is about to say. Silently communicate full acceptance of them.

## *Redirecting Strategies*

Try these strategies when someone in the group monopolizes the discussion, gets excessively wordy; or when the discussion gets off the topic. The facilitator is the one who watches for these and takes action when needed.

- **Remind the participants to keep their comments fairly brief**, no more than **one** minute.
- **Thank the person and give ample recognition.**  
Example: Susan, I think you have some very good ideas. Let's get some other thoughts.
- **Summarize and move the discussion on.** (Example below)  
Example: What I heard from all your sharing was a variety of feelings about this situation. Now let's give some attention to another question. How can you apply Truth principles in this situation?
- **Suggest a way to proceed.** (Examples below)
  - Remember, we all agreed to stay on topic, so let's refocus. We were talking about...
  - Let's see if we can find some positive aspects to this.
  - In our discussions, being in agreement is really not necessary. This seems to be a controversial point. It gives us a great opportunity to honor each other's perspectives while differing in our thoughts. Can we do that and move on?
  - Joan and Pat, perhaps you two would enjoy discussing this together outside of this lesson when you have more time.
- **Recognize "cross-talk"** and encourage the group to discourage that among each other.  
Example: We seem to have a couple of conversations happening at the same time. I think we all would like to hear what Joan is saying.
- **Recognize when the discussion drifts toward "counseling"** a member of the group. Intervene in appropriate ways.
  - In our Spiritual Gifts Discovery Process groups we do not counsel or give advice.
  - I'm not qualified to advise you about that, but when I am seeking an answer, what works for me is to spend some quiet time with God, clearing my mind and being conscious of God's presence. I know I will receive the right answer at the right time.

**Most Important—Have Fun!**

# Appendix Three

## Sacred Service Ministry Defined

## *Intention of Sacred Service Ministry*

Creating Sacred Service Ministry is an intentional and important element in shifting from a minister-centric to a mission-centric model of ministry. Thriving spiritual communities intentionally engage members in growing and evolving spiritually and relationally through sacred service. These thriving spiritual communities honor their members as vital, fully empowered partners in ministry.

Sacred Service Ministry results from a spiritual community culture that places a high value on individual and collective spiritual development and sacred service that transforms lives within the spiritual community and beyond its “walls.” People who are grounded in Unity teachings and who embody these teachings measure their success by serving in ways that maximize their gifts and callings. Success is also measured by actualizing the potential of impacting and transforming lives both of those in service and those they are serving inside and outside the spiritual community.

## *Goals of Sacred Service Ministry*

- Prepares people to understand their gifts and live out their calling in every area of their lives.
- Helps individuals mature spiritually by using their gifts to serve each other and the community, so that whole spiritual community can attain maturity of Spirit. (from Ephesians 4:13)

## *Differences between Sacred Service Ministry and Volunteer Programs*

Sacred Service ministry is more than a volunteer program. While volunteer programs provide service opportunities, these opportunities are often disconnected from a person’s primary gifts and calling. Sacred Service ministry is more than asking people to perform needed tasks in the church out of sense of duty. It is a philosophy of service based upon knowing that each of us brings gifts and life experience into our spiritual communities along with an inner desire to experience meaning and purpose in our lives, to know that we are making a difference in the lives of others.

Many volunteer programs are about filling ministry slots, instead Sacred Service Ministry is about assisting spiritual community members in finding fulfilling ministry as part of their own spiritual journey. Sacred Service ministry is a whole systems approach that provides a venue for

spiritual growth through gifts-based service with systems and people in place that create ways for those serving to feel successful and fulfilled, cared for, and developed. In Sacred Service Ministry, members end up both serving and being served themselves.