



TWELVE GIFTS DISCOVERY PROGRAM for Churches

Using the book, *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*, this 12- session study and discovery program is designed to encourage children to respect themselves and others, to recognize and experience their gifts, to make a positive difference in the world, and to thrive. Based on the belief that every child is gifted and talented, this program rests on the scriptural passages below. Each lesson is further guided by Bible quotes and stories.

"...that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us."
- 1 Corinthians 2:12

*"...eagerly desire the greater gifts.
And I will show you the most excellent way."*
1 Corinthians 12:31

"The kingdom of God is within you."
Luke 17:21

"From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."
John 1:16

The key understanding is:

Each of us is born with inherent gifts to help us live well. These gifts include: *Strength, Beauty, Courage, Compassion, Hope, Joy, Talent, Imagination, Reverence, Wisdom, Love, and Faith.*

The objectives are:

- To have children see that, no matter who they are, they have inherent gifts within them
- To have children experience what it is like to have each gift at work in their lives
- To stimulate their enthusiasm for learning more about their gifts

This Twelve Gifts Discovery Program is meant to be customized by you for your particular Sunday school, summer camp curriculum, or home use.

Each basic lesson offers a presentation outline and a variety of activity options for children from ages 4 through 10. Each lesson is designed to be completed within approximately 30–60 minutes yet can easily be condensed or expanded to fit your time frame and adjusted for your church approach and student needs. Activity Sheet Templates are provided for all lessons, when needed.

Factors to consider as you plan and prepare for this Twelve Gifts Discovery Program:

What is your time frame for each class session?
How many children are likely to participate?
Might that number vary from session to session?
What are the ages of the children?
How much indoor and/or outdoor space do you have available?
If you will be using outdoor space, consider variable weather conditions.

In the course of implementing This Twelve Gifts Discovery Program, remember to:

Use good judgment and creativity - your gifts of wisdom and imagination!
Select activity options that will work best for your environment.
Be well-prepared
Have more activities ready than you are likely to need, in case fewer children show up, an activity goes faster than expected, or something falls flat.
Be prepared to give up one or more aspects of your plan in case one activity becomes so grace-filled that you want to spend more time with it. In other words, be flexible. Let go and let God lead the way in every session.
Feel free to mix up the order of activities.
Open and close each session with a ceremonial cue, such as ringing a bell or flickering lights.
Use a gratitude prayer before the main activity in each session as a way of recognizing and consciously calling upon the particular gift of that lesson.

In addition to preparing the classroom and materials, prepare yourself for each lesson by reading the scriptural quotes and affirmation that introduces each lesson outline. Recall a time when you used that gift in a

meaningful way. Reflect on the inspirational essay and try the activity offered for *your* enrichment at www.thetwelvegifts.com.

Provide feedback. Please share your discoveries and suggestions so that this program can continually improve and grow. Thank you!

May you always recognize your gifts and help others to see theirs!

Supply List

All Weeks

A copy of *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* book by Charlene Costanzo

A CD of *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music by Susan Kay Wyatt

A CD player

Crayons and markers

The coloring sheet for that lesson, one for each student

(Templates are included)

The complementary picture book to be used in that lesson

The Tree of Life's Gifts* displayed on wall

* Prior to the first session, on butcher block paper or newsprint, draw a large tree with twelve branches. (See sample.) This tree will play a part in the conclusion of each lesson and help build consistency throughout the program.

The symbol for the gift featured in that lesson, one for each student

(Templates are included.)

The symbols are:

Strength – Triangle

Beauty – Flower

Courage – Spiral

Compassion – Water Droplet

Hope – Rainbow

Joy – Sun

Talent – Tree

Imagination – Cloud

Reverence – Star

Wisdom – Arrow

Love – Heart

Faith – Circle

Week #1 Strength

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

STRENGTH coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

TREE OF LIFE'S GIFTS on wall

The STRENGTH/triangle symbol, one for each child

Complementary picture book -

A large flat bed sheet

An obstacle course set up prior to the lesson

Week #2 Beauty

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

BEAUTY coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book

TREE OF LIFE'S GIFTS on wall

The BEAUTY/flower symbol, one for each child

Picture Book - *Henrietta, the Homely Duckling* by Phil Hahn

FIND HIDDEN BEAUTY page, 1 for each student (Template is included.)

Flower template, glue/paste

Fresh flowers (optional)

Week #3 Courage

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

COURAGE coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

TREE OF LIFE'S GIFTS on wall

The COURAGE/spiral symbol, one for each child

Picture Book -

COURAGE MAZE activity page, 1 for each student (Template is included.)

Blind Reach materials

Week #4 Compassion

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

COMPASSION coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

TREE OF LIFE'S GIFTS on wall

The COMPASSION/water droplet symbol, one for each child

Picture Book –

Materials for *What Might Jesus Do?* Theatre (photos collected from magazines of situations that call for a helpful action)

Week #5 Hope

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

HOPE coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book – *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*

TREE OF LIFE'S GIFTS on wall

The HOPE/rainbow symbol, one for each child

Picture Book –

Materials to make a vision board

Week #6 Joy

Picture Book -

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

JOY coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book

TREE OF LIFE'S GIFTS on wall

Bubbles

The JOY/sun symbol, one for each child

Week #7 Talent

Picture Book - *Silent Lotus* – Jeanne M. Lee

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

TALENT coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book

“TREE OF LIFE'S GIFTS” on wall

Lotus Flower Template

The TALENT/tree symbol, one for each child

Week #8 Imagination

Picture Book –

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

IMAGINATION coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book

“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall

The IMAGINATION/cloud symbol, one for each child

Week #9 Reverence

Picture Book - *Little Squarehead* – Peggy O’Neill

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

REVERENCE coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book

“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall

pre-cut and folded blank wonder webs

children of the world puzzles

The REVERENCE/star symbol, one for each child

Week #10 Wisdom

Picture Book - *A Perfect Name* – Charlene Costanzo

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

WISDOM coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book

“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall

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The WISDOM/arrow symbol, one for each child

Week #11 Love

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD
CD player
LOVE coloring page, 1 for each student
Crayons and markers
TREE OF LIFE'S GIFTS on wall
The LOVE/heart symbol, one for each child
Picture Book – *One Smile* by Cindy McCinley

Week #12 Faith

Picture Book - *The Carrot Seed* – Ruth Krauss
The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD
CD player
FAITH coloring page, 1 for each student
Crayons and markers
Complementary Picture Book
“TREE OF LIFE'S GIFTS” on wall
Mustard seeds
Photo(s) of mustard plants (available on the Internet)
The FAITH/circle symbol, one for each child

Week #1

The first gift is STRENGTH
May you remember to call upon it whenever you need it.

For Reflection and Prayer

**“Seek the Lord and his strength.”
1 Chronicles 16:11**

**“Oh my Strength! Come quickly to help me.”
Psalms 22:19**

**“On the day I called, you answered me, you increased by strength of soul.”
Psalm 138:3**

**“I will trust, and will not be afraid,
for the Lord God is my strength and my might.”
Isaiah 12:2**

**“It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect.”
Psalms 18:32**

Affirmation

I am strong. I remember to call upon strength whenever I need it.

Strength is in the foundation of who we are. It is strength that helps us to survive. It is not only physical. The gift of strength is also manifested by will, resolve, determination, and perseverance. Strength helps us to do the right thing. It helps us to admit we were wrong when we did not do the right thing. We use strength in many ways and when we use it, we increase it. A triangle is a good symbol of strength because it has a strong base and foundation.

PICTURE BOOK(S) THAT DEMONSTRATE STRENGTH:

***Brave Irene* - William Steig
The Story of Jumping Mouse - John Steptoe**

SUPPLIES:

***The Twelve Gifts of Birth* book and music CD
CD player
STRENGTH coloring page, 1 for each student
Crayons and markers
Complementary picture book
“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall**

1 large sheet
an obstacle course set up
a STRENGTH/triangle symbol for each child

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

During gathering time, have children color the STRENGTH coloring page while *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music CD is playing.

Set the stage for respect, trust, and discovery. Use a ceremonial cue to begin the lesson.

Read *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*; introduce the concept of birthright gifts and inherent powers we all have within us.

Focus on the gift of STRENGTH and the guiding “may you” blessing.

Use the STRENGTH photo and coloring page to begin discussion.

What might be happening? How is inner STRENGTH being shown? Ask students to share a time they used inner STRENGTH.

Read the selected picture book. Discuss how STRENGTH is demonstrated in the story.

Have students call upon of STRENGTH and do the “Lift Sheet” activity.

Do Obstacle Course to demonstrate the perseverance aspect of STRENGTH

Have students make/decorate STRENGTH’s symbol and attach symbols to the TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS.

Week #2

The second gift is BEAUTY

May your deeds reflect its depth.

For Reflection and Prayer

**“Perfect in Beauty, God shines forth.”
Psalm 50:2**

**“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or
praiseworthy—think about such things.”
Phil 4:8**

**“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and
good deeds.”
Heb 10:24**

**“The splendor I had given you made your beauty perfect.”
Ezekiel 16:14**

Affirmation

I see beauty in me and in others.

My thoughts, words, and actions reflect the gift of beauty.

**Each of us has the capacity to experience beauty in the world around us;
and, we all have beauty within us. Sometimes beauty is obvious.
Sometimes it is hidden but we can always look for it and find it.
Appreciating beauty in all its forms and bringing it forth from within
ourselves can greatly enrich our lives. A flower is a universally-recognized
symbol for beauty.**

PICTURE BOOK(S) THAT DEMONSTRATE BEAUTY:

Henrietta, the Homely Duckling – Phil Hahn
Little Squarehead – Peggy O’Neill

SUPPLIES:

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD
CD player
BEAUTY coloring page, 1 for each student
FIND HIDDEN BEAUTY page, 1 for each student
Crayons and markers
Complementary Picture Book
“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall
Flower template, glue/paste
A BEAUTY/flower symbol for each child
Fresh flowers

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

During gathering time, have children color the BEAUTY coloring page while *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music CD is playing.

Use a ceremonial cue to officially begin the lesson. Set the stage for respect, trust, and discovery with a signal, such as the ring of a bell or a flicker of lights.

Read *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*; introduce the concept of birthright gifts and inherent powers we all have within us.

Focus on the gift of BEAUTY and the guiding blessing:
May your deeds reflect its depth.

Use the BEAUTY photo and/or coloring page to begin discussion. What might be happening? How is BEAUTY being shown? Ask students to share a time they used the gift of BEAUTY.

Read *Henrietta, the Homely Duckling* or other selected picture book. Discuss how BEAUTY is demonstrated in the story. (Give points and questions)

Do “Find Hidden Beauty” Sheet; discuss how BEAUTY can seem hidden.

Do “Walk of Beauty” activity in which students amble, in an area designated by you, to gather objects of interest. Be sure to call it the walk of beauty not “nature walk”, which is different. Look for beauty that is obvious as well as for what might become beautiful, what is neat looking, what is interesting. Be careful to not disturb insects or their homes. Upon returning to the classroom, students can draw WFor objects of beauty that cannot or should not be removed, students can draw a likeness are too he, such as webs. c. can draw something you saw instead of removing it from its “home.”

Make art, use flower template.

Have students make/decorate BEAUTY’s symbol and attach symbols to the TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS.

Children distribute flowers to members of congregation.

Week #3

The third gift is COURAGE
*May you speak and act with confidence
and use courage to follow your own path.*

For Reflection and Prayer

“Do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.”
Heb 10:35

**“For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power
and of love and of self-discipline.”**
2 Timothy 1:7

“Act with courage.”
2 Chronicles 19:11

“Be strong and courageous...I will be with you.”
Deuteronomy 31:23

“Jesus said, ‘Take courage. It is I who is with you.’ ”
Matthew 14:27

“So keep up your courage.”
Acts 27:25

Affirmation

I speak and act with confidence and I use courage to follow my own path.

Courage is often associated with bravery and heroic acts. Courage is something we all have and use every day in small, seemingly ordinary ways. We use courage when we face fears and challenges. We all need courage to be true to ourselves, which is one very important way to use this gift. We are all called to be heroes. The spiral is a symbol of each person’s own path.

PICTURE BOOK(S) THAT DEMONSTRATE COURAGE:

Matthew's Dream – Leo Lionni
The Princess Knight – Cornelia Funke
Lyle, Lyle Crocodile – Bernard Waber
Sheila Rae, The Brave – Kevin Henkes

SUPPLIES:

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD
CD player
COURAGE coloring page, 1 for each student
COURAGE MAZE activity page, 1 for each student
Crayons and markers
Complementary Picture Book
“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall
Blind Reach materials
A COURAGE symbol for each child

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

During gathering time, have children color the COURAGE picture while *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music CD is playing.

Set the stage for respect, trust, and discovery. Use a ceremonial cue to begin the lesson.

Read *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*; introduce the concept of birthright gifts and inherent powers we all have within us.

Focus on the gift of COURAGE and the guiding “may you” blessing.

Use the COURAGE photo and coloring page to begin discussion. What is happening? How is COURAGE being shown? Ask students to share a time they used the gift of COURAGE.

Do the COURAGE MAZE, mindful of finding and following your own path.

Read the selected picture book. Discuss how COURAGE is demonstrated in the story.

Do “Blind Reach” activity.

Decorate and hang symbols on the TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS.

Week #4

The fourth gift is COMPASSION

***May you be gentle with yourself and others.
May you forgive those who hurt you and yourself
when you make mistakes.***

For Reflection and Prayer

**“Be kind and compassionate with one another, forgiving one another.”
Ephesians 4:32**

**“Let your gentleness be evident to all.”
Philippians 4:5**

**“Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility,
meekness, and patience.”
Colossians 3:12**

**“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have
against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”
Colossians 3:13**

**“The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.”
James 5:11**

Affirmation

**I am gentle with myself and others. I forgive those who have hurt me and
I forgive myself for making mistakes.**

**When we understand and care about how another person feels, that's
compassion. We all have the ability to feel and use
compassion. Compassion is showing kindness as well as feeling it
empathetically. Sometimes compassion involves forgiveness. It is as
important that we use compassion with ourselves as it is that we use it with
others. The rain drop or tear drop is an understandable symbol of
compassion.**

PICTURE BOOK(S) THAT DEMONSTRATE COMPASSION:

Tico and the Golden Wings – Leo Lionni

SUPPLIES:

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

COMPASSION coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book

“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall

Materials for “What Would Jesus Do? Theatre (photos from magazines)

A COMPASSION symbol for each child

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

During gathering time, have children color the COMPASSION picture while *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music CD is playing.

Set the stage for respect, trust, and discovery. Use a ceremonial cue to begin the lesson.

Read *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*; introduce the concept of birthright gifts and inherent powers we all have within us.

Focus on the gift of COMPASSION and the guiding “may you” blessing. What does “COMPASSION” mean? Connect with kindness and caring.

Use the COMPASSION photo and coloring page to begin discussion. What is happening? How is COMPASSION being shown? Ask students to share a time they used the gift of COMPASSION.

Read the selected picture book. Discuss how COMPASSION is demonstrated in the story.

Do “What Would Jesus Do” theatre activity.

Decorate and hang symbols on the TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS.

Week #5

The fifth gift is HOPE.
*Through each passion and season
may you trust in the goodness of life.*

For Reflection and Prayer

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”
Phil 4:6

“Be joyful in hope.”
Romans 12:12

“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”
Hebrews 6:19

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”
Romans 15:13

“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance.”
Ephesians 1:18

“...suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.”
Romans 5:3 -5

Affirmation

I trust the goodness of life.

As a noun, hope is an attitude of optimism. As a verb, hope is actively wishing for something we want or a particular outcome. Every day we all wish for things and use hope in this way. The gift of hope includes this but it is more: it is a sense of deep trust in what is and what is to come. Just like a real rainbow in the sky appearing after a rainstorm, the rainbow symbol reminds us to hope.

PICTURE BOOK(S) THAT DEMONSTRATE HOPE:

Sylvester and the Magic Pebble – William Steig
Dandelions – Eve Bunting
Too Many Murkles – Heidi Charissa Schmidt

SUPPLIES:

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD
CD player
HOPE coloring page, 1 for each student
Crayons and markers
Complementary Picture Book
“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall
Ingredients to make lemonade and drinking cups and/or
Materials to make a vision board
A HOPE symbol for each child

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

During gathering time, have children color the HOPE picture while *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music CD is playing.

Set the stage for respect, trust, and discovery. Use a ceremonial cue to begin the lesson.

Read *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*; introduce the concept of birthright gifts and inherent powers we all have within us.

Focus on the gift of HOPE and the guiding “may you” blessing.

Use the HOPE photo and coloring page to begin discussion. What is happening? How is HOPE being shown? Ask students to share a time they used the gift of HOPE.

Read the selected picture book. Discuss how HOPE is demonstrated in the story.

Make lemonade and/or vision boards.

Decorate and hang symbols on the TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS.

Week #6

The sixth gift is JOY.
May it keep your heart open and filled with light.

For Reflection and Prayer

“Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”
John 16:24

**“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you
and that your joy may be complete.**
John 15:11

“so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.”
John 17:13

“He...fills your hearts with joy.”
Acts 14:17

**“You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.”**
Acts 2:28

**“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy,
because great is your reward in heaven.”**
Luke 6:23

Affirmation

My heart is open and filled with light. I am grateful for all my gifts.

Joy is a sense of delight and well-being. We all have it within us. We are often aware of it when we are laughing and having fun. But, even in sad or challenging times, joy is available to us. In those times, we are more likely to have a soft, quiet experience of joy rather than a loud, energetic one. Joy is always within us regardless of what is going on outside of us. The shining sun is a good symbol for joy. It is bright and delightful. When clouds cover it, it is still there. Sometimes our own joy shines brightly; sometimes it does not; but it is always there.

PICTURE BOOK(S) THAT DEMONSTRATE JOY:

One Smile – Cindy McCinley

SUPPLIES:

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

JOY coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book

“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall

Bubbles

A JOY symbol for each child

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

During gathering time, have children color the JOY picture while *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music CD is playing.

Set the stage for respect, trust, and discovery. Use a ceremonial cue to begin the lesson.

Read *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*; introduce the concept of birthright gifts and inherent powers we all have within us.

Focus on the gift of JOY and the guiding “may you” blessing.

Use the JOY photo and coloring page to begin discussion. What is happening? How is JOY being shown? Ask students to share a time they used the gift of JOY.

Read the selected picture book. Discuss how JOY is demonstrated in the story.

Do “Laugh Chain” Activity

Blow bubbles

Decorate and hang symbols on the TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS.

Week #7

The seventh gift is TALENT.
***May you discover your own special abilities
and contribute them toward a better world.***

For Reflection and Prayer

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all persons. To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

1 Corinthians 12:4 – 7

**“Master, you handed over to me five talents;
see I have made five more talents.”**

Matthew 25:20

“We have not ceased praying for you...as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God”

Colossians 1:9,10

Affirmation

I recognize my special abilities and I enjoy sharing them in the world.

Each one of us has the gift of talent. Within our gift of talent, we *all* have *many* special abilities. Our particular talent is our unique set of special abilities. One of our jobs in life is to discover our own special abilities that make up our gift of talent. Another job is to decide how we will use our talent. Using our own gift of talent, we can all make a difference in the world. We can *all* make it a better place. What we enjoy doing gives us clues as to what our special abilities are. As we grow throughout life, we can discover and develop more of our special abilities. A tree is a good symbol of talent. The trunk represents the overall gift of talent. The branches represent our many growing special abilities. A tree in bloom symbolizes that our special abilities are being used.

PICTURE BOOK(S) THAT DEMONSTRATE TALENT:

Silent Lotus – Jeanne M. Lee

Louanne Pig in the Talent Show – Nancy Carlson

Angel and the Acrobat – Mark Shannon

SUPPLIES:

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

TALENT coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book

“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall

Lotus Flower Template

A TALENT symbol for each child

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

During gathering time, have children color the TALENT picture while *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music CD is playing.

Set the stage for respect, trust, and discovery. Use a ceremonial cue to begin the lesson.

Read *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*; introduce the concept of birthright gifts and inherent powers we all have within us.

Focus on the gift of TALENT and the guiding “may you” blessing.

Use the TALENT photo and coloring page to begin discussion.

What is happening? How is TALENT being shown? Ask students to share their special abilities and interests. How would they like to make the world a better place?

Read the selected picture book. Discuss how TALENT is demonstrated in the story.

Do “Talent Lotus” Activity

Decorate and hang symbols on the TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS.

Week #8

The eighth gift is IMAGINATION.
May it nourish your visions and dreams.

For Reflection and Prayer

**“I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.”
Acts 2:17**

Affirmation

I value my imagination and use it to nourish my visions and dreams.

Imagination is a powerful gift. We use it in many ways everyday. Imagination is used in play when we pretend. It helps us to solve problems, create, and visualize. It also helps us cope with anxieties and challenges. Using our imaginations, we can explore our hopes, our dreams, and our lifelong goals. Everything that has ever been achieved has started with an idea—an idea within someone’s imagination. A cloud is a symbol of imagination because it is a common activity to see things when we look at the shapes and movements of clouds.

Picture Book(s) that Demonstrate IMAGINATION:

Matthew's Dream – Leo Lionni

I Pretend – Heidi Goennell

SUPPLIES:

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

IMAGINATION coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book

“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall

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AN IMAGINATION symbol for each child

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

During gathering time, have children color the IMAGINATION picture while *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music CD is playing.

Set the stage for respect, trust, and discovery. Use a ceremonial cue to begin the lesson.

Read *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*; introduce the concept of birthright gifts and inherent powers we all have within us.

Focus on the gift of IMAGINATION and the guiding “may you” blessing.

Use the IMAGINATION photo and coloring page to begin discussion. What is happening? How is IMAGINATION being shown? Ask students to share ways they pretend, visualize, and use the gift of IMAGINATION.

Read *Matthew's Dream* or another selected picture book. Discuss how IMAGINATION is demonstrated in the story.

Do a Magic Carpet Meditation. Imagine Your Own Destination. Make water color self-portraits.

(Make vision boards, if time.)

Decorate and hang symbols on the TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS.

Week #9

The ninth gift is REVERENCE.
*May you appreciate the wonder that you are
and the miracle of all creation.*

For Reflection and Prayer

**“Meditate on wonders.”
Psalm 119:27**

**“Let us be thankful and worship God with reverence and awe.”
Hebrews 12:28**

**“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight.”
Hebrews 4:13**

**“In his hand is the life of every living thing
and the breath of every human being.”
Job 12:10**

**“believe the miracles”
John 10:30**

Affirmation

I appreciate the miracle of all creation and my part in it.

Reverence is a word that children may or may not have yet heard. But like all the gifts, they know what it is and they have the capacity for it within them. They have felt it at times and they have used it at times. Reverence is a sense of wonder and awe. It is a kind of deep respect and appreciation. When we feel reverence we might whisper, *Wow*. A star is a symbol of reverence because stars are one of the things that bring many people to feel wonder and awe.

PICTURE BOOK(S) THAT DEMONSTRATE REVERENCE:

Little Squarehead – Peggy O’Neill

Frederick – Leo Lionni

A Mother’s Song – Janet Lowler

Be Nice to Spiders – Margaret Bloom Graham

SUPPLIES:

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

REVERENCE coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book

“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall

pre-cut and folded blank wonder webs

children of the world puzzles

A REVERENCE symbol for each child

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

During gathering time, have children color the REVERENCE picture while *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music CD is playing.

Set the stage for respect, trust, and discovery. Use a ceremonial cue to begin the lesson.

Read *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*; introduce the concept of birthright gifts and inherent powers we all have within us.

Focus on the gift of REVERENCE and the guiding “may you” blessing. What does “REVERENCE” mean? Connect with wonder, awe, and respect.

Use the REVERENCE photo and coloring page to begin discussion. What is happening? How is REVERENCE being shown? Ask students to share a time they used the gift of REVERENCE.

Have children assemble “children of the world” puzzles. Read *Little Squarehead* or other selected picture book. Discuss how REVERENCE is demonstrated in the story.

Make Namaste sheets.

“Become the Christ” card exchange

Create another opportunity to experience wonderment and reverence. For example, break open a geod. Have the children see the inner beauty.

Make “Wonder Webs.” (Explain how)

Decorate and hang symbols on the TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS.

Week #10

The tenth gift is WISDOM.
*Guiding your way, wisdom will lead you
through knowledge to understanding.
May you hear its soft voice.*

For Reflection and Prayer

**“For the Lord gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”
Proverbs 2:6**

**“My mouth shall speak wisdom; the meditation of my heart shall be
understanding.”
Psalm 49:3**

**“You have made known to me the paths of life.”
Acts 2:28**

**“Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the
good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.”
Jeremiah 6:10**

Affirmation

**I hear the soft voice of wisdom. I follow its guidance to knowledge and
understanding.**

Wisdom is similar to knowledge and comprehension yet is it different. Wisdom offers us guidance and understanding of the really important things in life. Wisdom helps us to make good choices. It is like a compass within us. Conscience is a part of wisdom. We are born with wisdom but we learn how to listen and use it better as we grow and age. Sometimes we gain a deeper appreciation of wisdom and use it better as a result of making mistakes and learning from them. An arrow is a symbol of wisdom because wisdom gives us direction and points the way.

Picture Book(s) that Demonstrate WISDOM:

A Perfect Name – Charlene Costanzo
Fables – Arnold Lobel
Aesop’s Fables – Milo Winter
The King and the Tortoise – Tololwa M. Mollel

Bible Story – Solomon 1 Kings:30

SUPPLIES:

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD
CD player
WISDOM coloring page, 1 for each student
Crayons and markers
Complementary Picture Book
“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall
???
A WISDOM symbol for each child

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

During gathering time, have children color the WISDOM picture while *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music CD is playing.

Set the stage for respect, trust, and discovery. Use a ceremonial cue to begin the lesson.

Read *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*; introduce the concept of birthright gifts and inherent powers we all have within us.

Focus on the gift of WISDOM and the guiding “may you” blessing.

Use the WISDOM photo and coloring page to begin discussion. What might be happening? How is WISDOM being shown? Ask students to share a time they used the gift of WISDOM.

Read *A Perfect Name* or other selected picture book. Discuss how WISDOM is demonstrated in the story.

Go on a Wisdom Journey. (Explain how. Three groups find their way, with clues.)

Sit down and be silent, listening for wisdom. Discuss how wisdom is always inside.

**Discuss Solomon's Dream 1 Kings: 30
When Solomon asked for wisdom, he got other gifts also.**

Decorate and hang symbols on the TREE OF LIFE'S GIFTS.

Week #11

The eleventh gift is LOVE.
It will grow each time you give it away.

For Reflection and Prayer

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”
Mark 12:30

“Clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”
Colossians 3:14

“God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”
Romans 5:5

“May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.”
Jude 1:2

Affirmation

I give and receive love every chance I get.

Love is related both to feelings and to actions. We can *feel* love for ourselves, for other people, for animals, for nature, for the Earth, and for things. We can also *give* love, *show* love, and *receive* love. We all have the gift of love within us to give away; we all deserve to receive love ourselves. It is healthy and important to love ourselves and take good care of ourselves. There are times when we may feel unloving or unlovable. There are many things we can do to help us feel loving and lovable again. The heart is a well-known and universal symbol of love.

PICTURE BOOK(S) THAT DEMONSTRATE LOVE:

One Smile – Cindy McCinley
Amos and Boris – William Steig

SUPPLIES:

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD
CD player
LOVE coloring page, 1 for each student
Crayons and markers
Complementary Picture Book
“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall
???
A LOVE symbol for each child

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

During gathering time, have children color the LOVE picture while *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music CD is playing.

Set the stage for respect, trust, and discovery. Use a ceremonial cue to begin the lesson.

Read *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*; introduce the concept of birthright gifts and inherent powers we all have within us.

Focus on the gift of LOVE and the guiding “may you” blessing.

Use the LOVE photo and coloring page to begin discussion. What is happening? How is LOVE being shown? Ask students to share a time they used the gift of LOVE.

Read *One Smile* or other selected picture book. Discuss how LOVE is demonstrated in the story.

Paper Chain
Angel Wall
Massive chain

Decorate and hang symbols on the TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS.

Week #12

The twelfth gift is FAITH.

May you believe.

For Reflection and Prayer

**“Now faith is being sure of what we know for
and certain of what we do not see.”**

Heb 11:1

**“So we are always confident;...for we walk by faith, not by sight.”
2 Corinthians 5:6,7**

**“If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain,
'Move from here to there' and it will move.**

Nothing will be impossible for you.”

Matthew 17:20

Affirmation

I have faith in God and in the goodness of life.

Everyone has faith. Faith is our capacity to believe with our minds and our hearts and to trust. Faith is often associated with beliefs about the Divine. Throughout the world, people of all cultures have beliefs about the order in the universe and how it is unfolding. It is important that we respect one another's cherished beliefs in this area. We can see evidence of the gift of faith in all people in other ways too. For example, we have faith that the Earth is moving around the sun. We have faith that the sun will rise tomorrow. Every day we take actions and make choices that are influenced by what we believe and what we trust. Like all the gifts, faith is very powerful. The circle is a symbol of faith because the circle holds all the things in which we place faith.

PICTURE BOOK(S) THAT DEMONSTRATE FAITH:

The Carrot Seed – Ruth Krauss

SUPPLIES:

The Twelve Gifts of Birth book and music CD

CD player

FAITH coloring page, 1 for each student

Crayons and markers

Complementary Picture Book

“TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS” on wall

Mustard seeds and photos of mustard plants or a live plant

A FAITH symbol for each child

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

During gathering time, have children color the FAITH picture while *The Twelve Gifts of Birth* music CD is playing.

Set the stage for respect, trust, and discovery. Use a ceremonial cue to begin the lesson.

Read *The Twelve Gifts of Birth*; introduce the concept of birthright gifts and inherent powers we all have within us.

Focus on the gift of FAITH and the guiding “may you” blessing.

Use the FAITH photo and coloring page to begin discussion. What is happening? How is FAITH being shown? Ask students to share a time they used the gift of FAITH.

Read *The Carrot Seed* or other selected picture book. Discuss how FAITH is demonstrated in the story.

Use a marigold to show seeds.

Discuss: what is FAITH? Discuss FAITH in the Parable of the Mustard Seed. Have each child hold a mustard seed. (Have available photos of full-grown plants or a live plant.)

Have each child place a mustard seed in a balloon which is then blown up. Breathe FAITH into each balloon! Build a balloon mountain. Have the children life and move the mountain.

Experience FAITH in a “Faith Walk” Activity

Decorate and hang symbols on the TREE OF LIFE’S GIFTS.

In closing the 12-week program:

Each child gets a treasure chest and set of 12 gifts cards.

They can make 12 affirmation cards for their treasure chest by writing “I HAVE” on each card.