



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Find time to explore these questions as a family after each session.

Session 1

- What does *vocation* mean?
- What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus Christ?
- What does God call Christians to do or be?
- Who in your life is participating in God's work in the world? How did he or she hear God's call? How has responding to God's call changed him or her?

Session 2

- Do you have to be a pastor to serve God?
- How have you been involved in doing God's work in the world through the church? What were your favorite experiences?
- How has your church family helped you discover and develop the gifts God has given you?
- What can we accomplish when we work together using the gifts God has given us? What happens when someone doesn't use his or her gifts?
- When have you had what felt like a nearly impossible task to do? What made it possible for you to do it? How did a community's gifts and involvement make it possible?

Session 3

- Is serving in church the only way to serve God?
- When have you been in the right place at the right time to help someone? How did that feel?
- When have you looked to your faith to make difficult decisions? What did you do?
- How do you know something might be a call from God to do something?

Session 4

- How do you make space in your life to listen for God?
- What makes it easier or harder for you to make space in your life to listen to God?
- What does God's voice sound like? Have you heard God's voice?
- When are you most able to hear God or experience God's presence?
- How could you prepare yourself to hear God's voice more?
- How can your community of faith help you listen for God's voice and God's call in your life?



SESSION 1 FAITH STATEMENT

In baptism, the church celebrates the renewal of the covenant with which God has bound us to God's very self. By baptism, individuals are publicly received into the church to share in its life and ministry, and the church becomes responsible for their training and support in Christian discipleship. When those baptized are infants, the congregation, as well as the parents, has a special obligation to nurture them in the Christian life, leading them to make, by a public profession, a personal response to the love of God shown forth in their baptism.

—Confession of 1967 (9.51),
Inclusive Language Text

FAITH





Which gifts do you have?

Instructions: Self-Assessment Inventory

For each of the 75 questions which follow, circle the number that corresponds with the response that most closely matches how you perceive yourself. Circle 4 if the statement is very true; 3, frequently true; 2, sometimes true; 1, infrequently true and 0 if rarely true. You might also ask a friend to score the inventory with, and for, you. Their perception of your strengths may be useful in identifying the gifts with which you have been amply blessed. After responding to each question, turn to the scoring grid to discover your results. If you would like to take this Inventory on-line, go to www.elca.org/gathering/gifts.html.

	4	3	2	1	0
1. When presented a goal, I quickly think of what to do to achieve the desired result.	4	3	2	1	0
2. I express myself through artistic means.	4	3	2	1	0
3. My faith makes me seek out God's will and purpose in the circumstances of my daily life.	4	3	2	1	0
4. I am able to talk with those who do not go to church about God in ways they are able to easily understand.	4	3	2	1	0
5. I am moved by those who, through conflict or sorrow, are doubting God's presence in their lives.	4	3	2	1	0
6. I often see the Holy Spirit's presence in my life and the lives of others.	4	3	2	1	0
7. God blesses me each day. I tend to gladly respond to these blessings by giving generously of my time and money.	4	3	2	1	0
8. When I see a new youth visit our congregation, I introduce myself and help that person feel welcome.	4	3	2	1	0
9. I know that God hears and answers my daily prayers.	4	3	2	1	0
10. I want to learn as much as I can about the Bible and faith.	4	3	2	1	0
11. I am a take-charge person. With others help, I know the goal or task will be completed.	4	3	2	1	0
12. When I see a person in need, I want to assist them.	4	3	2	1	0
13. I love to dance, and enjoy encouraging others through movement.	4	3	2	1	0
14. I find joy in expressing myself by playing a musical instrument or by singing.	4	3	2	1	0
15. I am able to encourage others to develop in their faith.	4	3	2	1	0
16. I like working behind the scenes to make sure projects are successful.	4	3	2	1	0



Circle 4 if the statement is very true; 3, frequently true; 2, sometimes true; 1, infrequently true and 0 if rarely true.

	Very true of me	Frequently true of me	Sometimes true of me	Infrequently true of me	Rarely true of me
17. I enjoy working with my hands in a skill that requires considerable experience to perfect.	4	3	2	1	0
18. I love to tell others about biblical truth in a way that it becomes real to them.	4	3	2	1	0
19. When a challenge is presented, I am usually able to identify a workable solution.	4	3	2	1	0
20. I am able to take a thought or idea and put it into a clear and inspiring written form.	4	3	2	1	0
21. I am very comfortable using computers to organize information.	4	3	2	1	0
22. I feel compelled to speak up for people who cannot defend themselves.	4	3	2	1	0
23. I enjoy friendships with people much older or much younger than myself.	4	3	2	1	0
24. People have told me they appreciate my listening when they have a personal challenge.	4	3	2	1	0
25. I love to act out stories from the Bible.	4	3	2	1	0
26. I enjoy organizing thoughts, ideas, hopes, and dreams into a specific plan of action.	4	3	2	1	0
27. I can translate into an artistic form what I first see in my imagination.	4	3	2	1	0
28. I have helped others figure out which personal decisions help them live God's will for their lives.	4	3	2	1	0
29. I enjoy being with others not involved in church, and like having the opportunity to encourage them to faith and commitment in God.	4	3	2	1	0
30. When someone faces a crisis, I am compelled to show my care and support.	4	3	2	1	0
31. I have told others of the Spirit's presence in times of my own personal crises, to be a source of strength for them.	4	3	2	1	0
32. I manage my time and money so that I can give much of it to the work of the church or other organizations.	4	3	2	1	0
33. I love when others come to my house to hang out, even if there are some I don't know very well.	4	3	2	1	0
34. I can become so involved in prayer that outside distractions don't bother me.	4	3	2	1	0
35. I often study something in the Bible and think about how it influences my daily life.	4	3	2	1	0
36. In a group, others often look to me for direction.	4	3	2	1	0
37. I feel compelled to do what I can to provide housing for the homeless, food for the starving, comfort for those in distress.	4	3	2	1	0



Circle 4 if the statement is very true; 3, frequently true; 2, sometimes true; 1, infrequently true and 0 if rarely true.

	Very true of me	Frequently true of me	Sometimes true of me	Infrequently true of me	Rarely true of me
38. When I dance before groups, I feel a real sense of God's presence.	4	3	2	1	0
39. I am inspired and provide inspiration for others by my singing or playing a musical instrument.	4	3	2	1	0
40. I have taken responsibility to provide spiritual guidance to an individual believer or group of believers.	4	3	2	1	0
41. People tell me that without my willingness to do the unnoticed jobs, their work would be more difficult.	4	3	2	1	0
42. I am good at building, repairing, or restoring things and find satisfaction in doing so.	4	3	2	1	0
43. I want to express my faith by helping others discover the truths in the Bible.	4	3	2	1	0
44. People come to me for help in applying Christian faith and values to personal situations.	4	3	2	1	0
45. I often feel moved to write about my thoughts and feelings so others may benefit from them.	4	3	2	1	0
46. I see the Internet as a great place to communicate and share my faith with others.	4	3	2	1	0
47. I try to find a way through the system for people who are unable to get through it on their own.	4	3	2	1	0
48. I am eager to learn from people older or younger than myself—and like to share what I know with them.	4	3	2	1	0
49. I could listen to people's stories for hours.	4	3	2	1	0
50. When I am acting on stage, I feel a real sense of God's presence.	4	3	2	1	0
51. I have been successful in organizing, directing, and motivating people to achieve a goal.	4	3	2	1	0
52. My artistic work helps others think about God.	4	3	2	1	0
53. In my congregation, I often get a gut feeling if a direction being taken is in line with God's will and purpose.	4	3	2	1	0
54. I do not find it difficult to share what Jesus means to me with my friends.	4	3	2	1	0
55. Those seeking answers for life's questions have come to me for encouragement.	4	3	2	1	0
56. I can see great things happening in my congregation, even when others are doubtful.	4	3	2	1	0
57. When I receive money unexpectedly, I want to share this gift with the church.	4	3	2	1	0
58. I enjoy welcoming guests and helping them to feel at ease in new situations.	4	3	2	1	0
59. Others have asked me to pray for them in difficult times.	4	3	2	1	0



Circle 4 if the statement is very true; 3, frequently true; 2, sometimes true; 1, infrequently true and 0 if rarely true.

	Very true of me	Frequently true of me	Sometimes true of me	Infrequently true of me	Rarely true of me
60. I usually know of something in the Bible to help others on their faith journey.	4	3	2	1	0
61. People say they like to work with me because the task will be successfully completed.	4	3	2	1	0
62. People have been surprised by my comfort in working with those suffering in mind, body, or spirit.	4	3	2	1	0
63. I am often amazed that my dancing provides inspiration and hope for others on their faith journey.	4	3	2	1	0
64. Others have told me they were moved by my playing a musical instrument or by singing.	4	3	2	1	0
65. Friends have come to me for spiritual help and it has deepened our relationship.	4	3	2	1	0
66. At church, when I help take down tables, work in the kitchen, put chairs away or fold bulletins, I feel that I have served the Lord.	4	3	2	1	0
67. My knowledge of building, maintenance or repair has been of special value to the church and others.	4	3	2	1	0
68. Others have told me that I can take the most difficult idea or concept and help them understand it.	4	3	2	1	0
69. When a group's direction is needed, I am frequently asked for my opinion.	4	3	2	1	0
70. My written work has helped others understand life's truths.	4	3	2	1	0
71. I have used technology (computers, communications) to help others deal with life and grow in their faith.	4	3	2	1	0
72. I do whatever I can to get those in power to address the needs of the homeless, the hungry, or the excluded.	4	3	2	1	0
73. I have friends who are at least 10 years older or younger than I.	4	3	2	1	0
74. I always have time to hear about my friends' joys and sorrows.	4	3	2	1	0
75. My abilities as an actress/actor has had special value to the church and others.	4	3	2	1	0

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Scoring Grid

For each set of three questions, below left, fill in the number of rectangular blocks equal to your total score. For example, in the illustration to the right, in the category of Administration, the numbers 2+4+3 total 9. The strongest gifts will generally have a total score of "7" or more. If you have more than one gift with a total of seven or more, then all of these gifts can be referred to as your "gift cluster." In the illustration, the gifts of Administration, Encouragement, Faith, Knowledge, and Leadership are the gift cluster. Notice how each gift within the cluster has the potential to complement and support another. This inventory is not a scientific instrument, but it is designed to begin your journey toward spiritual gifts discovery.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
ADMINISTRATION														
DISCERNMENT														
EVANGELISM														
ENCOURAGEMENT														
FAITH														
GIVING														
HOSPITALITY														
INTERCESSION														
KNOWLEDGE														
LEADERSHIP														
MERCY														
PASTORING														
SERVICE														
TEACHING														
WISDOM														

Spiritual Gifts

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
QUESTIONS 1, 26, 51														ADMINISTRATION
QUESTIONS 3, 28, 53														DISCERNMENT
QUESTIONS 4, 29, 54														EVANGELISM
QUESTIONS 5, 30, 55														ENCOURAGEMENT
QUESTIONS 6, 31, 56														FAITH
QUESTIONS 7, 32, 57														GIVING
QUESTIONS 8, 33, 58														HOSPITALITY
QUESTIONS 9, 34, 59														INTERCESSION
QUESTIONS 10, 35, 60														KNOWLEDGE
QUESTIONS 11, 36, 61														LEADERSHIP
QUESTIONS 12, 37, 62														MERCY
QUESTIONS 15, 40, 65														PASTORING
QUESTIONS 16, 41, 66														SERVICE
QUESTIONS 18, 43, 68														TEACHING
QUESTIONS 19, 44, 69														WISDOM



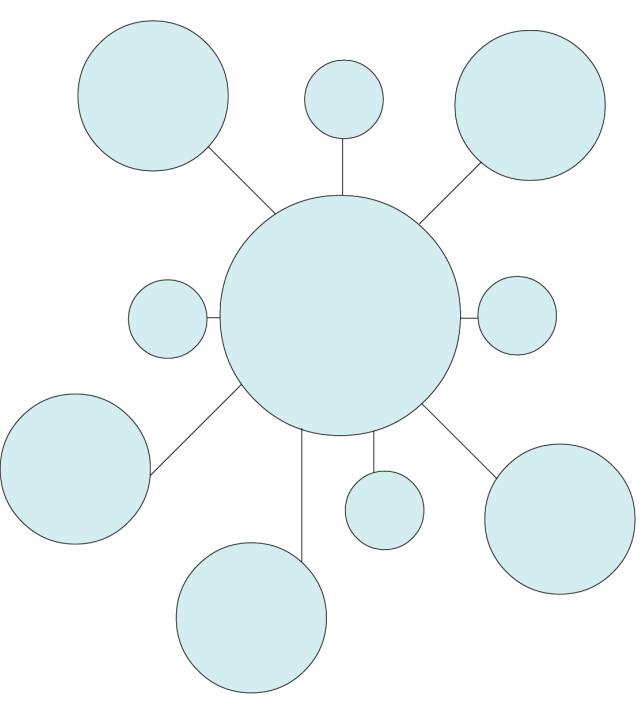


Relational Gifts

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
QUESTIONS 22, 47, 72														ADVOCACY
QUESTIONS 2, 27, 52														ARTISTRY
QUESTIONS 13, 38, 63														DANCE
QUESTIONS 25, 50, 75														DRAMA
QUESTIONS 23, 48, 73														INTERGENERATIONAL OPENNESS
QUESTIONS 24, 49, 74														LISTENING
QUESTIONS 14, 39, 64														MUSIC
QUESTIONS 17, 42, 67														SKILLED CRAFT
QUESTIONS 21, 46, 71														TECHNOLOGICAL SKILL
QUESTIONS 20, 45, 70														WRITING

Gift Cluster

In each of the **large** circles to the right, write one of the **spiritual gifts** that had a total score of seven or more. Begin with the center circle, identifying the gift with the highest score. In the event of a tie, select the gift with which you feel more comfortable. Then fill the other large circles with up to five of the remaining gifts. Use the **small** circles to record your **relational gifts**. This group of gifts is your **gift cluster**.



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THREE CIRCLES

When you were in first grade, what did you want to be when you grew up?

What in the world attracts your curiosity? What things do you pay attention to when you hear them in the news or in conversation?

What hopes do you have for situations in your community and around the world that need some good news (e.g., cure for lung cancer, an end to homelessness)?



THIS CALL'S FOR YOU

Characters:

- Receptionist
- Ringtone (person who can make the sound of a telephone ringtone)
- People being called: Maria, Lonnie, Sarah, Sam, Eva, Juan, Heeja, Tony

The receptionist sits at a table with a telephone. The ringer sits below or beside the table. The people being called can be around the meeting space, pretending to receive the transferred calls on cell phones.

Ringtone: Ring! Ring! (or appropriate ringtone sound)

Receptionist: (answering the phone and transferring the call to Maria) This call's for you, Maria.

Maria: Hello. Yes, I know the test scores are low for that school. It's a shame . . . But I don't have a child in school. You want me anyway? Spend one evening a week reading with kids? . . . Well . . . I could do that, I guess.

Ringtone: Ring! Ring! (or appropriate ringtone sound)

Receptionist: (answering the phone and transferring the call to Lonnie) This call's for you, Lonnie!

Lonnie: Hello. Yes, I heard they are going to reduce bus service. That's awful for people who don't have cars! You want me to get signatures on a petition? Come to a city council meeting? . . . Well . . . I could do that, I guess.

Ringtone: Ring! Ring! (or appropriate ringtone sound)

Receptionist: (answering the phone and transferring the call to Sarah) This call's for you, Sarah.

Sarah: Hi, Susie. How's it going? Yeah . . . My dad really wants me to go into business. But ever since we visited that orphanage in San Paulo during J-term last year, I've been thinking what I really want to do is work with children. It seems to give me a sense of purpose. What's that? Be a Young Adult Volunteer for a year after I graduate? I hadn't thought about that . . .

Ringtone: Ring! Ring! (or appropriate ringtone sound)

Receptionist: (answering the phone and transferring the call to Sam) Sam's Heating and Cooling. Hey, Sam. You haven't left yet, have you? This call's for you!

Sam: Hello. This is Sam. You don't have any heat? Three kids. Well, I was headed home . . . Where are you? OK. I'll be there as soon as I can.





THIS CALL'S FOR YOU (CONTINUED)

Ringtone: Ring! Ring! *(or appropriate ringtone sound)*

Receptionist: *(answering the phone and transferring the call to Eva)* This call's for you, Eva.

Eva: Hello. Meals on Wheels? Yes. I've heard of that. What do I have to do? Take a hot noon meal to shut-ins and make sure they're OK? Well . . . I suppose I could give it a try.

Ringtone: Ring! Ring! *(or appropriate ringtone sound)*

Receptionist: *(answering the phone and transferring the call to Juan)* This call's for you, Juan.

Juan: Yes. I've read over those reports you sent. I see you're saving the company a bunch of money and that's appealing. However, cutting corners on maintenance like this is just plain wrong. People are going to get hurt. I can't go with that.

Ringtone: Ring! Ring! *(or appropriate ringtone sound)*

Receptionist: *(answering the phone and transferring the call to Heeja)* This call's for you, Heeja.

Heeja: Hello. You need nurses really badly out there? Well . . . I'm really settled here. Sure. I understand and I really feel for you but . . . Well . . . OK. Send me the information and I'll think about it.

Ringtone: Ring! Ring! *(or appropriate ringtone sound)*

Receptionist: *(answering the phone and transferring the call to Tony)* This call's for you, Tony.

Tony: Yes. This is he. Ministry? Like being a pastor? Me? Sure, I love my church. But I was thinking about going into business with a friend—great investment prospects. Really . . . Well . . . OK. I'll talk with my pastor about it.

Ringtone: Ring! Ring! *(or appropriate ringtone sound)*

All: THIS CALL IS FOR YOU!

Adapted from "This Call Is For You," a skit written by the PC(USA)'s Office of Christian Vocation. Used by permission.





SESSION 3 FAITH STATEMENT

A person responds to God's call to faith in Jesus Christ through Baptism and through life and worship in the community of faith. Persons respond to God's call to discipleship through the ministries of God's people in and for the world. Persons respond to God's call to honor and serve God in every aspect of human life[:] in their work and in their play, in their thought and in their action, [and] in their private and in their public relationships.

God hallows daily life, and daily life provides opportunity for holy living. As Christians honor and serve God in daily life, they worship God. For Christians, work and worship cannot be separated.

—*Book of Order* (W-5.6002–5.6003)





INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Is your current job an occupation or a vocation? How would you define the difference?

What drew you to your current job?

How do you hope your work in this position will affect the world? How does it share the good news of Jesus Christ?

How did you come to be in this position? Did you always think you would be doing this?

What jobs did you have before this one?

When you were in elementary school, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Who have been your mentors?

How has your faith affected your jobs and career decisions?

How has your church community helped you know the kind of job to have?

How could your church community support you in your career or help in your work?

How do you see your work as part of God's work in the world?



WHO'S IN YOUR BALCONY?

There was a young girl who tried really hard in school, but never quite achieved the grades she hoped for. No matter how much tutoring she endured or how many hours she spent on homework, she never seemed to be able to make more than a C average. Almost every day after school, she would study with her grandfather. Whenever she brought home a report card, she was always disappointed that she never saw any A's or B's. Her grandfather, however, would always celebrate her report card by posting it on the refrigerator and preparing her favorite dinner. Though she seemed to always be disappointed, she knew that she was loved and her efforts were noticed.

As the girl grew older, she found that few people had the same opinion of her grades. In high school, teachers would give her a hard time for not trying hard enough on the homework and not studying hard enough for the tests, even though she was still studying with her grandfather every day after school. Guidance counselors advised her that she didn't have good prospects for college or for landing a good job. Some classmates felt sorry for her, but the majority of them ignored her and made fun of her, even though she was always nice to everyone. When she told her grandfather what people said, and of their doubts, he just smiled and assured her it would be OK.

The semester before high school graduation, her grandfather became ill and wasn't able to help her study. He hardly got out of bed much. Her grades suffered, her sunny disposition

darkened, and everyone started to doubt that she would graduate.

She managed to barely pass her final exams and, on graduation night, she nervously paraded into the school's auditorium. The seats on the main floor were filled with teachers and graduates, and the balconies were overflowing with family, friends, balloons, and noisemakers. As each graduate crossed the stage, family and friends from all over the auditorium clapped and made noise. Some graduates received louder celebrations than others, but everyone seemed to have a group of supporters. The girl became more anxious. When it was her turn to cross the stage, who would clap for her? After all, she really didn't have that many friends.

As she walked up the side stairs, she steadied herself for the silence that she feared would meet her big moment. She crossed the stage and, from the edge of the second balcony, a lone pair of hands started clapping, as an old gentleman stood up and called her name. She looked up and saw her grandfather looking as happy as if he had graduated high school himself that day.

Her classmates saw the lone man cheering for her and they began to clap for her, too. She proudly walked across the stage with a diploma in her hand.

Who's in *your* balcony?