

Ordinary Time, Proper 22

I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you.
—2 Timothy 1:6 NRSV

Explore

3 x 5-inch cards,
pens

Thanks for the Gift!

We believe that all people have God-given gifts. No one is left out! As a group, briefly brainstorm examples of gifts. Distribute 3 x 5-inch cards and pens. Have each student write down, without showing or telling others, three gifts God has given them for which they are thankful. Collect the cards and read each list of three. Have the class guess to whom they belong. Remind the group that God has given each of us a unique set of gifts to be used in helping God make the world a better place. We each have our own contribution to make. (Save the cards for a later activity.)

Extract

Serve with Courage

Ask volunteers to read the following scriptures to gather background information.

Bible	Acts 16:1	2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15	Romans 16:21
	Philippians 1:1	1 Corinthians 4:17	

We learn that Timothy was a trusted companion to Paul, who traveled with him on some of his missionary journeys and shared in both the associated joys and struggles.

Paul was very aware of the wonderful ministry his young friend possessed and when Timothy took on the responsibility of leadership for several churches, Paul sent him a personal letter of encouragement that we now know as 2 Timothy. He emphasized the importance of perseverance and courage in times when we struggle to serve and proclaim Christ. Read 2 Timothy 1:1–14. Note how Paul indicated that we are not on our own in mustering up this perseverance and courage. It is the Holy Spirit who creates it within us.

Experience

flip chart, markers,
3 x 5-inch cards

Feel the Burn

Paul challenged Timothy in verse six to rekindle his gift. The Holy Spirit is often referred to symbolically as fire. Paul stressed the need to access the Holy Spirit in fueling our gifts. There are many ways to keep a literal fire burning. Using a flip chart and marker, make two columns, one headed “Physical Fire” and the other “Spiritual Fire.” First, generate a list of elements needed to keep a physical fire “kindled.” Now, generate a similar list for spiritual fire.

Divide the students into groups of three or four and pass their 3 x 5-inch cards back to them. Have them discuss the following questions:

1. Which of the gifts listed is the easiest to use in service and which is the most difficult? Why?
2. When you are afraid or uncomfortable with sharing your gift, what is one thing you are willing to do to rekindle your gift?
3. How is the use of our gifts a witness of Jesus Christ?

It's in the Letter

Using construction paper, old magazines, and markers, have the students make cards that contain words of encouragement to help rekindle someone's gifts.

When the cards are completed, have each student write their name on a slip of paper and place it in a container. Draw from the container names for commitment partners. With their partner, share how they want to use one of their rekindled gifts during the week.

Distribute stamped envelopes for each student to write their mailing address and exchange envelopes with their partner. Place the card of encouragement made earlier in the envelope. They will send the envelope to their commitment partner sometime this week. They, like Paul, can mail their encouragement to a friend.

construction paper, old magazines, markers, scissors, glue, slips of paper, container, stamped envelopes for each student, pens

Expand

Courageously Share

Take a few minutes for students to respond (write or illustrate) to the following question: In what ways can I more courageously share my gifts?

Invite the pastor or an evangelist to offer a prayer of blessing on the students asking the Holy Spirit to help them rekindle their gifts so they will be vibrant witnesses of Jesus Christ.

As students leave, remind them to pray for their commitment partner throughout the week and to mail their cards of encouragement.

paper, pens, pastor or evangelist, cards of encouragement, stamped envelopes