

Liturgical Resources for teaching the calling by God of lay people to ministry

Entitled

**“You are shaped by God
to be part of the picture”**

brought to you by



Week 3 – A (Abilities)	
THEME	My skills make me belong <i>Abilities for my Vocation</i>
THEME NOTES	
COLLECT	Creative God source of all skill, intelligence and knowledge: help us to remain yoked to Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord so that by Your Holy Spirit we may learn from Him and faithfully use our abilities in Your service and to the glory of Your Holy Name.
READINGS	Exodus 35:30 – 36:3 God gives skill to artists and artisans Psalm 18: 30 – 37 God leads and teaches me 1 Corinthians 3: 5 – 15 Building on the foundation of Christ Matthew 11: 28 – 30 Yoked with Jesus and learning from Him
INTRODUCTION TO PENITENCE	Let us in silence, think about the abilities and skills which God has given to each of us. Are we using them to fulfil our purpose as members of the Body of Christ? Silence before the Penitence
PENITENCE	God of mercy, we humble ourselves before You and ask You to have mercy on us: we confess to You, our busy-ness and our lack of commitment to using our abilities to serve You. Forgive us and cleanse us, we pray that we may become all that You called us to be in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.
PREFACE	And now we give You thanks because He has invited us to come to Him in our weariness; to yoke ourselves with Him and to learn from Him; so that the burden we carry in Your service may be light.
BLESSING	May God our Creator lead you and teach you; May Jesus our Saviour give you rest as you take on His easy yoke; May the Holy Spirit empower you to use your skills for the glory of God; And the blessing...

NOTICE BOARD: May my skill
 fit the bill!

Sermon Notes: Week 1

God's Gifts make me Belong: Spiritual Gifts for my Vocation

Shaped for the Church

In a jigsaw puzzle, each piece has a unique shape and plays an important part in building the complete picture. It is the same with Christians. Each member of the Church has a unique shape. Each one of us has a special role in building God's Family. During the next 5 sessions, we will be examining ourselves to see how each one of us is shaped and where each one of us fits.

Shaped by the Holy Spirit

After Jesus' resurrection, God sent the Holy Spirit to create the Church. The Holy Spirit is a wonderful gift of God. When I receive this good gift, something special happens. The Holy Spirit shapes me to be part of the Church, the Body of Christ. That means I am not alone – I belong to the Family of God, and all God's children are my brothers and sisters.

Shaped by the Gifts of the Spirit

Being part of God's Family is a privilege. But if I belong to a Family, I also have responsibilities. Children in a Family must learn and grow until they mature. Each child has a role to play. This is true in God's Family too. The Holy Spirit gives every believer special spiritual gifts which shape us for service to God's Family. Some of these are listed in Ephesians 4 – you will find other lists in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12.

Shaped to Build Up God's Family

It is my responsibility to "ask, seek and knock" until I find out what my spiritual gifts are. God has made you and me part of God's Family so that we can use our unique spiritual gifts "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Ephesians 4: 12 – 13). Then, through Jesus at work in us, God will save the world!

The Revd Lynda Wyngaard

Bible Study: **God’s Gifts make me Belong**

Spiritual Gifts for my Vocation

Spiritual Gifts to Build the Church

Read Ephesians 4: 1 – 7; 11 – 16; Romans 12: 4 – 8; 1 Corinthians 12: 4 - 11

- How do we live a life “worthy of our calling” (Eph 4:1 – 6)?

- What is the purpose of the spiritual gifts (Eph 4:12 – 13)?

- How are you fulfilling the instruction in Ephesians 4: 14 – 16?

- Make a list of the spiritual gifts mentioned in these 3 passages. Which of these do you have?

The Holy Spirit – a Good Gift

Read Luke 11: 9 – 13

- Who receives the Holy Spirit (vs 13)?

- Do you know what spiritual gifts you have received from the Holy Spirit?

- If you do not know your spiritual gifts, what will you do to “ask, seek and knock” until you find them out?

Sermon Notes: Week 2

My Passion makes me Belong: A Heart for my Vocation

The Heart: a Spring of Life

God gives spiritual gifts to every believer so that we may help to build up God's Family, the Church. Usually these spiritual gifts are closely tied to "what makes us tick" – to the deepest passions of our hearts. Everyone is passionate about something. Our greatest creativity comes from what is close to our hearts. The writer of Proverbs says that from our hearts flows "the spring of life" (Proverbs 4:23). The psalmist says that if we take delight in the Lord, God will give us the desires of our hearts (Psalm 37:4).

The Abundance of the Heart

How do we know what is in a person's heart? Jesus said, "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit" (Luke 6:43). We can see a person's heart by what fruit they bear in their lives. You can hear the passion of my heart in what I say, for Jesus said, "it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45).

The Heart and the Shape of my Passion

We have many different kinds of people in the Church, so there are also many different passions. This means we are able to bring Christ into all these different areas! You may be passionate about cooking, I am crazy about art, and another person spends night and day thinking about technology. Someone else loves sport; another one loves study; another person just enjoys being with people. None of these passions is an accident! Each of them is planted in the person's heart by God. Your passion is part of the unique shape by which you fit into the "jigsaw puzzle" of God's Family.

The Living Word and my Heart

God does not want lukewarm Christians – God wants passionate Christians! You and I need to serve God with all our passion. For the living Word of God is sharper than a sword, and able "to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). One day we will have to stand before God and give account of ourselves. So, Christian, how is your heart?

The Revd Lynda Wyngaard

Bible Study: My Passion makes me Belong

A Heart for my Vocation

The Desires of your Heart

Read Psalm 37: 1 – 7

- What four things does the psalmist encourage us to do, in relation to the Lord?

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____

- How do you think this will help you to gain the desires of your heart?

The Fruit of your Heart

Read Luke 6: 43 – 45

- Write down examples of how a person’s heart (passion) influences the “fruit” of their life -

- How can your passion be revealed in what you say?

- What is *your* passion? What “fruit” is growing out of your passion, right now?

The Judgement of your Heart

Read Hebrews 4: 12 – 13

- What do these verses tell us about what God expects from us?

- When you have to give an account to God for your life, what will you say? What evidence is there that you have served God with the passion of your heart?

Sermon Notes: week 3

My Skills make me Belong: Abilities for my Vocation

God gives us Abilities

God shapes us to fit into the “jigsaw puzzle” of the Church by giving us spiritual gifts and planting passion in our hearts. The natural abilities we received at birth are linked to our spiritual gifts and tied to our passion. This makes each Christian a unique blessing to the Church. If we develop our natural abilities, we are like Bezalel and Oholiab, who used their artistic skill to build a sanctuary for the Lord (Exodus 35:30 – 36:3).

Our Abilities build the Church

Paul used words from the building industry when he described his work in creating a Church community in Corinth. He said we always start a Christian community on the foundation of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). There is not one builder, but many. Each person uses different skills and different materials to extend the Kingdom of God. Here he was not talking about a Church building, because the early Church met in one another’s homes. The Church is the Body of Christ – and the *people* who make up the eucharistic community. Every believer is uniquely shaped to build up this community.

Our Abilities wherever we are

Our natural abilities help us develop skills. Wherever we spend our lives – in the home, at school, at work, even at leisure – we use these skills to build upon the foundation of Christ. There are many different vocations, and very few of these are exercised in the Church building! We serve Christ with our skills, and Him with us into a needy world. Then we can bring the needy world under the lordship of Christ.

Our Abilities Yoked to Christ

But many of us find life stressful and exhausting. Jesus understands this and invites us, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). We should not depend upon our own strength to build a Christian community. “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,” says Jesus, “for my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:29 – 30). In partnership with Jesus, we have the strength to keep using our skills to build the Kingdom of God.

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Bible Study: My Skills make me Belong

Abilities for my Vocation

Skills to Serve God

Read Exodus 35:30 – 36:3

- Moses used three words to describe God’s action in the lives of Bezalel and Oholiab. How did God’s action enable them to grow in their skills?

Called _____

filled _____

inspired _____

- With these words in mind, write down how God has worked in your own life.

called _____

filled _____

inspired _____

Skills to Plant and Build

Read 1 Corinthians 3:5 – 15

- What important point is Paul making about our skills in verses 5 – 9?

- Why does Paul lay special emphasis on the foundation of our work?

- Does every “vocation” from God have to be exercised “in the Church”? Why or why not?

- What kind of materials are you using in the building of your life’s work, your vocation?

Skills Yoked to Christ

Read Matthew 11: 28 – 30

- What do these verses tell us about how Jesus understands us?

- What warning is there in these verses?

Sermon Notes: Week 4

Who I am makes me Belong: A Personality for my Vocation

God made me

“I am fearfully and wonderfully made”, says the psalmist (Psalm 139: 14). That is true for you and me, for we are God’s design. God planned each one of us. He gave us unique DNA, unique fingerprints, and a unique personality. God called us into the Church and gifted us with spiritual gifts to go with our passion and our natural abilities. That’s how we fit in the “jigsaw puzzle” of the Church.

God made me unique

God made each of us with a purpose in mind. You and I are uniquely shaped for the vocation God has planned for us. Whether I am shy or outgoing, serious or lighthearted; whether I plan ahead or like to live spontaneously; whether I am thoughtful or emotional – my personality traits were designed by God to fulfil my purpose, my vocation. “For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life” (Ephesians 2:10). Paul wrote that the work God has begun in each of us will eventually be completed (Philippians 1:6). “Please be patient”, says a bumper sticker aptly, “God hasn’t finished with me yet!”

God made me for God’s Family

God made us, in all our diversity, to belong to one another. We were made to be part of the Body of Christ, God’s Family, so that our different personalities might enrich one another, as we “make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). Then God’s Family will be built up in love (Ephesians 4:15 – 16).

God loves you and me

Although we know that God made us, many of us find it hard to believe how much God loves us. God loves us as a Church, redeeming us and calling us by name (Isaiah 43:1). God knows each one of us so well, Jesus said, that every hair on our heads has been counted (Matthew 10:30).

This love was perfectly illustrated for us in the death of Jesus on the Cross. We do not need to be afraid of anyone because God has promised, “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you” (Isaiah 43:2).

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Bible Study: Who I am makes me Belong

A Personality for my Vocation

Made and Known

Read Psalm 139: 1 – 16

- What knowledge is too wonderful for the psalmist (verse 6)? Do you agree?

- Have you ever wished that you could escape from God? Why?

- What do verses 13 – 16 say about how well God knows you?

Named and Protected

Read Isaiah 43: 1 – 4 and Matthew 10: 26 - 30

- Put your name in the place of Jacob and Israel in Isaiah 43:1. What does this say about God’s love for you?

- What promise does God give you in Isaiah 43: 2 – 4?

- What assurance does Jesus give you in Matthew 10: 29 – 31?

Under Construction

Read Philippians 1: 3 – 11

- What “good work” has God begun in you, as a member of the Church?.....

- Rewrite verses 9 - 11 them as a prayer to say daily for yourself

Sermon Notes: Week 5

My Past makes me Belong: Experience for my Vocation

Experience Counts!

God has shaped each of us to fit into the “jigsaw puzzle” of the Church. But often we respond to God’s calling by making excuses as Moses did. He was afraid Pharaoh wouldn’t listen to him and that he was not a good enough speaker (Exodus 4:10). Nothing in his past experience had prepared him for this task. But God sent Moses anyway, with Aaron to help him speak. God is an expert at giving us on-the-job training!

All Experience works for Good

Paul makes a powerful statement of faith in Romans 8:28. “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose”. Maybe you think that he never had any bad experiences! But Paul lists his bad experiences: beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, in danger from rivers, bandits, his own people and Gentiles, danger in the city, in the wilderness, at sea, “danger from false brothers and sisters, in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked” (2 Corinthians 11:25 – 27). After all these bad experiences, how could Paul conclude that all things work together for good?

Teaching by Experience

Paul knew that God has always used our experiences to teach us. “I will teach you what you shall do,” God told Moses (Exodus 4:15). Jesus made a similar promise before His death. “The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you” (John 14:26). Jesus transformed the disciples’ lives by being with them day and night, and using their everyday experiences as teaching material. The Holy Spirit does the same for us.

The Spirit transforms our Experience

Sometimes we groan because of the bad experiences we are going through. But Paul wrote that even our groaning is prayer! “The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words” (Romans 8:26). The Holy Spirit transforms our experiences to enable God to teach us. Paul explains it like this: “He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us” (2 Corinthians 1:4).

The Revd Lynda Wyngaard

Bible Study: My Past makes me Belong

Experience for my Vocation

Not Enough Experience?

Read Exodus 4: 10 – 15

- What excuses did Moses give to God, when God called him?

- What similar excuses have you made when God has called you?

- What promise does God give in response to Moses' objections?

Experience works for Good

Read Romans 8: 22 – 28 and 2 Corinthians 1:3 – 5

- What experiences are making you “groan” right now?

- How does the Holy Spirit help us when we are feeling too weak to pray?

- Think of the worst experience of your life. What good has God worked in your life, out of that experience?

- How can you use the comfort you have received in your painful experiences, to bring God's comfort to others?
