

Session 12 · Equipped and Sent

Exodus 31:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 1 Peter 4:10-11

Leader Preparation Guide

Session Overview

Discovery Aim. The group discovers that every baptized person is already equipped, works through the Gifts Inventory Guide together, and is commissioned: children of light, bearing fruit and carrying gifts, sent into the night the study began by naming.

Catholic Touchstone. The charisms, whether extraordinary or simple and humble, are graces of the Holy Spirit ordered to the building up of the Church, the good of men, and the needs of the world; every disciple has received some gift to employ in serving one another as good stewards of God's varied grace (CCC 799; 1 Peter 4:10).

What You Need to Know

The last session has three movements: discover (Scripture), inventory (the Guide), send (commissioning). Distribute the Gifts Inventory Guide at the start; walk Part 1 together during the session; Part 2 begins tonight and continues at home. Keep the two parts as clearly distinct in speech as they are on paper: Part 1 is prayerful reflection on how we respond to the seven Gifts the baptized receive, never a test of holiness; Part 2 discerns which charisms each of us has been individually equipped with. Tonight is the reason this study exists.

The Bezalel discovery sets the tone. The first person in all Scripture said to be "filled with the Spirit of God" is not a prophet or priest but a craftsman, filled "with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship" to build the tabernacle (Exodus 31:3). The Spirit's equipping has always included the seemingly ordinary: hands, skill, administration, hospitality. This demolishes in advance the assumption that charisms are exotic. Paul's lists (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12) include service, teaching, exhortation, giving, acts of mercy, administration, alongside prophecy and healing; Peter reduces the taxonomy to two: whoever speaks, whoever renders service (1 Peter 4:11). Many charisms meet ordinary, weekly needs.

Then the commissioning. In Session 3 the group heard half a verse: "once you were darkness." In Session 4 it completed: "but now you are light in the Lord." Tonight ask the question the thread has been holding for nine weeks: what are children of light for? Light is not for the light's own comfort. "Let your light so shine before men" (Matthew 5:16); "you shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8, the study's first memory verse, returning like a bookend). The study ends where the Church begins every mission: equipped people, sent into the dark, glorifying the Father by bearing much fruit.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

Bezalel (Exodus 31:1-5) is the charter text: Spirit-filled craftsmanship in service of God's dwelling among his people. Moses' seventy elders receive a share of the Spirit for administration (Numbers 11:16-17, 24-25), and Moses' response to jealousy over it is the Old Testament's longing for Pentecost: "Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them!" (11:29). Joel promised exactly that; Session 1 watched it happen.

Isaiah's servant songs give sending its grammar: "I will give you as a light to the nations" (Isaiah 49:6), and the sent one goes with the Spirit upon him "to bring good tidings to the afflicted" (Isaiah 61:1), the

very text Jesus unrolled in Nazareth to announce his mission. Equipping and sending are never separated in Scripture; gifts are given to be delivered, not displayed.

Voices of the Church

Lumen Gentium 12 (Second Vatican Council)

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (summary)

The Council teaches that the Holy Spirit not only sanctifies the People of God through the sacraments but also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank, allotting his gifts to each as he wills, making them fit and ready for works and offices that renew and build up the Church. These charisms, whether the most outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving; judgment about their genuineness belongs to those who preside over the Church.

A council document stands here beside the saints because it is the Church's own solemn voice on tonight's exact question.

St. Paul VI

Evangelii Nuntiandi 75 (summary)

Closing his great exhortation on evangelization, St. Paul VI names the Holy Spirit the principal agent of evangelization: it is he who impels each one to proclaim the Gospel and who in the depths of consciences causes the word of salvation to be accepted and understood. Techniques do not convert; the Spirit does. The application for tonight is ours to draw: he chooses to work through equipped and yielded people, and every commissioning stands under that.

St. John Paul II

Christifideles Laici 24 (summary)

Writing on the vocation of the laity, St. John Paul II teaches that the charisms are given to individuals, that they are a wealth of grace for the apostolic vitality and holiness of the entire Body, and that they are to be received in gratitude both by the one who receives them and by all in the Church. No charism dispenses a person from reference to the Church's shepherds. Gratitude, employment, communion: the lay charism's three duties in one paragraph.

Catechism Connection

CCC 799-801, the inventory's doctrinal spine: charisms benefit the Church, are to be received with gratitude, and are discerned in communion with the Church's pastors: test everything, hold fast what is good.

CCC 2003 situates charisms within grace: beyond sanctifying grace there are special graces, charisms, oriented toward the common good and at the service of charity which builds up the Church.

CCC 1302-1303 on Confirmation: the sacrament brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace, roots us more deeply in divine sonship, increases the Gifts of the Spirit in us, and gives special strength to spread and defend the faith by word and action: equipping ordered to sending, sacramentally.

CCC 863-865 on apostolate: the whole Church is apostolic and every member shares the mission; the fruitfulness of apostolate depends on vital union with Christ: the vine of Session 8, now with its purpose stated.

Thread Watch

Threads in play

Darkness-to-light (resolved tonight). Complete the arc aloud in the commissioning: you were darkness (Session 3), you are light in the Lord (Session 4), and light is given to be carried into the night (tonight). Children of light are not evacuated from the dark; they are sent into it, equipped.

Bookend. The closing memory verse pairs 1 Corinthians 12:7 with the study's first, Acts 1:8. If the group notices the return, the design has done its work.

Session Goals

1. Discover Bezalel and normalize the ordinary charism.
2. Walk Part 1 of the Inventory Guide together, keeping our response to the Gifts (not possession, and not a score) as the focus.
3. Launch Part 2 with the three discernment questions and the Church-communion guardrails.
4. Commission the group, resolving the darkness thread: equipped children of light, sent.

Time Note

Runs 90 minutes and needs them: 25 for Scripture, 35 for Inventory Part 1, 10 to launch Part 2, and a full 15 for the commissioning, which must not be rushed or skipped. If short, trim the Scripture discussion, never the commissioning.

Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit. You gave Bezalel the skill to serve your people, and you have equipped every baptized person in this room. Show us tonight what you have placed in our hands, and make us willing to spend it. Amen.

Win · Opening Questions

1. What is something you do easily that others find difficult, so easily you are tempted to think it does not count?
2. Looking back across eleven sessions: which single discovery has stayed with you most?

Build · Into the Text

Live Discovery

Open with the hunt. Say: the first person in the entire Bible described as filled with the Spirit of God is not who you think. Send them to Exodus 31, first five verses. Read aloud, and let the room absorb what Bezalel was filled with the Spirit for: ability, intelligence, knowledge, craftsmanship, to build the tabernacle.

1. What did God equip Bezalel to do in Exodus 31:1-5, and what does that suggest about the kinds of work through which we can serve God and other people?

ANSWER · share after the discussion

God equipped Bezalel with ability, intelligence, knowledge, and craftsmanship to build his dwelling: skilled, ordinary work made the Spirit's instrument. That relocates the charisms from the exotic to the whole of life. The first man Scripture explicitly calls filled with the Spirit of God (Joseph was earlier "a man in whom is the Spirit of God," Genesis 41:38) received that filling in his hands, for the practical service of God's dwelling among his people. Ordinary skills become vehicles of charism when the Spirit gives and bears fruit through them for the building up of God's house, then and now: administration, hospitality, teaching children, fixing what is broken, craftsmanship itself. Paul's lists confirm the range: service, giving, acts of mercy, and administration stand in the same catalogues as prophecy and healing. Many charisms meet ordinary, weekly needs. A natural talent may become a means through which the Spirit serves others, but being good at something does not by itself establish a charism (CCC 799-801, 2003); Part 2 of the inventory shows how charisms are actually discerned.

2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and 1 Peter 4:10-11. What is constant across every distribution, and why does each passage say God gives these gifts?

ANSWER · share after the discussion

Constant: the one Giver ("the same Spirit... who apportions to each one individually as he wills") and the universality of receiving ("as each has received a gift"). Purpose: "for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7), "employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace... in order that

in everything God may be glorified" (1 Peter 4:10-11). No charism terminates in its holder. God gives charisms so we can serve others, not to draw attention to ourselves; stewardship implies an owner who expects the goods delivered.

Inventory · Part 1 together, 35 minutes

Distribute the Gifts Inventory Guide. Read its opening page aloud, especially the sentences distinguishing the two parts and saying what the booklet is and is not: a guide for prayer and reflection, never a test of holiness or a measure of grace. Work Part 1 in the session: for each of the seven Gifts, participants read the definition, Scripture, and practice statement, then privately mark their honest response. No sharing is required; invite one voluntary observation after each Gift at most. Close Part 1 by having each participant choose one response to God they want to practice more faithfully this month, writing it where the Guide asks.

Launch Part 2 briefly: read together the three preliminary indicators (fruitfulness for others, confirmation by the community, joy in the doing) and the essential criteria and cautions: conformity with the faith, the rule of charity, and ecclesial discernment. Assign Part 2 as the study's final take-home work, ideally reviewed with a pastor, spiritual director, or trusted mature Christian.

3. Why does the Guide insist that charism discernment involve other people and, where fitting, the Church's pastors, rather than being settled privately? Draw on Session 8 and CCC 801.

ANSWER · share after the discussion

Because the criterion is fruit, and fruit is borne outward: others taste what we cannot see in ourselves, so the community's confirmation is evidence, not bureaucracy. Because self-assessment alone inflates and deflates unreliably: Session 8 showed that even wonders can coexist with an unknown heart. And because charisms exist for the Church, the Church rightly helps discern them: test everything, hold fast what is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21; CCC 801). Because charisms are given for the Church's good, we discern and use them in communion with the Church.

Dig Deeper · The ladder, ascended

Look back at the whole study's shape with Augustine's staircase in mind. It began in the fear of the Lord (the works of the flesh named honestly, the kingdom warning taken seriously), climbed through piety (sons crying Abba), knowledge (the true worth of things), fortitude (but if not), counsel and understanding, and arrives at wisdom: tasting that the Lord is good and being spent for others. The fruits are what the climb produces; the Gifts are what make climbing possible; the charisms are what the climber hands out on the way. One Spirit, all of it.

Send · Closing Questions

1. Complete these two lines honestly: "One area of service I would like to try is..." and "I will ask this person for feedback about whether it helped: ..." Then take the first step within two weeks.

2. The study opened with a sealed question about recognizing the Spirit's work. Final question, unsealed: where do you want someone to be able to recognize the Spirit's work in you one year from now?

Live It This Week

- Complete Inventory Part 2 within two weeks, and review it with a pastor, director, or mature Christian friend.
- Choose one possible area of service your worksheet suggests and try one concrete act of it before the group's follow-up gathering; schedule that gathering tonight, and ask someone there to tell you honestly whether it helped.
- Keep the abiding practice from Session 8: exercise every gift close to Christ and in charity, and submit its use to the Church's discernment.

Closing Prayer

Commissioning, to be prayed with the group standing. Father, you have named the darkness and called us out of it: once darkness, now light in the Lord. Son of God, true vine, keep us abiding, that we may bear much fruit and glorify the Father. Holy Spirit, you have equipped every baptized person standing here: seven Gifts for our holiness, and gifts of your choosing for our service. We do not ask to be kept from the night; we ask to be sent into it burning. Make us your witnesses, at home, at work, in this parish, and to the ends of the earth. Amen. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

Scripture Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 12:7

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Leader Reference Card

Every passage read or discussed in this session, in order of appearance, with key leader background.

- Exodus 31:1-5
- Romans 12:6-8 (leader background)
- Genesis 41:38
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
- 1 Peter 4:10-11
- Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29 (leader background)
- Isaiah 49:6
- Isaiah 61:1 (leader background)
- Matthew 5:16
- Acts 1:8
- 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21