

YOUTH ACTIVITY: EMPOWERED TO SHARE THE LIGHT

Jesus encourages us to use our unique talents and gifts to be in service to others. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reminds us that we are the light of the world. Eugene Peterson's *The Message* paraphrase says it like this:

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ "Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven."

We share that light when we do good for others. Discipleship from the inside out begins with generosity and that begins with us.

Discuss

Ask youth to share about a time when someone offered them a gift or shared something meaningful with them. If they have trouble with ideas, you might share some ideas: a time when someone shared a compliment, a friend who helped with a difficult assignment, or something more tangible.

After a time of sharing, ask them to discuss what it is like to receive a gift from another. How does it feel? Is it easy to be gracious and thankful? Or is it difficult? What is it like to give a gift to another? How does that feel? How is it different?

Gifted (Empowered) To Serve

Each of us has been gifted by God to serve others. We are empowered to **share the light**.

Ask youth either at your session or before to take a spiritual gifts inventory. There are many free surveys online;

Here are two to consider:

https://www.fumcr.com/june_8_-_youth_spiritual_giftstest.pdf

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/spiritual-gifts-inventory>. It is also available in Spanish.

Discuss

When the youth have their results, ask them to discuss:

- Were you surprised by any of your top gifts?
- Thinking about your top two gifts, how can those gifts help you **share light** with others?
- Jesus says we should not hide our lights from others. When you do not use your gifts, you are hiding your light. Which of your spiritual gifts have you been hiding? How could you begin sharing those with others?

Creating Emojis

Materials: Cardboard cut into circles big enough to cover the face of youth, markers

Either break the group into smaller groups of identical spiritual gifts or let them work separately. Ask them to create an Emoji which represents their spiritual gift.

Give them time to work on their Emojis and then ask them to share with the group when they are complete.

Ask them to share HOW the Emoji both depicts the spiritual gift and how they could **share the light** through their gift with others. For example, an Emoji with a speech bubble might depict the spiritual gift of faith sharing. An Emoji with a Band-Aid across it could depict the spiritual gift of healing. In both instances, the youth can share how the light of Christ can shine through them by offering this gift to another.

Find a place in the church to display the Emojis and add a sticky note or some other way to explain how the Emoji represents a spiritual gift.

Conclude the session with prayer about encouraging the youth to **share the light** in as many places with as many people as they can.