

HighLight Key – Every One of Your Children is Gifted!

In this document we explore the miracle and nature of giftedness in our children. By ‘giftedness’ we mean the special talents or abilities that seem to be partly innate and partly learned. We hope this helps you to see your own children but also to consider the pupils you teach. The gifts they have may not fit our academic ‘box’

This true story is told by a teacher: -

“I have had three children and it has always amazed me that, although they are born from the same two parents, they are so very different in personality, in abilities and in gifting.

My son is a pioneer, rather like me. He is a passionate speaker, artistic and very musical, writing his own worship songs and with his lovely wife has made a lovely worship CD. He is sporty and loves the outdoors. My two daughters are each different. One is organised and yet very artistic, a fairly private person, producing beautiful and sensitive paintings, yet she is not particularly musical but loves history. She also loves animals, especially dogs but likes her own company. My other daughter is very musical with a lovely voice, yet not artistic but a great home-maker; able to solve technical problems (which I can’t!) but not a lover of animals. She has great compassion and is a carer of people, not particularly wanting to be on her own too much.

Every child a unique child

God has created every one of our children uniquely. He has used our parental genes but yet he has crafted them and equipped them each for a unique purpose and a plan in their lives. ‘For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God has prepared in advance for us to do.’ (Eph.2:10 NIV)

Prior to the Fall, God’s original plan was not for anything He made to be sub-standard. I believe every child is gifted no matter what their physical or mental condition (see last paragraph for clarification). However, we may not recognise their gifts and calling if we have our own blinkered ideas of what gifted really may mean. For some parents and teachers ‘gifted’ means only gifted in academic terms. Some children are created to think ‘outside the box’ and do not fit into our narrow categories. God will use them to do entrepreneurial or creative, imaginative pioneering.

Bear Grylls comes to mind as a person God has created to be kinaesthetically motivated (i.e. physically able and active) rather than academically or cognitively focused. Edward Michael ‘Bear’ Grylls is a British adventurer, writer and television presenter. who specialises in daring outdoor challenges. Yet he uses his cognitive awareness in the outdoors to great advantage enabling many to learn the arts of survival. However, there wasn’t a ‘survival’ exam course in school to cater for him! We all know many students who are kinaesthetically motivated and gifted but have struggled with the confines of curricular subjects until they have been released to their chosen profession, often in athletics, sports, acting or outdoor pursuits. Yet they were specifically created by God for this. Samson is one biblical example of such a kinaesthetic man.

The Bible mentions a selection of different gifts in the book of Romans chapter 12 vv.4-8 and Ephesians 4: 11-12. In Romans, Paul writes 'We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.' (v6) The following gifts are mentioned: -

Serving, prophesying, teaching, encouraging, governing in leadership and mercy or compassion.

In Ephesians several functional roles are listed. Some are created by God to be apostles in the church, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors or teachers.

Now you may not be sure about the word 'apostle'. It was a Greek term used by the Romans. When conquering a territory, the Romans sent a man ahead to control the culture and to make it like Rome. Jesus used it and, in biblical terms, it means one 'sent' to get a job done, like the twelve apostles or the apostle Paul. This gift is apparent today in those who are called by God to oversee a project and can designate the right people to the right tasks. They have a special gift of wisdom and relational ability to motivate others.

Is practical or artistic skill less important than academics?

There are many more gifts than are listed in those bible passages but we see them outworked in the practical craftwork gift of Bezalel and his helper, Oholiab, in Exodus 31. These two men were filled with the Spirit and gifted by God 'with skill, ability and knowledge of all kinds of crafts – to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.' (Ex.31:3-6. NIV) Wow! What a gift! Be careful not to despise your child who is gifted with their hands at making things. They may be called by God to make something amazing for His glory one day!

Teachers need to learn to look at their pupils in this way. It is fun to try and spot the potential gifts in your children, even though they may as yet not be fully developed gifts as they are immature. Note that your child may have a combination of gifts!

In the following, see if you can spot the gifts from these immature and mixed signs that may be seen in your children.

1. Humble, always offering to help, practical.
2. Generous, may give belongings away too easily.
3. Always ready to praise others, to get alongside those needing help.
4. Usually wants to be first, may be bossy, a challenger, looks ahead and sees the issues; other children follow.
5. Soft-hearted, gentle, aware of those hurting, may be over-sensitive.
6. Daring, pioneering, may be cheeky, has a bigger perspective.
7. Attractive to other children, popular, often a kind face, has many friends.
8. Articulate, good at explaining things, sense of order, a 1-2-3 steps person, may be bossy.
9. Easy-going, winsome, wants to be 'out there', finds it difficult to concentrate indoors or on detail.
10. Orderly, likes routine, sequential, tidy, organised, can be easily 'put out' by change.
11. Shrewd, can be critical and fault-finding.
12. Speaks out dramatically, often using colourful images, sometimes impulsively.

(Answers on the next page)

Finally, some of our children suffer from disability or inherit our weaknesses; for example, dyslexic confusion over letters or numbers. (See our HighLight Key on 'Children with Special Needs'). Others

may experience some form of damage or emotional 'bruising' in the birth process, or in relationships, or be traumatised by events or accidents. God has compassion on the weak and disadvantaged. Our Father has special love for them: 'A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.' (Isaiah 42:3) Jesus, likewise, spoke of himself as gentle: 'Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.' (Matthew 11:28-30)

Some Biblical gifts	
1. Humble, always offering to help, practical	Serving, helps
2. Generous, may give belongings away too easily	Giver
3. Always ready to praise others, to get alongside those needing help	Encourager
4. Usually wants to be first, may be bossy, a challenger, looks ahead and sees the issues, other children follow	Leader
5. Soft-hearted, gentle, aware of those hurting, may be over-sensitive	Mercy or compassion
6. Daring, pioneering, may be cheeky, has a bigger perspective	Apostolic
7. Attractive to other children, popular, often a kind face, has many friends	Pastoral
8. Articulate, good at explaining things, sense of order, a 1-2-3 steps person may be bossy	Teacher
9. Easy-going, winsome, wants to be 'out there', finds it difficult to concentrate indoors or on detail	Evangelist
10. Orderly, likes routine, sequential, tidy, organised, can be easily 'put out' by change	Administrator
11. Shrewd, can be critical and fault-finding	Discernment
12. Speaks out dramatically, using images, sometimes too impulsively	Prophetic