

# Different Gifts, But the Same Spirit

## INTRODUCTION

Have you ever observed an “outsider,” a young person standing alone near a group of teens involved in some activity? At a time in life when peer acceptance is so important, and individuals can be so self-conscious, the reasons for a teen’s isolation may be the “wrong” clothes or a disability. No matter the reason, isolation is always painful.

This lesson addresses the challenge of inclusion for young teens today. Using a passage from St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, you and your students will reflect together and explore the nature of “giftedness” and “disability.”

## OBJECTIVES OF THIS LESSON

Students will:

- gain insights into their own giftedness and limitations and the giftedness and limitation of others;
- come to appreciate the gifts of each person, including those with disabilities;
- discover some of the limitations experienced and adaptations used by people with disabilities; and
- join with others in prayer for the inclusion and appreciation of all.



## PREPARE YOURSELF

Begin by reading through the student lesson. Then, prayerfully think about your own experiences with disabilities. If possible gather with other teachers to discuss and share your own ideas and feelings. Pathways Awareness Foundation’s 20-minute video, *Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors*, is a helpful starting point for discussion. The video and its accompanying booklet may be available in your parish library. If not, you may call 1-800-955-2445 and schedule a free screening with a Pathways representative to obtain a free copy.

Since you are teaching high school students, consider whether the videotape would be valuable for your class to view after they have studied this lesson with you.

## PREPARE MATERIALS

Make copies of the two lists of commands on the next page simulation activity described in the lesson. Provide cotton earplugs for each student. Have at least one Bible, if not copy for each student.

## TEACHING HINTS

**1. Before you distribute the lesson paper:** Write the letters “MVP” on the board or on newsprint. Tell students the letters will stand for “Most Valuable person” today, and ask them to help you make a list of valuable people and some of their gifts. For instance, students might list “mom” because she helps her kids with homework, or friend “Joe” because he’s great at math.

**2. Read from the Bible:** If you like, have copies for each student, but read this passage aloud yourself, with appropriate emphasis and feeling. Ask students if they know anyone who has any of the gifts Paul listed in this passage (wisdom in discourse, power to express knowledge, faith, healing, and prophecy). Remark that Paul only wrote a partial list of gifts here.

**3. Distribute the lesson paper:** Read *The Most Valuable Player* story aloud. (student lesson page one) Then direct students to read *Different Gifts, All Needed* (student lesson page one)

silently and fill in the blanks naming their own and others’ gifts. (Examples of gifts could include athletic, artistic or academic abilities, etc.) Spend some time discussing this section when all have finished.

Read the first two paragraphs of *We All Have Gifts* aloud (student lesson page two). Get the whole class involved answering the question about some disabilities they know (for example: people who cannot see, hear or walk; people who have difficulty speaking; people with depressed spirits; people addicted to drugs or alcohol).

Read the rest of the section aloud, stopping to encourage students to answer the questions together.

**4. Written Activities:** Guide students in doing the activity in *More Able than We Think* (student lesson page three). Have them work together in pairs or threes. Discuss the ways to welcome people who have disabilities listed in this section.



5. **Simulation Activity:** Ask students to divide into pairs. Distribute the following lists of commands, giving half of the students list “A” and their partners list “B.”

**List A:**

- Sit down.
- Clap three times.
- Bunny, pink.
- Jump up.
- Wave your right hand.
- Go to the door.
- Mom and Dad.

**List B:**

- Shut your eyes.
- Smile.
- Book, paper,
- Shake my hand.
- Run in place.
- Bend your knees.
- Red white and blue.

Give each student cotton or earplugs (or ask them to plug their ears with their fingers).

Ask Students with list “A” to read each command softly and wait for their partner to respond by doing that command. Then ask students with list “B” to do the same.

Note: Two commands per list are nonsense commands meant to make the exercise more challenging.

Use the questions in the student paper under “Questions to Consider” to lead a discussion of the experience (student lesson page four).

6. **Prayer:** Give Students time to write a petition that can be prayed aloud during the prayer service. You might want to have students work in pairs to write a petition. When all petitions are written, gather students in a prayer circle and lead them in the simple **Prayer That All People May Be Included** (student lesson page four).

