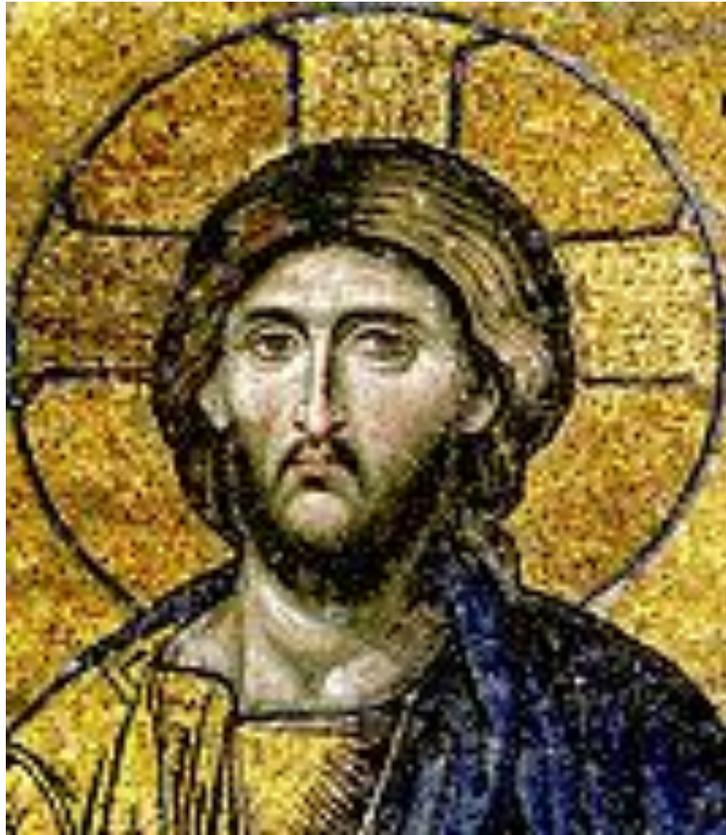


# LIVING YOUR STRENGTHS



## DISCUSSION GROUP MODERATOR GUIDE

by

**Steven S. Engelman**

*As a gift to all Catholic Churches  
seeking to further engage parishioners*

**Dear Moderator,**

Thank you for serving as a moderator...or “*one who presides over a discussion.*” Our parish is blessed to have you. The ongoing success of the Inner Strengths Ministry is dependent on parishioners such as you who enthusiastically assist others in learning more about their unique God-given strengths. You, and your gifts, are truly appreciated!

**OVERVIEW**

This guide is designed for approximately 10 hours of group discussion. Although written for five 2-hour sessions the material works equally well with sessions of varying frequency and duration. Simply introduce new modules when appropriate and modify between session assignments accordingly.

A key point to remember: it is the discussion, sharing, and learning that is most important, not that every topic or activity in this guide is addressed and promptly “checked off the list.”

**GROUP SIZE**

The preferred discussion group size is approximately 6-10 plus 2 moderators. Fewer than 6 limits interaction while more than 10 becomes less intimate potentially affecting our goal of enhancing the sense of belonging within the parish. Also, considering some participants may be absent any given week it is suggested the initial size is not too small.

**MODERATOR CHARACTERISTICS**

*The following are basic guidelines to keep in mind while leading your discussion groups.*

EFFECTIVE MODERATOR TRAITS	
Self-confident	Empathetic and responsive
Organized	Of good judgment and maturity
Able to resolve conflict	Tolerant to ambiguity
Reasonably comfortable in extraverted roles	Respected and trusted

MODERATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	
Makes everyone feel welcome	Arrives prepared
Guides & participates without dominating	Involves all participants
Contributes ideas to stimulate discussion	Stays on track by following agenda
Protects participants & their ideas from attack	Focuses on meeting “process” as much as content



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## MODERATOR CHECKLIST

### Preliminary Activities

- Establish new discussion group
  - Co-moderator identified
  - Meeting days and times
  - Location
- Obtain list of participants and their contact information
- Contact each participant
  - Confirm their interest in participating
  - Confirm they possess their own copy of *Living Your Strengths* Catholic edition. *If not, visit parish office.*
  - Take assessment
  - Print reports
  - Highlight portions that are particularly descriptive of them
  - Note portions that do not seem as descriptive
  - Prepare list of questions that arise
  - Suggest they read through page 65.
    - At a minimum, read pages 7-10
  - Read their Top 5 Signature Themes on the appropriate pages between 66-142

### Moderator Preparation

- Copies of Participant Guides
- Copies of Moderator Guides
- Copies of any relevant handouts
- Ensure meeting space and table/chair arrangement are ready
- Print Name Tents
- Bring extra pens/pencils
- Review Moderator Guide
  - Assign discussion topics to each Moderator

**During Sessions**

- Prepare refreshments (if desired)
- Welcome everyone
- Stay on-track
- Take photo if participant is willing to be displayed strengths identified
  - Send photos to Communications Director
- Encourage active and balance participation by everyone
- Create a sense of belonging

**Post Session**

- Clean up meeting area
- Debrief with other Moderator
  - What went well?
  - What needs improvement?
  - Communicate this to Living Your Strengths Coordinator
- Send Group's completed Top 5 Grid to LYS Coordinator
- Communicate with participants at least once between sessions
  - Remind them about assignments
  - What to bring to next session
    - Living Your Strengths* book
    - Top 5 reports
    - Participant Guide
    - Completed assignments
    - Any questions that arise

**Et cetera**

- Watch for participants who may be interested in serving as Moderators. Discuss with them at an appropriate time and then inform Inner Strengths Coordinator.

**SAMPLE LETTER**

Dear *Living Your Strengths* Participant,

Congratulations on your decision to participate in the upcoming *Living Your Strengths* discussion groups. We trust it will be an educational and enjoyable time for all involved as we learn more about ourselves, others, and how our natural talents and strengths can be best applied in our personal, professional, and spiritual lives.

This is to confirm you are registered for sessions beginning:

**Day:**

**Time:**

**Dates:**

**Location:**

By now you should have purchased the *Living Your Strengths* book. If you need a copy, please contact the parish office immediately.

Using the unique code in the back of the book, take the online StrengthsFinder Assessment. Your Top 5 Signature Themes will be immediately determined. Please print all available reports.

Read the report and highlight words or sentences which you believe most accurately describe you. Note or strike through portions which you do not agree with.

Refer to pages 66-142 in *Living Your Strengths* and read those specific to your Top 5.

For each session, please bring the following:

- a. Top 5 Signature Themes
- b. The printed report with your highlighting and notes
- c. The *Living Your Strengths* book
- d. Participant Guides
- e. Completed assignments
- f. Questions you may have

If you are interested in learning more about the development and validity of the StrengthsFinder assessment please read pages 231-246 in *Living Your Strengths*.

We look forward to seeing you soon and guiding you along this journey. Please call \_\_\_\_\_ at ( ) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ with any questions you may have regarding this activity.

Your Moderators,

**MODERATOR NOTES: FORMAT**

The following format is used throughout this Moderator Guide to assist with each topic in the Participant Guide. ***From this point forward -- and when printed two-sided --*** the Moderator Guide appears on the left pages and the Participant Guide on the right.

As shown in the example below, **Unshaded/bolded topics correlate to the Participant's Manual** while **Shaded areas denote adjoining topics**. This provides the Moderator with a broader view of topics while retaining the grouped time recommendations.

**EXAMPLE**

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
Intro-1	General	ALL	Upon handing out <i>Participant Discussion Guide</i> request they read the Intro-1 page.	10 Minutes
	Personal Commitment	MOD	Read aloud the <i>Personal Commitment</i> . Ask if any questions and then request they sign it in good faith and with good intentions.  Refer back to this whenever the group gets off track.	
Cover	Gospel passage	MOD	Read aloud. Comment on linkage to Module One. "...but I chose you" with our unique God-given talents, and "...go and bear fruit..." by sharing our talents through stewardship.	
1-1	<b>1) Opening Prayer</b>	ALL	<b>Read aloud together</b>	
	<b>Objectives</b>	MOD	<b>Read aloud. The first bullet refers back to the Personal Commitment.</b>  <b>Ask if there are questions or additions.</b>	
	<b>2) Overview</b>	MOD	<b>Read aloud. Comment on Ephesians scripture...it takes all of us, with our unique strengths, to build the body of Christ.</b>  <b>God did not create any of us to be "well-rounded"...that is...to possess all strengths. We are all needed to be good stewards and to work effectively together in His name.</b>	
1-2	3) Introductions	ALL	In the interest of time, keep participants focused on the statements listed. No ad-libbing!  "h" is especially beneficial if the group knows each other well...plus it can be a lot of fun!	10 Min.

## Session Materials Checklist

MODULE	HANDOUT
1	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module One” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
2	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Two” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Team Strengths Grid <i>(completed with team member information)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
3	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Three” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> “Alternate View: Talent Themes Side-by-Side” <input type="checkbox"/> Team Domain Table <i>(completed with team member information)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
4	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Four” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
5	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Five” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges

# LIVING YOUR STRENGTHS

## DISCUSSION GROUP PARTICIPANT GUIDE



**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

My Top 5 Signature Themes	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

*I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me.*

Philippians 4:13



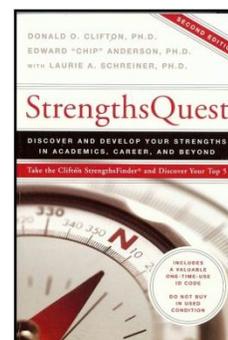
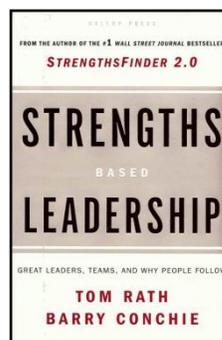
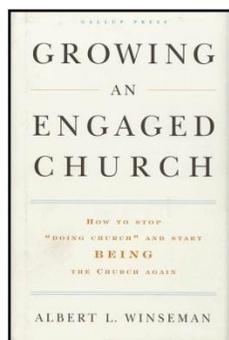
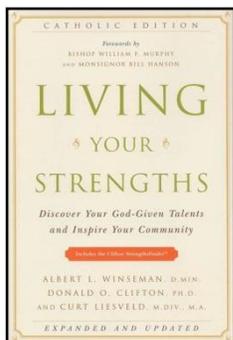
## WELCOME & OVERVIEW

This document has been compiled to guide small group discussions centered on the *Living Your Strengths* book and related StrengthsFinder® assessment. Small groups coming together to learn more about their unique God-given talents, those of others, and how we each contribute to fulfillment of the Body of Christ results in a greater sense of belonging and more effective stewardship.

*Where there's sharing there's caring...and where there's caring, there's love.*

### RECOMMENDED READING

Although this guide was prepared to enhance group discussions focused on the *Living Your Strengths* book, each is a valuable resource for gaining a deeper understanding of StrengthsFinder®.



### ABOUT THIS GUIDE

At its most basic level, living your strengths is about doing what you most naturally do best. This guide is the result of my talents in action – most specifically the top two of Ideation® and Maximizer®. The many hours spent compiling this material, and the associated Moderator Guide, is one way I feel I am giving a little something back to the Catholic community. I was one of those fallen away cradle Catholics who felt inferior, unworthy and too ill-informed to return to the church, yet the Holy Spirit guided my eyes to the Blessed Pope John XXIII (*Fort Myers, FL*) parish bulletin a few years ago. On the cover was their credo:

***No matter what your present status in the Catholic Church;  
No matter what your current family or marital situation;  
No matter what your past or present religious affiliation;  
No matter what your personal history, age, background, race or color;  
No matter what your self-image or esteem;***

***You are invited, welcomed, accepted, loved and respected at Blessed Pope John XXIII Catholic Church!***

This credo brought me back through the church doors and made me feel welcome. The *Living Your Strengths* discussion groups then made me feel *engaged*. Never in my wildest imagination could I have envisioned being this involved and actively participating in so many great ministries with so many great people. I feel welcome. I feel I belong. I feel at home. I am engaged.

My hope is that this document proves to be a valuable resource for *engaging* members of your parish. While this format serves us well, modifications may enhance your parish's experience.

With Peace and Gratitude,  
Steve Engelman  
Fort Myers, FL  
October, 2011



## IN APPRECIATION

### ***This guide was compiled by:***

Steve Engelman (email:[LYS@ParishPULSE.org](mailto:LYS@ParishPULSE.org))  
*Ideation, Maximizer, Analytical, Significance, Includer*  
Coordinator, Inner Strengths Ministry (volunteer position)  
Blessed Pope John XXIII Catholic Church, Fort Myers, FL ([www.JohnXXIII.net](http://www.JohnXXIII.net))

### ***With valuable input provided by:***

Holly Atkins, Business Manager  
Mike Navarro, Inner Strengths Ministry Moderator  
The numerous ministry team members who provided feedback  
Blessed Pope John XXIII Catholic Church, Fort Myers, FL

Jennifer Engelman, my wife, who truly lives her strengths while developing those of others.

### ***Special thanks to:***

Monsignor Bill Hanson and Marie Guido  
Church of Saint Gerard Majella, Port Jefferson Station, NY ([www.stgmajella.org](http://www.stgmajella.org))  
*Their generous sharing of strengths-related experiences and materials is incomparable.*

### ***and...***

Leisa Anslinger  
The Generous Heart, Indianapolis, IN ([www.thegenerousheart.com](http://www.thegenerousheart.com))  
*Her spiritual influences and material content are present throughout this guide.*



### **Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D. (1924-2003)**

The Clifton StrengthsFinder® used throughout this guide is the culmination of more than 50 years of Dr. Clifton's lifelong work; leading millions of people around the world in discovering their strengths. In 2002, Dr. Clifton was honored by an American Psychological Association Presidential Commendation as the Father of Strengths-Based-Psychology.

*Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. No permission is required for use of less than 5,000 words of the NAB in print, sound, or electronic formats provided that such use comprises less than 40% of a single book of the Bible and less than 40% of the proposed work.*

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
Intro-3	General	ALL	Upon handing out <i>Participant Discussion Guide</i> request they read the Intro-3 page (Intro 1 & 2 are for information only)	10 Minutes
	Personal Commitment	MOD	Read aloud the <i>Personal Commitment</i> . Ask if any questions and then request they sign it in good faith and with good intentions.  Refer back to this whenever the group gets off track.	
Cover	Gospel passage	MOD	Read aloud. Comment on linkage to Module One. "...but I chose you" with our unique God-given talents, and "...go and bear fruit..." by sharing our talents through stewardship.	
1-1	1) Opening Prayer	ALL	Read aloud together	
	Objectives	MOD	Read aloud. The first bullet refers back to the Personal Commitment.  Ask if there are questions or additions.	
	2) Overview	MOD	Read aloud. Comment on Ephesians scripture...it takes all of us, with our unique strengths, to build the body of Christ.  God did not create any of us to be "well-rounded"...that is...to possess all strengths. We are all needed to be good stewards and to work effectively together in His name.	

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**MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to enrich parishioner's awareness and understanding of their unique God-given gifts, and the unique gifts of others, for enhancing their home, work, community and spiritual lives.

**GOALS**

The primary goals of this ministry are to enhance the sense of belonging we each feel within the parish community while increasing our individual levels of engagement.

**APPROACH**

These goals will be accomplished by getting to know and understand ourselves and others even better than we already do by using the StrengthsFinder® assessment and group discussions. This will allow us to take steps toward recognizing and fulfilling a calling by becoming increasingly aware of the talents God has given us -- the ways in which we, as unique individuals, most naturally think, feel, and behave.

**OVERVIEW**

This guide is designed for approximately 10 hours of group discussion. Although written for five 2-hour sessions the material works equally well with sessions of varying frequency and duration. A key point to remember: it is the discussion, sharing, and learning that is most important, not that every topic or activity is addressed and promptly "checked off the list."

**COURSE OUTLINE**

<b>MODULE ONE:</b>	<i>Personal Discovery</i>
<b>MODULE TWO:</b>	<i>Understanding Others</i>
<b>MODULE THREE:</b>	<i>Team Development</i>
<b>MODULE FOUR:</b>	<i>Spiritual Enrichment</i>
<b>MODULE FIVE:</b>	<i>Devotion to Stewardship</i>

***PERSONAL COMMITMENT***

**Confidentiality** – *I agree what is shared within the group remains within the group.*

**Participation** – *I agree to actively join in group discussions and sharing.*

**Attendance** – *I agree to attend each session.*

**On Track** – *I agree to stay on topic while respecting session time constraints.*

**Develop** – *I agree to further enhance and utilize my God-given strengths.*

**Respect** – *I agree to honor and respect each member's uniqueness.*

**Prayer** – *I agree to pray for group members that their strengths be fully utilized.*

**Listen** – *I agree to allow others to speak without interruption.*

**Enjoy** – *I agree to have some fun!*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Date*

**ENJOY YOUR JOURNEY TOWARDS GREATER AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF SELF AND OTHERS!**

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
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1-1	3) Opening Prayer	ALL	Read aloud together	
	Objectives	MOD	Read aloud. The first bullet refers back to the Personal Commitment.  Ask if there are questions or additions.	
	4) Overview	MOD	Read aloud. Comment on Ephesians scripture...it takes all of us, with our unique strengths, to build the body of Christ.  God did not create any of us to be “well-rounded” ...that is...to possess all strengths. We are all needed to be good stewards and to work effectively together in His name.	

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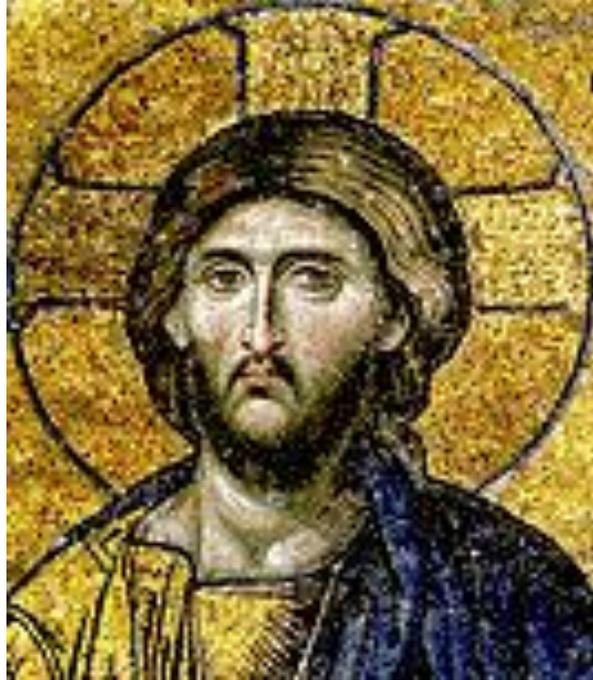
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# ***LIVING YOUR STRENGTHS***

## **MODULE ONE** **PERSONAL DISCOVERY**

*“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.”*  
*(John 15: 16-17)*

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
Intro-1	General	ALL	Upon handing out <i>Participant Discussion Guide</i> request they read the Intro-1 page.	10 Minutes
	Personal Commitment	MOD	Read aloud the <i>Personal Commitment</i> . Ask if any questions and then request they sign it in good faith and with good intentions.  Refer back to this whenever the group gets off track.	
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## **MODULE 1: PERSONAL DISCOVERY**

### **1) OPENING PRAYER**

*God of power and mercy, open our hearts in welcome. Thank you for gifting each of us with unique talents. Help us to further develop them with skills and knowledge to become strengths.*

*Please guide us in using our strengths most effectively at home, with friends, within our parish, and throughout our community. Open our eyes to see and appreciate the unique strengths in others and provide the grace to partner with others so that each has the opportunity to contribute with meaning.*

*We are thankful Dear Lord that you have uniquely blessed each of us. Help us serve you and to always know that we are part of your plan in building the kingdom of God. Amen.*

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To establish the foundation for successful group discussions.
- To meet and get better acquainted with other participants.
- To define and better understand the key elements of “Strengths” and how they apply to each of us.
- To initiate the process of understanding and further developing your God-given gifts.

### **2) OVERVIEW**

We come together to begin something new and exciting. Each of us is likely to discover something about ourselves and others during the weeks ahead. We may deepen our relationship with God and our relationships with family, friends, and co-workers will be influenced as well.

Some of us may discover new ways to apply ourselves in the activities that make up our lives, at home, at work, in our parish, and throughout the community. We will share much together and through that sharing we will see God’s blessings in our midst.

These group sessions will help explore your talents that have been identified as Signature Themes. You will review how you are already using them in your life and how to further develop them.

You will also reflect on the ways your talents help to recognize God’s presence in your life and how He calls upon you to offer your talents in service to others.

**EPHESIANS 4:11-12** *“And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”*

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
1-2	3) Introductions	ALL	In the interest of time, keep participants focused on the statements listed. No ad-libbing!  “h” is especially beneficial if the group knows each other well...plus it can be a lot of fun!	10 Min.
	4) “Signature” Challenge	ALL	Refer to Instructions below.	5 Min.

### “Signature” Challenge

Objective: To experience and discuss the role talents play in our daily lives.

Approximately 5 minutes

- 1) Have participants sign their name four times in the “First Task” column.
- 2) Next, in the “Second Task” column ask participants to sign their name four more times, but this time using their *non-dominant* hand.

### DISCUSSION

Debrief this activity by asking the following questions:

- 1) *What did it feel like to sign your name four times with your dominant hand?*
- 2) *How did it feel to use your non-dominant hand? What words describe these feelings?*

Participants will most likely make comments that writing with their dominant hand was “natural, easy, simple, mindless, etc.”

Reinforce for participants that because talents are natural, they are a part of our ordinary lives, and occur easily and without much thought.

On the other hand [*pun intended*], participants will describe the experience of writing with their *non-dominant* hand as “awkward, unnatural, difficult, clumsy, etc.”

As humans, we have a propensity to focus on weaknesses. If writing with your non-dominant hand is like a weakness, don’t we feel the same way when attempting to use non-dominant talents or strengths?

You can also ask participants if their signature got better over the course of writing their name four times with their non-dominant hand. Some will say yes, others no.

Could we get better if we practiced writing with our *non-dominant* hand? Of course, but how much effort would be required to get our signature to look like it does with our dominant hand? Not really worth the effort, is it?

Alternatively, look at the signatures with our dominant hand. Are they different? Likely, the answer is no. That’s because coming from a place of strength, we provided “consistent, near-perfect performance.”

**3) INTRODUCTIONS:**

Introduce yourself by responding to the following. Please note our Top 5 Signature Themes will be discussed later in this session.

- a. My name is \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I am originally from \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I have lived in this area for \_\_\_\_\_ years.
- d. I have been a member of this parish for \_\_\_\_\_ years.
- e. I am participating in this discussion group because \_\_\_\_\_
- f. My expectations for these sessions are \_\_\_\_\_
- g. If involved in ministries, which ones? \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Something most people do not know about me is \_\_\_\_\_

**4) "SIGNATURE" CHALLENGE**

**First Task**

**Second Task**

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**5) WHY FOCUS ON DEVELOPING STRENGTHS, NOT WEAKNESSES?****Reading Comprehension Case Study**

Years ago in Omaha, the Board of Education administered a reading comprehension test to their incoming freshmen. One group of freshmen showed they read at a rate of 90 words per minute with good comprehension. The other group had a reading comprehension rate of 350 words per minute. That is nearly 4 times better than the group who scored 90 words per minute.

The Board of Education did not know what to do with the information, so they brought it to the University of Nebraska, which unleashed a firestorm of opinions. After much debate, they decided to put some of the students who scored the 90 with some of the students who scored the 350 and provided them with additional reading skills using the Evelyn Wood Speed Reading course.

After 6 weeks, the students who scored 90 words per minute improved their score to 150 words per minute...a most respectable 67% improvement! What do you think happened to the students who originally scored 350? They increased their score to 2,900 words per minute! The only thing that slowed them down was turning the page! This clearly shows that those who scored 350 had a natural talent and with the additional knowledge and skills they were able to turn that talent into **Strength!**<sup>1</sup>

*Do you now see why we prefer to focus developing our strengths, not weaknesses!*<sup>2</sup>

**6) IDENTIFYING THE PIECES OF THE “STRENGTHS” PUZZLE**

*Living Your Strengths* pages 7-9:

- “What is a Strength?”
- “Talents”
- “Skills”
- “Knowledge”

*“A theme is a category of talents, and your Signature Themes are the five categories in which your talents are greatest, as indicated by your responses to StrengthsFinder. A theme of talent is not a strength, in and of itself, even if it is one of your Signature Themes. Your Signature Themes are simply a starting point for discovering your greatest talents, and a strength – the ability to consistently deliver near-perfect performance in a specific task – is what you create when you add helpful knowledge and skills to your talents.”<sup>3</sup>*

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
1-4	7) Strengths Summary	MOD	Being this is simply a recap of readings from the <i>LYS</i> book; allow participants a moment to read over. Ask if any questions to this point.	5 Min.
1-4 thru 1-8	8) Signature Themes	ALL	<p>Here we go...the initial introduction of each participant’s...and moderator’s...Top 5. The objective is to gain an initial sense of strengths but nothing in-depth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Allow a moment for the group to write in their five themes on page 1-4.</li> <li>b) Going around the table, ask each to share their Top 5...<i>one strength at a time</i>.</li> <li>c) When a particular strength is mentioned ask the participant to read the short description from pages 1-5 to 1-7.</li> <li>d) If the participant wishes to make a “brief” comment agreeing or disagreeing, that is acceptable. Due to time constraints, keep them brief.</li> <li>e) While the reader continues to share their Top 5 one at a time, the other participants begin completing the “TEAM SIGNATURE THEMES GRID” on page 1-8.</li> <li>f) Complete this section by asking if there are any general questions regarding strengths. Remind participants we will continue to dig deeper during the next couple of sessions.</li> </ul>	45 Minutes

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**7) STRENGTHS SUMMARY**

***STRENGTH – The ability to provide consistent, near-perfect performance in a given activity.***

***TALENT – A naturally recurring pattern of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied.***

Talents exist naturally within you. They are spontaneous, top-of-mind, perhaps even subconscious, reactions to situations you encounter. Talents are what you do well “without even thinking about it.” Talent is your natural way of thinking, feeling, and behaving.

***SKILL – The capacity to perform the fundamental steps of an activity.***

Skill deals with aspects of an activity that are rational and predictable. It is the basic ability to progress through the fundamental steps of a task.

***KNOWLEDGE – Quite simply, what you know or are aware of.***

This may be purely factual knowledge or it may be how you make sense of what you know—your understanding.

$$\text{TALENT + SKILL + KNOWLEDGE = STRENGTH}^4$$

**8) SIGNATURE THEMES**

The StrengthsFinder® assessment is comprised of 34 themes, each of which contains several talents. Talents are natural, recurring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The talents identified in your Signature Themes are things you do naturally, like breathing. It’s practically impossible to stop doing them. You actually do them without even trying.

***Write your Top 5 Signature Themes here. Share with the group.***

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

(4) \_\_\_\_\_

(5) \_\_\_\_\_

*As each group member shares their Top 5 Signature Themes refer to the following short descriptions to gain an initial understanding of their talents. Complete the table on page 1-8.*



**Achiever**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Achiever theme have a great deal of stamina and work hard. They take great satisfaction from being busy and productive.

**Activator**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Activator theme can make things happen by turning thoughts into action. They are often impatient.

**Adaptability**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Adaptability theme prefer to “go with the flow.” They tend to be “now” people who take things as they come and discover the future one day at a time.

**Analytical**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Analytical theme search for reasons and causes. They have the ability to think about all the factors that might affect a situation.

**Arranger**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Arranger theme can organize, but they also have a flexibility that complements this ability. They like to figure out how all of the pieces and resources can be arranged for maximum productivity.

**Belief**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Belief theme have certain core values that are unchanging. Out of these values emerges a defined purpose for their life.

**Command**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Command theme have presence. They can take control of a situation and make decisions.

**Communication**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Communication theme generally find it easy to put their thoughts into words. They are good conversationalists and presenters.

**Competition**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Competition theme measure their progress against the performance of others. They strive to win first place and revel in contests.

**Connectedness**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Connectedness theme have faith in the links between all things. They believe there are few coincidences and that almost every event has a reason.

*“I was always good at telling other people they have talents, but never really thought of myself as talented before,” said Matt.*

*“But when I read the descriptions of my Top 5 themes, I could see myself in what I was reading and I began to realize I do have talents after all!”*



**Consistency**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Consistency theme are keenly aware of the need to treat people the same. They try to treat everyone in the world with consistency by setting up clear rules and adhering to them.

**Context**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Context theme enjoy thinking about the past. They understand the present by researching its history.

**Deliberative**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Deliberative theme are best described by the serious care they take in making decisions or choices. They anticipate the obstacles.

**Developer**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Developer theme recognize and cultivate the potential in others. They spot the signs of each small improvement and derive satisfaction from these improvements.

**Discipline**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Discipline theme enjoy routine and structure. Their world is best described by the order they create.

**Empathy**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Empathy theme can sense the feelings of other people by imagining themselves in others' lives or others' situations.

**Focus**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Focus theme can take a direction, follow through, and make the corrections necessary to stay on track. They prioritize, and then act.

**Futuristic**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Futuristic theme are inspired by the future and what could be. They inspire others with their visions of the future.

**Harmony**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Harmony theme look for consensus. They don't enjoy conflict; rather, they seek areas of agreement.

**Ideation**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Ideation theme are fascinated by ideas. They are able to find connections between seemingly disparate phenomena.

**Includer**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Includer theme are accepting of others. They show awareness of those who feel left out, and make an effort to include them.

**Individualization**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Individualization theme are intrigued with the unique qualities of each person. They have a gift for figuring out how people who are different can work together productively.

**Input**<sup>®</sup> – People who are especially talented in the Input theme have a craving to know more. Often they like to collect and archive all kinds of information.

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**Intellection®** – People who are especially talented in the Intellection theme are characterized by their intellectual activity. They are introspective and appreciate intellectual discussions.

**Learner®** – People who are especially talented in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. In particular, the process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them.

**Maximizer®** – People who are especially talented in the Maximizer theme focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something strong into something superb.

**Positivity®** – People who are especially talented in the Positivity theme have an enthusiasm that is contagious. They are upbeat and can get others excited about what they are going to do.

**Relator®** – People who are especially talented in the Relator theme enjoy close relationships with others. They find deep satisfaction in working hard with friends to achieve a goal.

**Responsibility®** – People who are especially talented in the Responsibility theme take psychological ownership of what they say they will do. They are committed to stable values such as honesty and loyalty.

**Restorative®** – People who are especially talented in the Restorative theme are adept at dealing with problems. They are good at figuring out what is wrong and resolving it.

**Self-Assurance®** – People who are especially talented in the Self-Assurance theme feel confident in their ability to manage their own lives. They possess an inner compass that gives them confidence that their decisions are right.

**Significance®** – People who are especially talented in the Significance theme want to be very important in the eyes of others. They are independent and want to be recognized.

**Strategic®** – People who are especially talented in the Strategic theme create alternative ways to proceed. Faced with any given scenario, they can quickly spot the relevant patterns and issues.

**WOO®** – People who are especially talented in the Woo theme love the challenge of meeting new people and winning them over. They derive satisfaction from breaking the ice and making a connection with another person.<sup>5</sup>



**TEAM SIGNATURE THEMES GRID**

GROUP	NAMES											TOTALS	
	Achiever												
	Activator												
	Adaptability												
	Analytical												
	Arranger												
	Belief												
	Command												
	Communication												
	Competition												
	Connectedness												
	Consistency												
	Context												
	Deliberative												
	Developer												
	Discipline												
	Empathy												
	Focus												
	Futuristic												
	Harmony												
	Ideation												
	Includer												
	Individualization												
	Input												
	Intellection												
	Learner												
	Maximizer												
	Positivity												
	Relator												
	Responsibility												
	Restorative												
	Self-Assurance												
	Significance												
	Strategic												
	WOO												



**9) REMINDERS & SUGGESTIONS**

- a. Continue reading and referring to the *Living Your Strengths* book regularly.
- b. Commit to pray for each other that we may all maximize our God-given strengths.
- c. Reflect on your talents and observe how they affect your daily life.
- d. Consider keeping a daily journal to capture the ways in which you apply your strengths.
- e. Be prepared to discuss “*Between Sessions*” tasks during next session.

**10) INTENTIONS****11) CLOSING PRAYER**

*Good and gracious God, we praise you and thank you! We know that your love knows no bounds, and for this we are grateful.*

*We thank you in a special way for bringing us together, to explore the gifts you have given us in talents to be used for your glory.*

*Help us to humbly embrace these gifts as signs of your mercy and care for us and for all in our world. We ask this as with all things, through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Steve shares: “I first met Bob when he arrived at our Living Your Strengths discussion group on the first of two consecutive Saturdays. As the newly acquainted group began sharing and learning about each other’s gifts, Bob’s WOO talent quickly filled the room.*

*We spent nine hours together over those two days and I learned a lot about Bob, his family, his career, and how accurately he and family members believed StrengthsFinder® identified his natural talents. Bob had recently been hospitalized for many weeks and his wife frequently commented how happy he was during our group’s time together.*

*Just 42 days following our first meeting, God called Bob home. Although I previously moderated many sessions, it was not until Bob’s passing that I truly appreciated how much we do learn about someone in such a brief period of time. We’re not chatting about the weather or sports when together, we’re peeling back the layers of who God created us to be.”*

*As Bob’s daughter mentioned during the eulogy, “He’s now WOOing them in heaven.”*



**“BETWEEN SESSIONS” - Please complete the following three pages and be prepared to share with the group at our next session.**

***PART 1 – PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF SIGNATURE THEMES***

*Using the long descriptions for each of your Signature Themes, highlight...if you have not previously done so...the words and/or sentences that best describe you then answer the following questions.*

- a. What was your initial reaction to seeing your Top 5 Signature Themes?

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- b. Which of the Top 5 Signature Themes best describes you?

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- c. What in the report surprised you?

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- d. How well do you feel your Top 5 Signature Themes describe the ways in which you most naturally, think, feel, and behave as a unique individual?

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**PART 2 – VERIFYING YOUR SIGNATURE THEMES**

*Share your Signature Themes Report with someone that knows you well. Ask them to read through the report and then ask the following questions. Record their answers.*

a. What in the report most accurately describes me?

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b. What in the report surprised you about me?

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c. Which of the Top 5 Signature Themes do you notice in me the most?

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d. Provide examples of how and when you've seen these themes in me?

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**ANSWER KEY: Understanding Strength, Theme, Talent, Skill, and Knowledge**

Select the appropriate category for each of the following.	STRENGTH	THEME	TALENT	SKILL	KNOWLEDGE
1) A group of similar talents.		X			
2) The capacity to do something.			X		
3) The ability to hit a golf ball.				X	
4) The burning desire to beat the competition.			X		
5) Measured by the StrengthsFinder assessment.		X			
6) Ability to develop new software.					X
7) The power to concentrate on computer programming.			X		
8) Installing software on a computer.				X	
9) Combined with knowledge and skill to create strength.			X		
10) Being familiar with rules of a card game.					X
11) The basis for achieving excellence when fully developed.	X				
12) "Diamonds" in the rough.			X		
13) Awareness of basic plant pruning.					X
14) Baking brownies using a box mix.				X	
15) Creating new recipes.					X
16) Using a detour to avoid traffic congestion.					X
17) A naturally recurring pattern of feelings, thoughts, & behavior.			X		
18) Your Top 5 talents.		X			
19) Top 5 Signature Themes plus skill and knowledge.	X				
20) The ability to provide consistent, near perfect performance in a given activity.	X				

**PART 3 –STRENGTH, THEME, TALENT, SKILL, AND KNOWLEDGE REFRESHER**

Check the appropriate column for each statement. There is only one correct answer for each.

Select the appropriate category for each of the following.	STRENGTH	THEME	TALENT	SKILL	KNOWLEDGE
1) A group of similar talents.					
2) The capacity to do something.					
3) The ability to hit a golf ball.					
4) The burning desire to beat the competition.					
5) Measured by the StrengthsFinder® assessment.					
6) Ability to develop new software.					
7) The power to concentrate on computer programming.					
8) Installing software on a computer.					
9) Combined with knowledge and skill to create strength.					
10) Being familiar with rules of a card game.					
11) The basis for achieving excellence when fully developed.					
12) “Diamonds” in the rough.					
13) Awareness of basic plant pruning.					
14) Baking brownies using a box mix.					
15) Creating new recipes.					
16) Using a detour to avoid traffic congestion.					
17) A naturally recurring pattern of feelings, thoughts, & behavior.					
18) Your Top 5 talents.					
19) Top 5 Signature Themes plus skill and knowledge.					
20) The ability to provide consistent, near perfect performance in a given activity.					

**PART 4 –CREATE MNEMONIC AND “LIVING MY STRENGTHS” BOOKLET (USING FOLLOWING PAGES)**



# ACTIVITY

A mnemonic is a learning technique that aids memory. To more easily remember your Top 5 Signature Themes create a mnemonic made from the first letter of each. For example, let's consider a person with these five:

- Ideation
- Maximizer
- Analytical
- Significance
- Includer

A possible mnemonic for this example is:

*"I Must Always Seek Ideas"*

Mnemonics can be meaningful, logical, funny, quirky, silly...anything to make it easier to remember your Top 5. Be Creative!

Instructions for creating your "Strengths Booklet":

- 1) The opposite side of this page is to be cut off along the dashed line. It will become the booklet cover.
- 2) The following sheets each have two booklet pages. Remove from this manual and once again cut along the dashed lines. You should now have a booklet cover and one page for each of your Top 5, plus one extra. Staple the packet.
- 3) Complete one page for each of your Top 5. The time this takes will allow for reflecting upon your God-given talents while preparing a mini-journal that can be shared with others. Enjoy!



## LIVING MY STRENGTHS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Write mnemonic in the five spaces below*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Talents (Strengths)**

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	



<b>TALENT:</b> _____ # _____	<input type="checkbox"/> EX	<input type="checkbox"/> IN	<input type="checkbox"/> RB	<input type="checkbox"/> ST
My talent in me (I am...)				
My talent in action (I do...)				
My talent requires (I need...)				
My talent fosters (I love...)				
My talent avoids (I dislike...)				
My talent looks like (metaphor/image)				
My talent gets distorted (overuse)				
A one-liner for my talent is:				
A biblical reference describing my talent is:				
A song that describes my talent is:				

<b>TALENT:</b> _____ # _____	<input type="checkbox"/> EX	<input type="checkbox"/> IN	<input type="checkbox"/> RB	<input type="checkbox"/> ST
My talent in me (I am...)				
My talent in action (I do...)				
My talent requires (I need...)				
My talent fosters (I love...)				
My talent avoids (I dislike...)				
My talent looks like (metaphor/image)				
My talent gets distorted (overuse)				
A one-liner for my talent is:				
A biblical reference describing my talent is:				
A song that describes my talent is:				



<b>TALENT:</b> _____ # _____	<input type="checkbox"/> EX	<input type="checkbox"/> IN	<input type="checkbox"/> RB	<input type="checkbox"/> ST
My talent in me (I am...)				
My talent in action (I do...)				
My talent requires (I need...)				
My talent fosters (I love...)				
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My talent looks like (metaphor/image)				
My talent gets distorted (overuse)				
A one-liner for my talent is:				
A biblical reference describing my talent is:				
A song that describes my talent is:				

<b>TALENT:</b> _____ # _____	<input type="checkbox"/> EX	<input type="checkbox"/> IN	<input type="checkbox"/> RB	<input type="checkbox"/> ST
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My talent gets distorted (overuse)				
A one-liner for my talent is:				
A biblical reference describing my talent is:				
A song that describes my talent is:				



<b>TALENT:</b> _____ # _____	<input type="checkbox"/> EX	<input type="checkbox"/> IN	<input type="checkbox"/> RB	<input type="checkbox"/> ST
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My talent gets distorted (overuse)				
A one-liner for my talent is:				
A biblical reference describing my talent is:				
A song that describes my talent is:				

<b>TALENT:</b> _____ # _____	<input type="checkbox"/> EX	<input type="checkbox"/> IN	<input type="checkbox"/> RB	<input type="checkbox"/> ST
My talent in me (I am...)				
My talent in action (I do...)				
My talent requires (I need...)				
My talent fosters (I love...)				
My talent avoids (I dislike...)				
My talent looks like (metaphor/image)				
My talent gets distorted (overuse)				
A one-liner for my talent is:				
A biblical reference describing my talent is:				
A song that describes my talent is:				

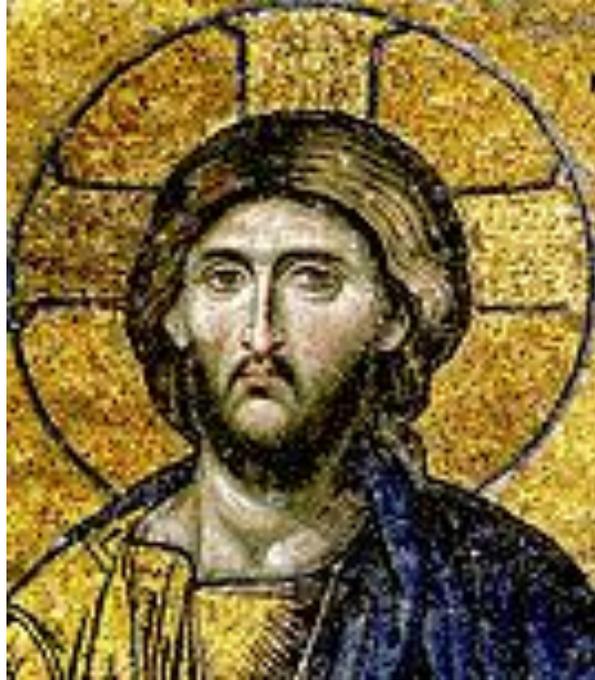


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3. Albert L. Winseman, Donald O. Clifton, and Curt Liesveld, *Living Your Strengths*, Gallup Press, New York, 2003, 2006, 2008, Gallup Press, New York. pp. 64.
4. Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, *StrengthsFinder 2.0*, Gallup Press, New York, 2007, pp. 20.
5. Albert L. Winseman, Donald O. Clifton, and Curt Liesveld, *Living Your Strengths*, Gallup Press, New York, 2003, 2006, 2008, Gallup Press, New York.

## Session Materials Checklist

MODULE	HANDOUT
1	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module One” Participant Guides in binders <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
2	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Two” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Team Strengths Grid <i>(completed with team member information)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
3	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Three” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> “Alternate View: Talent Themes Side-by-Side” <input type="checkbox"/> Team Domain Table <i>(completed with team member information)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
4	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Four” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
5	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Five” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges



# ***LIVING YOUR STRENGTHS***

## **MODULE TWO** **UNDERSTANDING OTHERS**

*“Now as you excel in every respect, in faith, discourse, knowledge, all earnestness, and in the love we have for you, may you excel in this gracious act also. (2 Corinthians 8:7)*

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
		MOD	<p>Welcome all participants back to the discussion group.</p> <p>Remember, one of our goals is to enhance the sense of belonging people feel within our parish. You are truly an ambassador serving on behalf of Blessed Pope John XXIII Catholic Church!</p> <p>Reminder: Encourage discussion...but remain focused.</p>	5 - 10 Minutes
2-1	1) Opening prayer	ALL	Read aloud.	
	Objectives	MOD	Briefly review what we plan to accomplish this session.	
	2) Open discussion	ALL	<p>Hopefully participants will have been mulling over the concept of strengths since the previous session.</p> <p>Ask if they have any questions, comments, or observations.</p>	20 - 30 Minutes
	3) Assignment Review & Discussion	ALL	Ask participants to share the results of their <i>Personal Assessment</i> and <i>Verification</i> . Encourage dialogue among all. Seek clarity and understanding.	
			<p>Using the ANSWER KEY, review responses.</p> <p>Again, encourage conversation while affirming the differences between strengths, themes, talents, skills and knowledge are being grasped and understood.</p>	5 Minutes
	4) Strengths Review	MOD	<p>A key point here is that we can improve and enhance our skills and knowledge, especially if we put significant effort into it, but we cannot modify our talents.</p> <p>Talents are what they are...God's natural gift to each of us.</p>	

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## **MODULE 2: UNDERSTANDING OTHERS**

### **1) OPENING PRAYER**

*God of power and mercy, open our hearts in welcome. Thank you for gifting each of us with unique talents. Help us to further develop them with skills and knowledge to become strengths.*

*Please guide us in using our strengths most effectively at home, with friends, within our parish, and throughout our community. Open our eyes to see and appreciate the unique strengths in others and provide the grace to partner with others so that each has the opportunity to contribute with meaning.*

*We are thankful Dear Lord that you have uniquely blessed each of us. Help us serve you and to always know that we are part of your plan in building the kingdom of God. Amen.*

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Review Module One assignments to continue learning about the application of Strengths in our daily lives
- Further develop understanding of one's own Strengths
- Gain a basic awareness and understanding of the uniqueness between the 34 Talent Themes
- To consider and discuss if Strengths can be "overused"

### **2) OPEN DISCUSSION**

Please share any strengths-related experiences you encountered since we last met. Have you found yourself using your natural talents differently? What have you observed about other's strengths?

### **3) ASSIGNMENT REVIEW & DISCUSSION**

- a. Personal assessment of Signature Themes
- b. Verifying your Signature Themes
- c. Strength, Theme, Talent, Skill, and Knowledge refresher

### **4) STRENGTHS REVIEW**

*Our initial look at Strengths in Module One was summarized by:*

**TALENT + SKILL + KNOWLEDGE = STRENGTH**

*Further building on this concept, consider...*

**TALENT X INVESTMENT = STRENGTH**

*...where **Investment** includes time spent further developing skills, continually building your knowledge base, and practicing to achieve excellence through near-perfect performance.*

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
2-2	5) Natural Talents	ALL	<p>This is an additional perspective of the participant’s natural talents and a way for them to consider how easily activities occur when talents are applied.</p> <p>Allow 5-10 minutes for participant’s to answer 5a-5d.</p> <p>Ask for volunteers to share some examples of their natural talents. Discuss for 10-15 minutes.</p>	15 - 25 Minutes
2-2 and 2-3	6) Talent Theme Match	ALL	<p>The objective of this exercise is to begin enriching each participant’s awareness and understanding of strengths other than their own.</p> <p>They are not expected to be experts...just more aware. This exercise also serves as a transition to the team-focused discussions during Module Three.</p> <p>Allow 5 minutes for each participant to complete as many matches as possible.</p> <p>Then, as a group, go around the table asking everyone to contribute one match at a time. Continue until matrix is complete.</p> <p>Encourage discussion while reinforcing understanding as answers are presented. Using your ANSWER KEYS (below) challenge responses and keep group on track.</p> <p><i>[Note] If active discussion (which is good) has consumed more time than anticipated to this point, consider including this exercise as homework. You may even decide to complete half of it and then ask participants to complete the remainder outside this session. Be flexible!</i></p>	20 - 30 Minutes (see note)

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**ANSWER KEY: Talent Theme Match – SOLUTIONS**

Z	Achiever	A	Impatient. "Just do it!"
A	Activator	B	Introspective thinker
AD	Adaptability	C	Common ground
W	Analytical	D	"What if?" Select. Strike.
AF	Arranger	E	Storyteller
H	Belief	F	Confident in their decisions
AB	Command	G	Instinctively understands others
E	Communication	H	Core values
AC	Competition	I	A collector
AA	Connectedness	J	Inspirational dreamer
O	Consistency	K	Celebrates achievements
N	Context	L	Independent spirit
AE	Deliberative	M	Journeys from ignorance to competence
AH	Developer	N	Historical perspective
T	Discipline	O	Equal treatment
G	Empathy	P	"Breaks the ice" & establishes connections
Y	Focus	Q	Stimulates personal & group excellence
J	Futuristic	R	Problem solver
C	Harmony	S	Creative, original, and conceptual.
S	Ideation	T	Routine and predictable
AG	Includer	U	Sees everyone's unique qualities
U	Individualization	V	Genuine relationships with close friends
I	Input	W	Dispassionate. "Prove it!"
B	Intellection	X	Utterly dependable
M	Learner	Y	Goal setter. Efficient.
Q	Maximizer	Z	Motivated and driven
K	Positivity	AA	No coincidences
V	Relator	AB	Confrontational
X	Responsibility	AC	Being number one
R	Restorative	AD	Flexible
F	Self-Assurance	AE	Cautious, careful, and private
L	Significance	AF	Enjoys dynamic situations. "Juggler"
D	Strategic	AG	All are equally important
P	WOO	AH	Challenges others

**TALENT THEME MATCH - Understanding Other Strengths**

*Match each of these talent themes with the word or phrase that best describes it.*

Achiever	A	Impatient. "Just do it!"
Activator	B	Introspective thinker
Adaptability	C	Common ground
Analytical	D	"What if?" Select. Strike.
Arranger	E	Storyteller
Belief	F	Confident in their decisions
Command	G	Instinctively understands others
Communication	H	Core values
Competition	I	A collector
Connectedness	J	Inspirational dreamer
Consistency	K	Celebrates achievements
Context	L	Independent spirit
Deliberative	M	Journeys from ignorance to competence
Developer	N	Historical perspective
Discipline	O	Equal treatment
Empathy	P	"Breaks the ice" & establishes connections
Focus	Q	Stimulates personal & group excellence
Futuristic	R	Problem solver
Harmony	S	Creative, original, and conceptual.
Ideation	T	Routine and predictable
Includer	U	Sees everyone's unique qualities
Individualization	V	Genuine relationships with close friends
Input	W	Dispassionate. "Prove it!"
Intellection	X	Utterly dependable
Learner	Y	Goal setter. Efficient.
Maximizer	Z	Motivated and driven
Positivity	AA	No coincidences
Relator	AB	Confrontational
Responsibility	AC	Being number one
Restorative	AD	Flexible
Self-Assurance	AE	Cautious, careful, and private
Significance	AF	Enjoys dynamic situations. "Juggler"
Strategic	AG	All are equally important
WOO	AH	Challenges others

**ALTERNATE VIEW: Talent Themes Side-by-Side**

Achiever	Motivated and driven
Activator	Impatient. "Just do it!"
Adaptability	Flexible
Analytical	Dispassionate. "Prove it!"
Arranger	Enjoys dynamic situations. "Juggler"
Belief	Core values
Command	Confrontational
Communication	Storyteller
Competition	Being number one
Connectedness	No coincidences
Consistency	Equal treatment
Context	Historical perspective
Deliberative	Cautious, careful, and private
Developer	Challenges others
Discipline	Routine and predictable
Empathy	Instinctively understands others
Focus	Goal setter. Efficient.
Futuristic	Inspirational dreamer
Harmony	Common ground
Ideation	Creative, original, and conceptual.
Includer	All are equally important
Individualization	Sees everyone's unique qualities
Input	A collector
Intellection	Introspective thinker
Learner	Journeys from ignorance to competence
Maximizer	Stimulates personal & group excellence
Positivity	Celebrates achievements
Relator	Genuine relationships with close friends
Responsibility	Utterly dependable
Restorative	Problem solver
Self-Assurance	Confident in their decisions
Significance	Independent spirit
Strategic	"What if?" Select. Strike.
WOO	"Breaks the ice" & establishes connections





## 7) CAN OUR STRENGTHS BE PERCEIVED INCORRECTLY?

If we view our God-given strengths as *the ability to consistently produce a nearly perfect positive outcome in a specific task* then we must also consider if the potential for a “perceived” negative outcome exists.

Since strengths are patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behavior it cannot be expected one will simply “turn off” their top talent themes upon demand or at will. After all, these are naturally occurring!

What we can do, however, is to be more cognizant and understanding of our highest-ranking natural abilities and the potential effects we can have on others. By focusing on applying our strengths in *positive and productive* ways we can make the greatest possible contributions to everything we are involved in.

Strengths should not become an excuse or casually tossed about as “that’s just the way I am, accept it!” We must work together, positively and productively, with our combined uniqueness to have the greatest effect on our family, professional, and spiritual lives.

Obviously, you are aware of perceptions you hold – both positive and negative – of others and their specific strengths. But, how do others perceive the natural gifts you possess?

### Group Activity

- a. Select one of your Top 5 Strengths. \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Consider how “overuse” of this Strength may be *perceived* by others.
- c. Write brief descriptions or common labels of these perceptions (i.e. Belief may be perceived as “hard-headed”).

\* \_\_\_\_\_

\* \_\_\_\_\_

\* \_\_\_\_\_

- d. If the perception is reality, what can you do to further develop this strength?

When we don’t recognize ourselves and others for who we really are, along with the strengths we each possess, negative perceptions can arise. When this occurs opportunities to contribute effectively are lost. Let’s respect and cultivate each person’s uniqueness. We never want to mistake a strength for a weakness!



**8) REMINDERS & SUGGESTIONS**

- a. Continue reading and referring to the *Living Your Strengths* book regularly to learn more about yourself and others.
- b. Continue to pray for each other that we may all maximize our God-given strengths.
- c. Reflect on your talents and observe how they affect your daily life.
- d. Consider keeping a daily journal to capture the ways in which you apply your strengths.
- e. Be prepared to discuss “*Between Sessions*” tasks during next session.

**9) INTENTIONS****10) CLOSING PRAYER**

*God who fashions us and who transforms us each day,  
we give you thanks for the blessings of talent.  
May we give you praise as we live each day in your image,  
created uniquely as your own. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*“From this point of view, to avoid your strengths and to focus on your weaknesses isn't a sign of diligent humility. It is almost irresponsible.*

*By contrast the most responsible, the most challenging, and, in the sense of being true to yourself, the most honorable thing to do is face up to the strength potential inherent in your talents and then find ways to realize it.”<sup>2</sup>*

*Donald O. Clifton  
StrengthsFinder Developer*

**“BETWEEN SESSIONS”** – *To assist the Moderator, here are some general words or phrases related to this activity.*

THEME	WHEN OVERUSED	POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION
Achiever	Overcommitted Can't say no	Undeniable work-ethic Leads by example
Activator	Loose cannon Speak before thinking	Source of energy Self-starter
Adaptability	Indecisive Rudderless	Embraces change Easy to get along with
Analytical	Impersonal Asks too many questions	Logical Thorough
Arranger	Too flexible Short term focus	Conductor Efficient
Belief	Opinionated Stubborn	Ethical Passionate
Command	Bossy Strong-willed	Inspirational Concise
Communication	Poor listener Blabbermouth	Easy to talk to Charismatic
Competition	Poor sport Self-centered	Motivated Driven
Connectedness	Idealistic Naive	Spiritual Searches for big picture
Consistency	Inflexible Sees things as black and white	Policy maker Just
Context	Lives in the past Closed-minded	Historical frame of reference Prevents repeat mistakes
Deliberative	Introverted Cautious	Sound judgment Considers risk/reward
Developer	Offers too many opportunities Observer	Teaches Invests in others
Discipline	Overbearing Rigid	Efficient Simplifies complexity
Empathy	Moody Soft	Heals Right words at right time

**“BETWEEN SESSIONS”** – *Make notes relating to the overused or positive traits of strengths you experience during the next several days. Remain aware of individual strengths exhibited at home, work, or at stores, restaurants, community functions, etc. Which strengths affected you positively? Which were overused to the point of irritation? If necessary, refer back to the individual descriptions in the Living Your Strengths book or Session One.*

THEME	WHEN OVERUSED	POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION
Achiever		
Activator		
Adaptability		
Analytical		
Arranger		
Belief		
Command		
Communication		
Competition		
Connectedness		
Consistency		
Context		
Deliberative		
Developer		
Discipline		
Empathy		

THEME	WHEN OVERUSED	POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION
Focus	Intense Stressed	Purposeful Goal setter
Futuristic	Dreamer Fantasy	Creative Imaginative
Harmony	Indecisive Non-confrontational	Negotiator Facilitator
Ideation	Inefficient Lacks follow through	Agile mind Quick learner
Includer	Indecisive Generous to a fault	Inviting Engaging
Individualization	Too nice Can't hurt other's feeling	Appreciates differences Sees uniqueness
Input	Packrat Dwells on trivial	Knowledgeable Interesting collector
Intellection	Loner Slow to act	Thinker Deep and philosophical thought
Learner	Know-it-all Lacks focus	Perpetual learner Broad interests
Maximizer	Perfectionist Never good enough	Excellence Mastery
Positivity	Superficial Insincere	Enthusiastic Optimistic
Relator	Cliquish Favoritism	Great friend Trusting
Responsibility	Obsessive Micro-manager	Accountable Conscientious
Restorative	Negative Critical	Troubleshooter Problem solver
Self-Assurance	Stubborn Arrogant	Confident Risk-taker
Significance	Self-focused Selfish	Outstanding performer Focuses on issues of importance
Strategic	Difficult to understand Closed-minded	Seeks alternatives Intuitive
WOO	Shallow Fake	People-oriented Build rapport

(Cont.)

THEME	WHEN OVERUSED	POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION
Focus		
Futuristic		
Harmony		
Ideation		
Includer		
Individualization		
Input		
Intellection		
Learner		
Maximizer		
Positivity		
Relator		
Responsibility		
Restorative		
Self-Assurance		
Significance		
Strategic		
WOO		



## REFERENCES

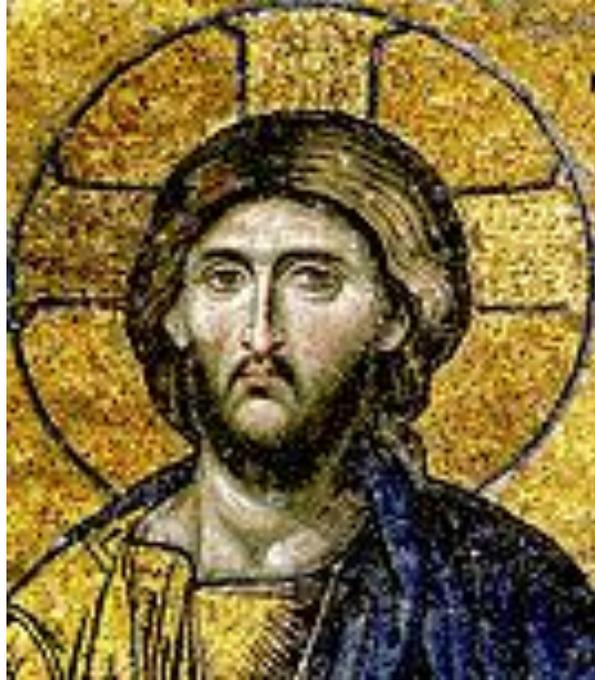
1. Activity is from:

[http://www.strengthsquest.com/content/File/142250/Five\\_Clues\\_to\\_Talent.pdf](http://www.strengthsquest.com/content/File/142250/Five_Clues_to_Talent.pdf)

2. Donald O. Clifton, *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, The Free Press, New York, 2001, pp.126-127

## Session Materials Checklist

MODULE	HANDOUT
1	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module One” Participant Guides in binders <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
2	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Two” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Team Strengths Grid <i>(completed with team member information)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
3	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Three” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> “Alternate View: Talent Themes Side-by-Side” <input type="checkbox"/> Team Domain Table <i>(completed with team member information)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
4	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Four” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
5	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Five” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges



# ***LIVING YOUR STRENGTHS***

## **MODULE THREE** **TEAM DEVELOPMENT**

*"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)*

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
		MOD	<p>Welcome all participants back to the discussion group.</p> <p>Remember, one of our goals is to enhance the sense of belonging people feel within our parish. You are truly an ambassador serving on behalf of Blessed Pope John XXIII Catholic Church!</p> <p>Reminder: Encourage discussion...but remain focused.</p>	
3-1	1) Opening prayer	ALL	Read aloud.	
	Objectives	MOD	Briefly review what we plan to accomplish this module.	
	2) Open discussion	ALL	The intent of this topic is to let participants share how strengths awareness has affected them recently.	20 Minutes
	3) Assignment Review & Discussion	ALL	<p>a) Using the ANSWER KEY: Talent Theme Match, review responses.</p> <p>[HANDOUT 1] ALTERNATE VIEW: Talent Themes Side-by-Side. This simplifies comparisons.</p> <p>b) Ask participants to share their observations since the previous session regarding people they encountered who may be over-using their strengths.</p> <p>Reminder; although these are “perceptions,” they do become reality to those affected.</p>	
3-1 and 3-2	4) Coming Together	ALL	<p>We now delve deeper into the interaction of strengths when two or more people embark upon an activity or task.</p> <p>The purpose of this exercise is to begin reinforcing why we are all needed for fulfilling Christ’s mission and how our differences / uniqueness (i.e. hand vs. foot) assist.</p> <p>Read aloud: Ask group members to alternate reading <i>1Corinthians 12:12-27</i></p> <p>Discuss questions “a” thru “d” following scripture.</p>	20 Minutes

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**MODULE 3: TEAM DEVELOPMENT****1) OPENING PRAYER**

*God of power and mercy, open our hearts in welcome. Thank you for gifting each of us with unique talents. Help us to further develop them with skills and knowledge to become strengths.*

*Please guide us in using our strengths most effectively at home, with friends, within our parish, and throughout our community. Open our eyes to see and appreciate the unique strengths in others and provide the grace to partner with others so that each has the opportunity to contribute with meaning.*

*We are thankful Dear Lord that you have uniquely blessed each of us. Help us serve you and to always know that we are part of your plan in building the kingdom of God. Amen.*

**OBJECTIVES:**

- To continue learning about the effect of strengths in our daily lives.
- To further explore our signature themes and how we can contribute to any activity.
- To discuss how our strengths interact with others and the importance of collaboration.

**2) OPEN DISCUSSION**

Please share any strengths-related experiences you encountered since we last met. Have you found yourself using your natural talents differently? What have you observed about other's strengths?

**3) ASSIGNMENT REVIEW & DISCUSSION**

- a. Talent Theme Match: Side-by-Side
- b. Review and discuss positive effects as well as perception challenges associated with strengths.

**4) COMING TOGETHER (1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27)**

*As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say, "Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body.*





PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
3-3 thru 3-5	5) Talent Theme Domains	ALL	<p>Continuing the concept that we are all greater working together than individually (i.e. synergy) this task provides an opportunity to learn how everyone contributes to the accomplishment of tasks and the achievement of goals.</p> <p>[MOD] Read aloud first two paragraphs</p> <p>[READER 1] Read aloud section [1 of 4].</p> <p>[ALL] Discuss question relating to the Executing domain.</p> <p><i>Continue this approach through [4 of 4]</i></p>	45 Minutes
3-5	Benefits	MOD	<p>Decide if you will read aloud this section or if you prefer the participants to do so.</p> <p>The intent of this section is to reinforce how out-of-balance teams may perform ineffectively.</p>	
	Discussion	ALL	<p>a) Review the makeup of this group and discuss questions “b” and “c”.</p> <p>b) Is the group well-rounded? Balanced?</p> <p>c) In not, what are the challenges they must be aware of and focus on overcoming?</p>	
3-6	Team Domain Table		<p>[HANDOUT 2] If this table has not previously been completed by the moderator, the template in Participant Guide can be used to create one for this discussion group.</p>	

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## 5) TALENT THEME DOMAINS<sup>1</sup>

The 34 Strengths identified by Gallup naturally align into four distinct categories, or *domains*, that can be used to better understand the interaction between members of groups or teams.

Through this categorization we can better assess and predict how people collaborating with each other will perform and the likelihood of successful accomplishments. The four Domains and their associated talent themes are:

**[1 OF 4] EXECUTING:** This domain knows how to make things happen. When a solution needs to be implemented these people will work tirelessly to accomplish the task. The following themes are represented in the Executing domain.<sup>2</sup>

Achiever	Discipline
Arranger	Focus
Belief	Responsibility
Consistency	Restorative
Deliberative	

*Considering strengths representing the Executing domain; discuss how each might contribute to “getting things done.”<sup>3</sup>*

**[2 OF 4] INFLUENCING:** This domain assists in reaching a broader audience. These members constantly sell the team's ideas inside & outside the organization. The following themes are represented in the Influencing domain.<sup>4</sup>

Activator	Maximizer
Command	Self-Assurance
Communication	Significance
Competition	WOO

*Considering strengths representing the Influencing domain; discuss how each might contribute to “reaching a broader audience.”<sup>5</sup>*

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	45 Minutes (Continued)
3-3 thru 3-5	5) Talent Theme Domains	ALL	<p>Continuing the concept that we are all greater working together than individually (i.e. synergy) this task provides an opportunity to learn how everyone contributes to the accomplishment of tasks and the achievement of goals.</p> <p>[MOD] Read aloud first two paragraphs</p> <p>[READER 1] Read aloud section [1 of 4].</p> <p>[ALL] Discuss question relating to the Executing domain.</p> <p><i>Continue this approach through [4 of 4]</i></p>	
3-5	Benefits	MOD	<p>Decide if you will read aloud this section or if you prefer the participants to do so.</p> <p>The intent of this section is to reinforce how out-of-balance teams may perform ineffectively.</p>	
	Discussion	ALL	<p>d) Review the makeup of this group and discuss questions "b" and "c".</p> <p>e) Is the group well-rounded? Balanced?</p> <p>f) In not, what are the challenges they must be aware of and focus on overcoming?</p>	
3-6	Team Domain Table		<p>[HANDOUT 2] If this table has not previously been completed by the moderator, the template in Participant Guide can be used to create one for this discussion group.</p>	

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**[3 OF 4] RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:** This domain holds the group together resulting in greater success than the individuals could achieve on their own, creating a synergistic experience. The following themes are represented in the Relationship Building domain.<sup>6</sup>

Adaptability	Includer
Connectedness	Individualization
Developer	Positivity
Empathy	Relator
Harmony	

*Considering strengths representing the Relationship Building domain; discuss how each might contribute to “being the glue that holds a team together.”<sup>7</sup>*

**[4 OF 4] STRATEGIC THINKING:** This domain keeps the group focused on what could be. These team members constantly absorb and analyze information resulting in enhanced decision making. The following themes are represented in the Strategic Thinking domain.<sup>8</sup>

Analytical	Input
Context	Intellection
Futuristic	Learner
Ideation	Strategic

*Considering strengths representing the Strategic Thinking domain; discuss how each might contribute to “enhancing decision making.”<sup>9</sup>*

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
3-3 thru 3-5	5) Talent Theme Domains	ALL	Continuing the concept that we are all greater working together than individually (i.e. synergy) this task provides an opportunity to learn how everyone contributes to the accomplishment of tasks and the achievement of goals.  [MOD] Read aloud first two paragraphs  [READER 1] Read aloud section [1 of 4]. [ALL] Discuss question relating to the Executing domain.  <i>Continue this approach through [4 of 4]</i>	45 Minutes (Continued)
3-5	Benefits	MOD	<b>Decide if you will read aloud this section or if you prefer the participants to do so.</b>  <b>The intent of this section is to reinforce how out-of-balance teams may perform ineffectively.</b>	
	Discussion	ALL	g) Review the makeup of this group and discuss questions “b” and “c”.  h) Is the group well-rounded? Balanced?  i) In not, what are the challenges they must be aware of and focus on overcoming?	
3-6	Team Domain Table		[HANDOUT 2] If this table has not previously been completed by the moderator, the template in Participant Guide can be used to create one for this discussion group.	

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**BENEFITS**

The benefit of this analysis is identifying where specific strengths assist and how they contribute to the accomplishment of tasks and the achievement of goals. Just as importantly, it also highlights a group's "blindspots" where specific domains may not be sufficiently represented. By identifying these blindspots conscious decisions and specific actions can be taken by groups to overcome potentially ineffective outcomes.

*"The only possible failure would be never managing to find the right role or the right partners to help you realize that strength."*

*Donald O. Clifton  
StrengthsFinder Developer*

For instance, if a group has significant representation within all Domains except "Executing" there may be a tendency to continually improve plans – in pursuit of perfection – without taking action. Strategy, relationship building, and influencing others matter little if the group is less effective in taking action through execution of their ideas, concepts, and plans. This scenario may be viewed as “ready... aim... aim... aim...” without getting to “fire.”

Conversely, if significant execution strengths exist within a group there may be a greater tendency towards “ready, fire, aim” resulting from inadequate preparation and planning.

While individuals are not expected to be well-rounded, teams or groups working toward a shared common goal must be; or at a minimum they must be cognizant of their shortcomings and strive to overcome them.

By creating this awareness, group activities will become more efficient and greater successes achieved.

**DISCUSSION**

- a. Refer to the *Team Domain Table* representing this discussion group.  
(Moderator may have prepared or group can create using form on following page)
- b. If this group assumed responsibility for accomplishing a specific task where would we excel?
- c. What “blindspots” might challenge the group?

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	45 Minutes (Continued)
3-3 thru 3-5	5) Talent Theme Domains	ALL	Continuing the concept that we are all greater working together than individually (i.e. synergy) this task provides an opportunity to learn how everyone contributes to the accomplishment of tasks and the achievement of goals.  [MOD] Read aloud first two paragraphs  [READER 1] Read aloud section [1 of 4]. [ALL] Discuss question relating to the Executing domain.  <i>Continue this approach through [4 of 4]</i>	
3-5	Benefits	MOD	Decide if you will read aloud this section or if you prefer the participants to do so.  The intent of this section is to reinforce how out-of-balance teams may perform ineffectively.	
	Discussion	ALL	j) Review the makeup of this group and discuss questions "b" and "c".  k) Is the group well-rounded? Balanced?  l) In not, what are the challenges they must be aware of and focus on overcoming?	
3-6	Team Domain Table		<b>[HANDOUT 2] If this table has not previously been completed by the moderator, the template in Participant Guide can be used to create one for this discussion group.</b>	

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	<b>ACHIEVER</b>	<b>ACTIVATOR</b>	<b>ADAPTABILITY</b>	<b>ANALYTICAL</b>
	<b>ARRANGER</b>	<b>COMMAND</b>	<b>CONNECTEDNESS</b>	<b>CONTEXT</b>
	<b>BELIEF</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>DEVELOPER</b>	<b>FUTURISTIC</b>
	<b>CONSISTENCY</b>	<b>COMPETITION</b>	<b>EMPATHY</b>	<b>IDEATION</b>
	<b>DELIBERATIVE</b>	<b>MAXIMIZER</b>	<b>HARMONY</b>	<b>INPUT</b>
	<b>DISCIPLINE</b>	<b>SELF-ASSURANCE</b>	<b>INCLUDER</b>	<b>INTELLECTION</b>
	<b>FOCUS</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANCE</b>	<b>INDIVIDUALIZATION</b>	<b>LEARNER</b>
	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>WOO</b>	<b>POSITIVITY</b>	<b>STRATEGIC</b>
	<b>RESTORATIVE</b>		<b>RELATOR</b>	
<b>TEAM MEMBER</b>	<b>EXECUTING</b>	<b>INFLUENCING</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIP BUILDING</b>	<b>STRATEGIC THINKING</b>



**6) REMINDERS & SUGGESTIONS**

- a. Consider how well-rounded, or not, any groups you are involved with actually function. Do you see the effects of individual strengths?
- b. Continue reading and referring to the *Living Your Strengths* book regularly to learn more about yourself and others.
- c. Continue to pray for each other that we may all maximize our God-given strengths.
- d. Reflect on your own strengths and observe how they affect your daily life.
- e. Be prepared to discuss “*Between Sessions*” tasks during next session.

**7) INTENTIONS****8) CLOSING PRAYER**

*Creator God, you have fashioned us as your own,  
giving us talents to be used for your glory.  
Open our hearts, you who are greater than our hearts.  
Reawaken in us a desire to serve you above all others.  
Transform us, so that we may more fully be a sign in  
our world of your love for all.  
This we ask, this we seek, through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*“The first time I joined a church committee, it left a pretty bad taste in my mouth. I was completely taken aback by how petty, arrogant and belittling people were. I had seen these qualities in other groups, but it was especially demoralizing to encounter them among believers. What was the point of belonging to a committee – or a church – in which people seemed to act no better than they did in the world at large?”*

*Like it or not, people of faith are still just people, with all their flaws. Are they hypocrites? If so, then I’m in good company. I am just as imperfect and sinful as the next person. And this is the reason we gather – not because we are perfect and good, but precisely because we are not. We need the support of other believers in our own life of faith. We gather to help each other to be better than we are.”*

*Karla Manternach  
Living Faith, Daily Catholic Devotions*



**BETWEEN SESSIONS - COMPLEMENTARY PARTNERS**

*Assume you are working with a partner to perform each of the following tasks. What strengths would you like the person to have for that particular task? Why? How do they complement your strengths?*

a) Planning and hosting a surprise birthday party with 100 people attending.

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b) Increasing membership and participation in a ministry.

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c) Comforting a friend who recently experienced loss.

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d) Developing and teaching a course on the Gospels.

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e) Conducting a fund-raising activity.

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f) Preparing a five-year financial plan for the parish.

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g) Buying a new car.

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h) Changing the culture of an organization.

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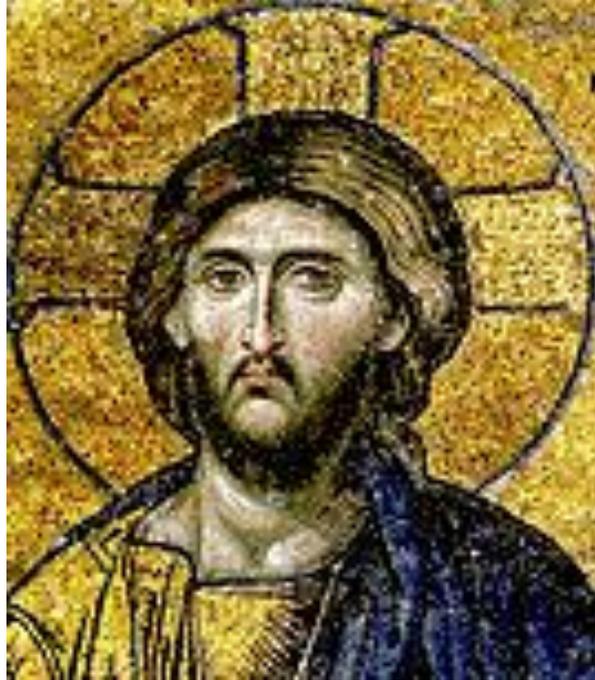


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1. Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership*, Gallup Press, New York, 2008, pp. 22-27.
2. *Ibid.* 24
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.* 25
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.* 26
9. *Ibid.*

## Session Materials Checklist

MODULE	HANDOUT
<b>1</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module One” Participant Guides in binders <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
<b>2</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Two” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Team Strengths Grid <i>(completed with team member information)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
<b>3</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Three” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> “Alternate View: Talent Themes Side-by-Side” <input type="checkbox"/> Team Domain Table <i>(completed with team member information)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
<b>4</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Four” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
<b>5</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Five” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges



# ***LIVING YOUR STRENGTHS***

## **MODULE FOUR** **SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT**

*“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)*

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
		MOD	<p>Welcome all participants back to the discussion group.</p> <p>Remember, one of our goals is to enhance the sense of belonging people feel within our parish. You are truly an ambassador serving on behalf of Blessed Pope John XXIII Catholic Church!</p> <p>Reminder: Encourage discussion...but remain focused.</p>	25 Minutes
4-1	1) Opening prayer	ALL	Read aloud.	
	Objectives	MOD	Briefly review what we plan to accomplish this module.	
	2) Open discussion	ALL	The intent of this topic is to let participants share how strengths awareness has affected them recently.	25 Minutes
	3) Assignment Review & Discussion	ALL	<p>The “Complementary Partner” exercise is intended to promote a greater understanding of which strengths, other than those we most strongly possess, can assist in the achievement of specific tasks...and how different tasks call for different strengths.</p> <p>Depending on group size and potential time constraints, decide the level of detail with which you want each participant to share their responses.</p>	
	4) Changing Culture	ALL	<p>This exercise provides another opportunity to reinforce the four Talent Theme Domains while transitioning into deeper spiritual discussions.</p> <p>Allow a few minutes of quiet time for participants to decide the prioritized sequence as they see it.</p> <p>In open discussion, ask for responses. Why did they choose this sequence?</p> <p>Ask who has a different sequence? Why?</p> <p>Obviously, there is no absolute correct answer. A key learning is that although Christ may have been well-rounded and could manage each domain effectively, we are not and it takes all of us working together to be the body of Christ.</p>	15 Minutes

## **MODULE 4: SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT**

### **1) OPENING PRAYER**

*God of power and mercy, open our hearts in welcome. Thank you for gifting each of us with unique talents. Help us to further develop them with skills and knowledge to become strengths.*

*Please guide us in using our strengths most effectively at home, with friends, within our parish, and throughout our community. Open our eyes to see and appreciate the unique strengths in others and provide the grace to partner with others so that each has the opportunity to contribute with meaning.*

*We are thankful Dear Lord that you have uniquely blessed each of us. Help us serve you and to always know that we are part of your plan in building the kingdom of God. Amen.*

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To further develop and enrich your signature themes from a spiritual perspective
- To assess the effects of your signature themes on humility and discipleship
- To continue exploring your personal strengths and those of others.

### **2) OPEN DISCUSSION**

Please share any strengths-related experiences you encountered since we last met. Have you found yourself using your natural talents differently? What have you observed about other's strengths?

### **3) ASSIGNMENT REVIEW & DISCUSSION**

- Complementary Partners

### **4) CHANGING CULTURE**

Recall the final topic from last week's *Complementary Partners* assignment; "Changing the culture of an organization."

If changing a culture is indeed altering how people think, feel and act, isn't this precisely what Jesus was doing?

Prioritize the four *Talent Theme Domains* in the order, from 1 being most important through 4, that you believe Christ applied them. Which needed to be most prevalent? Why?

\_\_\_ Executing

\_\_\_ Influencing

\_\_\_ Relationship  
Building

\_\_\_ Strategic  
Thinking



**5) GOSPEL READING *John 13: 12-18, 20***

*So when he had washed their feet [and] put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it. I am not speaking of all of you. I know those whom I have chosen. But so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'The one who ate my food has raised his heel against me.' Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."*

**COMMENTARY**

What an image of the sort of love Christ calls us to, this washing of feet! Jesus knows that his self-giving way is difficult to put into words; every circumstance of life calls for a response that is Christ-directed, and that calls on the greatest of who we are and what we can do. So, in washing the feet of his disciples, Jesus provides a stark image of what this self-giving love and service "looks like."

Jesus has walked and talked and shared much life with this group of disciples at this point in his earthly ministry. He knows them. He knows their gifts and passions, and their human

tendency to fail. Remember, on this same occasion, as he institutes the Eucharist, the ultimate gift of God for us in Christ, he tells the disciples that he knows they will not always be faithful to him – one will betray, one will deny, many will flee...

Christ knows us, too. Still, Jesus says, "Follow me." Christ calls us, knowing that it takes each of us offering ourselves to re-create the world in love. It will take each person offering our gifts generously, as our finest model and teacher, the Lord himself gives, to truly transform our homes, workplaces, parish, city, and world.

*"Jesus not only calls people to him but also forms them and sends them out in his service. Being sent on a mission is a consequence of being a disciple. Whoever wants to follow Christ will have much work to do on his behalf – announcing the Good News and serving others as Jesus did. Jesus' call is urgent. He does not tell people to follow him at some time in the future but here and now – at this moment, in these circumstances. There can be no delay."<sup>1</sup>*

*"I was already involved in a few things at my parish, and helped at my son's school a bit, too, but becoming more aware of my talents seemed to energize me, and I found myself looking at all the ways I could really serve, and offer my talents in deeper ways.*

*I suddenly feel I've been given gifts and would be selfish to hold them back. What most needs my time and talents?"*



**THEMES & INSIGHTS**

The themes of this Gospel are *Humility and Discipleship*. Humility, being the opposite of pride; or dying to one's self; is necessary to give and receive unconditional, sacrificial love. Jesus even washed Judas' feet as an act of complete humility!

Giving and sharing of our gifts (strengths/talents) transforms us interiorly and draws others to Christ. In so doing, our hearts and minds change from being self-seeking to self-giving.

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."  
Matthew 16:24*

Christ teaches us how to be a servant, steward, and shepherd for our neighbor.

Jesus calls all of the baptized to be his disciples.

A disciple is a learner, a student of Christ. One of the greatest gifts from God is his Word, which Christ reveals to us. Reflection is to listen, to read, and to study the Word of God. Then the Holy Spirit will form and guide us in sharing Christ's love with our family, friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ.

In our weakness we put things off and delay answering Jesus's call to discipleship. We do not feel a sense of urgency to follow him by serving others. How much time do we have in our lives to answer His call? What is holding us back?

***a. What are your thoughts regarding the washing of feet as described in the gospel reading? How do you view humility and discipleship?***

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**6) ACTIVITY – RELATING STRENGTHS TO HUMILITY AND DISCIPLESHIP**

- Using the following form, enter your Top 5 Strengths in the center column.
- Reflect on the gospel readings and discussions regarding humility and discipleship.
- How do your particular strengths *support* being humble and living a life of discipleship. Write notes in the first column next to the corresponding strength.
- How might your particular strengths act as *barriers* to humility and discipleship? Write notes in third column.

HOW STRENGTH SUPPORTS HUMILITY & DISCIPLESHIP	TOP 5 STRENGTHS	HOW STRENGTH ACTS AS BARRIER TO HUMILITY & DISCIPLESHIP
	(1) _____	
	(2) _____	
	(3) _____	
	(4) _____	
	(5) _____	

Considering your unique strengths, what actions can be taken to grow as a disciple of our Lord?

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PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	5 Minutes
4-5	7) Reminders and Suggestions	MOD	<p>Address each and ask if any questions or additions.</p> <p>Assignment appears on pages 4-6 and 4-7. Reinforce importance of assignment and that it will be discussed during Module Five.</p> <p>We will continue to get out of this what we put into it...plus, this is the last assignment!</p>	
	8) Intentions	ALL	<p>Ask the group to mention any special prayer intentions they have at this time.</p>	
	9) Closing prayer	ALL	<p>Thank all involved for their participation.</p>	

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**7) REMINDERS & SUGGESTIONS**

- a. Continue assessing how your strengths affect humility and discipleship. What “blindspots” are limiting your efforts?
- b. Continue to pray for each other that we may all maximize our God-given strengths.
- c. Reflect on your own strengths and observe how they affect your daily life.
- d. Be prepared to discuss “*Between Sessions*” tasks during next session.

**8) INTENTIONS****9) CLOSING PRAYER<sup>2</sup>**

*My church is composed of people like me.  
I help make it what it is.*

*It will be friendly, if I am.*

*Its pews will be filled, if I help fill them.*

*It will do great work, if I work.*

*It will make generous gifts to many causes, if I am a generous giver.*

*It will bring other people into its worship and fellowship, if I invite and bring them.*

*It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, and a church with a noble spirit,  
if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these same things.*

*Therefore, with the help of God, I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all the things that I  
want my church to be. Amen.*

*LORD, you have probed me, you know me: you  
know when I sit and stand; you understand my  
thoughts from afar. You sift through my travels  
and my rest; with all my ways you are familiar.*

*Psalms 139:1-3*



**BETWEEN SESSIONS**

- 1) Read pages 149-154 in *Living Your Strengths*.
- 2) Refer to pages 155-222 in *Living Your Strengths*. Answer the following for each of your Top 5 Strengths:

- a. From your own perspective, select/highlight 2 or 3 of the statements you believe best describe opportunities for the particular strength.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Suggest 1 or 2 new statements for each of your Top 5 Strengths that can be added to the lists in the book.

- 3) Read pages 227-230 in *Living Your Strengths*. Answer the following questions on page 228:

- a. If time and money were no object, what would you do for God?

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- b. Where is your passion? What do you love to do?

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- c. What are your greatest talents? How could you combine your talents and your passions to fulfill your calling?

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**BETWEEN SESSIONS** *(continued)*

4) How does recognizing and accepting your talents help you to see God's grace in your life?

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5) What difference would it make in your life to build on your talents rather than endlessly trying to fix your weaknesses?

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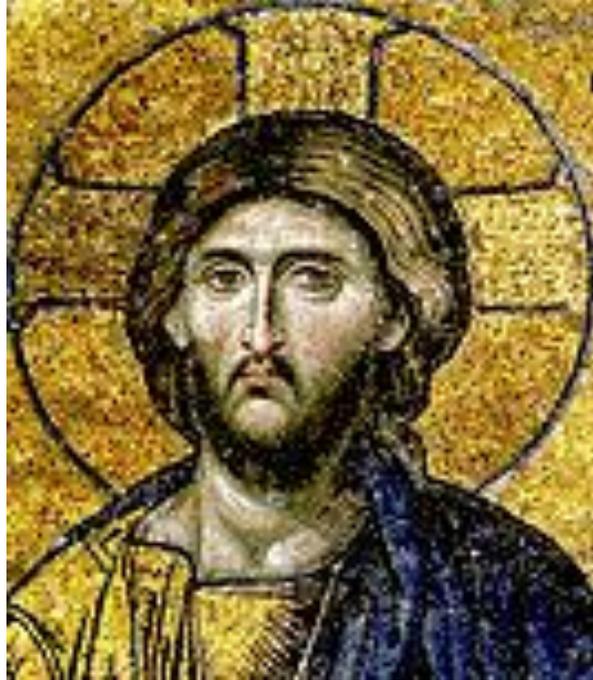


**REFERENCES**

1. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Stewardship, A Disciple's Response, A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, Tenth Anniversary Edition*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C., 2002, pp. 14.
2. Diocese of San Diego:  
<http://www.diocese-sdiego.org/Stewardship/stewardshipprayer.htm>

## Session Materials Checklist

MODULE	HANDOUT
<b>1</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module One” Participant Guides in binders <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
<b>2</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Two” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Team Strengths Grid <i>(completed with team member information)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
<b>3</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Three” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> “Alternate View: Talent Themes Side-by-Side” <input type="checkbox"/> Team Domain Table <i>(completed with team member information)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
<b>4</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Four” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges
<b>5</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> “Module Five” Participant Guides <input type="checkbox"/> Name tents / badges



# **LIVING YOUR STRENGTHS**

## **MODULE FIVE** **DEVOTION TO STEWARDSHIP**

*"You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.*

*Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house.*

*Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father." (Matthew 5:14-16)*

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
		MOD	<p>Welcome all participants back to the discussion group. Since this is the final session remind them to reflect back on their journey to this point and how much they have learned about themselves and others.</p> <p>Remember, one of our goals is to enhance the sense of belonging people feel within our parish. You are truly an ambassador serving on behalf of Blessed Pope John XXIII Catholic Church!</p> <p>Reminder: Encourage discussion...but remain focused.</p>	10 Minutes
5-1	1) Opening prayer	ALL	Read aloud.	
	Objectives	MOD	Briefly review what we plan to accomplish this session.	
	2) Open discussion	ALL	The intent of this topic is to let participants share how strengths awareness has affected them recently.	
	3) Assignment Review & Discussion	ALL	Due to time constraints, it is suggested you ask each participant to share their answers for Question #2 and then ask for random responses for questions 3-5.	20 Min.

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## **MODULE 5: DEVOTION TO STEWARDSHIP**

### **1) OPENING PRAYER**

*God of power and mercy, open our hearts in welcome. Thank you for gifting each of us with unique talents. Help us to further develop them with skills and knowledge to become strengths.*

*Please guide us in using our strengths most effectively at home, with friends, within our parish, and throughout our community. Open our eyes to see and appreciate the unique strengths in others and provide the grace to partner with others so that each has the opportunity to contribute with meaning.*

*We are thankful Dear Lord that you have uniquely blessed each of us. Help us serve you and to always know that we are part of your plan in building the kingdom of God. Amen.*

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To align stewardship and callings to your unique gifts.
- To discuss select scripture and relationships to strengths.
- To reflect on your strengths and opportunities to further improve and apply.
- To discuss “what’s next.”

### **2) OPEN DISCUSSION**

Please share any strengths-related experiences you encountered since we last met. Have you found yourself using your natural talents differently? What have you observed about other’s strengths?

### **3) ASSIGNMENT REVIEW & DISCUSSION**

#2 from *LYS* pages 155-222

- a. From your perspective, select/highlight 2 or 3 of the statements...
- b. Suggest 1 or 2 new statements for each of your Top 5 Strengths...

#3 from *LYS* page 228:

- a. If time and money were no object, what would you do for God?
- b. Where is your passion? What do you love to do?
- c. What are your greatest talents?
  - How could you combine your talents and your passions to fulfill your calling?

#4 How does recognizing & accepting your talents help you see God’s grace in your life?

#5 What difference would it make in your life to build on your talents rather than endlessly trying to fix your weaknesses?

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
5-2	4) What is Stewardship?	MOD	<p>Read aloud and reinforce all people are God’s stewards.</p> <p>To indicate significance of stewardship; inform the group that the words “steward” or “stewardship” appear more than two dozen times in the bible.</p>	5 Minutes
	5) What is a Calling?	MOD	<p>Read aloud and reinforce that better knowing our strengths can guide us to fulfilling a calling we were unaware of.</p> <p>Why not enjoy doing what you do best while serving others?</p>	
5-2 thru 5-4	<p>6) Scripture Passage with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commentary</li> <li>• Themes &amp; Insights</li> <li>• Group Discussion</li> </ul>	ALL	<p>[MOD] Read aloud first paragraph which introduces this topic. [GROUP] Alternate reading Ephesians.</p> <p>[GROUP] Alternate reading Scripture aloud through end of “Commentary.”</p> <p>[MOD] Read aloud “Themes and Insights”</p> <p>[ALL] allow a few minutes to record responses to the two questions. Discuss.</p>	20 Minutes

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**4) WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP?**

Derived from two ancient terms meaning “manage” and “house”, the word steward (or stewardship) is defined as someone who manages someone else’s house – or even more specifically, all the owner’s possessions.

From a spiritual perspective, no one actually “owns” anything as God is ultimately the owner of all that exists. Therefore, the fundamental element of stewardship is that everything belongs to God and each of us is charged with managing His house.

**5) WHAT IS A CALLING?**

As stated by Frederick Buechner, American writer and theologian, a calling is “*the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep need meet.*”<sup>1</sup> With our unique God-given gifts, comprised of the natural talents, skills and knowledge we possess, we are called to serve where we are most effective and able to perform at our best. After all, isn’t this when we truly experience a sense of joy and fulfillment?

**6) SCRIPTURE PASSAGE**

Reflecting on our individual talents leads us to think about the ways in which we are a community of people who are each given particular gifts to be used in service for others. Let us turn our thoughts to how we act in partnership with others.

***Ephesians 3:14-21 and 4:1-6***

*For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he may grant you in accord with the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner self, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

*Now to him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

*I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*



**COMMENTARY**

That we may be filled with all the fullness of God. Imagine! What is it to be filled with all the fullness of God? Could it be that when we allow ourselves to surrender to God's love and mercy, to accept the talents and blessings we have been given, and to allow the Spirit of the Lord to work through us as we offer those gifts and blessings in service, we will know the "breadth and the length and height and depth... the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge"?

*"It seemed almost the moment I started thinking about my strengths," said Mike, "I started to see the talents others have to offer, and realized we all have responsibility to offer our gifts in service. If we don't, imagine what is missing in the world!"*

The mission Jesus handed over to his disciples, the blessings he gave them, and the promises he made them are precisely the same blessings he offers to us and challenges he asks of us. Two thousand years have passed, but

*Now, I find that the more I share myself in serving others, the richer my life is, and realize that when we serve together, we are truly a community. When we do this together, it isn't scary to try something unfamiliar."*

God has not changed, nor have his hopes or expectations for his followers. God called them and he calls us. God walked with them and he walks with us. God empowered them and he empowers us, no matter how unlikely that sounds. Incredible things are asked of us and incredible things are absolutely possible, whenever we act in God's name (in other words, in a faithful way) and tap into his power.

We are one in Christ's Spirit, empowered to live as God's love poured out, together in community. Being in communion, in community, with God and with each other strengthens us to use our talents in ways difficult for any of us as an individual person. We are strong when we are together. God's "power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine!"

**THEMES & INSIGHTS**

*Love and Unity* are the key themes of this reading. These two letters of St. Paul are prayers that Christ's love will dwell within our hearts and that this love has no bounds and surpasses all knowledge. The power of this love is able to accomplish more than we could ever imagine.

This is also a call to unity as Disciples of the Body of Christ. The seven unities that unite us as a community of believers in Christ are:

***One Church      One Spirit      One Hope      One Lord***  
***One Faith      One Baptism      One God***

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
5-2 thru 5-4	6) Scripture Passage with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commentary</li> <li>• Themes &amp; Insights</li> <li>• Group Discussion</li> </ul>	ALL	<p>[MOD] Read aloud first paragraph which introduces this topic. [GROUP] Alternate reading Ephesians.</p> <p>[GROUP] Alternate reading aloud through end of "Commentary."</p> <p>[MOD] Read aloud "Themes and Insights"</p> <p><b>[ALL] Allow a few minutes to record responses to the two questions. Discuss.</b></p>	20 Minutes (Continued)
5-4 thru 5-6	7) Gospel Passage with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commentary</li> <li>• Themes &amp; Insights</li> <li>• The Power of Being Called</li> <li>• Group Discussion</li> </ul>	ALL	<p><b>[GROUP] Alternate reading aloud from Gospel through end of "Commentary."</b></p> <p>[MOD] Read aloud "Themes and Insights"</p> <p>[ALL] Pages 229-230 in <i>Living Your Strengths</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternate reading aloud by paragraph.</li> <li>• The [MOD] should read the final two paragraphs and emphasize this is a great summary of our journey together.</li> <li>• As we now know more about our God-given strengths we can better utilize them in fulfilling our callings.</li> </ul> <p>[ALL] Allow a few minutes to record responses to the two questions. There is a list of ministries on page 5-9 for participants to refer to.</p> <p>NOTE: We are not asking them to sign-up, but rather to identify how the particular strengths they possess can be best aligned with ministries.</p> <p>Discuss responses.</p>	25 Minutes

Our inner strengths are God’s gifts of love for us to use to further His Kingdom on earth. We can only fully experience this love by sharing these gifts. Love is indeed a mystery in that the only way we can keep it is by losing it again and again.

**GROUP DISCUSSION** – Considering the above scripture and commentary:

- a. With whom do you partner in service?

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- b. How do you draw on each other’s strengths to most effectively be a sign of Christ’s presence in our world?

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**7) GOSPEL PASSAGE [Mark 8:5-9]**

*Still he asked them, “How many loaves do you have?” “Seven,” they replied. He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then, taking the seven loaves he gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to distribute, and they distributed them to the crowd. They also had a few fish. He said the blessing over them and ordered them distributed also. They ate and were satisfied. They picked up the fragments left over—seven baskets. There were about four thousand people.*

**COMMENTARY**

Jesus uses what his disciples have to offer, and a feast is produced! The hungry are fed, and people see the glory of God in their midst. Disciples are asked to offer all they are and have and will be as faithful stewards.

Continue reflecting on the above gospel passage while reading the following extracts from the *U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Stewardship*. Consider your call as a disciple who is now even better prepared to live your strengths.

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
5-4 thru 5-6	<p>7) Gospel Passage with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commentary</li> <li>• Themes &amp; Insights</li> <li>• The Power of Being Called</li> <li>• Group Discussion</li> </ul>	ALL	<p>[GROUP] Alternate reading aloud from Gospel through end of "Commentary."</p> <p>[MOD] Read aloud "Themes and Insights"</p> <p>[ALL] Pages 229-230 in <i>Living Your Strengths</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternate reading aloud by paragraph.</li> <li>• The MOD] should read the final two paragraphs and emphasize this is a great summary of our journey together.</li> <li>• As we now know more about our God-given strengths we can better utilize them in fulfilling our callings.</li> </ul> <p>[ALL] Allow a few minutes to record responses to the two questions. There is a list of ministries on page 5-9 for participants to refer to.</p> <p>NOTE: We are not asking them to sign-up, but rather to identify how the particular strengths they possess can be best aligned with ministries.</p> <p>Discuss responses.</p>	25 Minutes (Continued)

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“Mature disciples make a conscious, firm decision, carried out in action, to be followers of Jesus Christ no matter the cost to themselves. Beginning in conversion, change of mind and heart, this commitment is expressed not in a single action, nor even in a number of actions over a period of time, but in an entire way of life. It means committing one’s very self to the Lord. Stewardship is an expression of discipleship with the power to change how we understand and live out our lives.

“The Christian vocation is essentially a call to be a disciple of Jesus. Stewardship is part of that. Even more to the point, however, Christians are called to be good stewards of the personal vocations they receive. Each of us must discern, accept, and live out joyfully and generously the commitments, responsibilities, and roles to which God calls him or her.”

“Every person should walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of a living faith which arouses hope and works through charity.”

“The Christian vocation is essentially a call to be a disciple of Jesus ... Jesus’ call is urgent. He does not tell people to follow him at some time in the future but here and now – at this moment, in these circumstances. There can be no delay.”

“Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ leads naturally to the practice of stewardship. These linked realities, discipleship and stewardship, then, make up the fabric of a Christian life in which each day is lived in an intimate, personal relationship with the Lord.”

“Refracted through the prisms of countless individual vocations, this way of life embodies and expresses the one mission of Christ: to do God’s will, to proclaim the good news of salvation, to heal the afflicted, to care for one’s sisters and brothers, to give life – life to the full – as Jesus did.”

*“Do the best with what you have: That’s the time-tested advice the man in the gospel ignored when he didn’t make good use of his gold coin. (Re: Luke 19:20-21)*

*You have been blessed with at least one gold coin. The gold coin is a beautiful symbol for the particular gift God gave you to use for the good of others. It may be the gift to teach, to console, to encourage, to heal, or even the gift of humor to make people laugh.*

*Know your gift and put it to use. It would be a great loss to you and to others if your gift were not known and so remain unused.*

*Fr. Kenneth Grabner  
Living Faith,  
Daily Catholic Devotion*

PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
5-4 thru 5-6	<p>7) Gospel Passage with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commentary</li> <li>• Themes &amp; Insights</li> <li>• The Power of Being Called</li> <li>• Group Discussion</li> </ul>	ALL	<p>[GROUP] Alternate reading aloud through end of "Commentary."</p> <p>[MOD] Read aloud "Themes and Insights" <i>SEE BELOW for additional information</i></p> <p>[ALL] Pages 229-230 in <i>Living Your Strengths</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternate reading aloud by paragraph.</li> <li>• The Moderator should read the final two paragraphs and emphasize this is a great summary of our journey together.</li> <li>• As we now know more about our God-given strengths we can better utilize them in fulfilling our callings.</li> </ul> <p>[ALL] Allow a few minutes to record responses to the two questions. There is a list of ministries on page 5-9 for participants to refer to.</p> <p><b>NOTE: We are not asking them to sign-up, but rather to identify how the particular strengths they possess can be best aligned with ministries.</b></p> <p>Discuss responses.</p>	25 Minutes (Continued)

As stated, "The multiplication of loaves and fishes is the only miracle included in all four gospels." Obviously, there are numerous miracles mentioned throughout the gospels...and some are even mentioned in three of the four gospels. However, the feeding of the multitude is the *only miracle* which is present in all four gospels (apart from the resurrection.) There may be discussion regarding five loaves vs. seven; the number fed, etc. The following table summarizes the differences.

Reference	Loaves	Fish	Fed
Matthew 14:13-21	5	2	5,000 + Women & Children
Mark 6:31-44	5	2	5,000
Luke 9:10-17	5	2	5,000
John 6:5-15	5	2	5,000
Matthew 15:32-39	7	Few small	4,000 + Women & Children
Mark 8:1-9	7	Few small	4,000

“Following Jesus is the work of a lifetime. At every step one is challenged to go further in accepting and loving God’s will.” Do you believe that you are called? What experiences in your life have reinforced or validated your faith in that call?

**THEMES & INSIGHTS**

*Community and Stewardship* are the key themes of this gospel passage and commentary.

The multiplication of loaves and fishes is the only one of the miracles included in *all four* gospels. Therefore, its message is very important.

When we are united and in communion with others, Christ will produce abundant fruit through us. He will magnify and multiply our offerings (prayers, service, time, stewardship) and efforts. A good example is Mother Teresa.

The church community is where we learn of the gifts and blessings bestowed upon us by God and how best to share them. This ministry is designed to help us discover our God-given talents and guide us in sharing and serving others. By doing this in our parish community we become more Christ-like while furthering God’s Kingdom here on earth.

**THE POWER OF BEING CALLED** [PAGES 229-230 in the *Living Your Strengths* book]**GROUP DISCUSSION**

- a. Reflecting on your increased awareness and understanding of the unique gifts God blessed you with, what will you do differently when ministering to others in our parish or at home, work, or in the community?

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- b. Which ministries best align with the strengths you possess? Why?

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PAGE	TOPIC /ACTIVITY	WHO	MODERATOR INSIGHTS	
5-7	8) What's Next?	MOD	<p>Mention each item.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If anyone is interested in being a Moderator please record their name and forward to Inner Strengths Coordinator.</li> <li>• Even if participants are not interested in moderating, ask them to spread the word about these discussion groups.</li> <li>• Remind them, especially those who may not be currently serving in a ministry, to refer to Appendix A.</li> <li>• We intend to have future strengths-related events and would like their support and participation when they occur.</li> <li>• A survey will be e-mailed to them in the near future. Ask them to PLEASE complete ASAP and submit. Their feedback is valued.</li> </ul> <p>Recognize their completion of this journey and express your appreciation for the sharing and participation.</p>	5 Minutes
	9) Intentions	ALL	<p>Ask the group to mention any special prayer intentions they have at this time.</p>	5 Minutes
	10) Closing prayer	ALL	<p>THANK YOU to all participants and moderators. The Blessed Pope John XXIII parish appreciates you!</p> <p>God Bless!</p>	5 Minutes

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**8) WHAT'S NEXT?**

- Continue to pray we all maximize our God-given strengths.
- Continue exploring and developing your unique gifts.
- Serve as Inner Strengths Moderator
- Be an Inner Strengths Ambassador
- Stewardship opportunities
- Watch for future events
- Respond to Survey

**9) INTENTIONS****10) CLOSING PRAYER**

*Lord, you have called us to be stewards  
and to form stewards.*

*Send your Spirit into our lives  
that we might better recognize  
and share the gifts  
you have lavished upon us  
and lead others to discover  
and share their gifts.*

*May we continue to look for ways  
to strengthen our ties with those  
who have already embraced stewardship  
and to discover ways to reach out to those  
for whom stewardship is not yet part of their lives.*

*And when, like the Apostles,  
we have labored through the night  
and caught nothing,  
help us to heed your call to set out into the deep  
and uncharted waters  
that our nets might be filled.*

*In all that we do,  
help us to remember that as your disciples  
we are called to do your will.  
Amen.*

***Did You Know?***

*Ministries throughout the parish are always in need of new members and active participants. We frequently hear parishioners believe ministries have ample support or are "closed" to additional members, which is never the case.*

*For instance, observing activities prior to a weekend Mass typically reveals a last-minute scramble to identify enough ushers, Eucharistic ministers, etc. Because of the hard work performed by those coordinating these activities all appears complete and calm to attendees.*

*Now that you better understand your strengths, where are you called to serve?*

**As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another  
as good stewards of God's varied grace.**

***1 Peter 4:10***



**APPENDIX A: FINDING THE RIGHT FIT**

*Use the information below to help yourself or someone you know discern ways to more fully serve in Christ's name.*

***Recall Your Experiences and Observations***

If you have never participated in ministry before, or have only done so occasionally and are ready to deepen your involvement, it may be helpful to think about the ways you have experienced or have been inspired by the ministry of others. How can you learn to grow as a servant from others?

***Who Needs You?***

- The poor, sick, lonely, young and old.
- Those who need compassion, listening or attention
- The homebound, the disabled, those who need education or companionship.
- The grieving.
- Your parish.

***Where Do You Feel Called? What Talents or Strengths Can You Offer?***

- Talk to someone at the parish who knows current ministry needs.
- Think about the areas that call to your heart, or seem to need you.
- Reflect on your talents, skills and knowledge.

***Focus on your Talents and Strengths***

- Look to your strengths, what your passion is, and what you love to do.
- What kinds of activities are you naturally drawn to?
- What kinds of activities do you seem to pick up quickly?
- In what activities did the "steps" just come to you automatically?
- In what activities do you "lose track of time?"
- During what activities have you had moments when you asked yourself "how did I do that?"
- What activities provide joy and fulfillment and either while doing them, or immediately after finishing, you say "when can I do that again?"
- Dare to dream, if time and money were no object, what would you do?

***Continue Learning More about Your Strengths to Further Affirm Your Talents***

- Get a glimpse of how others see your talents & strengths in ways you may not.

***Understand the Value of Your Active Participation in Ministry***

- Each of us has gifts to offer; each has talents upon which to draw.

***How Might You Serve?***

- Refer to the ministry list on the following page.



# Stewardship in Action Ministries

## FAITH FORMATION

- BAPTISM PREPARATION TEAM
- CATECHIST (TEACHER) / ASSISTANT
- CHILDREN’S LITURGY
- EDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL (STUDENT)
- FAITH FORMATION K-5 (STUDENT)
- YOUTH PROGRAM (HIGH SCHOOL)
- YOUTH MINISTRY VOLUNTEER
- VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL VOLUNTEER

## SACRAMENT PROGRAM

- BAPTISM
- CONFIRMATION
- FIRST EUCHARIST & RECONCILIATION
- MARRIAGE
- HOW TO BECOME A CATHOLIC (RCIA)
- CATECHISTS & SPONSORS: RCIA/SACRAMENTS

## ADULT EDUCATION

- WEEKLY SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

## WORSHIP

- ALTAR SERVERS (ENGLISH, SPANISH, VIETNAMESE)
- GREETERS (ENGLISH, SPANISH, VIETNAMESE)
- LECTORS (ENGLISH, SPANISH, VIETNAMESE)
- USHERS (ENGLISH, SPANISH, VIETNAMESE)
- SACRISTANS (ENGLISH, SPANISH, VIETNAMESE)
- ART AND ENVIRONMENT

## MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

- CHURCH
- HEALTH CARE CENTERS
- HOMEBOUND
- HOSPITAL

## MUSIC MINISTRY

- CHOIR
- CANTORS
- INSTRUMENTALS

## OUTREACH

- BLESSED LITTLE ANGELS (PRESCHOOL)
- CARE GIVER SUPPORT GROUP
- CYBERPRAYER
- EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE
- HISPANIC MASS MINISTRY
- HOSPITALITY (WEEKEND)
- INNER STRENGTHS MINISTRY
- KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
- LIBRARY MINISTRY
- MARRIAGE MINISTRY
- MEN’S GOSPEL FORUM
- MEN UNITE MINISTRY
- NEW PARISHIONER ORIENTATION & WELCOME
- RESPECT LIFE
- THRIFT STORE
- VIETNAMESE MASS MINISTRY
- WOMEN’S GUILD
- SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECTS
- GARDENING MINISTRY
- COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY
- WOMEN’S FAITH SHARING

## SOCIAL GROUPS

- SINGLES CLUB (UNDER 50)
- SINGLES CLUB (50 +)

## SPIRITUAL SERVICES

- ARIMATHEAN  
(REPRESENT PARISH AT FUNERALS)
- GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP
- FUNERAL MINISTRY  
(HELP PLAN FUNERALS)
- PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY



**REFERENCES**

1. Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC*, Harper and Row, New York, 1973, 95