



**The Lord adorn you with talents-invest them  
Code: 9/NT/6**

**1. General Aims of the unit**

Better Understanding of the teachings of gospels and the basics of the spiritual life

**2. Special aims of the lesson**

1. Explain fully the parable of the talents Matt. 25:14-30
2. Highlight the talents the Lord gives us and we are not aware of ; like our families , health , education , intelligence ,the church , Christianity , .....
3. Use examples from the NT , OT and contemporary personalities to highlight their talents and how they invest them or hid them ( St. Paul , St. Stephen , Demas ,Ananias and Sapphira , King David ,Pope Kyrillos , Habib Guirguis , .....

**3.Outcomes**

**By the end of this lesson the teens are able to:**

1. Identify the common talents and the special talents concerning each one of them.
2. Discuss as a group how to invest the different talents among yourselves and come out with some ideas to invest their talents in.
3. Summarize the talents of each character of the examples you studied and to what extent they utilize them.
4. Identify (each one) the major talent he/she has been granted, and list how he / she will utilize to please our Lord Jesus Christ.

**4.Verses:**

Matt. 25:29 ; 1Pe. 4:10

**5.References:**

Any commentary on the gospels

**LESSON MATERIAL**

**1. The Parable of the Talents (Matt 25:14-30)**

- This parable explains the use of gifts given by God. It is important to note that:
  - All of the servants were given talents, in much the same way that we have **all** been given talents by God. One talent, although it seems like a little compared

to ten talents, was still a substantial amount of many. Similarly, although we may feel that we are not as talented as other people, the Lord has undoubtedly adorned us with many talents, whether we see them or not!

- To the servant who was given five talents, the master was happy with another five, but to the servant that was given two talents, the master was happy with two. The just master does not expect the same return from the servant who was given less. He does expect, however, that regardless of what He gives to each servant, that servant will “invest” it.
- Also note that to the one who returned 5 more talents and the one who returned 2 more talents received the *same* reward: “...enter into the joy of your Lord.” (v 21 and 23). Therefore, God will **not** ask us, “Why weren’t you more talented, or have this talent rather than that one,” He is more concerned with what we are doing with the talents He gave us.
  - There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 1 Cor 12:4-6
- “Burying the talent in the ground” (v 18) is an illustration of using one’s God-given gifts for earthly pursuits. Some examples include:
  - Athleticism directed to inappropriate dancing
  - Musical talent directed into music of the world
  - Academic talent directed exclusively into worldly matters.
- The bankers (v27) represent other people who the servant could have asked for guidance on how to make the most of this talent (e.g. confession father, parents, Sunday school servants).
- This short cartoon depicts the parable in a modern way quite nicely:
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0LzqB1ehTE>

- One very important point to mention is that love is more important than talents. Immediately after addressing the various spiritual gifts given to people in 1 Cor 12, St Paul writes in chapter 13 (from verse 1): “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all **faith so that I could remove mountains**, but have not love, I AM NOTHING. (1 Cor 13: 1-2)

### **Our Hidden Gifts**

- God has blessed us with many gifts that we may take for granted or be unaware of. This is a significant problem, since it places us in the category of the third servant who buried his talent and was cast into the outer darkness. There is a beautiful prayer in the mass, just before the commemoration of the saints, where the priest prays: “grant us sufficiency of all things at all times so that we may grow in every good deed.”
  - We are very lucky in this country, and have been blessed with a loving family, a home, an education etc. So the first half of the deal has been fulfilled (sufficiency of all things at all times). The question we need to ask ourselves is whether or not we are growing in every good deed? If not, what is the difference between me and that third servant?
  - Another significant gift that has been given to us is that we are Christian and most of us were born in the church, with a strong support network pushing us to attend. What are we doing with this beautiful gift? Have we progressed spiritually to the degree that would be expected with all these resources?
    - To illustrate this point, you could compare a teenager in a third world country to the teens in your class. How difficult it is for those starving teenagers to fast for lent, to pray regularly or to attend church services. And how easy it is for our teens. They have been given ten talents in this regard, and the Lord expects an abundant return.

### **Two Case Studies**

#### **1. St. Paul**

- His gifts were:
  - i. Discipline: “They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee” (Acts 26:5)
  - ii. Zeal: “Now Saul was consenting to his (St Stephen’s) death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. (Acts 8:1)
- Initially, these gifts were used in the farthest way imaginable from what would please the Lord, but in the end, St Paul redirected all of his talents, and more, to the Way. He went on many missionary journeys, wrote 14 epistles, was persecuted himself (in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. (2 Cor 11:26) )

- The message to the teens is simple. No matter how “bad” the area they are investing their talent in is, it cannot possibly be worse than St Paul’s initial efforts! And look at how he (by the grace of God) turned it around!

## 2. A Contemporary Example

- **C.S. Lewis**
  - i. Many of the teens may have read books by C.S Lewis at school, such as “The Chronicles of Narnia” and others. However, they might not know that he is a devout Christian and has identified, improved and utilised the creative talents God gave him to spread the good news, with books like “The Screwtape Letters,” “Mere Christianity” and “The Problem of Pain.” You might want to take some of the kids to the church library (in the hall) where these books can readily be borrowed!

### Story:

Pope Kyrillos V was known to be a very Holy man with many great gifts such as a man of prayer, a man of administration etc.. however he knew he did not have the gift of public speaking.

As such he found a very gifted speaker by the name of Deacon Habib Guirgis, and at times would ask this deacon to give the sermon, even in his presence (which is something unheard of as he was a Patriarch listening to a deacon however he was a wise and humble Patriarch) at which time he would be standing and doing the sign of the cross over Deacon Habib Guirgis whilst he was giving the sermon.

Therefore he serves as a good lesson for each of us to get to know our strengths and weaknesses so we can learn to serve God to the best of our ability.

### Take home messages:

1. God has given you talents; find it, develop it and use it to glorify His name!  
(Encourage the kids to listen to sermon by Fr Anthony Messeh which is part 2 of the Shaped for significance series titled “Unwrapping your Gifts,” to elaborate further on this point.  
[http://www.orthodoxsermons.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=cat\\_view&gid=76&Itemid=26](http://www.orthodoxsermons.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=76&Itemid=26) )
2. Not knowing about your talent is NOT an excuse for not “investing” it – ask the banker!
3. You can always use your talent for the glorification of God, regardless of how impossible that seems now (look at St Paul).
4. You have been given many gifts in terms of comfort, the church etc...These are talents that MUST be invested.

### Activities

- Bring in a few apparently useless items e.g. a piece of string, a pin, and plastic bag and give the teens three minutes to come up with as many uses as they can for these items. Then explain that if a piece of string can be used in many different ways, how much more so a man? And because the mind of a man is much more advanced than

anything a piece of string possesses, is it really unreasonable to ask us to find a way to invest our talents for the glorification of the Lord?

- You may want to do a role play of the parable with 4 members of your class