

Share Your Gifts



Image: encouraging words

Note: I gave this speech at Mass during our Ministry Weekend at St. Joan of Arc Church in Aberdeen to encourage others to find their God-given gifts and share them with our parish.

You can do the same at your parish.

“Our St. Joan of Arc parish motto is “Jesus invites...St. Joan of Arc welcomes.” I witnessed this first hand when I walked through these doors on December 25, 2011. I had my husband and our two-year-old son with me and a baby in my belly. I was feeling disconnected from the church I was attending. It was a place where people showed up, said prayers, sang songs, and left. We were all connected to God, but we weren’t connected to each other.

“From the very first moment I walked into St. Joan of Arc, I felt a deeper connection to Christ because I felt connected to others who share my faith. I felt it at that first moment when I set foot into this church, as someone held open the door for my family. I was greeted by complete strangers as I took in the enormous tree in the gathering space. And no one gave a dead fish handshake during the exchange of peace. After Mass, no one rushed to their cars. There was conversation and joy radiating through the air. I came back the following week. And I’m still here.

“A little over two years later, I can say that I have found my second home. In addition to having Father Willie baptize two of my babies here, I became a St. Joan of Arc school parent and teacher. I’ve also joined the Pastoral Council, where I’m following my mom’s advice by using the talents that God gave me. I’m kind, creative, and love to bring people together to have a good time. So, I’ve chosen to focus on community building, by hosting events such as Donut Sunday and Family Movie Night to help members of the parish feel connected with each other and with Christ.

“I knew that Christmas morning that I had found the church I was looking for. I’m sure that some of the friendly faces I met that day are in this room. I also know that every person in this room was given some sort of a talent.

“Here’s my challenge to you: Ask yourself, “What can I contribute to St. Joan of Arc?”

“Do you have a beautiful voice? Sing God’s praises in our choir.

"Are you a born teacher? Consider becoming a catechist.

*"Should you be competing on Top Chef? Get some practice on our Hospitality
Committee.*

*"Maybe you're a good listener. Be the source of peace someone who's hurting needs
by volunteering for our bereavement committee.*

"Even if all you have is a truck, you can take food to someone who is hungry.

*"God made all of us unique so that we need to rely on each other to do his work.
What were you created to do for Him?"*