It’s more difficult and problematic when trying to identify spiritual gifts in young children. However, it is possible as parents and teachers observe and interact with children in play and within a variety of venues. Here are some things to look for in young children as they play. As you read the description, make note of children you think may fall into that area.

**Leading Gifts:**

**Pastor/Shepherd:** The ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the Spiritual welfare of others. Pastors nurture, care for and guide people toward progressive Spiritual maturity and becoming Christ-like.

(Jeremiah 23:4, John 10:11, Ephesians 4:11-12, I Timothy 3:2, Hebrew 13:17, I Peter 5:1-4)

**In Young Children:**

Hugs others or cries when someone is hurt. Often asks how someone hurt is doing and may want to sit or stay by them until they show signs of feeling better. Might stop playing in order to help someone. Shows a lot of empathy toward a child who is not being treated well by other children. Young children with this gift are nurturing toward dolls and great at inviting others into their play area.

**Teaching:** The ability to pass on wisdom, truth and Bible knowledge and concepts to others in a way they can easily grasp and understand. Teachers take complex things and make them simple to understand.

(Ephesians 4:11-12, I Corinthians 12:29, Romans 12:7, Acts 11:25-26, John 7:16)

**In Young Children:**

They seem to like learning and being read to. When playing, he or she will often explain a task to playmates as opposed to just doing it. They may have strong verbal skills for their developmental age. They like to correct playmates in the proper use of the toys and materials. Communicates verbally or through drawing pictures and explaining meaning to others. Excited about being read to or learning from bible storybooks. Enjoys writing, reading and listening.

**Leadership:** The ability to direct God’s people into God’s plans. Lead beyond self.

(Romans 12:8, Hebrews 13:7)

**In Young Children:**

They are problem solvers in play and can move around obstacles. They are more assertive than most young children. When in parallel play, they will come up with new ideas and try to get their playmate on board. We see others following that child’s lead in play. Likes to organize and communicate!

**Apostle:** Apostle, (greek~ “apostolos”) means, “SENT ONE”. An apostle is a messenger or ambassador. This gift is ability to inspire and develop the church and people of God through the proclamation and teaching of God’s word and truth.

(Acts 14:21-23, I Corinthians 12:28-29, Ephesians 1:1; 4:11)

**In Young Children:**

It isDifficult to test any age child for this gift. It often comes across as the leadership gift. You can’t often observe this until a person begins to express a direct call to ministry. However, look for any ability to share God’s love toward others. This child will seem to walk in exceptional authority for a little one. They seem to have a lot of ideas!

**Helper Gifts:**

**Administration:** The ability to manage, plan and orchestrate God’s purposes upon the earth. (Exodus 18:13-27, Acts 6:2-4, I Corinthians 12:28)

**In Young Children:**

Young children who have the spiritual gift of administration show an attention to detail when at play; may line cars in an exact manner, place play cups neatly on a shelf, fold doll blankets in a particular manner. Watch to see how they take care to organize play areas.

**Giving:** Ability to give with a thankful and cheerful heart from material resources for the purpose of building the kingdom. The expression of the true spiritual gift of giving comes out of and understanding that everything belongs to God.

(Mark 12:43-44, Romans 12:6-8, II Corinthians 8:2-3, 9:7)

**In Young Children**:

Most young children find sharing very difficult and they are very self-focused. A child with this gift may find it comes more easily to share toys with others and not be overly protective of his/her things. Doesn’t need to have the best in regard to toys etc. Content with what they have. They are the ones less self-focused than most children and can see the needs of others. (This will stand out because it is not natural in the young child’s developmental process).

**Helps:** Manifested in believers who invest their talents into the life and minister of others, allowing the one being served to increase n his or her own abilities.

(Act 6:2-4, I Corinthians 12:28, I Timothy 5:10).

**In Young Children:**

Will come along side other children to help them in play. They love playing with a partner. When he or she sees a playmate in need, they want to help the person directly and immediately. Consistently offers to help mommy fold clothes or daddy fix the broken chair etc.

**Compassion Gifts:**

**Healing:** The ability to be used as a conduit for God to deliver supernatural healing and wholeness to another. Matthew 10:1, Luke 4:40, Acts 3:6-9, I Corinthians 12:9, 30.

**In Young Children:**

He or she has or desires to pray for someone who has an injury. When hearing of a person’s illness, he/she most often wants to pray about it. Often remembers the sick during family prayer times. Makes faith-filled statements about God’s healing ability. Physically comforts, hugs or touches a person who is sick or hurting. This is because the laying on of hands is part of the healing equation in many cases. It is not uncomfortable or scary for them when going into a hospital. Has a deep sense of compassion! They may want to sit by someone who has hurt their knee or bumped their head.

**Mercy:** A heart for the hurting and the outcast. It shows it’s fruit in taking action to meet the needs of the hurting and despondent. Matthew 5:7, Romans 12:8, Luke 6:36, Titus 3:5.

**In Young Children:**

This is the very sensitive child. Cries or expresses emotion when others are showing their pain in words or tears. Responds to the illness of a pet in a very caring manner. Includes the outcast in games or sporting events. Asks lots of question after witnessing someone being mistreated. Seeks ways to alleviate peoples’ discomfort. More easily able to gives others a second chance than most children do.

**Insight Gifts: {Kids who carry a keen sensitivity to the spirit realm and heaven}**

**Discernment:** This allows the believers to rapidly see to the core of an issue and know the truth. (This is not finding fault in people ~ It is seeing where God is working and responding to Him and what He is doing). I Kings 3:9, Acts 5:3-6, Romans 12:2, I Corinthians 2:14, Hebrews 5:14, I John 4:1.

**In Young Children:**

These children might be more tentative than most before rushing forward into participation. May cry or want parents when near a person or child who is troubled. Is aware of spiritual attack or God’s presence on a place and may not wish to stay there or may cry. He/she may have more night terrors, which is common with many believing young children. Has a strong sense of Jesus for their age. Is perceptive and sensitive. Likes to learn through their senses. Sensitive to sound! They may claim to see angels, fire and supernatural pictures of things around the room. Stare off into space as if they are seeing something above and around them.

**Word of Knowledge:** The ability to grasp deep Spiritual truth and Spiritual insight in regard to a particular situation and knowing things without prior knowledge that only God could know.

(John 7:16-17; 17:3, I Corinthians 12:8, Ephesians 3:18-19)

**In Young Children:**

He/she says things beyond his or her years. Enjoys roleplaying, which is a way of playing out what they may know. Will convey messages on his or her developmental level that resonate with your spirit as a parent or teacher.

**Prophecy:** Those who are able to hear God’s voice above and beyond the normal frequency and expression from John 10:27, “My Sheep Hear My Voice”. It is also the ability to strengthen another person through words or perhaps physical presence. These are the encouragers bring comfort and healing to others. … They spur them on.

(I Corinthians 12:10, 29; 14:1-3, 30-33, Ephesians 4:11-12, Roman’s 12:8)

**In Young Children:**

Have deep thoughts, ideas, and dreams. Is less critical or negative than other kids. Gives well-timed encouragement using their own developmental language and is a motivator of others in play. Uses appropriate physical touch like hugs to encourage someone who is down. They may wish to work alone at times and are self motivated. Very sensitive and seem to be in tune with their 5 senses.

**Salvation Gifts:**

**Evangelism:** The ability to boldly share the message of salvation in a way that is clear, concise and effective. Evangelists not only share the gospel, but also see people make a decision for Christ. They are able to see people as God see them, as His treasures. Acts 21:8, Ephesians 4:11-12, II Timothy 4:5.

**In Young Children:**

These young ones may talk about Jesus often and seem interested in reading Bible stories about Him. They ask questions about people who may seem hurt or lost. They may respond sadly as parents or teachers talk about people in parts of the world who don’t know about Jesus.

**Prayer Gifts:**

**Intercessory Prayer:** The ability to pray at length with effectiveness, standing in the gap according to Ezekiel 22 where we see God looking for someone to stand in the gap. This is a person who loves to worship and spend time before the Lord to hear what is on His heart.

(Ezekiel 22:30, Luke 18:1, John 16:24, Ephesians 6:18, I Thessalonians 3:10-13; 5:17, Timothy 2:1-2; 5:5)

**In Young Children:**

You catch him/her praying when you are not looking. He/she offers to pray for others without prompting. Is attentive during prayer and seems to more easily believe Jesus hears our prayers. Remembers things their family or Sunday school class has prayed for in the past. They may talk about prayer a lot, and wants to pray. When praying, tend to pray longer than most kids. Displays emotions during prayer, like crying.

**Faith:** A strong belief in the promises and purposes of God. It is the ability to believe in things unseen, but also being sure of those things.

(Luke 17:5, Romans 10:17, I Corinthians 12:6, 8, I Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 3:9, Hebrew 11:6)

**In Young Children:**

He/she makes statements about how God can help us and do great things for us. Tends to walk in more boldness than others children. Seems to trust teachers and leaders more than other children.