

Take this Gift

*An installation service for new leaders by Dodie Lepp
From Walking in Love: One Body, One Spirit
Mennonite Women*

Although this program is written to welcome a new president and secretary, it can be adapted to be used for the installation of any member or members of a leadership team. It can also be used to acknowledge leaders completing a term, having them pass on the gifts needed for the task.

Advance Preparation

You will need a table with a number of prettily wrapped gifts on it. Vary the size of the boxes to make a pleasing display and to demonstrate the varying amounts of gifts required. On the side not seen by the group, write the words that depict the gifts you are giving the candidate.

Program

Leader: Think of Christmas. Or birthdays. For children, and even adults, these times in a year when we give and receive gifts are exciting days. We have trouble sleeping the night before. We're curious and hopeful, but also afraid that the gift won't be just what we want. The anticipation is almost too much to take. Then finally the gift is unwrapped! It is exactly what we hoped for or completely different from what we expected. The pride of now owning this special sign of affection is overwhelming. Today we want to seize some of that excitement as we affirm the gifts God has given women among us. How much greater are these gifts than any material thing.

Sing HWB 304 "Lift your glad voices."

Reader: *(Or in unison)* We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If your gift is prophesying, use it in proportion to your faith. If your gift is serving, serve. If it is teaching, teach. If your gift is encouraging, encourage those around you. If your gift is leadership, govern diligently. If it is showing mercy, do so cheerfully *(Rom. 12:6-8, paraphrased)*.

Leader: *(To the candidates)* You have already given us a gift in your willingness to serve. We trust that your daily walk with God has helped you grow to know that God has given you the grace to lead.

(Name), you have come today to accept the position of secretary of this group for women for the next ___ years. God has given you many gifts for this task. We want to acknowledge some that will be needed for the job. *(Leader places each labeled gift in front of the candidate with the label facing the group.)*

Listening: to hear what is being said and interpret it clearly so it can be used as a reference and learning tool.

Patience: as you write minutes and wait for responses from us.

Organization: to keep us all informed.

Faith: in us as a group and in God who will guide you.

Do you, (name), accept these gifts and this position in the spirit of love in which they are given?

Candidate: I do, and I will strive to use and develop these gifts with God's help.

Leader: (Name), you have come today to accept responsibility for the leadership of this group and become its president for the next ___ years. God has given you many gifts for this task. Many are the same as for the other positions, but we want to acknowledge some that will be required particularly for your work.

Humor: to see the light side of difficult decisions.

Understanding: to overlook criticism, gossip, and misunderstandings that may come along.

Wisdom: to see where God wants to lead us.

Joy: in serving others.

Do you, (name), accept these gifts and this position in the spirit of love in which they are given?

Candidate: I do, and I will strive to use and develop these gifts with God's help.

Group: We as a group have acknowledged the gifts God has given you and appreciate your willingness to serve. We commit ourselves to support (organization/group name) through our financial gifts and through prayer for you as you guide us.

Sing or read as a prayer HWB 383 "God, whose giving."