Bea Salazar was in physical and emotional pain. An accident at work had broken her pelvis and separated two discs in her back. The single mother of five had to rely on state aid while her body healed from surgery. One day while her kids were at school, she took out the trash and heard something in the dumpster. When she peered inside, she saw a little boy from a nearby apartment holding a dirty piece of bread in his hand. He started to cry when she took the bread because he was so hungry. Bea took him to her apartment and made him a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. When he finished, she sent him home.

About 15 minutes later, there was a knock on her door. When Bea opened it, she saw six five-year-olds standing there. "Is it true you're giving peanut butter sandwiches away?" one of the little boys asked. "No, I'm not," she said. "But if you're hungry, come on in. I'll feed you." The following day 13 hungry neighborhood kids showed up at her door. And she made them sandwiches.

Bea asked around and found out that these kids were a part of the free lunch program at school. But because it was June, they didn't have lunches provided. Their parents worked, and they had to wait till evening to eat.

Bea called the local social services agency and her church. She let it be known that she wanted to help these kids, but couldn't afford to do it alone. So for the past eight years, people have been supplying her with all of the peanut butter, jelly, and bread she needs to feed hungry neighborhood children from her home. That first summer, the kids didn't just eat and run. They stayed. They stayed to watch movies, play games, and learn about God. Bea taught them about cleanliness and got rid of their head lice. When school started they still came—now after school to receive help with their homework.

"I believe God called me to do this work," says Bea. "God needed someone to look after these kids and that someone was me. When God calls you to do something, you don't fight that. You go with it. So in 1990, I formally established a nonprofit organization called Bea's Kids."1

Bea has discovered that life is much more fulfilling when you live for God and others. She has discovered her spiritual gift in ministering to her neighborhood kids, and God has blessed her ministry.

As this week's lesson points out, discovering your unique spiritual gift isn't hard to do. Your pastor will have tools to help you discover yours. Attending a spiritual gifts seminar along with affirmation from fellow church members can help guide you.

Most importantly, ask God to lead you. Your Creator knows you better than anyone, and knows what gifts lie within you, just waiting to be used! God can do great things through us, if we are willing.

~ nc

For inspiration: 
1. Courage to Give

http://www.creativeministry.org/article/1780/store/small-group-tools/co...
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