

# Sparks

## Examples of Sparks

The sparks named by several thousand teens, as listed in *Sparks: How Parents Can Help Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers* by Peter Benson. 2008 Jossey-Bass.

### **Music: Instrumental**

Playing piano  
Playing guitar  
Playing violin  
Playing cello  
Playing saxophone  
Playing clarinet  
Playing bass  
Playing drums  
Playing percussion  
Playing trumpet  
Playing trombone  
Playing harmonica  
Playing accordion  
Other

### **Music: Conducting/Directing**

Directing a choir and/or band  
Conducting an orchestra  
Writing song lyrics and/or musical scores  
Creating beats, composing hip-hop or rap  
Other

### **Music: Performance**

Singing in a choir  
Singing or playing as a soloist  
Performing in a band and/or an orchestra  
Other

### **Art**

Painting  
Drawing/Illustrating  
Sketching

Sculpture or making pottery  
Creating graphic art  
Other

### **Writing**

Writing poetry  
Writing plays  
Writing stories  
Writing fiction  
Writing nonfiction  
Journaling  
Other

### **Dance/Movement**

Modern and/or ballroom dance  
Cheerleading  
Martial arts  
Break dancing  
Other

### **Other Creative Arts**

Cooking  
Sewing  
Fashion design  
Knitting  
Other

### **Building and Design**

Woodworking or Carpentry  
Cabinetry  
Construction  
Drafting  
Architecture  
Other

**Leadership**

Leading problem-solving for groups  
 Bringing people together  
 Motivating people  
 Guiding conflict resolution  
 Being a student-government leader  
 Engaging in civic decision making  
 Serving on committees or boards  
 Other

**Entrepreneurship**

Creating business plans  
 Marketing and/or Sales  
 Management  
 Inventing things  
 Developing new products  
 Designing services for others  
 Other

**Sports/Athletics**

Basketball  
 Football  
 Soccer  
 Tennis  
 Golf  
 Baseball  
 Softball  
 Running  
 Skateboarding  
 Skiing  
 Rowing  
 Horseback riding  
 Wrestling  
 Gymnastics  
 Bowling  
 Hockey  
 Archery  
 Conditioning  
 Swimming  
 Volleyball  
 Weight lifting  
 Other

**Learning**

Learning about science and/or math

Learning about archeology  
 Learning about history  
 Learning about literature  
 Learning about languages  
 Learning about political science  
 Learning about religion  
 Learning about psychology  
 Learning about anthropology  
 Learning about geography  
 Learning about sociology  
 Other

**Teaching and Instructing**

Teaching swimming  
 Teaching rock climbing  
 Teaching first aid  
 Teaching CPR  
 Teaching about computers  
 Teaching team or individual sports  
 Teaching academic subjects or languages  
 Other

**Relationships**

Making and supporting friends  
 Being a peacemaker  
 Showing empathy  
 Studying people  
 Other

**Serving/Helping/Volunteering**

Making my community better  
 Volunteering  
 Helping people and/or children  
 Counseling, tutoring and/or mentoring  
 Other

**Nature/Ecology/Environment**

Exploring the natural world  
 Protecting endangered species or wildlife  
 Growing and/or arranging flowers  
 Preservation and conservation  
 Landscaping or gardening  
 Other

**Animals**

Caring for animals  
 Training and/or raising animals

Animal medicine

Other

### **Computers**

Computer keyboarding and programming

Software development

Working with computer hardware

Computer repair

Web page design and graphics

Other

### **Comedy**

Making people laugh

Telling jokes or comedy improvisation

Writing sketches

Other

### **Speech**

Debate or public speaking

Broadcasting

Other

### **Spirituality**

Meditation and/or prayer

Worship and/or ritual

Sacred music

Studying sacred texts

Experiencing unity and harmony

Experiencing transcendence

Practice of yoga

Other

### **Drama/Theater**

Acting or directing

Theater lighting or set design

Other

### **Photography and Film**

Nature or portrait photography

Filmmaking and/or videography

Animation or movie production

Other

### **Committed to Living in a Specific Way**

Commitment to living with joy or passion

Commitment to supporting tolerance

Commitment to caring and being optimistic

Commitment to idealism

Other

### **Reading**

Reading fiction or nonfiction

Reading poetry or memoirs

Reading biographies or autobiographies

Other

### **Advocacy**

Advocating for social justice or environment

Advocating for children or school reform

Other

### **Family**

Learning family history

Helping family members

Being with and/or celebrating family

Other

### **Outdoor Life**

Fishing and/or hunting

Camping

Hiking

Bicycling

Other

### **Journalism**

Newscasting

News writing

News editing

Radio and TV production

Other

### **Mechanics/Engineering**

Electronics or machine repair

Auto mechanics or customizing automobiles

Car audio engineering

Bridge and highway design

Other

### **Solving Social Problems**

Solving global warming or pollution

Solving poverty or homelessness

Solving racism

Solving the problem of at-risk children

Other