


A Prophetic Vision's Power

This week's scripture passages speak to the power of love, giving us vision, bringing joy in times of struggle, shaping us as a community, and grounding our faith in a practice that confronts injustice with a bold but straightforward proposition: love.



Focus scripture
Deuteronomy
34:1–12

Additional scriptures
Psalm 90:1–6, 13–17
1 Thessalonians 2:1–8
Matthew 22:34–46

 *Seasons of the Spirit*
is based on semi-
continuous readings of the
Revised Common Lectionary.

Focus scripture: Deuteronomy 34:1–12

If ever there was a time for Moses to experience heartbreaking disappointment, the events in this week's reading is such a time. Moses has invested his entire adult life leading the people on a long 40-year journey through the wilderness. Again and again the people lost faith, breaking covenant with each other and with God, believing the certainty of imperial oppression was better than the uncertainty of this wilderness journey. In spite of their betrayals, Moses remained an unflinching advocate for the people, never relinquishing the vision of freedom that God had given him and the people. The journey, however, was enough to exhaust and deplete the most dedicated and faithful of leaders.

Now, Moses finds himself on a mountaintop, looking out at the promised land, having been told by God that this is where his journey will end. There will be for Moses no celebratory crossing of the Jordan River. There will be no tasting the ripe, juicy grapes and the sweet honey about which they had dreamed as they wandered in the wilderness, munching on the same old mana, day after day. Moses is only offered a vision of the promised land. Yet, according to the text, the vision seems to be more than enough. You can almost hear Moses say, as Martin Luther King Jr. would say years later, just before his assassination, "I have seen the promised land, I may not get there with you, but I want you to know that we, as a people, will get to the promised land."

Moses has every reason to feel exhausted, tired, discouraged and heartbroken, but we are told that "his sight was unimpaired, and his vigour had not abated." For Moses, the vision of the promised land was never limited to the physical territory the people were about to enter. The promised land resided in the promise of freedom and justice for all people.

This is something the Israelites, including the author of Deuteronomy, would forget, as the Deuteronomist goes on to recount a story of genocide and the same imperial, brutal practices toward the Canaanites as had been experienced by the Israelites in Egypt. Yet in spite of the never-ending allure that systems of dominations can provide, neither the Israelites nor the Deuteronomist could forget the prophetic power of the vision by which Moses guided the people.

Psalm 90:1–6, 13–17 is a selection of verses from the only psalm attributed to Moses, or at the very least in remembrance of Moses. With unflinching honesty, the psalm speaks of disappointment and failure, but also the steady joy that comes from trusting the liberating vision given by God.

In **1 Thessalonians 2:1–8**, Paul rejects imperial, hierarchical authority, which he says he could claim if he were inclined. Instead, Paul's gospel model is a gentle authority, like that of a mother nursing a child.

Matthew 22:34–46 reflects the tension, conflict, and contradiction between an imperial theology of hierarchy and the realm of God. The Good News theology proclaimed by Jesus centred in love of God and love of neighbour"

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It is the vision of freedom and promise rather than life turning out precisely as Moses expects and desires that gives Moses hope. He could live with discouragement, frustration and betrayal because the vision God had given them as a community was intended as a blessing for all people, and this vision never loses its force or power. It is this same vision that is the source of life and strength for the psalmist, for Paul, and for Jesus as he confounds those whose lives are governed by imperial rules rather than the power of love.

**Creator of life,
you set before us
the promise of
freedom and the
opportunity to
live in a just and
compassionate
relationship with
one another and all
of life. Thank you
for the prophetic
voices who remain
empowered by the
vision of a land of
promise for all, and
who call upon us to
join our voice with
theirs. Amen.**

Lesson Connection
links current events
with this week's
scriptures. Go to www.seasonsonline.ca and
click on the link.

The Focus for Ages 3–5

For materials for Reformation Day, go to www.seasonsonline.ca, click on the Library tab.

Children know from their own life experiences what it means to pass something on. As they grow, they may be used to either passing on clothes to a sibling or receiving them. They are able to understand that when one child has finished with an item, it's time to pass it on to a younger brother or sister. Perhaps they are used to the idea of passing on stories from one generation to the next. They may have been the recipients of a faith story from a member of an older generation – a treasure passed on to those who come next.

The idea of the role of leadership being passed on from Moses to Joshua is more abstract, but not out of the reach of the children when you fill out the definition of leadership by talking about “the one in charge.” The act of passing on becomes concrete as the children hear that Moses is giving his blessing to Joshua, so that Joshua can take over the leadership of the community. Pray that the children will see that they are part of a community of faith in which stories are passed on from one generation to another.

Prepare

Before the session

- ❑ Read and prayerfully reflect on this week's focus scripture, Deuteronomy 34:1–12, and [biblical background](#) material (p. 45).
- ❑ Set a worship space with green cloth, candle, offering basket, and Bible with bookmark in focus passage.
- ❑ Bring [basic supply kit](#) (p. 2) and, if possible, *Seasons Growing Faith (SGF) Songbook*, *Seasons Growing Faith (SGF) Music CD*, *Seasons Songbook* and *Seasons CD*, Vol. 9; and CD or MP3 player; downloadable sheet music and MP3 recordings are available at www.seasonsonline.ca.

Gather

- ❑ Bring “Gathering song” (on resource sheet “[Additional Songs and Poems](#),” p. 76) or “A Little Peace Song” (p. 5 in *SGF Songbook*; #1 on *SGF Music CD*).
- ❑ Option: bring a puppet (see information on p. 2).

Engage

- ❑ Bring blanket and resource sheet “[Moses Blesses Joshua](#).”
- ❑ Review information on resource sheet “[Storytelling Boxes](#)” (p. 78); prepare a box for this week, with the figures of “Moses #1,” “Moses #2,” “Joshua,” and “group of people” (enlarged as much as possible), and piece of felt cut in the shape of a mountain.

- ❑ Option: prepare materials for individual [storytelling boxes](#) (see p. 78).
- ❑ Bring sheet of poster board with the images of “The Ten Commandments,” “The golden calf statue,” and “Seeing God's Glory” from poster [Storytelling Resources #2](#); bring this week's image of “Moses blesses Joshua.”
- ❑ Bring song, “Shout It Out” (on resource sheet “[Additional Songs and Poems](#),” p. 76).

Respond

Choose from the options provided. Prepare and bring the materials.

- ❑ **Pew cards:** copies of “Option A” from resource sheet “[Respond Options](#)”; cut two cards for each child.
- ❑ **Music:** lyrics and recording for song, “Pass It On” (p. 26 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 9; #7 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 9)
- ❑ **Blessing bags:** small paper bags, copies of “Option B” from resource sheet “[Respond Options](#)”; print “Blessing bag” on each paper bag and cut out a set of blessing strips for each child.

Bless

- ❑ Bring “Blessing song” (on resource sheet “[Additional Songs and Poems](#),” p. 76) or song, “Jump for Joy” (pp. 14–15 in *SGF Songbook*; #10 on *SGF Music CD*).

For groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds, supplemental resources can be downloaded from the Library at www.seasonsonline.ca.
user name: spirit
password: child



A Prophetic Vision's Power

Scripture

Deuteronomy
34:1-12

FOCUS To celebrate the passing on of faith from one generation to another

Gather

Welcome each child, saying "Hello, *(child's name)*, we're happy you're here."

Opening ritual

Gather around the worship space. Say,

**The colour green reminds us
to grow in God's way** *(point to the green cloth).*
**The Bible is a book of stories about God
and of people who loved God** *(point to Bible).*
**The light of the candle reminds us
of God's love** *(light the candle).*

Sing "Gathering song" (p. 76) or "A Little Peace Song" (p. 5 in *SGF Songbook*, #1 on *SGF Music CD*).

Pray Loving God,
thank you for this place.
Thank you for stories
that tell us about your love. Amen.

Extinguish the candle to signal that the opening ritual has ended.

Moving into the theme

Choose one of the following:

☐ Puppet conversation

Priscilla: Hi, everybody. Last night I slept at my grandma's house. We had so much fun together.

Leader: That's nice, Priscilla. What did you do?

Priscilla: We did a lot of singing, and my Grandma taught me a silly song. *(Sing or say the words for "Pop goes the weasel" printed below.)*

Leader: Boys and girls, what are some funny songs that your parents or grandparents have passed on to you? *(Encourage responses.)* Today we're going to hear a story about someone named Moses who passed a special blessing on to another person. *(Say goodbye to Priscilla.)*

All around the mulberry bush *(crouch down low).*
The monkey chased the weasel.
The monkey thought t'was all in fun.
POP! Goes the weasel! *(Jump up high.)*

- ☐ **Action song** Teach the children the words and actions for the song, "Pop goes the weasel" (above). Invite the children to share other action rhymes that someone has taught them, or passed on to them. Explain that today we're going to hear a story about someone named Moses who passed a special blessing on to another person.

Engage

Before the story

Spread the blanket on the floor, gather in a circle, and invite a child to bring the Bible from the worship table and open it to the book of Deuteronomy. Explain that this book has stories about God's people that have been passed on from generation to generation. Place the Bible and the storytelling box in the middle of the circle.

The Bible story

Use the resource sheet "[Moses Blesses Joshua](#)," based on **Deuteronomy 24:1-12**, and the items from the box to tell the story.

Poster ritual Invite a child to glue the image of "Moses blesses Joshua" (from the poster [Storytelling Resources #2](#)) in the bottom right corner of the

poster board. Look together at the finished poster, with the images of the ten commandments (rules about God's loving way), the golden calf (a story helping us to see that what we do matters to God), a figure of Moses as he teaches people about God, and this week's figures of Moses and Joshua, who was going to be the new leader.

Retelling the story (optional) Distribute the small storytelling boxes and review the story pieces. Encourage children to use these props as you read again the story on the resource sheet "[Moses Blesses Joshua](#)."

After the story

Song Lead the children in singing the song, "[Shout It Out](#)" (p. 76).

Respond

Choose from the following activities:

- ☐ **Pew cards** Children can share the good news of God's love with other members of the church family. Give each child two cards from "Option A" of the resource sheet "[Respond Options](#)" to decorate. If possible, take children into the sanctuary after the worship service to place one of their cards in the pew racks. Encourage them to take their other card home to share with their family.



- ☐ **Music** Songs help us to share the good news of God's love. Lead the children in singing the song, "Pass It On" (p. 26



in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 9) or listen to the song together (#7 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 9), about passing on Jesus' teachings about God's love.

- ☐ **Blessing bags** Joshua received a blessing from Moses. Distribute blessing strips from "Option B" on the resource sheet "[Respond Options](#)" and read the words aloud: *You are special to God. Be strong and have courage knowing God loves you.* Distribute paper bags and invite children to decorate the bags and their blessing strips. Encourage them to pass on a blessing strip to each member of their family.

Bless

Gather in the worship space and light the candle.

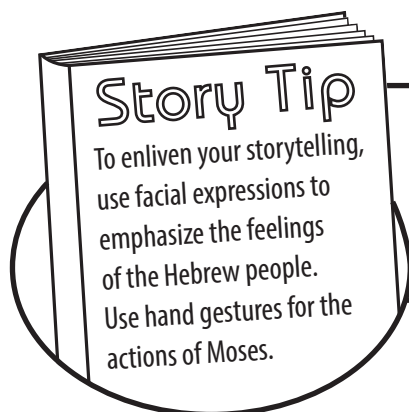
Pray Dear God, thank you for being with us.
Thank you for caring for us
through the love of our families. Amen.

Blessing Lead the group in the "[Blessing song](#)" (p. 76) or the song, "Jump for Joy" (pp. 14-15 in *SGF Songbook*, #10 on *SGF Music CD*).

Send each child out with the words, "(Child's name), you bless others with your caring love."

Reflect

Think about the stories, songs, and poems you have been telling the children in your group. In what ways can you encourage them to keep them and pass them on? What stories of faith do you treasure?



Moses Blesses Joshua

(based on Deuteronomy 34:1-12)

(Open the storytelling box. Remove the figures of Moses #1, Moses #2, Joshua, and group of people and place them nearby. Place them on the blanket at the appropriate times in the story.)

Moses was the leader of the people of Israel. Moses helped the people travel to a new land. They had many adventures along the way. *(Place Moses #1 on the blanket.)* But now Moses was growing very old. *(Replace Moses #1 with Moses #2.)* His hair was long and grey. His beard was long and grey. He walked slowly and talked slowly too.

One day Moses called all the people together. *(Place group of people near Moses #2.)* Moses said to the people, "Friends, I am growing very old. I have led you for many years. We have walked together, and we have talked together for many moons. Now I am feeling tired and I need to rest."

The people started to whisper. "Who will lead us now? Who will be in charge?" they said to each other. The people felt worried.

Moses heard their whispers and felt their worry. "Dear friends," Moses said with a

smile. "God will take care of you. There will be a new leader, someone younger who can continue walking with you and showing you the way to go."

Moses invited Joshua to come and stand beside him. *(Place Joshua beside Moses #2.)* The people looked at Joshua. They weren't sure that this was the right person to lead them. They loved Moses. Moses was their leader!











Moses said, "This is Joshua. He is a good listener and a smart thinker. He will be a great leader."

Joshua knelt down in front of Moses. Moses put his hands on Joshua's head and said, "I will bless you, Joshua. Be strong and be brave. You will lead the people to the land God has promised to them. You will continue telling people about God's love. And God will be with you and keep you safe."

The people started to smile. They knew that Moses was right. God would be with them and God would take care of their new leader, Joshua.



Respond Options

Option A	Option B
 <p>God blesses you.</p>	 <p>You are special to God. Be strong and have courage knowing God loves you.</p>
	 <p>You are special to God. Be strong and have courage knowing God loves you.</p>
	 <p>You are special to God. Be strong and have courage knowing God loves you.</p>
 <p>God blesses you.</p>	 <p>You are special to God. Be strong and have courage knowing God loves you.</p>
	 <p>You are special to God. Be strong and have courage knowing God loves you.</p>
 <p>God blesses you.</p>	 <p>You are special to God. Be strong and have courage knowing God loves you.</p>
	 <p>You are special to God. Be strong and have courage knowing God loves you.</p>

Additional Songs and Poems

Welcome song

(tune: "London Bridges")

Welcome, welcome, we are here!
Clap your hands! Shout a cheer!
We'll sing and pray and learn today,
to live and grow in God's good way.

Parting poem

Where do we see God? (*Shrug shoulders.*)
Let's look all around. (*Shade eyes with hand.*)
God's love is there, shining through,
in me (*point to self*) and in you (*point to others*).

Where do we find God? (*Shrug shoulders.*)
Let's look all around. (*Shade eyes with hand.*)
God's love can be found,
the whole wide world around (*spread arms wide*).

God Is with Us

(tune: "B-I-N-G-O")

God's with me and (*point to self*).
God's with you and (*point to another*).
God is with us always (*make a circle with arms*).
Yes, yes, when we love (*clap for each word*),
Yes, yes, when we care (*clap for each word*),
Yes, yes, when we help (*clap for each word*),
God's with us every day (*place hands over heart*).

Gathering song

(tune: "Jesus Loves Me")

Thank you for this lovely day (*arms held wide*).
Thank you for the ways to pray (*hand together*).
Thank you for the friends we see (*wave to each other*).
Thank you for your love for me (*hug self*).
Yes, God, we thank you (*hands out, palms up*).
Yes, God, we thank you (*hands out, palms up*).
Yes, God, we thank you (*hands out, palms up*).
We thank you every day (*hands over heart*).

Blessing song

(tune: "The Wheels on the Bus")

Now let's go out to share God's love,
share God's love, share God's love.
Every day, in every way,
let's share God's love with all.
(Repeat if desired, substituting the last line with phrases, such as "Let's be a friend to all" or "Let's show our care for all" or "Let's try and help someone.")

Shout It Out

(tune: "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

Share, share, share God's love,
share God's love today.
Shout it out and tell your friends,
God's love is here to stay!

Ten Young Bridesmaids

(Start by holding up 10 fingers. Put one finger down as each bridesmaid runs out of oil.)

- 10 young bridesmaids with lamps burning fine.
One ran out of oil and then there were 9.
- 9 young bridesmaids said, "The bridegroom is late."
One ran out of oil and then there were 8.
- 8 young bridesmaids said, "Now it's past eleven."
One ran out of oil and then there were 7.
- 7 young bridesmaids, with brightly burning wicks.
One ran out of oil and then there were 6.
- 6 young women asked, "When will he arrive?"
One ran out of oil and then there were 5.
- 5 young bridesmaids, standing in the room.
"Finally he's coming! Here comes the groom."
- 5 young bridesmaids with lamps burning bright,
went to the wedding and shared their light.

Just like the bridesmaids, we make choices, too.
We can let our lights shine depending on what we do.



STORYTELLING BOXES

During the month of October, we will hear several stories of Moses and the Hebrew people. Each week the children will march in a parade formation around the room until the music ends and everyone has arrived in the story area. A plain-coloured blanket is then spread on the floor, everyone sits around it, and a special storytelling box is placed beside you. The area in the middle of the blanket will be used for the story figures and props that are in the storytelling box.

Decorate a box (such as a shoebox with a lid) in any way you choose. The lid should be done separately so it can be removed easily to reveal the contents inside the box. As you tell a story, pull out the figures or objects as they relate to the story.

After the story, there is an optional activity whereby the children could have their own small

storytelling boxes. Each child would be given a box and the appropriate figures or objects for that day's story. (Copy and cut out the story figures found on this page. For extra durability, consider gluing the figures to poster board or construction paper before cutting them out.)

Items needed each week

October 4: Moses #1, group of people, felt mountain, at least ten red paper hearts

October 11: Moses #1, group of people, golden calf, felt mountain

October 18: Moses #1, group of people, felt tent

October 25: Moses #1, Moses #2, Joshua, group of people, felt mountain

Story Figures

