

The Prophets

We have come a long way in time and space since creation. The People of God have been led out of slavery, ruled their own country, were defeated, carried off into exile, and returned to rebuild the temple and Jerusalem. God has been with them all the way—but they have not always been with God. The prophets' job was to show the people, the king and the priests when they turned away from God.

The role of prophets changed over time. In ancient Israel, a judge was like a priest, a ruler and a prophet all in one person. After Samuel anointed Saul, kings began to rule. The priests led the people in worship. At that time, prophets arose to challenge the kings, the priests and the people. After the exile there were no more independent kings, and the priests needed support to help the people keep their identity. The role of the prophets was absorbed into the role of the priest.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense *relives*—the experience of today's Godly Play presentation. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today's story?

Just listen. This is *not* a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or

her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to *listen* in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today's presentation offered below. Whether you read the lesson or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today's lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the presentation can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying "Amen."

The Presentation

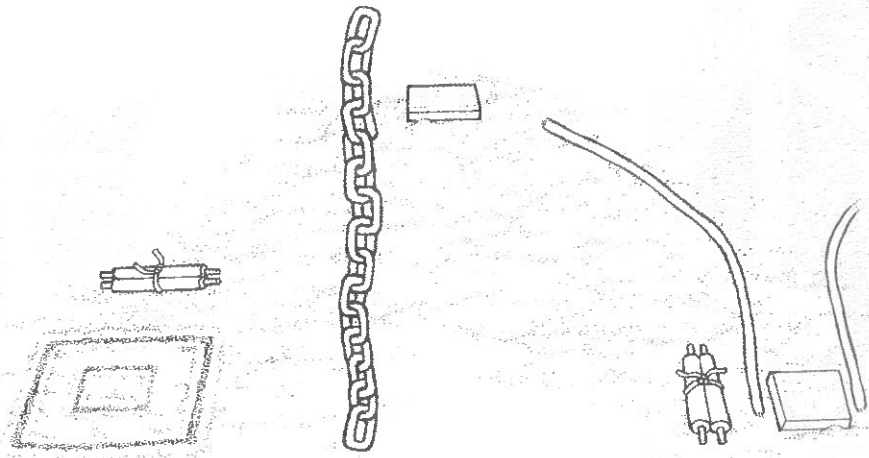
Sometimes the People of God forget who they are. They hide from God, and pretend that God isn't there. Sometimes they even worship other gods.

There are also people who come so close to God, and God comes so close to them, that they know what God wants them to say or do. These people are called *prophets*. They know the best way. Both men and women are prophets, so both boys and girls can grow up to be prophets.

Prophets spoke to the kings, to the people and even to the priests. Sometimes, like with Elijah and Elisha, their words were either lost or never written down.

Wondering

- **I wonder** what you like best about the prophets?
- **I wonder** what's most important about the prophets?
- **I wonder** if you know any prophets, or if any prophets know you?
- **I wonder** if the prophets in the Bible are all the prophets we need?



Others wrote down what God told them to say, or some of their friends wrote down their words.

Here are the words of the prophet Amos:

I hate, I despise your feasts,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Take away from me the noise of your songs;
To the melody of your harps I will not listen.
But let justice roll down like waters,
And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (Amos 5:21, 23-24).

Today there are still prophets. They speak to the rulers, to the priests and ministers and rabbis, and to the people, to tell them what God wants them to say and do. Prophets come from all kinds of places and are all kinds of people—just like you. So some of you may become prophets too.

Godly Play Liturgical Actions

In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. A few Godly Play lessons explore liturgical actions. Liturgical actions help integrate our sense of identity (given through sacred stories), of the creative process (given through parables), and of the unspoken presence of God (given through silence). In liturgical actions, we mark life, time and space, so children can know the Holy. As in the great liturgical actions of the whole Church, Godly Play liturgical actions evoke a wholehearted aesthetic appreciation of "Ahh..."

Godly Play lessons are not the liturgy itself. Neither are Godly Play lessons simply talking *about* the liturgy. That kind of scholarly approach would not invite children to enter deeply into the offered experience. Instead, Godly Play liturgical action lessons present a kind of language-learning. Children can learn how liturgy works and have an appropriate place to practice the language and actions of liturgy, so they can enter more fully into the worship experience of their church.