

YEAR C | QUARTER 2

13

God's Special Messenger

Grace in Action
We are grateful for the gift of prophecy.

POWER TEXT

"Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

KEY REFERENCES

- Revelation 12:17; Revelation 19:10
- *Early Writings,* pp. vii-32
- *The Acts of the Apostles,* chap. 5, pp. 47-56
- no reference in *The Bible Story*
- student story on page 142 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 18, The Gift of Prophecy
- No. 13, The Remnant and Its Mission
- No. 1, The Holy Scriptures

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God has given humanity a special gift through which He can communicate with His people.
- **Feel** grateful for God's special attempts to communicate with His children.
- **Respond** by having an increased respect for the gift of prophecy as manifested in the writings of Ellen White.

POWERPOINT

God gave a special gift of prophecy for the church today.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Our power text tells us that God never does anything big that affects all of humanity without telling His children what He is doing. As a church we are especially blessed by the special gift of prophecy. At times when His people need Him most, God intervenes to guide and direct them. Through this gift God gives specific guidance for the end-time and help to face the difficult times in which we live.

This is a lesson about grace in action.

God's gifts of love to undeserving humankind include the special gift of prophecy, which helps to guide us in our worship, our relationships as a community of believers, and our service to a world lost in sin.

Teacher Enrichment

"After I came out of vision, everything looked changed; a gloom was spread over all that I beheld. Oh, how dark this world looked to me. I wept when I found myself here, and felt homesick. . . . I told the view to our little band in Portland, who then fully believed it to be of God. That was a powerful time. . . . About one week after this the Lord gave me another view and showed me the trials I must pass through, and that I must go and relate to others what He had revealed to me, and that I should meet with great opposition and suffer anguish of spirit by going. But said the angel, 'The grace of God is sufficient for you; He will hold you up.'

"After I came out of this vision, I was exceedingly troubled. My health was very poor, and I was but seventeen years old. . . . I went to the Lord in prayer and begged Him to lay the burden on someone else. . . . I lay upon my face a long time, and all the light I could get was, 'Make known to others what I have revealed to you'" (*Early Writings,* p. 20).

What effect does God's gift of prophecy have in my life? How am I willing to ask God to open my heart and mind more fully to the blessings of His special gift?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice. »

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. "My Best Guess"* *B. Silhouette*	pillowcase, rope or tie, 20 different small objects sheet (or projection screen), strong light (optional: hats, blankets, wigs, etc.)
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 137. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, offering plate/basket, container with lock, paper, pencils, world map, pushpins
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	 Bibles Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenario*	Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Pass It On*	one copy per student of *Steps to Christ* or a copy of the chapter "The Privilege of Prayer"
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:

- ☐ pillowcase
- ☐ rope OR tie
- ☐ 20 different small objects

"My Best Guess"

In advance, prepare a pillowcase tied firmly at the top, with 20 small objects inside. Divide the students into two groups and place the pillowcase at the other end of the room. When you say, "Go," the first student should go and feel the pillowcase. After identifying one of the objects (this will be a guess), the student goes back to the team and writes it down. The next person goes and tries to identify a different object. Do this until one team has guessed (or has had a chance to guess) all the objects or after an agreed-upon time limit. The winning team is the one that meets whichever criterion you have chosen.

Debriefing

Ask: **What made identifying all the things in the bag difficult?** (We could only feel the objects; didn't have all the information needed to know for sure; couldn't see through the bag.) **How is that like being human?** (We don't always have all the information. We are limited in our knowledge of spiritual things.) **How did you feel when you were trying to guess?** (confused, frustrated) **How did you feel when you finally saw the objects?** (relieved, upset)

Say: **Just as you couldn't see through the bag to identify everything correctly, it's not easy to understand everything about God, because we can't talk with Him face to face. But God has given us a special gift of prophecy to help us. Our power point this week is:**

God gave a special gift of prophecy for the church today.

B

YOU NEED:

- ☐ sheet OR projection screen
- ☐ strong light
- ☐ (optional: hats, blankets, wigs, etc.)

Silhouettes

Hang a sheet across one corner of the room (or use a projection screen). Place a strong light behind it. Before class, arrange for some students (or other church members) to be available, without being noticed, to get between the light and the sheet, one at a time. Before turning on the bright light, ask the seated students to guess who is standing behind the sheet. Then turn on the light. Ask the audience to guess again. (Optional: You may want to make it more difficult by providing "props," such as hats, blankets, wigs, etc., so that the persons behind the sheet can disguise their silhouettes.)

Debriefing

Ask: **What made it difficult to recognize the people behind the screen? What difference did the light make?**

Say: **Sometimes we find it hard to know what God wants us to do. To help us, God has given us the gift of prophecy. Just as the light behind the screen gives us silhouettes, which allow us to see a clear outline of the person behind the screen, the gift of prophecy shines on the Bible so we will read it and can understand God better.**

(Optional: Ask: **To what or to whom can you compare the people who used hats and wigs to disguise their silhouettes?** [false doctrines, interpretations, and prophecy; Satan and/or his followers, such as hypocrites, clairvoyants, psychics, fortunetellers, New Age practitioners, etc.])

Say: **We're going to learn more in today's lesson. Our power point this week is:**

God gave a special gift of prophecy for the church today.

Prayer and Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"I Will Sing of the Mercies of the Lord" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 15)
"Father, I Adore You" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 32)
"I Just Came to Praise the Lord" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 16)
"Behold What Manner of Love" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 42)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map and push pins

Use Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. For the mission story, have a map of the world where the students can identify the location of the mission story and compare it to where they are. You could use pushpins to mark where the mission story takes place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate/basket

Say: **Giving our offerings is one way of responding to God's grace. Our offerings help others to learn about God and the wonderful way He can help them in their lives.**

Prayer

YOU NEED:
- ☐ container with lock
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

Ask the students to think of future events that they are concerned about, such as exams, choosing careers, and family situations. Ask them to write one or more of their concerns on a piece of paper and then place them in a container with a lock, which you have placed nearby. Pray for the concerns in the container. At the end of the prayer take the key out of the lock.

Say: **When we hand our fears over to Jesus it's just like locking them up and throwing away the key. He takes care of the future, and we don't need to worry about it anymore.**

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Ask the students to think of the person on their right and imagine what they will be doing in 20 years, where they will live, what job they will have, whether they will be married, how many children they will have, etc. Allow a few minutes and then go around the group and listen to their thoughts.

Ask: **Can we really know what is going to happen in the future? Why do people want to know what is going to happen in the future? God gives us guidance so we can understand more about Jesus and be prepared for His return, even though we don't know all the details of what it will be like.**

Note:

This is a very important lesson for the students to understand that God used Ellen White. You may want to use additional resources about Ellen White as a child so the students can relate to her.

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles

Experiencing the Story

Read the following definition or say it in your own words: **"The word 'prophecy' describes any inspired message communicated by God through a prophet. . . . Prophecy may be a prediction of future events, though more commonly it is not. The expression 'spirit of prophecy' refers specifically to the 'manifestation of the Spirit' in the form of a special gift of the Holy Spirit that inspires the recipient and enables him to speak authoritatively as a representative of God (1 Corinthians 12:7-10) when 'moved by the Holy Ghost' to do so (2 Peter 1:21)"** (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 876).

Ask volunteers to find and read the following verses. Follow each reading with the question provided. Encourage input and discussion after each text and question.

1. Amos 3:7. Ask: **According to this verse, why has God given the gift of prophecy?** (To communicate with us, to keep us informed, to help us understand His Word and His plans for us.)

2. Joel 2:28-31. Ask: **Who can receive the gift of prophecy?** (anyone, young, old, male, female)

3. Acts 2:2-21. Ask: **What happened when the Spirit descended in this case and inspired and enabled these disciples to "speak authoritatively" as representatives of God?** (They were able to tell everyone about Jesus, and do it so that everyone could hear in their own language and take the message back home with them.)

4. Revelation 19:10. Ask: **What will prophecy be about?** (It will be whatever Jesus wants to communicate to the church to help its members have a relationship with Him and understand the signs of His soon return for us.)

5. Matthew 24:11, 24. Ask: **What danger is there regarding prophecy?** (False prophets can pretend to have the Spirit and try to speak error authoritatively. That is why we must test the messages of people who claim to be prophets. See Exploring the Bible below.)

Debriefing

Ask: **How many of you know who Ellen White is, and how she relates to this topic we have been studying?** As needed, share with your students the same information, in your own words, that Mrs. Cristobal gave to her class in the student story for this week.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

Exploring the Bible

Have the students work in small groups with an adult facilitator to find and discuss answers to the following questions.

Ask: **What are we advised to do when we come across prophecies?**

1 Thessalonians 5:20-22 (Test everything.)

What are some biblical guidelines by which to distinguish between a true and a false prophet?

Isaiah 8:20 and James 1:17 (They do not contradict what the Spirit has given before—in other words, they will agree with the Bible.)

Deuteronomy 18:21, 22 (Their predictions come true.)

1 John 4:2, 3 (They recognize Jesus' incarnation—that Jesus is God, a full member of the Godhead, which consists of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.)

Matthew 7:16, 18-20 (They live good lives, following God's plan for all of us.)

(For further information, or to expand your discussion, see *Seventh-day Adventists Believe,* pp. 247-261.)

God gave a special gift of prophecy for the church today.

Accommodation for students with special needs: Use the Bibles with tabs to help students who don't know all the books of the Bible to become familiarized with them.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Scenario

Read the following aloud to your students: **A news report announced that the prediction of a self-proclaimed prophet about the end of the world proved to be a hoax. At school everyone is discussing sects and modern prophets. Then one of your friends remembers hearing that your church has a prophet. Soon there are three or four people making fun of you. What can you say?**

Debriefing

Review the tests of a true prophet (in the Bible Exploration). Encourage all to participate in putting together a simple answer. Write the summary on the board.

Ask: **How can we be confident that what we believe is right?** (by faith in the Scriptures)

Say: **Repeat today's power text with me:**

"Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ one copy per student of *Steps to Christ* OR a copy of the chapter "The Privilege of Prayer"

Steps to Christ

Give each student a paperback copy of *Steps to Jesus* (simplified version), *Steps to Christ,* or photocopy the chapter "The Privilege of Prayer," pages 93-104. Explain that this is something Ellen White wrote to help us have a better friendship with Jesus. Ask them to read it during the week.

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you feel knowing that God loves you so much that He has given you this special gift of prophecy?**

Encourage each student to share something they learn from reading *Steps to Christ* with a friend or someone in their family this week. Tell the students that you will ask them to share the following Sabbath what they learned.

Ask: **How can we have confidence in what we are reading?** (by faith that God sent it)

Say: **Let's say together the power text for this week:**

"Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

Remember:

God gave a special gift of prophecy for the church today.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Ask: **How do you feel about knowing that God cares for us so much that He communicates with us, His friends, through a special gift? Let's say a prayer of thanks for His communication to us and ask that He will help us to listen to His guidance.**

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php ?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **God is at the center of the world's creation. We acknowledge Him as our Creator when we worship Him.**

Notes

Student lesson

God's Special Messenger

Imagine you know that something bad is going to happen in your neighborhood. You know that if people follow some very simple rules, they will be safe. What would you do? God knows that sin is destroying the world. He has given a special gift of prophecy to the church. This helps His people get ready for His return when He will take them home.

Kevin was a visitor. He had just started to come to church and did not know much about the Bible. This Sabbath his teacher, Mrs. Cristobal, had promised that there would be time to ask any questions they wanted about the Bible.

Kevin could hardly wait until question time. As soon as Mrs. Cristobal asked, "Any questions?" Kevin called out, "I have one."

"OK, Kevin, let's hear it," said Mrs. Cristobal with a smile.

"I keep hearing people talk about 'Mrs. White.' I want to know who she is and how she fits in with the Bible."

"Good question, Kevin," replied Mrs. Cristobal. "Class, who can help Kevin with the answer?"

"I can," said Erica, waving her hand. "God gave her the gift of prophecy. In the early 1840s there was a group of people who believed that Jesus was going to come on October 22, 1844. Ellen was one of those people. When Jesus didn't come, she was really disappointed like everyone else. Lots of people stopped believing, but she did not. She studied the Bible with other believers and realized that no one could set a date for Jesus' return to earth."

"Yes, but what does that have to do with prophecy?" interrupted Simon.

"I was coming to that," continued Erica. "Jesus sent a vision for the disappointed believers to a man called Hazen Foss. But he was afraid to tell anyone about it. Then he had another vision. In the new vision he was warned that if he did not tell others, God would use the weakest of the weak to deliver His message. But Foss still refused to talk about it."

"So Ellen White was the weakest of the weak?" asked Kevin. "Why?"

"She was only 17 when God called her," answered Mrs. Cristobal. "When Ellen was a child, she was hit in the face by a stone, and that accident left her very weak for the rest of her life. She barely attended school, so she was definitely not the kind of person you would expect to deliver messages from God."

"Why did God need to send more messages to us? Was the Bible not enough?" asked Kevin.

"Let's see what the Bible says," replied Mrs. Cristobal. "Look at the last book of the Bible, in Revelation 12:17. The apostle John is describing God's church at the end of time. What are the two things that are special about the church?" The sound of flipping pages stilled as the students found the text.

"They keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus," Kevin said. "I know what the commandments are, but what is the testimony of Jesus?"

"Look at Revelation 19:10. It tells us that Jesus communicates with His church through the gift of prophecy. He sends the Holy Spirit to give messages to a person He has chosen to speak for Him," answered Mrs. Cristobal.

"How can we know that Ellen White was one of those people, chosen for this time? I've read Jesus' words that there would be false prophets at the end of time," said Sylvia, looking a bit puzzled.

"Yes, that's in Matthew 24:11, 24."

"I've found it!" shouted Simon. "It says that false prophets will appear."

Mrs. Cristobal continued, "The Bible gives four guidelines by which to test if someone is a true or a false prophet. Does anyone know what they are?"

"I guess what they say has to agree with the Bible," said Kevin.

"Their predictions should come true," added Francis.

"They must live a good life, or practice what they preach," said Sylvia. "H'mm, I have no idea what the fourth thing could be."

"Good, everyone!" said Mrs. Cristobal. "The fourth sign of a true prophet is that they must believe that Jesus is God and that He came and lived on earth as a man."

"Does Ellen White live up to all those things?" asked Kevin.

"Yes, she does," replied Mrs. Cristobal. "She always said that the things she wrote were not a replacement for the Bible but were to help people understand the Bible better. It's like having a flashlight in an unfamiliar dark room. It helps you find the light switch to turn on the main light. God wants all of us to be ready to live with Him in heaven. The gift of prophecy is just one of the ways He helps us."

"I'm beginning to understand," said Kevin.

KEY REFERENCES

- Revelation 12:17; 19:10
- *Early Writings,* pp. vii-32
- *The Acts of the Apostles,* chap. 5, pp. 47-56
- No reference in *The Bible Story*
- Our Beliefs, nos. 18, 13, 1

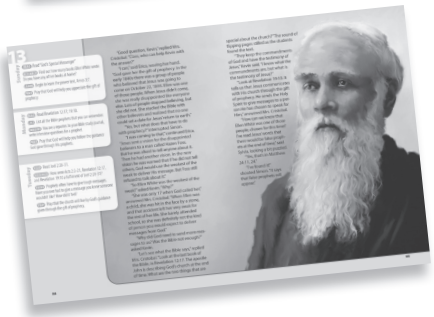
POWER TEXT

"Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

POWER POINT

God gave a special gift of prophecy for the church today.







Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 102.

Sunday

READ Read Revelation 22:8, 9 and this week's story, "God's Special Messenger."

RESEARCH Find out how many books Ellen White wrote. Do you have any of her books at home?

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, Amos 3:7.

PRAY Pray that God will help you appreciate the gift of prophecy.

Monday

READ Read Revelation 12:17; Matthew 19:10.

LIST List all the Bible prophets that you can remember.

IMAGINE You are a reporter. In your Bible study journal, write interview questions for a prophet.

PRAY Pray that God will help you follow the guidance God gave through His prophets.

Tuesday

READ Read Joel 2:28-31.

RESEARCH How were Acts 2:2-21, Revelation 12:17, and Revelation 19:10 a fulfillment of Joel 2:28-31?

THINK Prophets often have to give tough messages. Have you ever had to give a message you knew someone wouldn't like? How did it feel?

PRAY Pray that the church will live by God's guidance given through the gift of prophecy.

Wednesday

READ Read Matthew 24:11, 24.

SEARCH Find Isaiah 8:20; Deuteronomy 18:21, 22; 1 John 4:2, 3; Matthew 7:16, 18-20 to discover the characteristics of a true prophet.

LIST List them in your Bible study journal.

PRAY Pray that you will know a true prophet from a false one.

Thursday

READ Read Acts 11:27-30; Acts 13:1, 2; Ephesians 2:20, 21.

THINK How did the gift of prophecy help the early church?

SING Sing a song in praise of God for all the ways He communicates with us.

LIST List the methods of communication God used to send prophetic messages.

PRAY Praise God that He is not limited by our methods of communication.

Friday

READ Read John 15:15.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write how you would answer someone who says that there are no prophets today.

THINK Ellen was 17 when she had her first vision. How would you feel if God gave you a vision now?

RESEARCH Find a new fact about Ellen White to share with your Sabbath School class.

PRAY Thank God for all His gifts.