Heaven’s Means of Communication

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Be able to explain the three major ways in which God reveals Himself to us.
► Understand that Christ is the most complete revelation of God, and that other revelations point us to Him.
► Be able to explain why Christ is the only direct path to God, even with the other revelations available to us.

Preparing to Lead
In the beginning, Adam and Eve talked and listened to God face to face. Nothing more was needed until the day they deliberately disobeyed Him. In the years following, people stopped hearing God’s voice and developed strange and erroneous ideas about who He was and what He wanted. But even though we tried to forget Him, He never forgot us, and He continues to reveal Himself to anyone who wants to know Him through His creation, His Word, and the person of Christ. Are you listening?

Getting Started
A. Give each member a copy of the activity sheet (p. 31). Instruct them to jot down ways God has used His Creation, His Word, and the Person of Christ to communicate with them personally. Emphasize that there are no wrong answers. Allow at least five minutes for them to collect their thoughts and complete the assignment.

When everyone has completed the survey, take five to ten minutes to discuss the answers and to allow members to express any thoughts they may have. Make clear that God is always seeking to establish a relationship with us—collectively and as individuals.

B. This variation may be more effective if you think that class members might be reluctant to share their thoughts and opinions individually, and if your class is fairly large. Ask class members to break up into groups of three to five, and give each group a copy of the survey (p. 31). The members will discuss the survey and suggest answers to fit into the categories. Each group will then appoint one member to report back to the class as a whole with the answers.

Delving Into the Word
A. Say: “When we read the Old Testament, it may seem that God’s lines of communication with His people at that time were more direct. We tend to identify with figures like Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc., who spoke directly to God.
and who were considered prophets for that reason. Most people, however, were not prophets, and did not receive direct communication from God. They received communication from Him through the prophets, with perhaps some signs and wonders to confirm that God had approved the message. Today, God has given us the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, we can each communicate directly with God.” Explain that even the prophets themselves looked forward to God’s greatest revelation (John 8:56, for example). Ask the class how they can relate directly and individually with God through Jesus. Discuss what is necessary to have this relationship.

Ask individuals to read the following texts: ●Heb.1:1, 2; ●John 1:14; ●Col. 2:9. Note that all of these writers seem quite confident that the fullest and most direct revelation of God’s nature and character came through Jesus Christ. Ask your class if they share that confidence. If not, ask what we as individuals can do to better appreciate and take advantage of this precious gift we have been given.

B. Ask: “What do Hebrews 1:1, 2 tell us about God and His means of revealing Himself to us?” Point out that all three means of revelation are included in this passage: (1) prophecy, (2) the Creation, and (3) the life, death, resurrection, and continuing ministry of Jesus Christ.

God’s message, the author says, was given in “various ways” by the prophets, and has culminated in His revelation of Himself in the person of His Son, who is much more than a prophet, and through whom the world itself was created.

Ask: “What is the relationship of God’s revelation through nature and the prophets (Scripture) to His greatest revelation in the person of Jesus?” Refer your class to John 5:39 and Psalm 19:1.

Say: “All the forms of revelation tell us something about God, and if it was simply a matter of believing that He exists, knowing what He wants us to do, and resolving to do it, the prophets and the witness to God seen in nature would be enough. But because of sin, we are incapable of consistently acting on what we know is right. Jesus reveals Himself not only in terms of giving us information, but in the action of saving us when we can’t save ourselves.”

Discussing the Ideas

1. If we are to use nature as a way of understanding God, how do we explain the aspects of nature that do not match up with what we know about His character?
2. In the Old Testament, God reveals His character, His concern for the human race, and His laws and requirements. Why can’t we please God by learning this information and trying very hard?
3. Why do you think so many people failed to appreciate who and what Christ was when He lived on earth? How can we avoid taking this gift for granted and failing to comprehend its infinite value?
4. Revelation culminates in the supreme message of Christ. Given this fact, what standard should we hold for anyone claiming to have “new light”?

Closing the Activity

Ask: “Does God want to make His presence known in your life? How can you make it easier for Him to speak to you and for Him to speak through you to others?”

Say: “God wants us to be the vehicle for His revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ, but He won’t force us. We have to be willing to be used by Him, and we have to keep the channels open through regular devotion, prayer, and study.”

Alan Hecht, Takoma Park, Maryland, U.S.A.
Directions: Below are three means of revelation God often uses today. List ways in which He has used each one to communicate with you personally.

- God’s Word
- God’s Creation
- The Person of Christ
The Prophetic Gift

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
➤ Recognize that the prophetic gift is bestowed by God (prophets are not self-appointed), and that it encompasses so much more than being a “fortuneteller.”
➤ Understand that God’s prophets are His friends (Psalm 25). We need to know our Friend well.
➤ Learn that in a general sense, all Christians are prophets. We can all reveal God’s love and His ultimate will for others—their salvation.

Preparing to Lead
Read Psalm 25:8–15. While the prophetic gift may only be bestowed in its classic sense on selected individuals, we may all share in the gift of being able to reveal God and His ultimate will for humankind—their salvation. In order to do this, we need to be friends of God as the prophets of old were. We must avail ourselves of all opportunities to get close to Him (prayer, study, worship, etc.) so that He might “confide in us” (verse 14, NIV), and so that we may then be able to reveal Him to others.

Getting Started
A. Pass a mirror around, and ask each class member to take a look at himself or herself in the mirror. Now ask them to divide into groups of two, and have each one tell what they see in the other person that in some sense is a revelation of who God is. This could range from physical attributes to personality and character traits. The point being made is the question: Do others see what I think I’m reflecting as a Christian?
B. Read to your class the biblical passage mentioned in Preparing to Lead. Tell the class that the New International Version translates verse 14 this way: “The Lord confides in those who fear him.” Read the definition of the word confide from a dictionary.
Then ask class members to share their appreciation of friends in whom they can confide. Ask: “Of what value is such confidence in our lives?”
Then ask them to share ways in which God has “confided in them” or guided them in the past. Ask: “How did you know for sure it was God’s guidance?”

Delving Into the Word
A. Let the class tell the story of Jonah or read the story in the Bible. Let each member tell or read a portion of it. Then discuss the following points (answering...
them from the story itself): ●Was the point of the prophecy to predict the destruction of Nineveh, or to convert Nineveh? What is the ultimate goal of prophecy? ●What was the effect of the whole prophetic episode on the prophet? ●In addition to Nineveh, what other group of people was affected by the event?

Ask: ●What areas in our lives are “in rebellion” against God? ●How can we better align ourselves with God to reveal Him better?

B. Read 1 Samuel 28 and discuss the following points: ●What was the source of the prophetic gift in this passage? ●Was the prophecy inaccurate? ●What did this prophetic event lead to? ●What are the dangers regarding false prophecy?

Discuss the biblical view of the gift of prophecy. Look up the texts in the How-To section of the quarterly’s lesson. Ask:

●Many denominations use the prophetic gift in their worship services. They allow time for people to come up front or to approach individuals and share a “prophetic message” they feel they have received from the Lord. Is this practice necessarily unbiblical? How would we test it? ●How can this contemporary practice of the “prophetic gift” be confusing or potentially dangerous? ●Does God use us, as fellow Christians, to help guide each other? If yes, then how?

Discussing the Ideas

1. How does a gift become a spiritual gift?
2. How do you know what your spiritual gifts are? (Plan to do a spiritual gifts survey in class in the future.)
3. Are all spiritual gifts for everyone? (Have the class study 1 Corinthians 12–14 to arrive at an answer.)
4. Why might people covet certain spiritual gifts?
5. What practical things can you do in your circle of influence to reveal God, His love, and His ultimate will? Be specific.
6. How can you constructively respond when you come into contact with those who may be practicing the gift of prophecy in a way that is different from your understanding of biblical prophecy?
7. The ultimate spiritual gift is love. Refer to 1 Corinthians 13:2, 13. (If you read from a King James Version, you will need to tell the class that the word charity means “love.”) How can we be sure that this is the main message people perceive through the use of our gifts?
8. In what way can we better appreciate the wonderful gift of prophecy we have received as a church in the person and work of Ellen G. White?

Closing the Activity

Summarize by listing on a flipchart or whiteboard the benefits of the true prophetic gifts. Quote scriptural references. Contrast this with a list of the worldly view of prophecy—which focuses mostly on foretelling the future.

Using the template on page 32, have each class member design a poster or simple flyer noting these differences to share with a friend.

Penny Brink, Somerset West, Cape, South Africa
Lesson 3

Spiritual Gifts and Prophecy

Surveying the Source
Acts 2:1–18; Rom. 12:6–8; 1 Cor. 1:4–7; 13:8–12; Eph. 4:10–13; 2 Thess. 2:9, 10.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Discover the different types of spiritual gifts.
► Learn about some of the characteristics of the spiritual gifts.
► Investigate their own response to the spiritual gifts and whether they are using them for God’s purposes.

Preparing to Lead
We understand God to be unchanging—always the same throughout eternity. But we also understand Him to be different things to different people according to their needs at any specific time. Likewise, God works through each of us differently to help meet those varying needs. To do this, God has given each of us a variety of abilities, talents, and gifts. The spiritual gifts come in different shapes and sizes, but all are to be used for the nurture and growth of His people.

Getting Started
A. Before class, separate a 100– or 500–piece jigsaw puzzle into piles of about 20 pieces each. When the class comes together, divide members into smaller groups, and give each group a pile of puzzle pieces to complete. Do not tell them their pieces are not a complete puzzle. When most groups realize they do not have complete puzzles, bring the groups back together. Ask: ● “When did you realize you didn’t have a complete puzzle?” ● “How did that make you feel?” ● “What does this tell us about our need of each other and our different abilities, strengths, and gifts?”

B. Discuss: ● “Has anyone broken a bone? Or has anyone had to care for someone with a broken bone?” ● “What was life like while caring for an injured part?” ● “How did the rest of your body cope?” (For example, a broken leg may result in the good leg getting tired quickly.) ● “Just as the body suffers when a part of it is immobilized, so too can the church suffer if an area of giftedness is not functioning. Think of examples when a church can be missing an area of giftedness and what affect that would have.”

Delving Into the Word
A. Divide the class into smaller groups. Hand each group a copy of the Spiritual Gifts Bible Study Worksheet (p. 33). Each group should read the Bible references listed and answer the questions on the worksheet for each Bible reference. Ask them to also note other comments or things they learned about spiritual gifts.

Materials
a 100 or 500 piece puzzle; pens or pencils; copies of a spiritual gift survey from the Internet or other source.

Teacher’s Guide

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Discussing the Ideas

1. Why is the study of spiritual gifts important? Why is it important to know your own areas of spiritual giftedness?
2. Can someone have more than one spiritual gift? Give examples.
3. Can someone have more or less of the same spiritual gift as someone else? Why, or why not?
4. Are spiritual gifts the same as abilities? Why, or why not?
5. Can someone serve the church in areas outside of their spiritual giftedness and still be effective? Why, or why not?
6. Why do you think some people serve the church in areas outside their spiritual giftedness?
7. Are some spiritual gifts more valuable than others? How is God’s view of spiritual gifts different from our view?

Closing the Activity

Conclude by reading 1 Corinthians 12:4–7 to the class. Remind them that although we have each been given different spiritual gifts, they all come from one God for one purpose—the common good of the church and humanity. Remind them that each of them has been given spiritual gifts. Challenge them to consider their areas of spiritual giftedness and whether they are using them for God’s glory, the nurture of the church, and the growth of the kingdom. Tell them to check the Internet for spiritual gift surveys or provide copies for them to complete in their own time.

Candice Jaques, Seven Hills, New South Wales, Australia
# Spiritual Gifts

## Bible Study Worksheet

To answer the questions below, read the following texts:

Acts 2:1–18; Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 1:4–7; 13:8–12; Ephesians 4:10–13; 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<td>How are spiritual gifts delivered or by what means are they given out?</td>
<td>What are the types of spiritual gifts?</td>
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<td>What is/are the purpose(s) of spiritual gifts?</td>
<td>Note any other observations made from these texts regarding spiritual gifts.</td>
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<td>List the characteristics of the spiritual gifts.</td>
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The Gift of Prophecy and God’s Remnant Church

Surveying the Source
Revelation 12; 14:1–12.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Identify examples of the term remnant as used in the Bible.
► Discuss the characteristics of the remnant people in Revelation.
► Affirm his/her choice to be a part of God’s remnant people.

Preparing to Lead
God has always had His representatives at every stage of history. They were never a majority, but they were all part of the continuous fabric of salvation. They were all washed in the blood of the Lamb. Each was committed to God and His Word and were willing to stand up against society if necessary. God’s end-time people are known as the remnant—the material left at the end of a bolt of fabric. Like all God’s people before them, they are saved by grace. They too put God first and obey His commands. They earnestly seek to reflect His image.

Getting Started
A. Ask the entire group to stand. Then ask people to sit down if they have: (1) a last name that starts with a vowel; (2) a first name that starts with a consonant; (3) more than six letters in their first name; (4) fewer than five letters in their last name; (5) fewer than five letters in their last name; (4) fewer than five letters in their last name; (5) a last name that contains an L or an N.

Those left standing are a “remnant.” They’re part of the same group as those who sat down, but they are the ones who remain.

B. Divide your class into groups of three. In each group, one person should have a Bible (a quarterly will also be helpful), one a pencil or pen, and one a copy of the reproducible puzzle (p. 34). Give the groups no more than four or five minutes to work on the puzzle before going over the solutions together.

Delving Into the Word
A. Divide the class into small groups. Have each group read one of the following passages and discuss the questions below in light of their specific passage:
● Genesis 45:1–9 (NIV and NASB, among others, use the word remnant here); ● 2 Kings 18:17–19:7 (see 19:4); ● Ezra 9:1–9; ● Isaiah 10:20–25.

The questions are: ● What happened to create this remnant? ● What is stated or implied about those who are part of the remnant described in this passage? ● How was the remnant in this passage preserved? ● How is the remnant in this pas-
meets. (If your room is small, it could go around the perimeter several times.) Affix small pieces of paper along the rope with the names of some of God’s heroes: Enoch, Abraham, Miriam, David, Peter, Martha, Hannah, Martin Luther, Ellen White, Dwight Moody, etc. Place them in chronological order. Remind the group that God’s remnant church comes at the end of a long line of believers. Have one person grasp the end of the rope, and the others join hands to continue the chain. Offer closing prayer before disconnecting.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. How is the remnant in Revelation different from God’s people at any other point in history?
2. Is being a part of the remnant church synonymous with being a Seventh-day Adventist? Why, or why not?
3. Which characteristic of the remnant do you think is the most important, and why?
4. Is it possible to honestly believe that you are committed to God and following His will and not be part of the remnant? Why, or why not?
5. Why are those who keep God’s commandments a remnant?
6. Each of the women in Revelation 12 and 17 represents a church. What distinguishes the “children” of one from the “children” of the other?
7. What does it mean in your life to overcome “[Satan] by the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 12:11, NIV)?

**Closing the Activity**

Ahead of time, cut bookmark-sized strips from one piece of fabric (or paper) using pinking shears or some other fancy-cut scissors. (If your group is small, you may be able to do this in class.) Display the original “source” piece, and give each person in the group one of the “remnants.” Invite them to place it in their Bibles at Revelation 12 as a reminder that they can choose to be a part of the last-day remnant of God’s people. Also ahead of time, prepare a length of rope or string. Make it as long as possible, given the space where your class meets. (If your room is small, it could go around the perimeter several times.) Affix small pieces of paper along the rope with the names of some of God’s heroes: Enoch, Abraham, Miriam, David, Peter, Martha, Hannah, Martin Luther, Ellen White, Dwight Moody, etc. Place them in chronological order. Remind the group that God’s remnant church comes at the end of a long line of believers. Have one person grasp the end of the rope, and the others join hands to continue the chain. Offer closing prayer before disconnecting.

**Sharon E. Wright, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.**

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PUZZLE

Fill in the vertical phrases with characteristics of the remnant church that you learned through this week’s study of Revelation 12 and 14.

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The Inspiration of the Prophets

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
▶ Realize that the Bible and prophetic writings are the most valuable when people choose to believe they are from God.
▶ Acknowledge that Scripture and spiritual leaders, including prophets, are valuable in helping us to be balanced in faith, belief, and practice.
▶ Understand that the recording of prophecy (God’s messages into human language) is for the practical purpose of training and guiding people in God’s way.

Preventing to Lead
In the past, God inspired certain humans as prophets. The results of this inspiration is recorded in the Bible, God’s Word. The Bible consists of letters, stories, predictions, prophetic writings, and more. Although it is written by humans and has cultural, personal, and historic material in it, God guided its creation.

Some people today claim to be prophets. Biblical prophetic writings give criteria to help us determine whether they are true or false prophets. Prophetic writings can give insight and power to transform our lives.

Getting Started
A. Read and discuss with the class these predictions which were made in the past:
Say: “Obviously, in hindsight, we can see that these predictions turned out to be false—and consequently humorous.”
Ask: On what basis would you determine whether a prediction was true or if somebody was a true prophet or not?” (See Jeremiah 28:9; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 12:7).
B. Two dictionary meanings for the word prophet are: (1) “a religious leader regarded as, or claiming to be, divinely inspired” and (2) “one who predicts the future.”—Webster’s New World Dictionary.
Ask: ● “Do you agree with these definitions? Why, or why not? ● “What would it be like to have your own personal prophet?”
Have each class member finish this sentence in one of the following ways given below: “I think it would be good to have a prophet to talk to me as. . . .”
1. a financial adviser
2. a dating planner
3. an exam partner
4. your choice
Delving Into the Word

A. Divide the class into groups. Give each group Bibles, pens, and paper. Have each group read the following Bible texts and from those texts, make a checklist for the characteristics of a true prophet: Deuteronomy 13:1–3; Matthew 7:15–20; Jeremiah 28:9; Isaiah 8:20; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Peter 2:1–3.

Once completed, delegate a person from each group to present their criteria for a true prophet to the rest of the class.

B. Divide the class into groups. Hand out Bibles, pens, poster board, and the “Purpose of Prophecy” handout (p. 45; one per student). Have each group write what the purpose of prophecy is from each selected Bible passage.

From the verses on the handout, have each group either present a drama or a poster to the class on the purpose of prophecy on one or all of the points discovered from the handout.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Do you believe God still appoints prophets today? Give reasons for your answer.
2. How would you be able to determine between a prophet from God and a false prophet?
3. If somebody in your church announced he or she was a prophet, what would you think, and why?
4. What examples of predictions do you find hard to believe?
5. Do you think the main purpose of a prophet is to make predictions? Why, or why not?
6. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13. When you listen to your pastor or Sabbath School teacher, do you take their words as the words of God? Give reasons for your answer.

Closing the Activity

Ask the class to meditate on the words of 2 Timothy 3:16 as it is read aloud. Encourage the class to remain silent and spend one to three minutes with God. Suggest that each person ask God to give them spiritual insight in their daily devotions. This quiet time gives God a chance to speak to them.

Close with prayer, asking God to give each one the ability to discern between false and true prophecy, to give each one guidance and direction as they take into account the insight they can get from scriptural prophecy.

Amy Townend, Lesmurdie, Australia
## THE PURPOSE OF PROPHECY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIBLE TEXTS</th>
<th>WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROPHECY FOUND IN THESE TEXTS?</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Thess. 2:13</td>
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<td>2 Tim. 3:16</td>
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<td>2 Peter 1−4, 20, 21</td>
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<td>Eph. 4:7−14</td>
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Lesson 6

Testing the Prophets

Surveying the Source
Isa. 8:20; Jer. 18:6–10; Jonah 3, 4; Matt. 7:15–20; Gal. 2:11–14.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
▶ Learn how to distinguish a false prophet from a true one.
▶ Discover the benefit of following God’s counsel.
▶ Build a stronger faith in God’s trustworthiness.

Preparing to Lead
Jeremiah was quite young when God called him to be a prophet. He never married. On one occasion, Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets’ ” (Matt. 16:14, NIV). Many who saw Jesus were reminded of Jeremiah. Jeremiah loved the people. He was kind, compassionate, and courageous just like Jesus.

Getting Started
A. Read the following quote, “The prophet is a person, not a microphone. He is endowed with a mission, with a power of a word not his own that accounts for his greatness—but also with temperament, concern, character, and individuality. As there was no resisting the impact of divine inspiration, so at times there was no resisting the vortex of his own temperament. The word of God reverberated in the voice of man.”

Discuss with the class how much of the personality, character, temperament, and individuality comes through in the message of a prophet. Allow the class to give their views.

B. Tell your class about the Puerto Rican preacher José Luis de Jesús Miranda who claims to be Jesus Christ. He preaches that there is no devil and no sin and that in Christ’s eyes, his followers can do no wrong.

Encourage members to share stories of other people who made similar claims as Mr. Miranda. Ask what makes these people true or false prophets.

Delving Into the Word
A. Show the class a clay pot, and talk about what it is. Pass it around for each member to touch. Then give each member some modeling clay for them to create whatever they can. Next, read Jeremiah 18:1–10 slowly in order to capture the imagery that the text paints. Invite each member to share how easy or hard was it to make their object. Encourage the discussion by asking the following questions: ●How does your clay object relate to Jeremiah’s message? ●What...
Discussing the Ideas

1. Why is character and behavior a good test of a true prophet?
2. God asked Jonah if he had any right to be angry. What does this say about the character of God and the character of a prophet?
3. Is the life of a prophet more like an impatient developer building a shopping mall or a farmer cultivating a field? Explain your answer.
4. Is the prophecy more important than the prophet? Explain your answer.
5. Ellen White wrote, “My Saviour declared to me to be His messenger.” What did she mean by that?
6. How was Jesus a prophet?

Closing the Activity

Ask class members to share which of Ellen White’s books or quotations is their favorite. Give each of them a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 36), and ask them to write on it why they like that book or quotation so much and how it has helped them to grow in Christ. Give a minute or two for them to do this. Then collect their papers and randomly pass them around for other people to read. Give people time to respond to what others have written.

Sergio Torres, Miami, Florida, U.S.A.

Answer these questions in the space below: (1) What is your favorite Ellen White book or quote? (2) Why is it your favorite? (3) Was there a time when this book or quote helped you in a special way?
The Work of the Prophets

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Recognize the role of a modern prophet.
► Evaluate how one can tell a true from an untrue prophet.
► Apply biblical principles to test those who claim the prophetic gift.

Preparing to Lead
When one envisions a prophet, images may include coarse, stringy hair; sandal-clad dusty feet; or rough-hewn hands. The time period that likely comes to mind is more than two millennia ago. However, the Bible makes it clear that God can raise a prophet at any time, from any people. “It will come about after this/That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;/And your sons and daughters will prophesy./Your old men will dream dreams,/Your young men will see visions” (Joel 2:28, NASB). Hmmm. Does this bring a different vision to mind?

Getting Started
A. Say: “God used a physically weak, teenaged girl in a mighty way. Ellen Gould Harmon, who was disfigured by a rock thrown to her head, reflected God’s image to the world. She was willing to endure hardship and trials and to be taken in vision to the heavenly realm. Now, nearly 100 years after her death in 1915, many still turn to her writings seeking to know God better. Technological advances have made it amazingly easy to do so.” To demonstrate, go to http://www.whiteestate.org/search/search.asp, or show a printed page of this home page to show the class.

Delving Into the Word
A. Explore biblical principles pertaining to the tests of a true prophet. Read with your class texts such as ●Isaiah 8:20; ●Jeremiah 28:9; ●Matthew 7:16, 18–20; ●1 Thessalonians 5:19–21; ●1 John 4:2, 3. Helpful information about

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B. Tell your class that Ellen White’s writings are generally understood and written in a straightforward manner. As an example, read to your class this description of the new earth as seen in one of her visions:

“With Jesus at our head we all descended from the City down to this earth, on a great and mighty mountain, which could not bear Jesus up, and it parted asunder, and there was a mighty plain. Then we looked up and saw the great City, with twelve foundations, twelve gates, three on each side, and an angel at each gate. We all cried out, ‘The City, the great City, it’s coming! it’s coming down from God out of heaven!’ And it came and settled on the place where we stood. Then we began to look at the glorious things outside of the City. There I saw most beautiful houses, that had the appearance of silver, supported by four pillars set with pearls, most glorious to behold, which were to be inhabited by the saints, and in them was a golden shelf. I saw many of the saints go into the houses, take off their glittering crowns and lay them on the shelf, then go out into the field by the houses to do something with the earth; not as we have to do with the earth here. A glorious light shone all about their heads, and they were continually offering praises to God.”*  

Some prophetic writings are far less straightforward and not easily understood. Read Revelation 13 with your class, and discuss with them the interpretation of this chapter. Invite your pastor to participate or use the information found here: http://www.tagnet.org/davenportsda/revbeast.htm.

These and related texts is found online at http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/books/27/27-17.htm and at http://whiteestate.org/books/mol/Chapt3.html#Tests%20of%20Genuine. Compare these texts to what is known about Ellen White’s work and the fruit of her labor. Discuss how in the last days these tests will be a strong defense.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Prior to Ellen’s receiving the prophetic gift, God tried to bestow it upon William Foy and Hazen Foss. Ask the class how they would react had they been so chosen by God in the 19th century.

2. During Ellen White’s life, only printed materials comprised the mass media. How would things be different today if God were to raise up an early 21st century prophet?

3. Ask class members to share an experience about how an Ellen White writing affected them or someone they know.

4. Discuss why there seems to be so much interest in the tabloid media and some of the general public in Nostradamus, a so-called prophet who lived in the 16th century, yet there is comparatively little or no interest in Ellen White.

5. What could the Seventh-day Adventist Church do to make Ellen White’s life and writings more widely known and read by church members and the general public?

Closing the Activity

Ask class members to consider what their reaction might have been had they been present during one of Ellen White’s visions. Using the details found in the reproducible activity (p. 37), ask a student to role-play Ellen in vision. Discuss the reaction of your class members. Were any frightened? Perplexed? Dismissive? Interview the role-player to determine his or her reaction to the situation.

Rick Blando, Clarksville, Maryland, U.S.A.

*Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, pp. 52, 53.
What were Ellen White's visions like? Are there any eyewitness accounts?

The work of anyone who claims to bear God's message must meet the sure tests of the Word of God, such as “‘you will know them by their fruits’” (Matt. 7:16, NKJV), “to the law and to the testimony” (Isa. 8:20), etc. While the physical phenomena that sometimes accompanied the visions do not rightfully form a test, they did supply, in the minds of most eyewitnesses, confirmatory evidence of the working of divine power. Those who personally witnessed Ellen White in vision observed rather carefully what took place. From the eyewitness accounts available (http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/eyewitness.html), we can build the following summary:

1. Immediately preceding a vision, both Mrs. White and others in the room experienced a deep sense of the presence of God.
2. As the vision began, Ellen White would exclaim "Glory!" or "Glory to God!" at times repeated.
3. She experienced a loss of physical strength.
4. Subsequently, she often manifested supernatural strength.
5. She did not breathe, but her heartbeat continued normally, and the color in her cheeks was natural.
6. Occasionally she gave exclamations indicative of the scene being presented to her.
7. Her eyes were open, not with a vacant stare, but as if she were intently watching something.
8. Her position might vary. At times she was seated; at times reclining; at times she walked about the room and made graceful gestures as she spoke of matters presented.
9. She was absolutely unconscious of what was occurring about her. She neither saw, heard, felt, nor perceived in any way her immediate surroundings or happenings.
10. The close of the vision was indicated by a deep inhalation, followed in about a minute by another, and very soon her natural breathing resumed.
11. Immediately after the vision all seemed very dark to her.
12. Within a short time, she regained her natural strength and abilities.
The Authority of the Prophets

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Identify the different ways in which God speaks through prophets.
► Identify the main messages of some of the major biblical prophets.
► Discuss the ways in which God related to the biblical prophets and how He relates to us today.

Preparing to Lead
Prophecy is such a controversial topic in our world today. We all want to know what lies in the future, and while some seek mediums and fortunetellers to satisfy their curiosity, we need to have faith in the biblical prophecies that promise a sure future for those who believe in Jesus.

Getting Started
A. Tell the class that you had a dream last night in which God gave you a special message. (You decide on what the message should be. Just be sure it is relevant to your group.) Tell them the message, and notice their reactions. Get a show of hands as to who believes this message to be from God and who doesn’t. Then discuss how they can know whether this message is really from God or not.
B. Discuss: • “Are there things about your church or in your society that you would like clarity on (for example, a charismatic movement; the war on terror, a lifestyle issue)?” • “Do you think there is a need for a prophet in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today, or do you think the Bible and E. G. White provide all the answers we need on such issues?”

Delving Into the Word
A. As a class, summarize the messages God wanted the following prophets to deliver to His people at various times throughout history: ●Moses ●Jonah ●Hosea ●Daniel ●Elijah ●Noah ●E. G. White.
Ask: ● “Are these messages still relevant to us today?” ● “Why hasn’t God sent a modern-day prophet to remind us of these things?” ● “What would it take for you to really listen to a modern-day prophet?”
B. Hand out copies of the reproducible activity (p. 38) for the class to complete in pairs. When all the pairs have completed their copies, discuss the answers to both questions.
Discussing the Ideas

1. Why is E. G. White so important to the Seventh-day Adventist Church? In your opinion, is too much emphasis placed on her writings, or not enough?
2. If God were to send the Seventh-day Adventist Church another prophet today, what do you think the message would be, and why?
3. What would it take for us to seriously accept a prophet today?
4. When God’s messages weren’t heeded in biblical times, what were the outcomes? Do you think God would act the same way today if we didn’t listen to the message He had for us?
5. How did God give the biblical prophets their messages?
6. What are some other ways God speaks to us today, other than through prophets?

Closing the Activity

Say: “God longs to speak to you every day about His will for your life and how much He loves you. He wants to draw you back to Him. Let’s really be mindful of that this week and seek His voice and presence in our lives.”

Conclude the lesson with prayer.

Nina Atcheson, Scarborough, Queensland, Australia
What are the five tests of a prophet?

1. Matt. 7:15–20
2. 1 John 4:1–3
3. Deut. 13:1–4
4. Deut. 18:20–22
5. Isa. 8:20

Do these prophets fulfill these tests? (yes/no)

1. Noah
2. Jonah
3. Hosea
4. Daniel
5. Mohammad
6. E. G. White
7. Nostradamus

Be able to state why you answered as you did.
The Integrity of the Prophetic Gift

Surveying the Source
2 Sam. 7:1–7; 1 Kings 22:10–34; Dan. 8:27.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Experience an expanded understanding of the prophetic gift.
► Realize that God speaks to each one personally, today.
► Explore the impact of culture and human perception when receiving communication from God.

Preparing to Lead

The gift of prophecy didn’t die with the Bible writers or Ellen White. “Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. But now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son” (Heb. 1:1, 2, NLT).

“ ‘Then after I have poured out my rains again, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions. In those days, I will pour out my Spirit even on servants, men and women alike’ ” (Joel 2:28, 29, NLT).


Getting Started

A. Say: “Briefly share a time when you “prophesied,” for example: ● you accurately “read” how a friend or child was feeling when he or she wasn’t able to identify the feeling themselves; ● you said something like, “Just watch, [someone] is going to ______,” and they did; ● you had an accurate impression about something and followed it (or didn’t and wished you had); a time a hunch turned out to be false.

B. Provide “eye filters” for each class member. Invite the students to look through them at an object you will reveal shortly. Uncover a multi-colored object or piece of fabric and ask the students to describe how they see it viewing it through their filters only. Ask the students what “filters” might affect a prophet, or anyone receiving a message from God.

Delving Into the Word
(The following resources will be helpful for both sections A and B: Life Application Study Bible, NLT by Tyndale; The IVP Bible Background Commentary:

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Encourage each person to pray, to listen for God’s voice providing His answer, and to write what He says. For those who may be uncomfortable with this exercise, suggest they describe in writing the feelings this question provokes in their hearts.

Give each student lined paper and a pen or pencil. Then read Joel 2:28, 29. Invite the students to explore this question: How might God use me in a prophetic way?

There is no “right answer” to memorize for a quiz at the end of class. This is an exercise in relating directly with God.

Talk about what you discover. Share any new insights into the prophetic process that you received.

A. Give each class member a copy of the reproducible activity on page 39 entitled “The Context When Originally Written.” For each passage explored in the Logos section, study the context—what is happening before and after the specified texts. The following texts provide the context you will need: 2 Samuel 6, 7; 1 Kings 22:1–50; Daniel 8, 9.

For each text, write down: ●who the writer of the story is; who would have been the intended reader(s) at that time; ●what the prophet did, how well he did it, how he related with God; ●what God did and how He related with the prophet.

B. Look at the story of Balaam in Numbers 22–24—especially 22:7–20; 22:21–35; 23:3–5; 15, 16; and 24:1, 2. Write down the different times of day, ways, places, etc., in which God communicated with and/or used Balaam. What does this information tell us about God, and also about His relationship with us?

Look at Jesus’ use of prophecy in John 4:1–39—especially 4:10, 16–18. What does Jesus prophetically see?

Compare and contrast these prophetic instances with the ones featured in this week’s lesson. What do these stories add to your understanding of the gift of prophecy?

Discussing the Ideas

1. How is the gift of prophecy looking to the future (Daniel’s visions, for example) different from the gift of prophecy looking in the present (Jesus seeing the heart and marital status of the woman at the well or the prophet Nathan with King David)?
2. What makes a “true prophet”?
3. What sorts of things in our hearts prevent us from hearing God’s voice more clearly?
4. How are prophetic gifts used by people living today?
5. God Himself will write His law on our hearts and minds (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; 10:16). How should we interpret Ellen White’s writings in light of these Scriptures?
6. In what ways does God speak to each of us personally today?

Closing the Activity

Give each student lined paper and a pen or pencil. Then read Joel 2:28, 29. Invite the students to explore this question: How might God use me in a prophetic way?

There is no “right answer” to memorize for a quiz at the end of class. This is an exercise in relating directly with God.

Encourage each person to pray, to listen for God’s voice providing His answer, and to write what He says. For those who may be uncomfortable with this exercise, suggest they describe in writing the feelings this question provokes in their hearts.

Gill Bahnsen, Auburn, Washington, U.S.A.
# THE CONTEXT WHEN ORIGINALLY WRITTEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripture</th>
<th>The Writer</th>
<th>The Audience</th>
<th>Meaning That Time</th>
<th>The Prophet’s Words/Actions</th>
<th>God’s Words/Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Samuel 6, 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Kings 22:1–50</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniel 8, 9</td>
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Lesson 10

The Message of the Prophets

Surveying the Source
Exod. 20:1–17; Leviticus 16; Matt. 24:24–31; Rom. 3:21–28; Heb. 8:1, 2; 9:23.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Understand prophecy as an important communication tool in the hands of God.
► Be familiar with one or more tests of a true prophet.
► Appreciate prophecy as a gift to God’s people (not so much to the prophet) and their role, as youth, as one of obedience to the words of the prophet and, especially in these last days, of sharing the news that prophecy provides.

Preparing to Lead
The following is a well-known quote from Ellen G. White: “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!” (Messages to Young People, p. 196). Consider it alongside this equally well-known biblical promise: “Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, / Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7, NKJV).

Getting Started
A. Arrange with a student in advance to role-play a Muslim youth. Have that student stand up and say that she (or he) believes that Jesus Christ was a prophet. Then ask the other students which of the following three statements best expresses their feelings: ● Yes. That’s what Jesus is—a prophet. ● No. That’s an insult. Jesus is not a prophet. He’s the Son of God. ● Yes. Jesus is a prophet; but He Himself says that He is God.

Guide the class to a reaffirmation of Christ as God. But also draw attention to His prophetic warnings (Matt. 24:24–31), His role as a spokesperson for the Father (John 12:49), and His description of Himself, at least by implication, as a prophet (Matt. 13:57).

B. Discuss: “Does a prophet talk or write about the past, the present, or the future?”

To assist the discussion, read Ezekiel 16:1–7, and ask whether the prophet is talking about the past, present, or future. Now read Isaiah 3:12–15, and ask the same question. Finish by reading Matthew 24:24–27 and asking the same question.

Help the class to see that what is common among prophetic statements is not the time period they represent, but whether the prophet is serving as an authentic spokesperson for God. To that end, you may want to use both A and B.
Delving Into the Word

A. Read the “Six Honest Serving Men” poem at the top of the reproducible activity (see page 40). Then distribute the activity. Depending on the size of the class, you can have one student or a small group of students responsible for filling in each of the six sections. Then they can share their answers during the discussion that follows.

B. Tell your class about an imaginary Ellen White basher who says she’s not a true prophet because (1) she’s a woman, and the Bible requires that women be kept in their place; (2) almost everything she writes is in the Bible anyway—no prediction there; and (3) the prophets all lived before Christ, not like Mrs. White, in the 19th and 20th centuries. Ask the class to develop a defense showing that Mrs. White is a true prophet. These texts should help: ●Isa. 8:20; ●Amos 3:7; ●Joel 2:28–32; ●Acts 21:9; ●Rev. 19:10.

You may divide the work by distributing the texts among different students or groups of students, and then put the argument together during the discussion.

Discussing the Ideas

1. What is prophecy?
2. Why does the world need prophets?
3. What was the difference between priests and prophets in Old Testament times?
4. Would you accept as a true prophet someone who can consistently predict the lottery numbers? If so, why? If not, how then would you know that someone is a true prophet?
5. Explain why a woman could be a prophet both in New Testament times and now.
6. Are you convinced that Ellen White is a true prophet? If so, why? If you still have lingering uncertainties, what are the sources of those uncertainties?
7. Is prophecy the most important spiritual gift? Why or why not?
8. How does prophecy compare with other spiritual gifts?
9. Is the gift of prophecy a gift to the prophet, to the church, or to the world? Explain your answer.
10. As a young person who may not have the gift of prophecy, do you nonetheless have a role in fulfilling the prophetic mission? Explain your answer. (See 2 Chronicles 20:20; Proverbs 28:9; and the Ellen White quote in the “Preparing to Lead” section.)
11. How was the delivery of the commandments in Exodus 20:1–17 and of Moses’ message from God to Pharaoh examples of prophecy (for example, Exodus 5:1–6)?

Closing the Activity

Encourage class members to spend two or three minutes in quiet reflection on one or more of these questions: ●What does this prophecy discussion have to do with me? ●What more do I need to learn about prophecy, especially in relation to the Seventh-day Adventist Church? ●What am I going to think, say, or do differently after what I’ve learned today?

Let students know that they don’t have to share their thoughts. However, if time permits, a few of those willing to do so may each share their reflections on one of the questions.

Frank A. Campbell, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Here are the opening lines of a famous poem by Rudyard Kipling that you probably already know:

I keep six honest serving men.
(They taught me all I knew.)
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.

Let us use Kipling’s “six honest serving men” to organize what the Bible says about prophecy and prophets. Look at the questions below. Read the texts. Then write your answers in the space provided.

1. **What** is prophecy? (Ezek. 2:1; 3:4, 10, 11, 16–21; 37:4–7, 18–22)

2. **Why** do we, or God, need prophets? (Gen. 3:8–11, 23, 24; Exod. 20:18–22; Amos 3:7)

3. **When** did prophets walk the earth? (Joel 2:28–32; Acts 2:17, 18; 21:9)

4. **How** do we know a true prophet from a false one? (Deut. 13:1–4; 18:21, 22; Isa. 8:20)

5. **How** do prophets work? (Gen. 20:2–7; Isa. 38:1; Jer. 27:1, 2; 34:6; Matt. 2:5; 21:4)

6. **Where** do prophets work? (Exod. 17:9; Judg. 4:4, 5; Jer. 32:1, 2; Luke 2:36, 37)

7. **Who** could God select as prophets? (Exod. 7:1; 15:20; 1 Sam. 3:1–4, 9, 10, 19, 20; 2 Chron. 34:22; Acts 21:8, 9)

8. **Who** were some prophets in the Bible? (Gen. 20:2–7; Judg. 4:4; 1 Sam. 3:20; 1 Kings 18:36; 2 Kings 6:12; 22:14; Isa. 37:2; Luke 7:28; 11:29)
Interpreting the Prophetic Writings

Surveying the Source
John 16:5–13; Col. 1:9; 2 Pet. 1:20; 1 John 5:12, 13.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Gain a better understanding of the terms prophecy and prophet.
► Realize the importance of the writings of the modern-day prophet Ellen G. White.
► Understand that there are some prophecies in the Bible that must be fulfilled before Christ’s second coming.

Preparing to Lead
Do an Internet search for the word prophecy. What do you come up with? Who is a prophet? A prophet is said to be one who speaks for God. In the Old Testament, a prophet was one who had the Holy Spirit upon him or her and who could speak the Word of God. Look in at least three dictionaries for the definition of prophecy. Be prepared to share these definitions with the class.

Getting Started
A. Distribute index cards. Ask the class to come up with a definition for the term prophet. Allow each student to share his or her interpretation of the term. Record each definition on a flipchart or chalkboard. Then compare the definitions. Discuss any differences or similarities. Have volunteers read aloud Luke 21:25–28 and Matthew 24:14.
B. Distribute index cards. Ask the class to come up with a definition for the term future. Allow each student to share his or her interpretation of the term. Record their interpretations on a flipchart or chalkboard. Ask: • “Do these definitions seem biblical?” • “Why or why not?”
Say: “The Bible is our guidebook to the future, just as it is our handbook for the present. It alone will show us what God wants us to do. From it, we can learn God’s purpose and promises. The first thing is to understand and believe those things that are true. We shall then come to appreciate the need for obedience to God, and thus we shall be doing what Jesus commanded.”

Delving Into the Word
A. Share dictionary definitions of the term prophecy. Then have someone read John 16:5–13. Ask: • “What does the Bible say is the work of the Holy Spirit?” • “Why should we as Christians be guided by the Holy Spirit?”

B. Have someone read aloud Colossians 1:9. Ask: “What does the Bible say we should ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with?” Have volunteers read aloud the following texts: • 2 Peter 1:20; • 1 John 5:12,
13. Then discuss why it is necessary to search the Scriptures in order to understand God’s leading and purpose for our lives. Determine how this can help us to become better followers and representatives of Christ.

Have someone read Acts 2:16–18. Say: “The term spirit of prophecy refers both to the Holy Spirit, and to the prophetic gift as manifested through the ancient biblical prophets, but also to the ministry and writings of Ellen G. White, co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Say: “Our present lifestyle often fails to satisfy or bring us peace, even during times of happiness. Sometimes we feel hollow. So we look outside of ourselves for satisfaction. There are always those who, for a price, are ready to offer us a quick fix to satisfy this feeling of emptiness. Humanity is so preoccupied with ‘wanting and getting’ that we seem to have lost sight of who we are and why we are here. Predicting and interpreting the future can only be done by asking the God in heaven who holds the future.”

B. Say: “Ellen G. White (1827–1915) was a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and a prolific writer on religious matters. Her prophetic ministry was highly valued. It provided counsel, guidance, exhortation, and encouragement to the growing Seventh-day Adventist Church; and it left a legacy of writings still cherished today.”

Distribute the activity on page 41. Have the students select the books that were written by Ellen G. White from the table provided. Then, on a flipchart or chalkboard, record the names of these valuable writings.

Ask: ● “What are some of the major themes of these writings?” ● “How have these writings shaped our current lifestyle choices as Seventh-day Adventists?”

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Why is it important to remember that a prophecy is not necessarily a prediction of the future, but a promise about the future?

2. How would you share the hope you have in God’s prophecies and their fulfillment with someone who looks to astrology to tell them their future?

3. A good friend of yours goes to a palm reader so she will know what her future holds. The palm reader, however, “prophesies” trouble. What biblical texts and Ellen G. White quotes can you share with your friend about the true nature of prophesies and prophecies?

4. Why does God give us prophecies?

5. The news is full of bad happenings. However, the fulfillment of prophecies help us understand that God is in control and that we are moving toward a future He has planned for us. How should this make us feel?

6. The fulfillment of some Bible prophecies point to the Second Coming. Discuss why this should discourage setting specific dates for Jesus’ return.

7. We talk about the gift of prophecy. In what ways is prophecy a gift?

**Closing the Activity**

As a wrapup to this week’s lesson, have class members share the reading of Daniel 2:31–44. Then sing hymn number 596, “Look for the Waymarks,” in The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal.

You or a volunteer should offer a word of prayer inviting the Holy Spirit’s guidance for the week ahead.

**Samantha Bullock, St. Vincent and Grenadines, West Indies**
The Blessings of the Prophetic Gift

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Learn to appreciate God’s concern for their physical, emotional, and spiritual health.
► Discover how God’s health counsels can result in an improved quality of life while avoiding dangerous fads.
► Implement practical principles for maintaining and improving their physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

Preparing to Lead
Health is a trillion dollar industry, mostly because modern society has been conditioned to believe that in order to be healthy we have to take prescription drugs, invest in expensive equipment, or adopt some extreme diet.
In truth, there is no secret to living physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy lives. A few simple principles, practiced in a balanced manner, go a long way toward decreasing our risk of contracting many of the diseases that plague society at large, and help us to live active, productive, and fulfilled lives.


Getting Started

A. Write the following letters on a whiteboard or chalkboard. Have members of the class come up one at a time and fill in one of the blanks with a health principle that begins with that letter. (Those who go first will have the easiest time.)

N _____________________________
E _____________________________
W _____________________________
S _____________________________
T _____________________________
A _____________________________
R _____________________________
T® _____________________________

(KEY: Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunlight, Temperance, Air, Rest, Trust in divine power)
Or use the following:

C _____________________________
E _____________________________
L _____________________________
E _____________________________
B _____________________________
R _____________________________
A _____________________________
T _____________________________
I _____________________________
O _____________________________
N _____________________________
S _____________________________

(KEY: Choice, Environment, Liquids, Exercise, Belief, Rest, Atmosphere, Temperance, Integrity, Optimism, Nutrition, Social support)

B. Use the reproducible activity on page 42.
ists. Remind your students that adherence to Adventist health principles does not guarantee good health and that being a disciple of Christ is more than just a matter of what we eat and drink. "Then there are flashy ad campaigns pushing alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs (with often unpredictable and serious side effects), and fast food, all leaving us at higher risk of disease and premature death."

Steve Chavez, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

1. CELEBRATION is a program developed by the General Conference Health Ministries Department.
2. The Ministry of Healing, p. 127.
The Adventist emphasis on health goes back almost 150 years. In recent years, our health principles have become the center of some media attention. Yet often the emphasis is on what Adventists don’t do. Turn each of the following prohibitions into three life-affirming, proactive statements:

A. Adventists don’t smoke.
   Adventists ___________________________________________
   Adventists ___________________________________________
   Adventists ___________________________________________

B. Adventists don’t use illegal drugs.
   Adventists ___________________________________________
   Adventists ___________________________________________
   Adventists ___________________________________________

C. Adventists don’t drink alcohol.
   Adventists ___________________________________________
   Adventists ___________________________________________
   Adventists ___________________________________________

D. Adventists don’t participate in the “party scene.”
   Adventists ___________________________________________
   Adventists ___________________________________________
   Adventists ___________________________________________

E. Adventists don’t work on Saturday.
   Adventists ___________________________________________
   Adventists ___________________________________________
   Adventists ___________________________________________
Confidence in the Prophetic Gift

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
▸ Understand that the Bible provides a test to determine if a prophetic message is the truth.
▸ Define the key elements that distinguish a true prophecy from a false one.
▸ Examine the gospel in relation to the spirit of prophecy.

Preparing to Lead
Judah’s victory over the Moabites and their armies is a clear indication of what can happen when we trust God and His prophets. The Bible records a series of visions revealed to Zechariah. In these visions, an angel of the Lord told him, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: “You will not succeed by your own strength or power, but by my Spirit,” ” (Zech. 4:6, NCV).

Getting Started
A. Divide the class into three groups, giving all members in each group a copy of the activity on page 43. After the groups have worked on the activity for about 10 minutes, have them reconvene and share their answers in each case to the question, “What can we learn from this story?”

B. Arrange ahead of class for two volunteers to give a short play on false versus true prophets. One volunteer prophet meets the test of a true prophet according to 1 John 4:1–3, while the other does not. After both prophets have presented their message, have the rest of the class decide which prophet followed the guidelines in 1 John 4:1–3 and which did not. The one who did receives the green cardboard circle, while the other receives the red cardboard circle.

Delving Into the Word
A. Divide the class into three groups, and give each group a sheet of writing paper. Assign to each group one of the following sets of names and texts: (1) David/Nathan—2 Samuel 11, 12; (2) Rehoboam/elders who had served his father, Solomon, and the young men who had grown up with him—2 Chronicles 10; (3) Asa/Azariah—2 Chronicles 14, 15. The first name in each group is the...
name of a king of either Israel or Judah. The second name is the name of a prophet or group of people who delivered a message from God to that king.

Instruct each group to read their text and to record the circumstances between the prophet and the king that led to the success or failure of his mission. After each group has completed their assignment, bring all the groups back together and have each one share their findings.

Ask: ● “What does each of these instances teach us about the role of God’s prophets in the salvation of individuals?”
● “Based on the experiences of these kings and the role of prophetic messages, how should we view the role of Ellen G. White’s visions and messages?”

B. Say: “The Bible is full of success and failures regarding prophetic messages. But our lesson this week also focuses on the pivotal point of the spirit of prophecy—Christ Himself, the very object of prophecy.”

Then, divide the class into small groups. Have each group dramatize Isaiah 52:13 and 53:12. After each group has performed, discuss how these texts highlight the servanthood of Christ.

Say: “Many misunderstood the prophecies about the servant role of Christ at His first advent. This led them to think that His church should be quite different from what He meant it to be.” Ask: “Is there anything about Jesus and His role that you might not understand? For example, are there areas in which we believe the church should have political or economic dominion, when God actually desires servanthood instead?”

Discussing the Ideas

1. How can we know if we are or aren’t dealing with true prophets and their prophecies?
2. How would you explain the relationship between the gospel and the spirit of prophecy?
3. With so many strange teachings and explanations about prophecy in our world today, what can we do to help new church members become more solidly grounded in not only Bible prophecy and the principles behind it, but in the spirit of prophecy that we have in the writings of Ellen G. White?
4. Who are the present agents of God’s prophetic messages, and why?
5. As much as God gives us reasons for our faith, there is always room for doubt. How can we live in a way that feeds faith and confidence in the prophetic message?
6. How has Jesus fulfilled the prophetic promises, so that we can now stand forgiven before God regardless of our sinful past? How should salvation by faith in Christ transform our lives?

Closing the Activity

Stress that prophetic messages should be rated according to their consistency with Scripture. Emphasize that ignoring what the Bible says when new prophetic pronouncements are made deprives the Bible of its purpose and accuracy. Say: “As we learned today, the Bible is full of people who obeyed prophetic messages and who thus succeeded in their mission. However, the Bible also relates stories of people who did not obey such messages and who, therefore, did not succeed.”

Close with prayer that your class members and yourself will, through God’s help, yield your lives to the power of His prophetic word.

Tony Oreso, Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa
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