

## PRACTICING PROPHECY

Sometimes we think of a prophet as one who speaks for God or as one who speaks about the future. This understanding does not capture the role of the prophets in the Old Testament. The Old Testament prophets were worldly and savvy observers of human nature and of the political and social world of their time. Even though the prophets had many different social functions, they interpreted the things of God *and* the lives of the people around them.

As individuals, we are going to imitate the prophetic model. We will observe the world around us and attempt to interpret injustices. We will ask God about these injustices and listen for God's response. We will then speak and act according to what we hear.

1. Choose an injustice that moves you personally and interpret what is happening. Ask:
  - Why is this injustice happening?
  - What are the obstacles present that cause people or creation to suffer?
  - Why is life not "flourishing"?
2. Talk to God about this injustice and its effects by writing a prayer or letter to God.
3. Pray about the issue, asking for God's response. Ask questions such as the following:
  - God, what do you want for people or creation in this situation?
  - What is the loving way of acting here?
  - How do you call me to use my own gifts and talents to build loving relationships in this situation?
  - How do you call others involved in the injustice to build loving relationships?

Some passages about the compassion of God that you might refer to are Isaiah 35:1–10 and 49:14–16, Jeremiah 29:11–14 and 31:1–3.
4. Write a short speech in response to the dialogue with God that reflects your sense of what God wants for the people or the created things that are affected by the injustice. Try to respond as you think a prophet might. Refer to the passages from Isaiah and Micah in the textbook, page 23, as examples of prophetic speech, but feel free to use your own style.