

Planning



Sunday, October 29 – Saturday, November 4 • 2023

God's Story, Our Stories

As we stand with the people of Israel on the border of a new land and hear the gospel summary of the law, we consider the thresholds of our lives and the significance of our stories within God's larger story.

This Week...

Ecumenical prayer calendar

Canada, the United States of America

As listed in *Pilgrim Prayer: The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, edited by Ester Pudjo Widiastih and Karen L. Bloomquist. (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2018). <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle> offers valuable aids for intercessory prayers, prayer on behalf of and in solidarity with others.

Special days ([commentary](#) on p. 124)

October 31 – Reformation Day/Saints of the Reformation

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

October 31 – All Hallows Eve

November 1 – All Saints Day

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

November 2 – All Souls Day

Personal reflection

November 1 is All Saints Day. As you prepare to remember the saints that have inspired and supported your story, listen for the bells ringing throughout the day. Maybe you hear church bells reminding you of great faith teachers from your younger years. Maybe you hear school bells that remind you of the ways you are still learning to be a saint. Maybe you hear bells near train tracks reminding you of how God ventures with you into the future. Listen for the bells and welcome the invitation to remember and give thanks for all the saints.

The planning page is provided in text format for copying, adapting, and adding to your bulletin or online worship resources or website or social media (see Text folder, Worship Outline).

October 29, 2023

22nd Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 25 (30)

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Revised Common Lectionary
(Year A)**

Deuteronomy 34:1–12

the focus in age-level materials

Psalm 90:1–6, 13–17

1 Thessalonians 2:1–8

Matthew 22:34–46



Seasons of the Spirit™

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

Liturgical colour Green

The Season after Pentecost is a time to tell stories about God and who we are as Christ's disciples. Use the Storytelling Starters each week as an opportunity to encourage new stories. "[Fresh Expressions](#)" on page 125 reminds us that stories are not just shared in worship but every time people of faith gather. How might storytelling be shared this week?

Online Resources

Lection Connection

Essays and discussion prompts linking current events with this week's scriptures. Use for sermon preparation, Bible studies, and small groups or share on social media at <https://www.seasonsonline.ca/10/>.

Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home

An easy-to-share, weekly online resource supports the spiritual lives and faith formation of individuals and families at home. It is provided in the [Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home](#) folder.





Deuteronomy 34:1–12
 focus in age-level materials
Psalm 90:1–6, 13–17
1 Thessalonians 2:1–8
Matthew 22:34–46



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

God our comfort,
 we know our past but not our future.
 Grant us love and support as we use these
 present moments to reflect on the story of the
 last days of Moses and ponder on journeys.

God's Story, Our Stories

This week we arrive at the border of the new land towards which the people of Israel have been traveling since fleeing their enslaved lives in Egypt. We will also watch as Moses' life comes to an end. However, in the endings there are also new beginnings. God's story continues into the next era of God's creativity.

Deuteronomy 34:1–12 What a journey it has been for the people of Israel and their leaders, Moses, Aaron, and Joshua. Both leaders and the people have learned much along the way. As the people of Israel are about to enter into a new land, our focus is on Moses. Moses had done much for the people of Israel since his call to liberate them from slavery and to lead them on a wilderness journey to a new identity. They escaped from Egypt and the pharaoh's chasing army; they were sustained by manna, water, and God's presence on the wilderness journey; they received ten ways of living and a new covenant. Along the way, Moses was sorely tried by the Israelites and interceded on their behalf. In all the years of wilderness wandering, Moses and God lived an extraordinary friendship.

Moses' life then comes to an end in the presence of God, but not before a new leader has been mentored and blessed. The story does not stop here for the people of Israel. Joshua will lead them as they enter the new land. This does not happen immediately. Moses, the greatest prophet, is remembered and mourned for 30 days.

From Moses, we can learn to trust in God, the importance of regular prayer and, most importantly, endurance and recognition of God's gifts and graces.

Psalm 90:1–6, 13–17 is a selection of verses from the only psalm attributed to Moses. It recalls Moses as the one who asked God to turn and have compassion (v. 13). It is a community prayer that acknowledges God is our dwelling place in all generations and asks that God will give lasting value to the work of the community.

In **1 Thessalonians 2:1–8**, Paul tells the young church that sharing the gospel is of great value. This gospel work is to please God and not to curry favour with the people (v. 4). This rings true for us; what we do is something entrusted to us by God.

Matthew 22:34–46 Jesus summarizes the law in two succinct commandments: love God and love your neighbour as yourself stating, "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Alongside the story of Moses, the need to let go, hand leadership on, and grieve the moment, it is important to note that this command also calls us to love ourselves.

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From the life and wilderness experiences of Moses comes the prayer of the psalm, Paul's caution to please God and not mortals, and the gospel summary of the law – to love God and neighbour (as we love ourselves). The great stories told by the community of faith, generation after generation, include themes and values to which our individual and communal stories are connected. Our stories take on a different kind of significance when placed within the larger story and when held by the community with affection and respect. What are the ways your story connects to God's story?



Reflecting on the Word

Adapt and use for youth and adult studies,
sermon seeds, lay worship teams.

Connecting with life

Reflect on times when you have achieved a target score in sport, or saved for a special purpose, or begun a long book.

- **What motivated you to begin? How did you feel at the start, along the way, when you reached your goal?**
- **Sometimes, events can overtake us, and we cannot complete what we began. When has this happened to you, and how did you feel?**

Scripture

Deuteronomy 34:1–12 is an account of Moses' encounter with God shortly before his death.

- **What might it have been like to be there with Moses as God showed Moses the land to which he had been leading the people for 40 years?**
- **We are told in the text that the people of Israel wept for Moses for 30 days. Imagine you are in a small group of those people grieving the loss of your leader. What kind of things are you saying about Moses?**
- **What are the things that make for the smooth succession of Joshua's leadership?**

Psalm 90:1–6, 13–17 Read the psalm in response to Deuteronomy 34:1–12.

- **What lines from this psalm stand out for you? Why those lines?**
- **With what does the psalmist seem to be struggling?**
- **To what degree can you imagine these words as being spoken by Moses? by Joshua? by the people of Israel?**

Focus for Worship, Learning, and Serving

Recall the juxtaposition of emotions from just two weeks ago in worship. While we might not be vocal about the many transitions in our lives, these emotions are always present. We are always on the threshold of something new. Something is always ending. Change is our only constant.

While the people of Israel are saying goodbye to Moses, they are also preparing to say hello to their new leader Joshua. For some, it might be too soon. For others, not soon enough.

This week's worship delicately deals with the complicated reality that while some are woefully lamenting goodbyes, others are anxiously anticipating hellos. In

Connecting scripture and life

God's story unfolds through our lives, our choices, and our stories. Most people want to be Moses-like – to make a difference through their living.

- **What clues are offered in today's scripture passages about ways to embody the movement of God's Spirit in one's daily life?**

Imagine Moses standing on Mount Nebo, looking back over the wilderness that held his story for 40 years and then looking ahead to the land of promise.

- **How might you see the Spirit moving through every moment of your life?**

Draw a path on a piece of writing paper to represent the path of your life from birth into the future. Along the path, mark significant dates and events. Now mark places where you have been particularly aware of God's presence in your unfolding story – places where you might exclaim: "My story, God's story!"

Fold a paper in thirds, then unfold. In the left-hand column, write an epitaph of one or two lines that summarizes your life thus far. Fold the column in so you can no longer read it. In the right-hand column, write an epitaph based on your life as you hope it will continue to unfold. Unfold the left column and consider the content of both epitaphs side-by-side. Use the centre column to write down your reflections on the two columns: How might considering the way you want to be remembered guide your choices?

the Christian story, death is no stranger to our people. Everything and everyone dies. Too often, we struggle with knowing when something has come to the end of its time and letting it go. We deny and ignore our emotions. We miss the opportunity to tell the whole story.

We need space to share these tender, honest, and celebratory stories of life and death. How have endings affected your life as a community? In what ways have you found a "new path on which to travel" through letting go? Consider how Reformation Sunday and All Saints Day offer more opportunities for reflection and dreaming about who we are becoming as God's people.



God's Story, Our Stories

Prepare

NOTE: The following suggestions are mere starting points; adapt, delete, and add according to your local needs and context. If a community is gathered in person, they may speak the **bolded** lines. If worshippers are not all physically present, consider having a different individual say the bolded responses. Instructions are *italicized*.

- ❑ Recruit volunteers needed for worship:
- ❑ Choose an option for hearing Deuteronomy 34:1–12. For the Bible story, arrange for a storyteller to present “God’s Promises” on p. 126. Alternatively, for younger children, arrange for a storyteller to present “Moses Blesses Joshua” in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week’s materials. For the mime tableau, invite several actors to form a tableau (Moses, Joshua, and group of people) and someone to read.
- ❑ Bring items for setting the worship space: pencils and paper for the prayer of confession. White space might also be provided in the printed bulletin.
- ❑ You might choose to print *Desert Dancing* on or in your bulletin (in the Images to Project and Images for Printing folders). See “Connecting with the Art” on p. 8 for background to the art and artist.
- ❑ Bring song such as “Behold, I Make All Things New” (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6, #4 on *Seasons Music CD*, vol. 6. Printed music and recording are also available for

purchase and download at https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/).

- ❑ Set stations as described on pp. 127–128.



Music Suggestions

In God We Live and Move

Bruce Harding; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9

Fresh as the Morning

Shirley Erena Murray, Tony Alonso; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 8

Comfort Me

Monica O'Brien, Gina Ogilvie; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 7

Behold, I Make All Things New

John Bell; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6

I Want Jesus to Go With Me

African-American Spiritual; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6

Shelter

Jared and Rebecca Haschek; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 5

Give Thanks for Life

Shirley Erena Murray



A chart that shows the licence holder(s) for each song in each of the 9 *Seasons of the Spirit* Music Volumes can be found at www.seasonsonline.ca. Click on Library; Seasons Music Information. Please contact a licence holder for permission to duplicate.

Gather

Call to worship

Our journey with the people of Israel now brings us to the edge of grief.

Nothing is as it was.

The story has changed.

We welcome God's grace.

We come to remember what it means to be alive.

We invite Christ's love.

We come together to imagine and dream beyond the pain.

Into the unknown, we lean on each other to share our stories.

We welcome the Spirit's comfort.

Let us find ourselves in God's story today.

Let our stories come alive with God's love.

Opening prayer

Come, dwell with us, O God.

Mountains may crumble.

Time might pass, and it will feel like everything has changed,

but you will be in our breath.

You will be with us.

You will be Spirit, Comforter, Encourager and Guide, reminding us to breathe in and breathe out.

Come and breathe with us now.

O God, fill us with your presence in each breath.

Allow space to share in breathing in and out together. A worship leader might invite the gathered body to breathe together with the simple guidance of “Breathe in love, breathe out fear.” Conclude this time of prayer by gently ringing a bell.

Prayer of confession

The following litany involves interspersing time for silent meditation between lines of remembrance. Provide pencils and paper (or white space in the bulletin) to create a dynamic meditation on these questions and possibilities.



Worship Outline • October 29, 2023

Just a little further... Just a little more... Just a little longer...
Just a little closer.

Our story has been full of these moments. We've made the mistake of believing that the destination is the goal, rather than notice that the journey itself holds blessings often unseen and unknown.

We join with Moses in holding visions of what is possible.

The story, and our beginnings, continue to unfold. We trace your hope and love into the pages of our lives. We try to follow, and we sometimes fail. O God, we need your help erasing and your courage to draw again.

We fumble over our words. We don't think we are writers. We are not artists either. But we are part of your story so help us to remember our beginning. Where did we first learn about your love?

Silent reflection and doodling.

Just a little more... we say it again. Just a little closer... We have made mistakes. The lines have been redrawn. A new plot line was introduced. How has learning more about your love changed us?

Silent reflection and doodling.

We want our stories to reveal your love. What do we hope will be remembered about our lives?

Silent reflection and doodling.

Words of affirmation

Look around and take it in!

Look at the lines on your page. Where did you find God outlining hope?

What trace of love did you find in your unfolding story?

God's story is still being told. God is not done with us yet. God loves you with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their mind.

You are being made in love over and over again. Amen.

Engage

Opening the word

Deuteronomy 34:1-12 *the focus scripture for age-level materials in ENCORE*

Choose from the following.

Bible story Arrange for a storyteller to present "God's Promises" on p. 126. Alternatively, for younger children, tell the story "Moses Blesses Joshua" (in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week's materials).

Mime tableau *Use the translation of your choice.*

Have the Moses figure stand at the front looking out and pointing in different directions as the words of the Deuteronomy 34:1-4 are read.

A group of people gather around "Moses" so that he "disappears," as they turn silently weeping (verses 34:5-8).

The group then turns around again and takes a couple of steps backwards, bowing slightly (not too much, but respectfully) towards one of them, "Joshua," who stands tall (verse 9).

Group freezes as Deuteronomy 34:10-12 is read.

Matthew 22:34-46 You might choose to only read up to verse 40 (omitting verses 41-46) in to highlight how Jesus reminds his followers that loving God and loving our neighbours are the central commandments of living a compassionate life. Why is love of self important in times of great change? What does love do in times of death and loss? How does love make room for our stories?

If gathering in person, invite children, young people, and all who wish to move to the stations. Others will remain seated for proclaiming the word. For those participating at home, you might encourage them to use materials that have been sent.

Respond

Sing or listen to a song such as "Behold, I Make All Things New" as people gather again (*Seasons Songbook, vol. 6, #4 on Seasons Music CD, vol.6*). Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products).

Prayers of the people

We come to you, God, bringing our dreams,
bringing our longing to be whole,
bringing our deep questions.



We have so many “whys” God.
We know we won’t be satisfied
even if we can handle the answers,
even if you could give them to us.
So we come looking for a way
to love you in the middle of our story.
When we do not yet know the ending
and wonder what might happen next,
we listen for you in the quiet and the chaos.
We want to look for you in the hopes of others.
We want to respond to your signs of love around us.

Holy One, we know how to write letters.
Though we might not pick up a pen to share our love,

we know how to begin writing epistles that define our love
for our neighbour,
but we struggle to find the same courage to write the story
of our lives.
Help us to tell and share the story you are still composing.
Invite us into your creative process and with all the saints
of past and present, allow the work of our hands to bring
praise to your name.
Allow our whole lives to continue to tell your story, O God.
Amen.

Prayer of dedication or offering prayer

We offer to you the work of our hands, the love of our hearts,
the fruits of our labour, trusting that they will be used for
your service and to your glory. Amen.

Bless

We are people of the Way.
**We are people on a journey to find new directions, discover
new stories, to explore new ways of love.**
We give thanks for the way that is stretched before us and
all the challenges, fears, and possibilities it brings.

**We give thanks for the way that lies behind us; it has faith-
fully led us this far.**
We give thanks for the new ways that will emerge:
**May we continue to follow your leading with hopeful and
daring hearts.**

Special Days Commentary

October 31 – Reformation Day

On the night of October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses – a proposal to debate the doctrine and practice of *indulgences* – to the castle church door in Wittenberg, Germany, beginning what became known as the Protestant Reformation. Accordingly, this date has significance for churches of the reformed tradition.

Luther chose this night knowing that many people would be attending church the next day – All Saints Day – and would thus read his statements of concern about the church. Some Protestant churches not of the reformed tradition choose October 31 (or the Sunday prior) to honour “Saints of the Reformation Era,” broadening the observance to include others.

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

November 1 – All Saints Day

November 2 – All Souls Day

In many churches, All Saints Day (November 1) celebrates all people of faith, recalling how, in New Testament usage, the word *saints* refers to Christians collectively, as well as those people of special significance who have been set apart by

the church or canonized. It is the recognition of the common bond of Christians, both living and dead, and the common bond of the church here on earth and the church triumphant in heaven. If November 1 falls on a weekday, All Saints Day is generally observed on the following Sunday.

For those traditions who use All Saints Day to commemorate canonized saints or those whose lives have been particularly Christ-like, All Souls Day on November 2 provides an opportunity to remember other Christians who have died. A simple, reflective service can provide an opportunity to invite those who have been bereaved during the year to gather to remember their loved ones in prayer.

The night before All Saints Day was originally known as All Hallows Eve and, over time, became shortened to Halloween. Tracing its roots to an ancient Celtic day of the dead known as Samhain, it was believed that souls and supernatural beings would wander the night. Various traditions have merged over time, ranging from praying for saints and “lost souls” to children dressing up in costumes and going from door to door in search of treats.

For those churches who wish to observe All Saints Day, on November 5, biblical background and worship resources based on the readings from the Revised Common Lectionary are provided in the Library at www.seasonsonline.ca.



Fresh Expressions

Some possibilities for storytelling and faith sharing

By Susan McIlveen

When someone asks a faith-related question or expresses a faith-related doubt, we should celebrate as though the 1,000,000th customer has crossed the supermarket threshold: music, bright lights, and balloons and confetti falling from the ceiling. Someone has just become an active participant in working out their faith! What can we do to create an environment where such opportunities will occur more often?

In the church school: Lead with the story The temptation in church school is to condense the mystery and wonder of the Bible down to a few core proof-texts. However, providing a single, closed text as the core of a lesson effectively deflects inquiry. It says, “Here is the answer. Look no further.” It also makes the leader responsible for knowing all the right answers – yikes!

Stories, on the other hand, open inquiry. Stories are invitations for each person to become imaginatively present with Miriam, Moses, and Peter. As we walk among the characters and share their experiences, we enter into their emotions, thoughts, concerns, and choices they experienced. When we explore the intersection between the biblical story and our own story, we enter the world of faith.

In worship: Use more than one source Most traditional worship services carefully blend scripture readings, music, and reflection to reinforce a single main message the minister or a few others have chosen to impart. However, it is also possible to invite other sources of reflection and inspiration into the worshippers’ encounter with God. Consider incorporating elements that engage different learning styles: hands-on engagements in the pews with moulding compound/clay, writing or drawing materials; multisensory experiences of mustard seeds, perfumed oil, or unleavened bread. Such activities will encourage the worshippers to become initiators of their own worship experiences, actively seeking God’s presence rather than waiting for the worship team’s introduction.

In newsletters and outreach materials: Skip the slogans We’ve heard them all: catchy phrases that were original at one point, but have been seen on so many bumper stickers, t-shirts, and church signs, they’ve lost whatever meaning they had. Open up your print communications using simple, straightforward language to invite meaningful reflection on core Christian truths (especially for newcomers). Rather than trying to be clever or catchy, work toward being effective. Does the message invite a response – in reflection, dialogue, or action? Do the words you choose leave opportunities for more than one response, depending on where a person is coming from? If so, you are extending an invitation for explorations that can lead to new understanding and faith growth.

In committees and leadership councils: Build inquiry into the agenda We’re all busy, and there will never be enough hours in the week to complete the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) with time left over for coffee. So, let’s try multi-tasking: using our committee and council meetings to live out the transformative power of Christ’s way as we go about the work of the church. Start by putting a new line item on the agenda, somewhere near the beginning or the end, where the group can reflect on praxis within the context of their work together. One pastor asks his newly installed leaders each year, “Should New Community Church stay in existence for another year?” After the leaders responded with, “Yes, of course,” the entire first meeting with every new council is spent defining their reason for existence in this place and time. Another pastor begins every leadership meeting with the question, “How are we loving God and loving our neighbours?”

Jesus often taught by asking questions or telling stories, requiring his listeners to re-think what they already knew and imagine new possibilities. Wonder, question, explore, doubt, disagree...each is an opening for God to show us again or anew how we might live as God’s people. Celebrate it all (and don’t forget the confetti).



God's Promises

Based on Deuteronomy 34:1–12

Moses had been leading the people of Israel for 40 years. He was now 120 years old! He could see very well, and he still had lots of energy.

He had led the people from slavery into freedom, and he led them through life in the desert. During that time, Moses acted as God's spokesperson. God would speak to Moses, and Moses would tell the people what God said. God often chose to speak with Moses from a mountaintop.

One day, Moses went up a mountain called Mount Nebo. From the high place, God showed Moses land that stretched a very far distance. Moses could see flatlands, valleys, trees, cities, and even the sea.

God told Moses that this land that he could see was very important. This was a land of promise, where the people could finally settle after 40 years of living and travelling through the wilderness! This was a place they could call home. Here they could grow their food and raise their families. This was a place where they could be happy and free and build and plant.

Guided by God, Moses had led the people to this new land.

After Moses saw the land and talked with God, but before the people entered the land, Moses died.

The people were very, very sad. They mourned and cried for many days.

Moses had been an incredible leader. There was no one quite like him. God had spoken to Moses face-to-face and had appointed Moses to do miracles and wonders that no one else could do. God's power was seen through Moses, and Moses was well-known throughout the whole land of Israel.

When the people of Israel had finished crying about Moses, they learnt that they would have a new leader. Before he died, Moses had chosen Joshua to become the new leader. The people of Israel listened carefully to what Joshua had to say.

A recording of this story is available in MP3 format in the Audio Stories folder.



Bible story

Materials

- Recording of "God's Promises"
- Alternatively, arrange for a storyteller to present the story
- Paper or drawing pads
- Basic supplies

The practice of storytelling

Directions

1. Listen to the story "God's promises."
2. Using the materials provided, imagine the faces of the people as they listened to Moses speak. How would they be feeling? How might you be feeling?



Living, Learning, Growing as Disciples

The following stations might be set up around your worship space, or in other places around the church, in your home, or outdoors. Choose one or more practices, depending on your space and numbers. Display the directions for all to see onscreen or in person. Adapt stations for use when physically distancing and above all, follow the safe practices of your congregation and local health officials.

For your convenience, directions are formatted for printing and available in the Stations folder.

Health and Safety Practices

Basic supplies pens, pencils, markers, crayons, white glue/glue sticks, scissors, hand sanitizer, wipes placed in a basket or bin, two containers marked "clean" and "used"

Setting the space Utilize large spaces where people can maintain a safe physical distance. Spread out chairs around a large table or use tape to mark off the space around stand alone chairs.

Keep it clean Wipe down and disinfect places used for stations. Provide enough arts and crafts supplies to reduce sharing and mark containers "clean" and "used." Remind people to use hand sanitizer as they begin and as they end stations.

Journey sticks

Materials

- Basic supplies
- Sticks of varying lengths
- Found natural materials
- Beads
- Coloured string or yarn



**Suitable for all ages
working together**

The practice of storytelling

Directions

Journey sticks are familiar to aboriginal people in Australia to remember their stories. Natural materials and markings are slowly added to these walking sticks to retell their travels and experiences over time. Native Americans have a similar practice both for storytelling and navigational purposes.

1. Begin by selecting the perfect stick to tell your story. Will you tell your whole life story? Or is there a particular story you need to carry on your journey?
2. Once you have selected your stick, choose an end to begin telling your story. Add markings and other materials to tell your story until you reach the other end. Recall how you felt, what you saw and what happened. You might pause here to wonder if your story is over. If not, what might you add to remember that you are held within God's ongoing story?
3. Share your story and listen to others share their stories. Give thanks.

Caring for the land

Materials

- Sand, dirt, rocks, pebbles (each in its own tray)
- Hand sanitizer or wipes



**Suitable for all ages
working together**

The practice of stewardship

Directions

God showed Moses the land of promise. The people of Israel had waited a very long time to get to this new land; it was important to respect and care for it. Today, we can also actively care for the land and water. Some of those actions might happen around the church, and some might occur at home.

1. Consider your connection to the land as you touch and feel the elements displayed on the table.
 - **What do you remember about the land?**
 - **How does the land come alive?**
 - **What does the land love?**
1. As you are able, share a story from your reflection with another. Listen to their story.
2. Wonder how you might care for the land as land has cared for you. You might learn more about the land and its history, as well as the Indigenous people for whom this land has been and is important, or you might choose to explore xeriscaping (landscaping technique that aims at conserving water through creative landscaping).
3. Pray together for land and your desire to care for land well.



Loud dwelling sounds

Materials

- Clear mixing bowls
- Plant-based cling film
- Large rubber bands
- Large sugar crystals



Suitable for all ages
working together

The practice of prayer

Directions

Psalm 90:1–6, 13–17 insists that God be a part of our lives. This psalm demands God to be part of the human story in a loud voice.

1. Stretch a large piece of cling film over the mouth of a mixing bowl. Make sure it is tight and secure, using rubber band if needed. It should feel like a drum. As you do, you might wonder:

- **When or how are you most aware of God's presence?**
- **How does God dwell with you through beginnings and endings?**

2. Place a few sugar crystals in the middle of the cling film.
3. Lean close to the rim of the bowl and share honestly with God what you needed in the past and where you hope to find God in the future. Use a loud voice and notice what happens to the sugar crystals.
4. Experiment with softer and louder sounds. Try different voices as you wonder what God hears when God comes to dwell in your story.

A good story

Materials

- Basic supplies
- Newspaper obituaries/tributes
- Paper



Suitable for
ages 12-adults

The practice of remembering

Directions

Moses had led the people of Israel for 40 years. During that time, there were many significant events that the people remembered. Deuteronomy 34:10–12 records Moses' life in a short obituary or tribute,

“Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. He was unequaled for all the signs and wonders that the Lord sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants and his entire land, and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.” Reflecting on our lives and our church's lives can also help us remember significant events. Remembering can also help us recall how God has been with us in our past and present.

1. Begin by flipping through the newspapers to read through some obituaries/tributes. Notice their similarities and differences as well as what makes a good story.
2. Consider your own story and how you might be remembered. You might wonder:
 - **For what you will be remembered?**
 - **What achievements?**
 - **Your contribution to the community and your family?**
3. Write a first draft of your obituary telling a really good story of a life.

The article “[Connecting with the Art](#)” on page 8 provides background to this season's posters and art engagement ideas for individuals and groups. You might add an Art station and select one of the art engagement ideas.



Story and activities for the very young to use in church or at home.

Moses Blesses Joshua

Based on Deuteronomy 34:1-12

Moses was the leader of the people of Israel and helped the people travel to a new land. They had many adventures along the way.

But now Moses was growing very old...120 years old.

His hair was long and white. His beard was long and white. He walked slowly and talked slowly, too.

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

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

Moses heard their whispers and felt their worry. "Dear friends," Moses said with a smile. "God will take care of you. There will be a new leader, someone younger

who can continue walking with you and showing you the way to go."

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

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

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

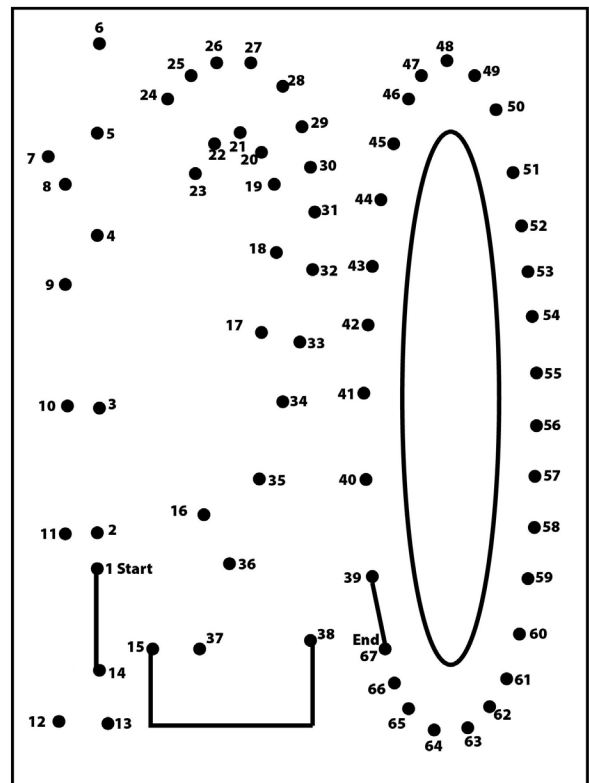
The people started to smile. They knew that Moses was right. God would be with them and take care of their new leader, Joshua.

120!

Moses is 120 years old in our story today. He says to the people, "Friends, I am growing very old. I have led you for many years. We have walked together, and we have talked together for many moons. Now I am feeling tired, and I need to rest."

120 is a really big number.

- Can you count all the way to 120?
- Can you build a tower with 120 blocks or legos?
- Can you count how many times, in 120 seconds, you can hop on one foot?
- How far would you go if you took 120 steps?
- Can you write your name 120 times?
- Can you think of 120 places you would like to visit?
- Can you write a story with 120 words?
- What do you imagine you will have done in your life after 120 years?



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Moses was with the people of Israel, teaching them about God's way of love. Much, much later, Jesus went to many places teaching about God's love. The people asked Jesus, "In everything we have learnt about living in God's way, what is the most important thing?"

Jesus answered: "Love God. Love your neighbour. Love yourself." There are many ways we can love. Maybe as many as 120! Fill in this heart with many ways to share love and kindness with your neighbours, God, and yourself.

