

CALLED TO BE PROPHETS

A social justice resource for the preparation of Confirmation

But as for you, return to your God, hold fast to Love and Justice.

(Prophet Hosea 12:6)

What is a Prophet?

In the Bible, the prophets were people who spoke on behalf of God and delivered his message to the people here on Earth. The prophets were often afraid and overwhelmed by the task given to them and felt unworthy and unqualified to do what God was asking of them. Many were persecuted in one way or another by the people they were sent to speak to. They were mocked, laughed at, imprisoned, ignored and driven away. Being a prophet was quite a high-risk job!

Activity for Students

- Can you name a prophet from the Old Testament? Take some time to find a quote from a prophet about social justice, e.g. Amos, Micah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah.

Prophets vs Celebrities

Many of us look up to famous celebrities because of their gifts, talents or beauty. We follow them on Twitter or Instagram, we go to their concerts and buy clothes so we can dress like them. Some people might think that being a 'modern-day prophet' is like being a celebrity. But being a prophet means much more. Often, prophets engaged with issues of justice and spoke out against unfairness and inequality. So too do some celebrities, but often we hear more about their latest movie rather than their humanitarian work, which helps to save lives.



Emma Watson at the UN



For example, did you know that Emma Watson (famously known for playing Hermione in the *Harry Potter* movies) has recently added her voice to the United Nations 'HeForShe' campaign?

She is campaigning for equal rights between men and women. When asked why she had chosen to get involved in this campaign, she said: *'I think it is right that socially I am afforded the same respect as men. But sadly I can say that there is no one country in the world where all women can expect to receive these rights.'*

As one of the most famous actresses in the world, Emma has chosen to use her powerful celebrity status to highlight a major injustice in our world and to help end gender inequality.

- Over 80% of farmers in Africa are women.
- Almost half of births in developing countries take place without the help of a skilled birth attendant.
- Every minute, a woman dies during pregnancy or childbirth somewhere in the world. This is over 1,400 women dying each day!
- More than 40% of women in Africa do not have access to basic education.

(Source: UNMilleniumProject.org)

We must look beyond celebrity and self-glory in life, towards a way that God has intended for us to live. We must love one another, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and care for the sick and vulnerable in our society.

Activity for Teacher/Catechist

- Ask students to talk about their favourite celebrity and why they look up to them (e.g. singer, sports star, actor, etc.).
- Arrange for students to research a celebrity or local person that does good deeds. What gifts of the Holy Spirit has this person used for a good cause? Each student must present their findings in a project to their class/Confirmation group.

Modern-Day Prophets

To be a prophet in today's world takes courage. Most prophets were never listened to during their own lifetime. Have you ever heard of the quote 'No prophet is accepted in his own land'? It comes from a scripture quote, Luke 4:24, and shows how difficult it was to be a prophet, to have people listen to you and believe your message from God.

This is often the case for some of the world's most vulnerable communities, who have no voice and nobody to listen to them. Trócaire helps the voices of the poor and oppressed to be heard, creating a future and a world of justice and peace where the dignity of every human being is respected and valued.

Trócaire invites you to look at the stories of Amos and Mahlet. Both are nearly teenagers and have lived through very difficult times, yet they strive to work towards a better future for themselves, their families and communities. Both have faced many difficulties in life and yet remain hopeful, thankful and full of love for the world around them. Read their stories and see how they serve as great examples of what it is to be a true modern-day prophet.

Mahlet's Story

Mahlet is thirteen years old and lives in northern Ethiopia. Her name means 'life' in her native language of Amharic. She loves school and says: 'School is the centre of knowledge. If you are knowledgeable, you will grow. I would like to study medicine to be a doctor and to help my family and my country.'

As part of their chores, Mahlet and her brother Samuel look after their family's animals. They like caring for the animals, and Mahlet often reads a book as she follows behind the cows who slowly roam the land looking for food. The animals

provide meat and milk for their family. Often, there is no grass because rain hasn't fallen so they have to prepare cactus for the animals to eat. They remove the prickly spines from the cactus using fire, which can be a dangerous task. After school they chop up the cactus and give it to the animals.

The shortage of rain doesn't just affect the animals. It can also mean that Mahlet's family struggle to grow food. Water means everything to Mahlet and her family. If she has water to drink, and enough water to grow her crops, she is more likely to do well in school. Hopefully when she grows up, she will fulfil her wish and become a doctor.



Mahlet (13), Tigray, Ethiopia

Amos's Story

Amos is twelve years old. He lives with his mother, Teresina, and older brother, Antony, in eastern Kenya. His favourite game is football and his favourite colour is red. He loves going to school, especially to meet his best friend Charles. He is very good at school and enjoys maths and English the most. When he comes home from school he loves to read.

Amos and his family grow vegetables on their small piece of land. They eat these vegetables, but also sell some at the market to earn money. In recent years the rain has not been as predictable as it used to be. Sometimes it is heavy, sometimes it does not come at all. It is becoming more and more difficult to grow crops. Amos's father has had to move to another town to find a job to earn money. Amos misses him very much. Both he and his brother Antony help their mother with chores around the house and on their small farm. It can be difficult to balance so many chores with his school work.

Trócaire is working with Amos, his family and his neighbours to build an irrigation system. This is a big pipe that will bring water to their land. When this is ready the crops will grow again and Amos's father will hopefully be able to return home.



Amos (12), Tharaka Nithi, Kenya



Did You Know ...

Amos shares the same name as the Prophet Amos? During his lifetime (circa 750 BC), the Prophet Amos spoke a lot about the increased divide between the rich and the poor, and about social justice and concern for the poor.

Questions:

1. How has Trócaire helped Mahlet and Amos?
2. How do Mahlet and Amos serve as good examples of modern-day prophets?
3. How can you serve as a modern-day prophet to the world and people who are less fortunate than you?

How to Become a Modern-Day Prophet

By becoming a modern-day prophet, you will be accepting a task given to you by God. In the Bible, all true prophets possessed power from God as a result of a personal relationship with God. At your Confirmation, you too will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and be called to action by God. The gifts of [Wisdom](#), [Understanding](#), [Right Judgement](#), [Courage](#), [Knowledge](#), [Wonder and Awe in God's Presence](#), and [Reverence](#) will definitely come in handy when becoming a good prophet! Pope Francis says: 'Solidarity retains its prophetic force.' What he means is that when you show solidarity and care for others who are in need, you are a true modern-day prophet!



Questions:

1. Do you think Pope Francis is a modern-day prophet?
2. Write about one way in which Pope Francis has shown us a good example of using our Confirmation gifts.

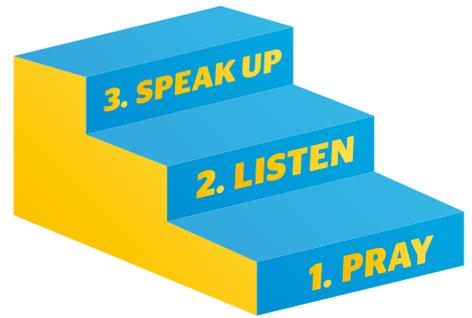
Take Action

Ideas for Becoming a Modern-Day Prophet

- **Brainstorm** with your fellow classmates about how you could become modern-day prophets. Take on the challenge together!
- **Fundraise for Trócaire.** Tell family and friends that you will be donating a percentage of your Confirmation money to Trócaire to help young people like Mahlet and Amos. Alternatively, host a fundraiser like a coffee morning, concert or a sale of work.
- **Wear blue and stand in solidarity.** Invite your family or classmates to join you in arranging a solidarity event as part of your preparation for your Confirmation. You might all agree to wear one small blue item on the day of your Confirmation to remind you of the poor in our world.
- **Take on a project.** Learn about a cause that could do with your 'prophetic voice'! See how you can highlight this cause in your local parish, school and community (visit trocaire.org for some ideas).
- **In your school/parish** ask the teachers in your school if you can 'teach' a younger class in the school about a particular injustice, or arrange for an exhibition of your class projects in your local parish after Mass on a Sunday during Lent.
- **Pray.** Make sure you set aside time for prayer each day. Prophets always spoke to God and heard an answer through their prayers.
- **Reflect** on the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit given to you in Confirmation, and think about how you could best channel them into action in your daily life for the good of the world around you.

Three Steps Towards Becoming a Prophet!

1. **Pray:** For guidance and in thanksgiving for all that you have, and for family and friends around you.
2. **Listen:** To what God is calling you to do.
3. **Speak up:** Answer God's call and take a stand for justice on behalf of those who have no voice in our world. Share examples of injustices with your class, community or parish, e.g. climate change, people losing their land, gender inequality and people having their human rights taken away from them.



Solidarity retains its prophetic force.

(Pope Francis)

Trócaire is the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland

Our Website

Visit our website trocaire.org/education to view this resource online. You will also find additional education resources and information about Trócaire's development education work.

Join us on

 Facebook: facebook.com/trocaireireland - connect with us

 Twitter: twitter.com/trocaire - keep up with our latest tweets

 YouTube: youtube.com/trocaire - see the people you support

 Flickr: flickr.com/trocaire - see our growing photo gallery

 Vimeo: vimeo.com/trocaire - watch our videos