

Called, Cleaned, and Committed

On this Sunday, when the church invites us to celebrate our most foundational and confounding doctrine, the lections demonstrate the three persons of the Trinity (Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer) working together to call, equip, and send out God's people. To be effective in leading where we are called, we must lean into both the mystery and power of God.

Focus scripture: Isaiah 6:1–8

Isaiah 6:1–8 provides us with an excellent example of the uncertainty of leadership in Isaiah's call story. We are grounded in this compelling story that has echoes in the church's historic liturgy and worship throughout the generations. Isaiah, like so many prophets before, and people after, initially resists his call.

When confronted with the untempered holiness of God, Isaiah recognizes his unworthiness. He finds, however, a God who is not dismissive of his concerns and brings healing and holiness where Isaiah didn't think it could exist.

While God's power is inexplicable, the unique ability of poetry is that it harnesses our language to do what prose cannot. The writer of **Psalm 29** reaches far and wide to describe God's power. From the raging waters to the thunderclouds, the forests to the fields, and the city to the wilderness, God's power is omnipresent and omnipotent. The ultimate set of opposites, however, frame the entire psalm, where we begin with the "heavenly beings" and conclude with God's care and protection for God's people. No matter how big and powerful God is, we as individual humans are not too small to be deemed unworthy of God's attention and love.

As Christians, we see this personal attention from God exemplified in our salvation through Jesus. In **Romans 8:12–17**, Paul draws on this paradoxical nature of our relationship with God who is powerful enough to defeat sin, but also intimate enough that we can refer to him as a parent. In his description, Paul delineates the various roles of the Triune God as Jesus and the Spirit work together to break the powers of sin and death and restore us as children of God.

John also presents us with the Trinity working together in his account of Jesus speaking with Nicodemus in **John 3:1–17**. While verse 16 gets much of the attention in this chapter, the whole story is one that merits attention. Nicodemus comes seeking to understand this new rabbi's power, however, the answers Jesus gives him are confusing. Such is the nature of our faith. When Jesus references the passage from Numbers 21 of Moses in the wilderness setting up a bronze snake to cure the people of snakebite (and hopefully their insolence as well), he is not just connecting two acts of God's saving and healing work, but also calling on Nicodemus and us to lift our eyes out of a place of wilderness and mystery and towards the near and present power of God, which calls us to trust and follow even without clarity and certainty.

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This week's scriptures seek to reckon with the mystery and power of the God whom we worship and who calls us into new life and service. Our world likes easy answers and superficial sound bites. However, the call to follow Jesus is one that brings us into something deeper and more difficult. This challenge is one that is not to be taken lightly. However, it offers us a greater adventure and a more meaningful life. It is up to us, though, to accept the healing coal that God offers us or seek to stay cowering in our unworthiness.



Focus scripture Isaiah 6:1–8

Additional scriptures
Psalm 29
Romans 8:12–17
John 3:1–17



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

Triune God, we know you in your unity, we see you in your diversity, and we experience you in your mystery. We are drawn into the intimacy of your love and by your Spirit granted a "spirit of adoption." We give glory to you, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. Amen.

Lection Connection

links current events with this week's scriptures. Go to www.seasonsonline.ca and click on the link.



The Focus for Ages 5–12

Most children in your group, especially the youngest ones, have a great capacity to experience awe and wonder. While older children are beginning to engage in more abstract thinking and hone their reasoning skills so that they can separate fact from fantasy, they still enjoy the world of fantasy. This week's story of Isaiah's awesome and mysterious encounter with God's presence offers a wonderful opportunity for children to experience a story with all of their senses. A variety of the activities will help do this, such as the way the story is told and the poetry in the writing zone. The option of a Response centre also offers an opportunity for children to use a variety of

items and media to engage their imaginations and make connections between the story and their lives. Information about setting up a [Response Centre](#) is on page 116.

Isaiah's story is not just about an awesome experience; it is the story of Isaiah's response to God's call. Older children in this age group may be beginning to think about confirmation classes and church membership in the near future. They are already "trying out" ways to respond to God's call, a call they will hear many times over during their lives. Pray that the children's experience and awareness of God's presence will be nurtured and sustained within your faith community.

Prepare

Before the session

- ❑ Read and prayerfully reflect on this week's focus scripture, Isaiah 6:1–8, and [biblical background](#) material (p. 3).
- ❑ Review "[About this Pentecost 1](#)" (p. 1) and "[This Pentecost 1 for Ages 5–12](#)" (p. 2).
- ❑ Set a worship space with white cloth, candle, offering basket, Bible with bookmark placed in focus passage.
- ❑ Bring [basic supply kit](#) (p. 2), matches, candle snuffer, and, if possible, *Seasons Songbook* (Volume 7), *Seasons Music CD* (Volume 7), and CD or MP3 player; downloadable sheet music and MP3 recordings are available at www.seasonsonline.ca.

Gather

- ❑ Bring a small bell or "singing bowl."
- ❑ Bring the "Circle Song" (p. 10 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 7; #11 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 7).
- ❑ Bring a selection of items you consider awesome.

Engage

- ❑ Bring this week's resource sheet "[An Amazing Experience](#)"; tealight in a glass jar; taper; bowl of potpourri, incense, or ground spices; and length of chiffon fabric.

- ❑ **Movement group:** song "[Holy, Holy, Holy](#)" (p. 7)

- ❑ **Imagining group:** Bibles

Respond

Choose one or more of the following activities and bring materials to set up the chosen zones.

- ❑ **Interview zone:** invite guests from congregation
- ❑ **Art zone:** variety of art supplies (fingerpaints, watercolours, chalk, pastels, brushes), different kinds of paper
- ❑ **Writing zone:** copies of this week's resource sheet "[Writing Poetry](#)," coloured paper
- ❑ **Response centre:** variety of art and craft materials; see resource sheet "[Response Centres](#)" (p. 116)
- ❑ **Outreach zone:** copies of this week's resource sheet "[Kids Helping](#)"

Bless

- ❑ Bring resource sheet "[Sign Language](#)" (p. 117)
- ❑ Bring, if possible, "May You Find Peace" (p. 26 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 7; #19 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 7).
- ❑ Bring copies of resource sheet "[Letter to Families](#)" (p. 115).



Scripture
Isaiah 6:1–8

May 30, 2021

Called, Cleaned, and Committed

FOCUS To experience God's awesome presence and call through Isaiah's story

Gather

Welcome the children as they arrive. Introduce newcomers to the group.

Call to gather Ring the bell or "singing bowl" as a signal for everyone to gather in the worship space. When everyone is settled, invite a child to light the candle. Explain that this week we begin a new season of the church year called the Season after Pentecost. Point out the white cloth which indicates that the first Sunday of this season is a special day. In some churches this is called Trinity Sunday, when we remember the different ways in which we experience God's presence.

Sing, if possible, the "Circle Song" (p. 10 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 7; #11 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 7).

Pray the following prayer, inviting children to respond with the phrase, "Holy, holy, holy God."

O God, we thank you for being with us.

Holy, holy, holy God.

May we feel your presence everywhere.

Holy, holy, holy God.

May we be filled with your Spirit.

Holy, holy, holy God. Amen.

Receive the offering. Extinguish the candle to signal that the opening ritual has ended.

Connecting with the focus

Display the items you have brought and explain why you consider these things to be awesome. Invite children to name the ones they think are awesome too. Encourage them to talk about other things they have seen or experienced that could be called awesome. Explain that today's Bible story is about one person's awesome experience of God.

Engage

Preparing for the story

Invite a child to bring the Bible from the worship table and use the bookmark to open it to this week's focus passage. Explain that today's story is about a man named Isaiah, who lived about 700 years before Jesus was born. Isaiah was worried because the people of Jerusalem were not living the way God wanted them to. Isaiah wondered what he could do to help them. One day Isaiah got an answer, in an amazing way.

The Bible story

Gather the children in a circle. Dim the lights, if possible, and have the props nearby. Use the resource sheet "[An Amazing Experience](#)" to tell the story based on **Isaiah 6:1–8**, sharing the story in a quiet voice and attitude of reverence. Encourage the children to participate with all of their senses. Discuss the following questions together:

■ **What were the amazing things that happened in this story about Isaiah?**

■ **How do you think Isaiah felt after this experience?**

Exploring the story further

(To enable the children to explore the scripture reading further, according to their own interests and abilities, explain the two options and have each child select one.)

Movement group The children in this group have the opportunity to respond to the story with music and dance. Teach the song "[Holy, Holy, Holy](#)" (p. 7) by singing a line at a time for children to echo. Once they know the song, invite children to move their bodies in response to the music as they sing.

Imagining group The children in this group have the opportunity to explore further what might have happened after Isaiah's experience in the temple. Invite children to find **Isaiah 6:7-8** in their Bibles and ask a volunteer to read the verses.

- **When Isaiah says, "Here I am, send me," what do you think God asked him to do or say?**
- **What do you think Isaiah told his friends about this experience later that day?**

Reporting Ring the bell or "singing bowl" as a signal to gather as a whole group again. Invite the movement group to sing the song, "Holy, holy, holy." Invite the imagining group to share some of their thoughts.

The Bible story and us

People today sometimes have amazing experiences of God's presence too.

■ **Where do you think people experience God today?**

■ **If you had an amazing experience do you think it would be easy or hard to talk about it? Why?**

Isaiah became a prophet, someone who brings messages from God to the people.

■ **I wonder what God would ask us to do?**

Respond

Invite the children to select a zone and work with the materials there.

- ❑ **Interview zone: Experiences of God's presence** Children benefit from hearing about other people's experiences of God's presence. Brainstorm a list of questions to ask guests about their experiences. Offer some starter questions: "Can you tell us about a time when you were aware of the presence of God? What did you feel, see, hear?" Invite guests to meet with the children in small groupings. Encourage children to make notes during their conversations. Consider ways to share the information collected and invite further discussion
- ❑ **Art zone: Abstract drawings** *(for younger children)* Experiences of God's presence are often hard to describe in words. Provide art supplies and invite children to create abstract paintings or drawings, using shapes and colours to convey a sense of mystery and awe. Make a display of the drawings and add an overall title.
- ❑ **Writing zone: Writing poetry** *(for older children)* Writers and composers of songs use poetry to describe their experiences of God. Distribute copies of the resource sheet "Writing Poetry" and invite children to describe their own experiences of God using the outlines provided.



Encourage those who wish to read their poems aloud to the group. Consider posting these in a church newsletter or in the "Prayer and Poem Gallery" in the Library on the *Seasons* website, www.seasonsonline.ca.

- ❑ **Response centre** Isaiah's experience in the temple was one that involved all the senses. Gather in the "Response centre space" (see resource sheet "Response Centres," p. 116) and look at the variety of materials provided. Invite the children to use the materials to create something that expresses God's holiness and presence. If possible, play quiet music in the background to enhance this special time.
- ❑ **Outreach zone: Serving** We can recognize and respond to God's call when we see or hear about others in need. Distribute copies of the resource sheet "Kids Helping," and read the story together; if possible, view one of the video clips from the website related to this project. Talk together about how the group could respond to God's call to help others. Plan a way for group members to be involved in a ministry of the church.

Bless

Gather in the worship space and relight the candle. Teach children the sign for “glory” and “God” (p. 117).

Sing, if possible, “May You Find Peace” (p. 26 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 7; #19 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 7).

Blessing Gather in a circle and invite children to echo the words printed in bold.

As we leave this place,

May the call of God **make us one**.

May the friendship of Jesus **make us one**.

May the wonder of the Spirit **make us one**. Amen.

Distribute copies of the family letter on the resource sheet “Letter to Families” (p. 115) for children to take home.

Reflect

In what ways did the children express a sense of wonder or awe? How did this differ across the age range?

How might you continue to foster experiences of God’s presence among the members of your group?

Movement group

“Holy, Holy, Holy” (tune: “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”)

Holy, holy, ho—ly,
is our awesome God!
All the world is singing out
the glory of our God!





An Amazing Experience

(based on Isaiah 6:1–8)

Using a quiet voice will help to create a sense of awe as you tell the story.

The temple was a beautiful big building, standing at the top of a hill. Isaiah loved to go to the temple. It was the place where he would pray to God. First Isaiah would sit quietly and look all around. He would notice the glow of lights coming from the candles. *(Use the taper to light the tealight. Pause while everyone looks at the glowing light.)*

Then Isaiah would smell the spicy incense that seemed to tickle the nostrils. *(Pause to light the stick of incense again, or to take turns smelling the bowl of potpourri or spices.)*

Sometimes Isaiah would hear the soft music of a flute or harp playing in the distance. *(Ring the bell or sound the "singing bowl" and listen together to the sounds.)*

Sometimes Isaiah would rub his hand on a tall pillar and feel the smooth, cool, polished metal. *(Pass around a shiny smooth object of brass or silver for the children to feel.)*

The light of the candles, the smell of the incense, the sound of the music – all these things helped Isaiah to think about God.

Isaiah also loved to look at the wooden carvings that were in the temple. There were carved figures that seemed to guard the covenant box – a special box that held the Ten Commandments and other holy objects. And high up on the walls, Isaiah could see carvings of figures with wings, called seraphim.

One day, Isaiah had an experience in the temple that was so awesome he could hardly talk about it. It was a day he would never forget. While Isaiah was praying, he began to feel as if God was all around and deep inside. The temple seemed to be full of sweet-smelling smoke. There was beautiful music, as if angels were singing. God's presence was filling the temple! It was as if God was sitting on a throne and the hem of God's robe spread from one side of the temple to the other. And way up high it seemed as if the carved wooden seraphim had come alive and their wings were moving. *(Swirl the fabric over the children's heads.)*

As Isaiah watched and listened, he thought he could hear the seraphim calling out, "Holy, holy, holy, God is wonderful. The whole world is full of God's beauty."

Then the temple seemed to shake! What was happening? Isaiah began to remember things he wished he hadn't done. Isaiah began to remember things he wished he hadn't said. He remembered that sometimes he had not been very good at listening to God. "Please forgive me, God. I am sorry," he said.

Suddenly Isaiah felt something touch his lips. It was like a cleansing heat. Isaiah began to relax. Isaiah felt God's presence all around. He heard God say, "I need a messenger. I need someone to tell the people about me. I need someone to help the people learn to listen to me. Who will be my messenger?"

Isaiah looked around but there was no one else in the temple. Then he knew the answer. *(Pause.)* "Here I am, God. Send me." God had called Isaiah and Isaiah would go. Isaiah had listened to what God said, and he would help the people learn to listen to God too.



Writing Poetry

Something happens to words when they are used in poems. Somehow, they grow deeper and wider and can help us say things that are hard to describe in ordinary conversation. Try writing some poems about your experiences of God.

Sensory poems describe things by using many of our senses. For example,

Love is red.

Love tastes like honey.

Love sounds like birdsong.

Love smells like a rose.

Love feels like a hug.

Use the following shape to write a poem about your experiences of the awesome presence of God.

God is _____.

God tastes like _____.

God sounds like _____.

God feels like _____.

God smells like _____.

Cinquain poems use five lines to describe something, with synonyms for the first and last words.

1st line: one word (a noun)

2nd line: two words (describe the noun)

3rd line: three words (action words about the noun)

4th line: four word phrase (describes a feeling about the noun)

5th line: one word (synonym of first word)

For example,

Tree

strong, tall

branching, sheltering, shading

safe place for birds

Pine

Use these lines to write a poem about God.



Kids Helping

One More Generation (OMG)

One More Generation (OMG) was founded in 2009 by 8-year-old Carter Ries and 7-year-old Olivia Ries founded One More Generation (OMG) in 2009, after a relative adopted two cheetahs from South Africa. Why would anyone need to adopt a wild animal, they wondered? After weeks of research, the duo decided to start their own non-profit, OMG: One More Generation, to help educate young and old about the plight of endangered species, so they could be here with us for generations to come.

Since then, their interests have expanded to include climate change and other environmental causes. Shortly after starting their organization, Carter and Olivia took action to assist marine wildlife affected by the BP Gulf Oil Spill. After spending four months collecting animal rescue supplies, the two spent five days delivering their supplies and rehabilitating marine wildlife. The two learned first hand that many animals are at risk of extinction due to environmental threats, specifically plastic pollution. Carter and Olivia proceeded to create a Plastic and Recycling Curriculum for elementary school students, launching their first environmental conservation initiative. Carter and Olivia have since launched additional divisions within OMG designed to empower youth around the world to stand up and help create solutions for the pressing issues of today.

Carter and Olivia are now old enough to go to college and so are taking time off to further their education, but they extremely passionate about animals and conservation, and promise to return.

Kids Go Global (KGG)

Kids Go Global is a place for elementary, junior and senior high school kids and teachers to explore global issues and then work alone or with NGOs to take action locally and internationally. Kids Go Global provides resources that help kids focus on the issue(s) that interest them, from 11 different areas of global concern, including animal rights, disaster relief, education, food, the environment (go green), health, human rights, water, and more. KGG provides links to information, videos, and more from NGOs working around the world. Partnering with Trickster Theatre, it encourages kids to “act out,” using drama as a way to communicate the message and concern to a broader audience.

Under the “Showcase” tab on the website, you’ll find examples of videos students have created themselves to explore an issue, and video recordings of plays they’ve performed related to global issues.

For more information and video clips go to www.seasonsonline.ca
and click on the Links tab.

Letter to Families

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Season after Pentecost. This is the longest season of the church year, a time for exploring the work of God's Spirit, alive in us and in the world. Where do you see signs of God's presence in your life? How might you help your child to discover a sense of God's presence? The following action poem can help children begin to understand the abundance of God's love and presence.

God's love is...

Higher than the highest mountain. (*Raise hands way up high.*)

Deeper than the deepest sea. (*Make a rolling wave motion with arms and hands.*)

Bigger than the space around us. (*Twirl around.*)

Brighter than a starry night. (*Wiggle fingers above head.*)

Stronger than a solid rock. (*Stomp feet.*)

Wider than the universe. (*Stretch hands out wide.*)

(*Invite children to make up more lines and actions.*)

During the first half of this season we will explore a story about Isaiah's call to be a prophet and stories from the first book of Samuel about David, who would be the future king of the people of Israel. During these weeks, children will also hear several stories from the gospels about Jesus and the disciples, including the familiar story of the young boy's gift of a loaf and some fish and the miraculous feeding of a large crowd.

You might like to read some of these stories together at home: Isaiah 6:1–8, 1 Samuel 15:34–16:13, Mark 5:21–43, and John 6:1–21. Reading the Bible together at home suggests that these stories are important to you.

Six of the sessions during July and August will focus on the letter to the Ephesians. During this time the children will learn about the first Christians, who gathered in house churches to learn how to be a community living in God's way. Through the stories of the early church, children will have an opportunity to learn more about their own faith community.

At home you might want to continue the conversation about the nature of community. Consider reading the newspaper together and talking about some of the things that are happening in your local community and in the world. You might discuss the following question together: In what ways is our family living out God's ways of love, hope, and compassion?

We will be praying for each child in our group during these seasons. We ask that your family also include us in your prayers as we explore God's Spirit alive in the world thousands of years ago and today.

Sincerely,

Suggested resources: *Read, Wonder, Listen* by Laura Alary and *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton are available from the publisher of *Seasons of the Spirit*; visit www.woodlakebooks.com

Response Centres

Offering a variety of ways in which to respond to a story invites children to find their own ways to connect the biblical stories with their own experiences. A “Response centre” offers an open-ended activity, which encourages children to learn and respond as the Spirit moves them. Those who may not be able to articulate their thoughts through words are often able to express themselves through their encounters with paper, fabric, items from nature, paints or pastels, and so on.

If children are not familiar with this type of activity, explain that they are free to use whatever materials they wish in whatever ways they wish. Some children may want to share their finished work with the whole group and others will not. Assure everyone that explanations of their work are not necessary.

Create a comfortable environment by playing a recording of quiet music. Begin by gathering around the table and looking at what is available in the “Response centre.” As you briefly review the biblical story aloud, encourage children to begin choosing items they might like to use. Move amongst the group during the activity, affirming their creativity and individual expression.

Some sessions in this season will include the option of a “Response centre” in the Respond time. However, you might consider providing a permanent “Response centre” in a corner of your meeting space, stocked with a variety of materials.

Basic supplies: variety of types of paper, foam trays, different sizes of small boxes and other empty containers, fabric scraps in a variety of colours and textures, yarn, cotton balls, wooden pegs (to make people figures), craft sticks, toothpicks, pipe cleaners, glitter, pastels, chalk, watercolour paints and brushes.

Other materials: variety of shiny paper, used compact disks, craft foam, sequins, confetti, glitter glue or glitter pens, glass “stones,” buttons, plastic beads and lacing, paper doilies, wooden chopsticks or dowsling, fingerpaints, used egg cartons, googly eyes, feathers, items from nature, sandpaper.

God’s power is...

Higher than the highest mountain.
(Raise hands way up high.)

Deeper than the deepest sea.
(Make a rolling wave motion with arms and hands.)

Bigger than the space around us.
(Twirl around.)

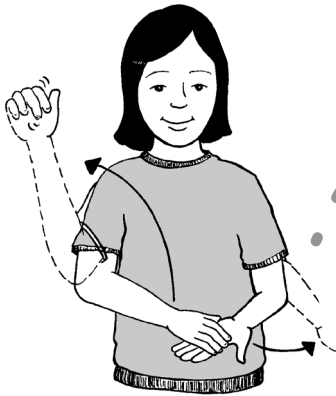
Brighter than a starry night.
(Wiggle fingers above head.)

Stronger than a solid rock. (Stomp feet.)

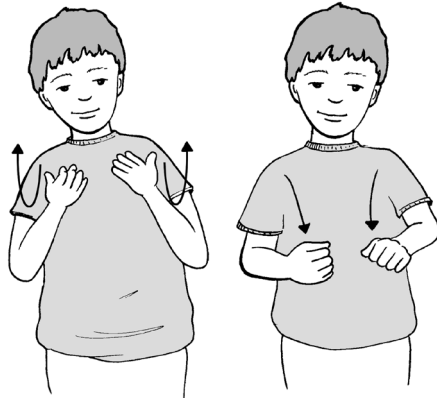
Wider than the universe.
(Stretch hands out wide.)

(Invite children to make up more lines and actions.)

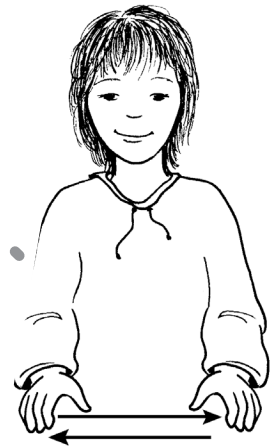
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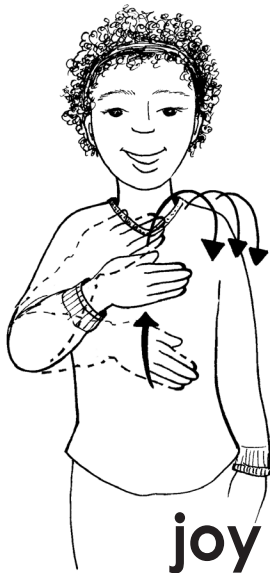
glory



courage



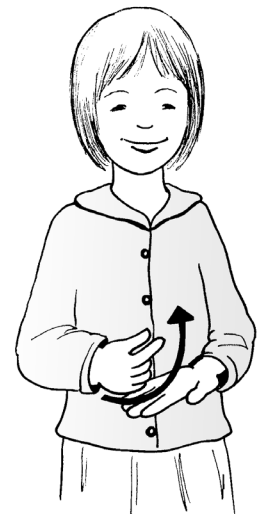
do



joy



God



gospel



hear

