

Community Leaders





Joseph answered Pharaoh,
"It is not I; God will give
Pharaoh a favorable answer."
—Genesis 41:16



SESSION 1
COMMUNITY LEADERS



Joseph: Interpreting the Future

words to remember

Listen to advice and accept instruction,
that you may gain wisdom for the future.
The human mind may devise many plans,
but it is the purpose of the Lord that will
be established.

—Proverbs 19:20-21

prayer Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 126

COMMENTARY

Pharaoh calls Joseph from the dungeon hoping that Joseph has the ability to decipher dreams. Joseph explains that it is not him, but God, who gives us answers to our questions.

To put it another way, we are the bridge that God uses to get ideas to his people. Bridges do not own the cars that are on them, just as we do not own our talents and gifts. We may be the method of transporting God's messages to other people, but God forms them.

—Kevin, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Dear Lord, please help us not to be consumed by our own talents. Let us see your face in our gifts, and remember that it is you, not us, that has provided them, as the Holy One who speaks in a voice much louder and much clearer than our own voices can. Help us look deeper to see and feel your presence.

—Kevin, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Proverbs 24:13-14

Tuesday—Ecclesiastes 8:1

Wednesday—Isaiah 42:8-9

Thursday—Daniel 5:13-16

Friday—Luke 12:54-56

Saturday—I Corinthians 2:11-13

voices



The future is hidden even from those who make it.

Anatole France

To the being fully alive, the future is not ominous but a promise; it surrounds the present like a halo.

John Dewey

I don't know what the future may hold, but I know who holds the future.

Ralph Abernathy

Trust the past to God's mercy, the present to God's love, and the future to God's providence.

Augustine of Hippo



—Judges 4:5

[Deborah] used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment.



SESSION 2
COMMUNITY LEADERS



Deborah: Leading with Wisdom

words to remember

Thus says the Lord,
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
I am the Lord your God,
who teaches you for your own good,
who leads you in the way you should go.

—Isaiah 48:17

prayer Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For those in the Armed Forces of our Country
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 823

COMMENTARY

When Deborah prophesied that Sisera, oppressor of the Israelites, would fall at the hand of a woman, she knew that brute strength could not vanquish Sisera's many chariots. The Lord put fear into Sisera's armies, forcing them to run. In running, they became weak like a stick separated from the bundle.

Sisera himself fled on foot, as the Israelites slaughtered his once-mighty army. He fled to the tent of Jael to hide. However, no one can hide from God. Jael took a stake and drove it through Sisera's head as he slept. Deborah's prophecy had come true.

—Nick, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Dear Lord, teach us to be strong, no matter what sex, race or class we are. We are your children, and we are all your messengers. Give us people to love us as we are all stronger when we are unified. But even when we are afraid or abandoned by our peers, help us to be strong. Thank you for giving us strength in everything we do. *Amen.*

—Nick, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—II Chronicles 9:1-4
Tuesday—Proverbs 9:9-10
Wednesday—Isaiah 55:3-5

Thursday—Sirach 9:17
Friday—Luke 2:24-27
Saturday—Colossians 3:16-17

voices



The best leaders train leaders while they are leading.

Author Unknown

Slowly, but surely humanity realizes the dreams of the wise.

Anatole France

The question of trust, it is so closely related to that of authority, is determined by the faithfulness with which a [person] serves Jesus Christ, never by the extraordinary talents which he [or she] possesses.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



—Judges 7:18

When I blow the trumpet,
I and all who are with me,
then you also blow the
trumpets around the whole
camp, and shout, "For the
Lord and for Gideon."

M



SESSION 3
COMMUNITY LEADERS

Gideon: Victory for God



words to remember

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

—Proverbs 3:5-6

prayer

Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift that your faithful people offer you true and laudable service: Grant that we may run without stumbling to obtain your heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Proper 26
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 235

COMMENTARY

God is always trying to tell us how great he is. However, it is our job to hear him in our own lives.

God is also a jealous God, so if we try to hide his good acts, he is not pleased and becomes angry. When doing something in God's name, it is hard to know whether we are doing it for God or for ourselves.

—Spence, Grade 6

Youth prayer

Lord, let us hear you in our lives and open ourselves not only to hear you but also to apply your words in our daily lives. Let us see you as the loving and righteous God you are, and not as an object of our own fame. Let us be messengers of your glory and your love and not messengers of evil. Let our tongues speak with all of your good deeds and not of our own. Give us the strength to know whether we are serving you or ourselves, and help us proclaim the glory of your name and of your Son. Amen.

—Spence, Grade 6

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Psalm 26:1-3

Tuesday—Isaiah 12:2-3

Wednesday—Daniel 6:22-23

Thursday—Mark 11:22-24

Friday—Romans 3:21-22

Saturday—I Peter 1:18-21

voices



Woe to the [person] whose heart has not learned while young to hope, to love—and to put its trust in life!

Joseph Conrad

Faith. You can do very little with it, but you can do nothing without it.

Samuel Butler

God is the silent partner in all great enterprises.

Abraham Lincoln

... I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Thomas Merton



—II Samuel 6:15

David and all the house
of Israel brought up the ark
of the Lord with shouting,
and with the sound of the
trumpet.

S



SESSION 4
COMMUNITY LEADERS

David & the Ark: Dancing for God



words to remember

Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that breathes
praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

—Psalm 150:4-6

prayer

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Proper 17
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 233

COMMENTARY

When the Ark entered the city of David, people rejoiced at its beauty and splendor. The box-like ark gleamed with gold. It reminded people of God. Inside of the Ark were the Ten Commandments. Everyone was happy because they knew they had God's blessings. It was a great day!

—Chris, Grade 7

Youth prayer

I'm thankful that we have things that remind us of God, just as the Hebrews did when the Ark was brought into the city of David. I'm also thankful that we have things that remind us that God is still watching over us, even though those things aren't always near us. Thank you God for all of our blessings. *Amen.*

—Chris, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Exodus 15:19-21

Tuesday—I Samuel 18:6-7

Wednesday—Nehemiah 8:9-10

Thursday—Psalm 149:1-3

Friday—Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Saturday—Luke 15:8-10

voices



To believe in God for me is to feel that there is a God, not a dead one, or a stuffed one, but a living one, who with irresistible force urges you towards more loving.

Vincent Van Gogh

To believe is to become what you believe.

June Jordan

In Israel, in order to be a realist you must believe in miracles.

David Ben Gurion

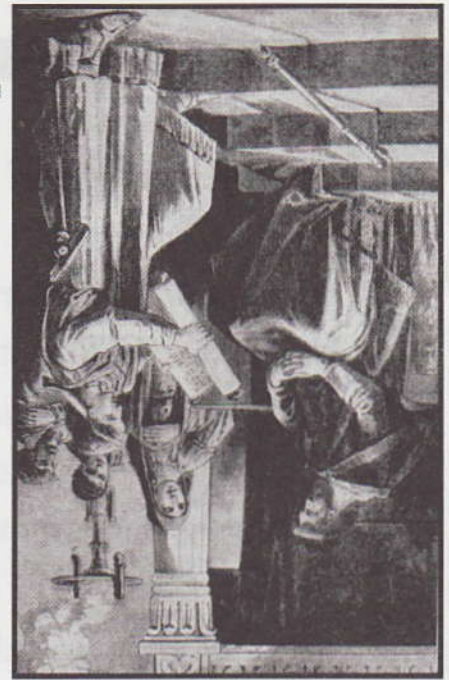
Can we somehow get through all the decoration which has been developed about the cross and just be quiet and be there with you?

Malcolm Boyd



—II Kings 22:2

[Josiah] did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right or to the left.



SESSION 5

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Josiah & Huldah: Seeking Direction



words to remember

You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will receive me with honor.
Whom have I in heaven but you?
And there is nothing on earth that I desire
other than you.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and
my portion forever.

—Psalm 73:24-26

prayer

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer of Self-Dedication
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 832-3

COMMENTARY

Josiah was used by God when he was a young age. He did the right thing by following God and not turning away. Josiah humbled himself before the Lord after he learned that his country had been sinning in the eyes of God. Because he was not afraid to ask for help, he went to the prophetess Huldah. Because of his faithfulness, Josiah was honored by God. Even though others in his country later were punished for their disobedience to God, Josiah was unhurt.

—Katie, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Thank you, Lord, for giving us an example of a person who followed you even though he was young. Lord, please show us how to humble ourselves and follow your way. Help us seek advice like Josiah.

—Katie, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—II Kings 17:27-28

Tuesday—Proverbs 1:8-9

Wednesday—Proverbs 5:13-14

Thursday—Luke 2:43-46

Friday—John 3:1-2

Saturday—Galatians 6:2, 4-6

voices



The future of the race marches forward on the feet of little children.

Phillips Brooks

If youth be a defect, it's one that we outgrow only too soon.

James Russell Lowell

It is absurd to talk of the ignorance of youth. The only people to whose opinions I listen now with any respect are people much younger than myself. They seem in front of me.

Oscar Wilde

For God's sake, give me [young people] who have brains enough to make fools of [themselves].

Robert Louis Stevenson



—*Esther 7:3*

When Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is my request."



SESSION 6

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Esther: Saving Her People



words to remember

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—*Romans 8:38-39*

prayer

Assist us mercifully, O Lord, in these our supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of your servants towards the attainment of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, they may ever be defended by your gracious and ready help; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Protection

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 832

COMMENTARY

Esther is a brave woman to take a stand for her country and the Israelite people. By believing in God, Esther is given the courage to step out in faith. She calls her people to support her by fasting and praying to God. Esther is willing to die for these people and her belief in God.

—Marco, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for sending Esther to take a stand for her beliefs and her people. Your encouragement has helped people like Esther and Martin Luther King, Jr. take stands for their beliefs. Help us to be brave enough to take a stand for our friends. Amen.

—Marco, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Judges 12:2-3

Tuesday—Ruth 2:12

Wednesday—I Samuel 19:4-6

Thursday—Psalm 46:1-3

Friday—Acts 15:24-26

Saturday—Romans 16:3-4

voices



Nothing but courage can guide life.

Vauvenargues

Courage faces fear and thereby masters it. Cowardice represses fear and is thereby mastered by it.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

True courage is not the brutal force of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve of virtue and reason.

Paul Whitehead

Stay with me, God. The night is dark,
The night is cold: my little spark
Of courage dies. The night is long
Be with me, God, and make me
strong.

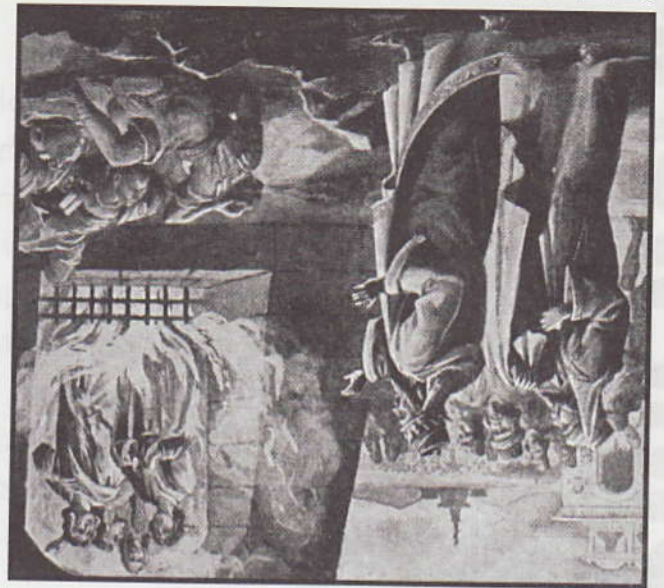
British soldier in Tunisia, 1944



—Daniel 3:28a

“Blessed be the God of
Shadrach, Meshach, and
Abdennago, who has sent his
angel and delivered his
servants who trusted in him.”

N



SESSION 7

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Shadrach, Meshach, Abdennago: Surviving Fire



words to remember

“Who among us can live with the devouring fire?
Who among us can live with everlasting flames?”
Those who walk righteously and speak uprightly,
who despise the gain of oppression,
who wave away a bribe instead of accepting it,
who stop their ears from hearing of bloodshed
and shut their eyes from looking on evil, . . .

—Isaiah 33:14b-15

prayer

Almighty God, by
your Holy Spirit
you have made us one with your
saints in heaven and on earth: Grant
that in our earthly pilgrimage we may
always be supported by this fellow-
ship of love and prayer, and know
ourselves to be surrounded by their
witness to your power and mercy. We
ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ,
in whom all our intercessions are
acceptable through the Spirit, and
who lives and reigns for ever and
ever. *Amen.*

Of a Saint
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 250

COMMENTARY

In the story in *Daniel*, King

Nebuchadnezzar insists that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego worship his gods or face death in a fiery furnace. The three men refused to worship the golden idol, and were forced into the furnace.

When the furnace was opened again, they hadn't been harmed at all. They had been saved by God's angel because they had ignored the king's command to worship his god.

We each should have faith that God will take care of us and take risks for our beliefs.

—Elizabeth, Grade 6

Youth prayer

Dear God, help us to be strong and believe in you like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Help us to learn your ways so that we may trust in you and not worship other gods. Teach us to have faith in you, shield us from harm, and deliver us from evil. *Amen.*

—Katherine, Grade 6

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Deuteronomy 4:20
Tuesday—Psalm 51:11-14
Wednesday—Isaiah 48:9-10

Thursday—Amos 4:11-12
Friday—Malachi 4:1-3
Saturday—Matthew 6:24

voices



Courage is the greatest of all the virtues, because if you haven't courage, you may not have an opportunity to use any of the others.

Samuel Johnson

The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else.

Oswald Chambers

Fear is faithlessness.

George Macdonald

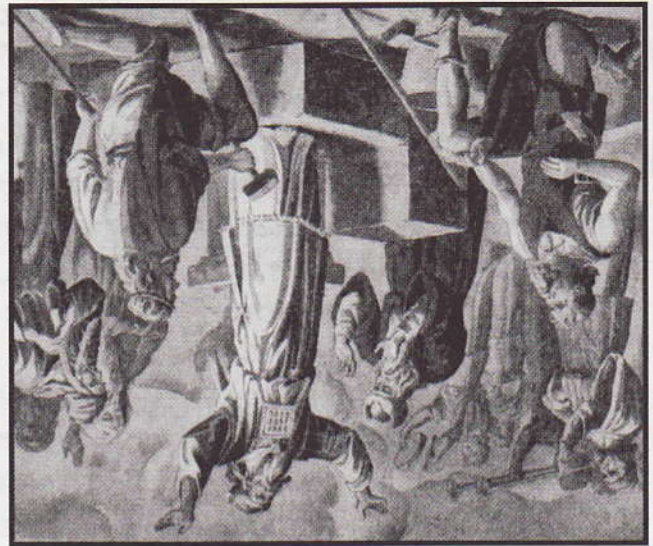
Never for the "sake of peace and quiet" deny your convictions.

Dag Hammarskjold



—Nehemiah 2:18

told them that the hand of my
God had been gracious upon me,
and also the words that the king
had spoken to me. Then they said,
"Let us start building!" So they
committed themselves to the
common good.



SESSION 8

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Ezra & Nehemiah: Rebuilding Jerusalem



words to remember

Thus says the Lord:

I am going to restore the fortunes of the tents
of Jacob,

and have compassion on his dwellings;
the city shall be rebuilt upon its mound,
and the citadel set on its rightful site.

Out of them shall come thanksgiving,
and the sound of merrymakers.

—Jeremiah 30:18-19a

prayer Heavenly Father, in
your Word you have
given us a vision of
that holy City to which the nations of the
world bring their glory: Behold and visit,
we pray, the cities of the earth. Renew
the ties of mutual regard which form our
civic life. Send us honest and able lead-
ers. Enable us to eliminate poverty,
prejudice, and oppression, that peace
may prevail with righteousness, and jus-
tice with order, and that men and
women from different cultures and with
differing talents may find with one
another the fulfillment of their humanity;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Cities
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 825

COMMENTARY

Before a person can motivate others, he or she must be motivated. Good leaders must be able to show their followers that they are willing to do as much as they ask them to do and more. The Bible shows us many great leaders and the ways they motivated themselves. For example, the journey Ezra made from Babylon to Jerusalem was not as easy as hopping in a plane or car. The journey took him four months, 120 days on foot. Ezra was able to make the journey because his faith was strong, and he used God as a motivating force. Similarly Nehemiah used his faith in God and his knowledge of Jewish beliefs to motivate the Israelites to rebuild their Holy City.

Just as leaders in the Bible used faith to motivate people, we can use faith to motivate others. People like Mother Teresa used her faith to give people hope and comfort. We can do anything if God is with us.

—Creighton, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Dear Lord,
Help us never to lose faith in you through good times or bad times. Help us to be good leaders and to motivate others. Give us the strength to guide others towards goals for the common good. Help us to be more like you every day. *Amen.*

—Creighton, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Psalm 51:17-18

Tuesday—Isaiah 61:1-4

Wednesday—Jeremiah 9:10-11

Thursday—Daniel 9:25

Friday—Ezekiel 36:8-11

Saturday—1 Peter 2:4-6

voices



We are made wise not by the recollections of our past, but by the responsibilities of our future.

George Bernard Shaw

We must welcome the future, remembering that soon it will be the past; and we must respect the past, remembering that once it was all that was humanly possible.

George Santayana

The promised land guarantees nothing. It is only an opportunity, not a deliverance.

Shelby Steele

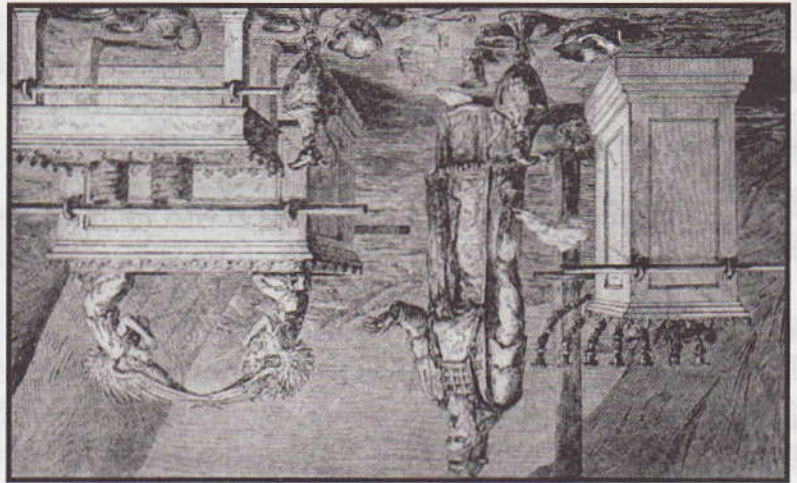
Lord, I want to be free of the pressure to do great things in the world by being great in doing small things for Thee.

Marian Wright Edelman



—II Maccabees 10:3b

They offered
incense and lighted
lamps and set out the
bread of the Presence.



SESSION 6

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Maccabees: Lighting the Way



words to remember

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

—Matthew 5:14-16

prayer

All you who stand near this marvelous and holy flame, pray with me to God the Almighty for the grace to sing the worthy praise of this great light; through Jesus Christ his Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Easter Vigil

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 286

COMMENTARY

In *II Maccabees 10:1-3*, the Jews recovered the temple that had been taken by their enemies. They tore down the desecrated altars and rebuilt an altar to God, offering incense and lighted lamps along with the bread of the Presence.

Incense, light, and bread are symbols of holiness. During worship we sometimes burn incense, carry candles, and use bread.

Light symbolizes God and love, while darkness is associated with evil and fear. In *Star Wars*, the evil Emperor wears a black robe. His second in command, Darth Vader, chose the dark side over light. Luke Skywalker had to choose between the dark side and light side. He chose light and goodness, even though it was not the easy choice.

We face the same choices. We can choose to do wrong, acting out of our fears. Or, we can choose to love others and do right. Lighting the lamp and candles represents the choice for good and for God.

—John, Grade 9

Youth prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for light and the chance to choose your side, the side of love. Even if we make the wrong choices, thank you for always giving us another chance to redeem ourselves and choose light. *Amen.*

—John, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Proverbs 4:18-19
Tuesday—Isaiah 60:1-3
Wednesday—Daniel 12:3

Thursday—Luke 11:34-36
Friday—Ephesians 5:8-9
Saturday—I Thessalonians 5:4-5

voices



When I liberate others, I liberate myself.

Fannie Lou Hamer

It is better to light one candle than curse the darkness.

Motto of the Christopher Society

For as children tremble and fear everything in the blind darkness, so we in the light sometimes fear what is no more to be feared than the things children in the dark hold in terror and imagine will come true.

Lucretius

We die when we refuse to stand up for what is right. We die when we refuse to take a stand for that which is true. So we are going to stand up right here. . . letting the world know that we are determined to be free.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

