

# **“Shining Glory” A Lesson on the Transfiguration of Jesus**

Mountains, clouds, tents, bright lights.... there’s a lot to look at in the Transfiguration tale, but what should be the emphasis for communicating the story with children? Young students can certainly benefit from a greater understanding of how the disciples witnessed Christ’s glory on the mountain. The faith of Peter, James, and John was strengthened and they had a foretaste of wonderful things to come. In the same way, our faith can be enhanced by realizing that the life we live now is but a glimmer of a greater Heavenly hope some day!

**Lesson focus:** Students will explore and experience the story of the transfiguration. They will understand how Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament dreams, as well as the hope of things to come in the future.

**Bible Passages:** Mark 17:1-13 (see also Mark 9:1-8 or Luke 9:28-36); 2 Peter 1:16-21

**Target Audience:** Kindergarten-6th grade

**Materials / Supplies Needed:** Blankets or “tent” material; flashlight; pictures of historical figures; butterfly toys or pictures; cotton balls; cups; crayons; oil; paper; aluminum foil; glue/tape (all items are optional, depending on which activities are used).

**Lesson Opening:** Start off the lesson with any of several opener activities...there are a few fun options, depending on which element of the story you hope to emphasize and focus on:

- Asleep, awake! In part of the transfiguration story, the disciples started to grow drowsy. In honor of this, start off with a “red light/green light” style game. Have students act like they are climbing a mountain, or running in place. Then turn out lights and instruct them to be “asleep” and freeze or act like they are sleeping. Turn the lights back on to “wake” them. Students who do not freeze or “sleep” in time can step aside and help watch for others.
- Transfiguration is “in tents!” Based on the suggestion to make tents for Elijah and Moses, help students construct blanket forts with chairs and cloths. You might even share the story from within these “shelters”, for extra fun!
- History...fulfilled! Show students pictures of old historical figures, grandparents, or presidents. You might also show some “relics” of old items, like original phones or even antiques. Explain that these former people/things are an important part of our history, but that the current government/parents and inventions that we use are what we should listen to and appreciate. In the same way, the disciples saw Elijah and Moses, who were important Old Testament figures. However, Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of all of the prophecies and hopes that had come before.
- Lite brite... this is a somewhat “retro” toy, but can still be found. If you are not lucky enough to have access to lite brite, you might be able to find a fun glow in the dark item, chalk, a black light, or even create a “lite brite” of sorts by poking holes into a paper and holding it up to a light. The point is to show how shining a bright light reveals new things. The glory of God was revealed in the transfiguration, as the disciples witnessed Jesus shining before them.

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- Metamorphosis...the transfiguration was sort of like a “metamorphosis” of sorts, where the divine nature of Jesus was revealed to the disciples. In a way, it was sort of like a caterpillar metamorphosing into a butterfly, so exhibit pictures or toys of butterflies/caterpillars, or have students act out the process by spinning a “chrysalis” and then “flying” around the room. Explain to students that today they will talk about a special event in the life of Jesus. Help them sound out the word “transfiguration” and talk about how Jesus was shining before His special disciples. Invite kids to dive deeper into the story and learn what happened in the Gospel lesson. Note: this story can be simplified for younger kids, or looked at with greater detail for older students who can understand it well.

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A very special camping trip... ask students if they have ever been on a trip to the mountains or been camping. What kinds of special things happen when you go camping? Tell students that the story we are looking at today has to do with Jesus taking some of His friends on a sort of “camping” trip. They went up on a mountain, and something remarkable happened!

**And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. Matthew 17:1-2**

Wait...why did Jesus turn white? Ask students if they have ever seen bleach, or what it can do...it makes things super white! Well, it looked like Jesus was white here, only it wasn't from chemical bleach. It was God. Jesus was revealing a little bit of God's glory here. Usually, if someone saw God, they would die from His glory! But not only was Jesus there... some historical figures appeared, as well.

**And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4 And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” Matthew 17:3-4**

Explain to kids that Peter was a little confused and a lot scared! He didn't even know what to say, so he thought maybe these Old Testament greats needed a tent to hang out in. Maybe he didn't fully understand what was happening. But then they heard a voice that cleared all their confusion!

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**5 He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. Matthew 17:5-6**

Who was speaking out of the cloud? This was none other than GOD Himself. The disciples were, again, probably more than a little frightened by that. But it was probably amazing and exciting, too. God was affirming who Jesus was. They may have not been a hundred percent certain, but this made it quite clear. Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus WAS God. The disciples were probably excited. But Jesus didn't want them sharing that thrill just yet..

**But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” 8 And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. 9 And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.” Matthew 17:7-9**

### **Craft: “Shiny Coloring Stained Glass”**

You will need:

- Paper or coloring pages
- Crayons or pastels
- Sharpies
- Cotton balls, Q-tips, or brushes • Oil (baby oil/vegetable oil)

Procedure:

1. Draw a picture on the paper using Sharpies or dark markers (if using a pre-printed coloring page, this step will not be necessary).
2. Using crayons or pastels, color in the lines of the picture.
3. Carefully dab a cotton ball into the oil, coating the picture with a thin layer.
4. Allow to dry somewhat, and hold up the picture to light to view the “shiny” element created through the oil rubbing!