
“Shining Glory”

Sunday School 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).

More Ideas for Teaching about the Transfiguration:

- Compare another writer's lesson on the [Transfiguration of Jesus](#)
- See how Kristen taught about the [Transfiguration in an earlier lesson](#)
- Compare our [preschool lesson on the Transfiguration](#)
- Watch the [children's message](#) and [craft ideas](#) that go along with this lesson
- Find bonus activities for this lesson on [Sermons4Kids](#) and [Mission Bible Class](#)
- See more [Transfiguration Sunday School lessons](#)
- See the [Object Lesson Message](#) that accompanies this lesson



Games and Lesson Introduction Activities

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.
- 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.



Bible Lesson: The Transfiguration of Jesus

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 of their confusion!



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

Jesus affirmed that He was fulfilling those old prophets. But He also knew people might have a hard time understanding or accepting who He was. So the disciples weren't to spread it around just yet. But we should! In fact, we know more than just a peek of Jesus...we know who He was and what He did. We can celebrate this story because we know that Jesus was God. Peter was later able to share more about the experience they had on that mountain. His testimony reminds us that we are called to know God, and to share His love with one another!

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with



him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. -2 Peter 1:16-21

Describe that in older times, people knew of God only through priests or prophets. What a blessing and privilege that now we have the assurance of Jesus, and the knowledge of His salvation!

For additional Scriptures on the call of disciples, see the following:

- Mark 9:1-8
- Luke 9:28-36

Close with prayer and thank God for Jesus. Acknowledge God's glory and greatness, found and fulfilled in Christ. Ask for help in shining His light for all the world.



Craft one: “Cloudy Mountain of Transfiguration”

You will need:

- Plastic or Styrofoam cups
- Cotton balls
- Stickers or glitter
- Markers or decorating materials
- Glue and/or tape
- Popsicle sticks



Procedure:

1. Flip the cup over and decorate with stickers or markers, if desired.
2. Glue cotton ball “clouds” around the cup, and add glitter for shine, if preferred. Add verse captions and notes.
3. Glue a popsicle stick near the top of the “mountain”, with a picture of Jesus (drawn or colored and cut out, we attached one if you get stuck).
4. If you would like to hang the craft, attach a string or pipe cleaner to the back side.



Craft Two: “Transfiguration Goggles”

You will need:

- Paper, paper plates, or cardstock
- Scissors
- Aluminum foil
- Pipe cleaners
- Glue and/or tape
- Decorative materials (markers, crayons, stickers)



Procedure:

1. Cut the paper or cardstock into a circular shape, similar to a figure eight or a “headless snowman” sideways (these will be “glasses” or “goggles”).
2. Cut out two large holes from the inside of each rounded portion.
3. If desired, decorate the outside of goggles with marker, crayon, stickers, and verses.
4. Cut two pieces of foil for the “shiny element”, and tape these behind the holes.
5. If you prefer to use the goggles functionally and be able to see out of them, cut two more small holes within the foil, for eye holes.
6. Attach pipe cleaners to the outside for the ear piece attachments. Remember the remarkable vision of transfiguration glory!



Craft Three: “Shiny Coloring Stained Glass”

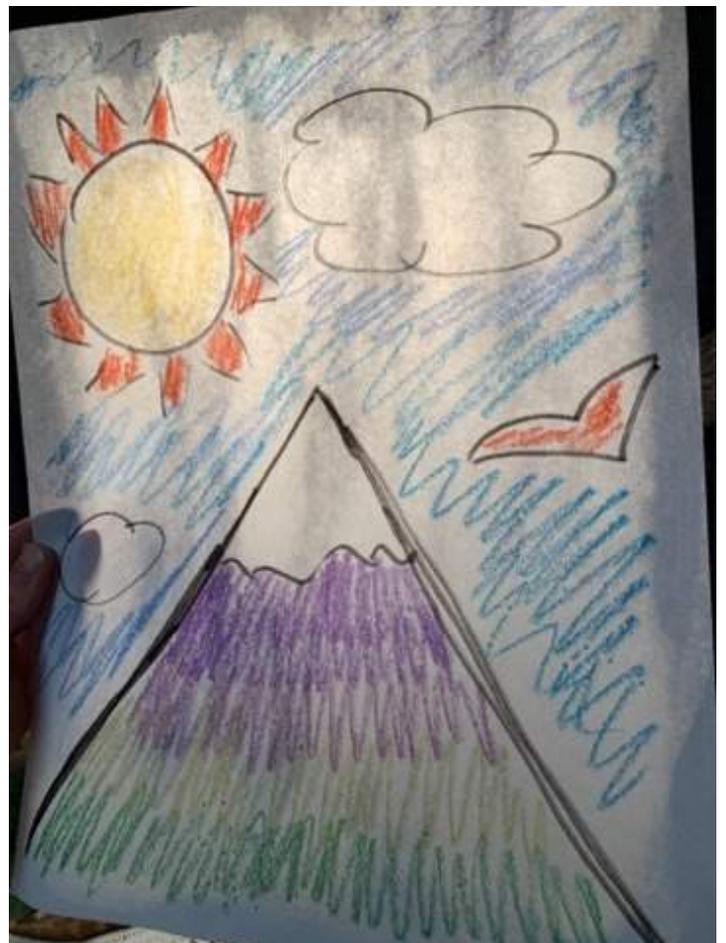
You will need:

- 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!





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