

LESSON 24

The Transfiguration

MARK 9:2-13



BIBLE TRUTH

JESUS GAVE UP HIS HEAVENLY GLORY TO TAKE OUR SINS UPON THE CROSS

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Mark 9:1–13 from the Scriptures or read story 102, “The Transfiguration,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Reenact the Transfiguration

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ strobe light, spotlight, or a bright flashlight (If these are unavailable, flicking the overhead lights on and off will suffice.)
- ✓ three white sheets or robes
- ✓ two chairs
- ✓ a strong table with tablecloth

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

The Amazing Brightness of God’s Glory

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ transparent 40-watt incandescent lightbulb (no white paint so you can see the filament)
- ✓ table lamp without a shade
- ✓ extension cord, if needed

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

The New Jerusalem

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Compare Transfiguration Accounts

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker
- ✓ Bibles for the class

TOTAL 85 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Jesus revealed his glory—Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a mountain. These three men were brought there to witness the glory of God in Christ. Luke tells us that as the Lord prayed, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes began to radiate in glorious splendor (Luke 9:3). By revealing his glory, Jesus demonstrated that he could remanifest his glorious power at any moment. This confirms that Jesus went to the cross freely and willingly, as a lamb led to the slaughter (Isaiah 53:7). Elijah and Moses appeared with Jesus, representing the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Though obviously having never before seen them, the disciples seemed to immediately recognize who they were.

The Father affirmed his Son—The disciples were terrified by Jesus' transfiguration and the display of glory. Not knowing what to do, but wanting to come up with something, Peter suggested that they build three shelters, or memorials, one each for Jesus, Elijah, and Moses. But Elijah and Moses were in no way equals with Jesus. While Peter was still speaking, Matthew records that a cloud came down and covered them (Matthew 17:5). Out from the cloud, interrupting Peter, came the voice of the Father to settle the matter. Three shelters would not be necessary, because they were to listen to the Son. When the cloud vanished, Moses and Elijah were gone and only Jesus remained.

Jesus gave up his glory to go to the cross—After God the Father spoke to affirm his Son, the cloud lifted and only Jesus remained. Once again, with the radiance of his glory hidden under the cloak of his full humanity, he stood beside the disciples. Soon Jesus would be arrested and though he could call legions of angels to defend him (Matthew 26:53), Jesus would instead be arrested and lay down his life willingly (John 10:18) as a sacrifice for our sins. With the transfiguration complete, the disciples tried futilely to make sense of it all. Jesus told them “to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead” (Mark 9:9).

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Cloud

The voice of the Father came from inside the cloud. God had used a cloud before. During their wilderness wanderings a pillar of cloud led Israel by day and it shone with the glory of the Lord (Exodus 16:10). Also, God told Moses that he would come in a dense cloud when he wanted to speak to the people (Exodus 19:9).

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today’s Bible story fit into God’s greater plan of redemption?

Here, in a moment of time, three of the disciples had the opportunity to glimpse the holiness, glory, and power of Jesus as God. They knew Jesus, the man, but they didn’t know Jesus the Son in glory. If Jesus was not both fully God and fully man, he could not have taken our punishment on the cross and then risen from the dead. Here on the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus revealed his glorious splendor as the Son of God. Yet once again, Jesus “made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:7–8).

Jesus was resolute. He would take the penalty for our sins upon himself and die a cursed death on the cross. After the transfiguration, Jesus gave his disciples strict orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until he had risen from the dead. They could not understand all that had been revealed by his transfiguration. They didn’t understand what Jesus meant by being raised from the dead. Later they would come to understand more fully that God the Son, Jesus, had come down to earth to take on human flesh that he might die for the sins of man and be raised on the third day to new life in victory over sin and death.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Mark 9:1–13 from the Scriptures or read story 102, “The Transfiguration,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Reenact the Transfiguration

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- ✓ strobe light, spotlight, or a bright flashlight (If these are unavailable, flicking the overhead lights on and off will suffice.)
- ✓ three white sheets or robes
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Recruit four volunteers to play the parts of Jesus and the three disciples, and two more to play Moses and Elijah. Do a simple pantomime performance in a room where you can turn out all the lights and darken the windows. (A basement room without windows works great.) Set up a table with a tablecloth and place the strobe light on a chair facing the top of the table.

Place another chair at the end of the table to act as a step up. The table becomes your mountain. Hide Moses and Elijah behind the table and start with the lights on.

Begin narrating the story. Have Jesus and the disciples pretend to be hiking up a steep mountain. Have Jesus use the chair to climb up onto the table and bow his head to pray. At that point turn off the lights and start the strobe. Continue with the rest of the story. Moses and Elijah should slowly climb up onto the table and then climb back down. Just as they go back down, speak the words of the Father. Turn on the lights, and finish the narration as Jesus and the disciples return down the “mountain.”

If you keep the strobe light a secret you will be surprised just how startling the bright flashing light can be.

Ask the children how many of them were startled by the light. Then ask if they can imagine what the disciples must have experienced. Talk about the purpose behind the transfiguration and what an amazing thing Jesus did for us in putting aside his glory to die for us as a man.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

OBJECT LESON 2 15 MIN

The Amazing Brightness of God’s Glory

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ transparent 40-watt incandescent lightbulb (no white paint so you can see the filament)
- ✓ table lamp without a shade
- ✓ extension cord, if needed

Screw the lightbulb into the lamp. Set the lamp near an electrical outlet and turn the lamp on, but do not plug it in. Recruit an adult volunteer to plug the lamp in when you give the signal later in the illustration.

Ask the children if they have ever looked inside a lightbulb. Explain to them that when the electrical current travels through the filament, it glows. All the air is taken out of the bulb to ensure that the filament does not burn up. See if you can interest them in the details of the lightbulb. Give everyone a chance to look at it closely.

Tell them the lightbulb is like Jesus’ ministry on earth. Jesus gave up his glory and became a man so that we could get to know God through him, just like we can get to know the lightbulb when it is off.

Explain that if God were to appear in his glory, we would not be able to look at him. Tell the children to look at the lightbulb again and while they are not prepared have an assistant plug in the lamp. Watch their reaction. They should turn away because of the brightness. Talk about how the lightbulb is like Jesus and his transfiguration.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

The New Jerusalem

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Read Revelation 21:9–27 and have all the children draw a picture of the New Jerusalem and the Lamb lighting the whole place up with the glory of God. While they are drawing, review the story of the transfiguration. Ask them what connection they see between the stories (Jesus' glory was the light in both of the stories).

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Compare Transfiguration Accounts

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker
- ✓ Bibles for the class

Compare the three accounts of the transfiguration to write one harmonized story.

The three passages are found in Matthew 17:1–13; Mark 9:2–13; and Luke 9:28–36.

Use the Mark passage as the base story. Read aloud through the Matthew and Luke accounts and list details on the whiteboard that don't appear in the Mark account.

Once you have finished, ask the class why Jesus would transfigure himself and why the disciples reacted as they did.