

THE TRANSFIGURATION

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MARK 9:1-13



The glory of God is revealed in Jesus.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Jesus revealed His Glory - Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a high mountain. These three men were brought there to witness the glory of God in Christ. Luke tells us that as the Lord prayed (Luke 9:29), the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes began to radiate in glorious splendor. By revealing His glory, Jesus demonstrated that He could, with the glories of heaven, show His power at any moment. This confirms that Jesus went to the cross freely and willingly, as a lamb led to the slaughter. Elijah and Moses appeared with Jesus, representing the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. The disciples seemed to immediately recognize them even though they had never seen these men before.

The Father affirmed His Son - The disciples were very frightened. Peter suggested that three shelters, or memorials, be built. While he 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 left, Moses and Elijah were gone, and only Jesus remained.

Jesus answered His disciples – Imagine being the disciples. What would you say? They tried to make sense of everything they had seen and heard, but they didn't understand. Jesus explained that the Elijah who was to come had already come. Jesus had already mentioned that to them before (Matthew 11:9-13). Though they didn't understand at the time, they would one day know exactly who Elijah was, why Jesus would need to suffer, and what Jesus meant when He said He would rise from the dead.

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WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Here, in a moment of time, three of the disciples had the opportunity to get a glimpse of the holiness, glory, and power of Jesus as God. They knew Jesus, the ordinary 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. Jesus was resolute. He would take that penalty. He would die. And, praise the Lord, He would also rise from the dead.

After the Transfiguration, Jesus gave His disciples strict orders not to tell anyone about what they had seen until Jesus had risen from the dead. They could not understand all that had been revealed to them at that time. They didn't understand what Jesus meant by being raised from the dead or even what His transfiguration revealed. Later they would come to more fully understand that God the Son, Jesus, had come down to earth to take on human flesh that He might die for the sins of man.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Psalm 72:11-13

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Jesus is the one to which all kings will bow. Paul tells us that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow (Philippians 2:10). This includes all the kings of the earth from all time. Revelation 17:14 tells us that the Lamb of God, Jesus, is the King of Kings.

Questions for reflection:

- When will all the kings of the earth from all time bow to the throne of Jesus? (In the last judgment, all men will know that Jesus is Lord. Those who rejected Him will be sent to eternal punishment, but they will all know that Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. They will all bow before His authority at that time.)
- Why are we blessed to know the kingship of Jesus while we are yet alive? (No one needs to force us to worship at the throne of Jesus. We can pledge our lives to Him right now and call out to Him to save us from our sin.)

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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

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.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

REENACT THE TRANSFIGURATION

Supplies:

- strobe light
- three white sheets or robes
- two chairs
- a strong table with tablecloth.

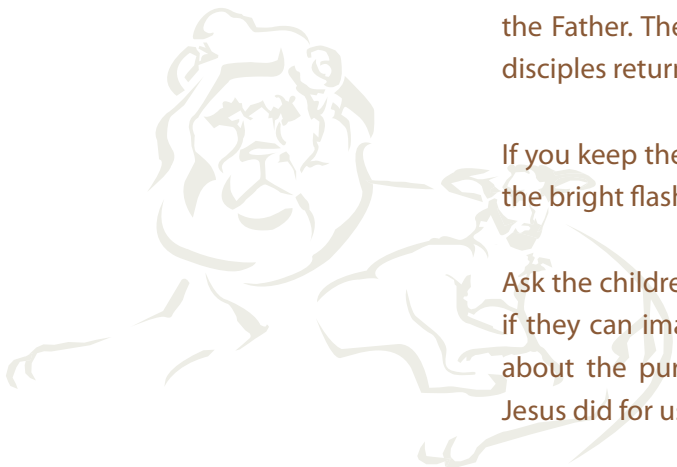
Choose four actors to play the parts of Jesus and the three disciples, and two more to play Moses and Elijah. Do a simple mime performance in a room where you can turn out all the lights. A basement room without windows works great. Set up a table with a tablecloth and place the strobe light on a chair 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 to tell the story as the narrator. Have Jesus and the disciples pretend to be hiking up a steep mountain. Have Jesus climb up the chair on to the table and bow His head to pray. Then suddenly turn off the lights and start the strobe. Then continue with the balance of the story. Moses and Elijah should slowly rise and then go back down. Just as they go back down, speak the words of the Father. Then turn on the lights, and finish the narration as Jesus and the disciples return.

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

Ask the children how many of them were startled by the light. Then ask them if they can imagine what the disciples must have experienced. Talk to them 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.



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PETER'S COSTUME

Retell the story of the transfiguration from Peter's perspective. Tell it as though you are Peter remembering just how amazing it was.

Some things you can add:

- Just how hard it was not to tell the other disciples
- How the rising from the dead part all made sense after the resurrection
- Just how much Peter is looking forward to heaven when Jesus will light up all the heavens with His glory.

THE LAMB IS THE LIGHT OF HEAVEN

Supplies:

- paper and colored pencils

Read Revelation 21:10-27 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 tell them the story of the transfiguration. Ask them questions about how the two stories connect together (Jesus' glory was the light in both of the stories).

THE AMAZING BRIGHTNESS OF GOD'S GLORY

Supplies:

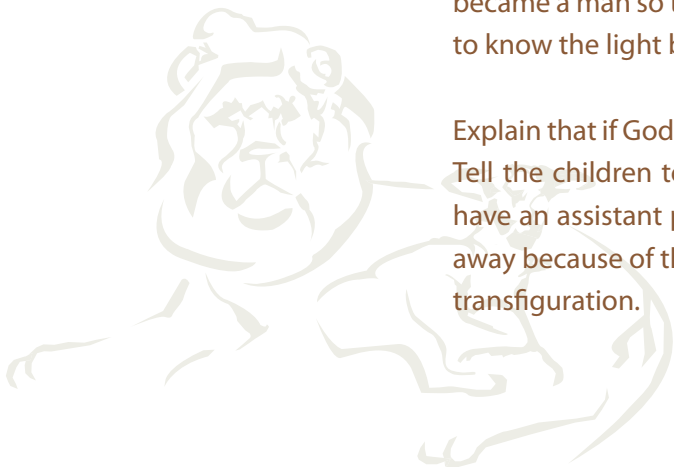
- clear 40 watt light bulb
- table top light fixture without a shade

The object of this lesson is to illustrate the transfiguration of Jesus.

Turn the light on, but do not plug it in. (Have a volunteer ready to plug it in when you give the signal later in the illustration.) Ask the children if they have ever looked inside a light bulb. Explain to the children that when the electrical current travels through the filament, it glows, or incandesces. All the air is taken out of the bulb to ensure that the filament does not burn up. Get them fascinated with the details of the light bulb. Give everyone a chance to look.

Tell them the light bulb 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 light bulb 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 light bulb again and while they are not prepared have an assistant plug in the extension cord. Watch their reaction. They will turn away because of the brightness. Talk about how the light bulb is like Jesus and His transfiguration.



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PRAYER

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

IN CLASS PROJECT

AN ACTIVITY

Supplies:
pencil and paper

Draw a picture of Jesus with radiant light. Use white pencils and chalk on black paper.

FOR THE OLDER GRADES

COMPARE TRANSFIGURATION ACCOUNTS

Supplies:
white board and markers

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

The three passages are found in Mark 9, Luke 9, and Matthew 17.

Choose the passage in Mark as the base story. Write the details on the board which are then added in the other two accounts.

Once you have finished, draw out the class as to the reasons Jesus would transfigure Himself and why the disciples reacted as they did.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Cloud – The voice of the Father came from inside the cloud. God had used a cloud before. The pillar of cloud led Israel by day and the glory of the Lord shown in it (Exodus 16:10). God told Moses He would come in a dense cloud when He wanted to speak to them (Exodus 19:9).

