Transfiguration



Scripture Reference: Matthew 17:1-13

Suggested Theme: God wants us to listen to the words of Jesus.

Memory Verse: “While Peter was talking, a bright cloud covered them. A voice came from the cloud. The voice said, ‘This is my Son and I love him. I am very pleased with him. Obey him!'” Matthew 17:5, ICB

Story Overview:

Jesus took Peter, James, and John up onto a mountain to pray. As these disciples watched in awe, Jesus transfigured (changed appearance). His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. Even more incredible, Jesus was joined by the long-dead Moses and Elijah. From a cloud that enveloped them all, the voice of the Lord affirms that this is His Son and they should listen to Him.

Background Study:

You can also read about this event in Mark 9:2-13 and Luke 9:28-36. Transfiguration means “transformed.” Jesus was transformed into a glorious image in which His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. This image was nothing like Peter, James, and John had ever seen before. It showed them that Jesus truly was from God.

Just before this transfiguration event, Peter had confessed that Jesus was the son of the Living God. (Matthew 16:13-20) Now, the transfiguration displays this truth in a magnificent way.

Moses and Elijah would have been two of the greatest Jews that had ever lived. For Jesus to stand with them showed His importance.

Moses received the Law and brought it to the people. In fact, his face also glowed after he had spent time with God on Mt. Sanai (Exodus 34:29-35).

Elijah is referred to as a messenger of the Lord preparing the way (Malachi 3:1; 4:5). Even before the Transfiguration, Jesus said that John the Baptist was like Elijah (Mark 9:11-13). John prepared the way for the coming of Jesus by preaching repentance and softening the hearts of the people.

On a mountain, with the Law (Moses) and prophecies (Elijah), the voice of the Lord came from a bright cloud to announce that Jesus was above all. The Lord said that Jesus, His Son, had new words to say. The Lord told the disciples to “Listen to Him.”

In the transfiguration story, the International Children’s Bible translates the end of verse 5 as “obey Him”, even though the original language of the verse (Greek) is better translated as “listen to Him.” In the majority of Bible translations, you will read “listen to Him.”

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Since Jesus had just been in the region of Caesarea Philippi, this tall mountain could have been Mount Hermon since it is nearby. Some think that it was Mount Tabor, but that was further away.

It is interesting that Peter wanted to build shelters for Moses, Elijah and Jesus. Maybe he wanted to make a place like the tabernacle in the Old Testament. Or perhaps he wanted them to stay for a while (Luke records that he brought it up when Moses and Elijah were about to leave (Luke 9:33). Either way, can you imagine a mere building holding the glory that they were witnessing?

Peter never forgot this event. He wrote about it later in his life in 2 Peter 1:16-21. Peter reminds his readers that he, himself, witnessed the glory of Jesus and even heard the voice of the Lord confirm His Son's words. Perhaps Peter was remembering the transfiguration and the glowing face and clothes of Jesus when he wrote:

> "This makes us more sure about the message the prophets gave. And it is good for you to follow closely what they said. Their message is like a light shining in a dark place. That light shines until the day begins and the morning star rises in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19, ICB

Way to Introduce the Story:

Ask the children to share some of the things they like to listen to (favourite music, TV, singing, conversations on the telephone, sports on the radio, etc.) What times have you had to listen very carefully? (Instructions, rules, directions, etc.) Ask the children to be very quiet and see if they can hear a very small object like a pin when you drop it onto the table.) In today's story, we are going to learn about a time when God told the disciples something they should listen to.

The Story:

The disciples had seen Jesus do many miracles. He healed a man who could not walk. He made a dead girl come back to life. He fed thousands of people with just a few fish and loaves of bread. He even walked on water. Yes, Jesus was amazing.

One evening some of the disciples were about to learn something even more amazing about Jesus. They were going to learn what God thought about Jesus. In fact, they were going to SEE what God thought of Jesus.

Jesus asked Peter, James and John to follow Him up onto a mountain to pray. Even though the disciples were very sleepy, they followed Him just as He asked. As they were walking, Jesus began to change right before their eyes. Everything became bright. Jesus' face began to shine brighter than light and lightning. His clothes became lighter than any colour on earth.

Then two other men appeared beside Jesus. One of the men was Moses, and the other was Elijah. Peter, James and John could hardly believe their eyes. They did not know how this could be possible. Moses and Elijah lived a long, long time ago. Now the two men were standing here with Jesus. And they were having a conversation with Jesus. They were talking about how Jesus was going to die.

Soon, Moses and Elijah started to leave, but Peter tried to stop them. "Please wait; I would like to build three nice shelters so that you can stay with us," Peter said.

While Peter was speaking to them, a bright cloud came down and covered them all. Wow! Can you imagine standing in a bright cloud with Moses, Elijah and Jesus? Moses was one of the most significant people in the Old Testament. He was the one who led the people out of Egypt. He was the one that God gave the 10 Commandments to. Do you think he was the most important one there?

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And Elijah was one of the greatest Prophets of the Old Testament. Even though a wicked queen tried to kill him, Elijah kept preaching about God. Do you think Elijah was the most important person there?

Then everyone heard a voice. This was not a voice like any they had ever heard. This was the voice of God. The Lord said, “This is my Son, and I love Him. I am very pleased with Him. Listen to Him.” NOW who do you think was the most important one there? That’s right, Jesus.

Upon hearing God’s voice, the disciples were so afraid that they fell to the ground. They fell flat on their faces. Jesus told them to get up. He told them not to be afraid.

When the disciples finally looked up, they saw that everything was back to normal, and Jesus was standing there alone. Now they knew that Jesus was even more special than they had thought before. He was the Son of God. The disciples knew that they should always do what God said and listen to the words of Jesus.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

View this slideshow and download it from the original source:
https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/jesus-transfiguration/

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child’s spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- What does “transfigured” mean? (Changed or transformed)
- How did Jesus look different on the mountain? (His face became bright like the sun, and his clothes were as white as light)
- What two Old Testament men appeared on the mountain with Jesus? (Moses and Elijah)
- Whose voice did the disciples hear coming out of the bright cloud on the mountain? (The voice of God)
- What did God (the voice in the bright cloud) say about Jesus? (“This is my Son and I love him. I am very pleased with him. Obey/Listen to Him!”)
- What did the disciples do when they heard God’s voice? (They fell to the ground in fear)
- Jesus was God’s son. What did God tell the disciples to do? (Listen to Jesus)
- What did the disciples learn from this experience?

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- What did you learn about God from this story? What did you learn about Jesus?

Reflection:

- Can you imagine what Jesus looked like in this story?
- How do you think it felt to be inside of a cloud?
- What do you think God's voice sounded like?
- How do you think Jesus felt when He heard God's voice saying He was God's Son and that God was pleased with Him?
- Why do you think Jesus told the disciples to not tell anyone about what they'd seen on the mountain until Jesus had been raised from the dead?
- How do you think the disciples were different or treated Jesus differently after experiencing everything on the mountain?
- What are some words you remember Jesus saying in the Bible? Are any of Jesus' words hard for you to obey or listen to? Why?
- What part of this story did you find most interesting?
- Does this story remind you of any other part of the Bible?
- What question would you ask God about this story?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- I'm All Wrapped Up, Tied Up, Tangled Up Song
- Read Your Bible, Pray Every Day Song
- Goodbye World Song
- J-E-S-U-S Song
- God is Listening When We Pray (Song) English/Cebuano
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

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- For older children, you can write the word “transfiguration” on the board or on a piece of paper. Give them a certain amount of time (a few minutes) to think of as many new words as possible using the letters from the word. If you want to keep score, then children score a point for every word they have written that no one else has written.
- God said to listen to the words of Jesus. Invite a very good reader to come to the session today and read from the word of God while the children listen. Perhaps you could ask them to read the Scriptures containing the stories you have studied in the last few weeks. End up with today’s transfiguration story.
- Older kids might enjoy having a “Post-Transfiguration Press Conference.” Assign each child to play the part of one of the characters in today’s story. You can hold a pretend microphone and ask each person what happened up there on the mountain. Be sure to ask who they saw and what they heard. Ask them if it was true that they had been sleeping. Ask them if they were afraid.
- Listen to Him: Provide a New Testament with the words of Jesus in red. Let the children take turns passing the bible around and reading the words of Jesus.
- Glue story pictures onto a storyboard. Click here for the Transfiguration story template.
- Bring the story to life by making a “Coke float” or “spider drink.” Fill each child’s cup with 3 spoonfuls of ice cream (one each for Jesus, Moses and Elijah) and pour cola over the top to create a “cloud” as in the story. Photo and instructions here.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

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Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

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Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page and worksheets about the transfiguration (Calvary Curriculum)
- A number of activities (Sermon 4 kids)
- Activity: Bee-themed lesson with activities to teach how to “bee” like Jesus. The printables were created to study the Book of Romans but could be adapted to today’s lesson on listening to Jesus. (Kids Bible Deb Jackson)
- Lesson plan and activities (Ministry to children)

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Date

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