

The Transfiguration

(Matthew 17:1-9)

Pre-Session Warm Up

If I were to ask you, “*Who is Jesus?*” What would you say? [Teacher, let the children respond.] When Jesus was on the earth, He claimed He was God the Son. Is there proof that what He said is true? Let’s be like detectives today as we listen to our Bible lesson. Listen for evidence that Jesus is God the Son.

Opening Prayer

Father, if there is anyone here this morning that isn’t sure that You are God the Son, convince them, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, that You are the Almighty One, the Creator of the universe. That You have all power and all wisdom and that You have the power to forgive them of their sins. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. (1 John 5:1a)

Lesson

In our lesson today we will learn that the closer we get to the Lord Jesus, the better we understand who He is.

One day Peter, James and John, the disciples who were Jesus’ closest friends, went with the Lord to a private place and a very special thing happened.

Matthew 17:1-2

Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. (2) As the men watched, Jesus’ appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light.

Jesus took Peter, James and John to a high mountain and there was transformed or changed before them. His face was changed and His robe became white and glistening — bright as a flash of lightning. This gives us an idea of what we will look like after we die and go to heaven.

The disciples were seeing for themselves that Jesus is God the Son. He had left His home in heaven to come to this earth and take on a human body. The Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus “*being in the form of God*” came in the “*likeness of man*” (Philippians 2:6,7) Jesus was both God and man. Although He did many miracles and some people recognized Him as the Messiah, the Christ (the sent One from God), most saw Jesus as just another man.

But now it was as if the glory He had had forever with His Father in heaven could no longer be hidden. Jesus’ true nature as God shone through His human body. His face and body were changed so that beams of light made His clothes white and glittering. The disciples were getting a glimpse of His glory.

Matthew 17:3

Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus.

Moses and Elijah also appeared to them in their heavenly bodies. We don’t know what they talked about, but it may have been about His coming death because soon He would go to Jerusalem to die. They were probably encouraging Jesus to stay strong and faithful during His final week on earth, knowing how hard it would be for Him.

Matthew 17:4

Peter exclaimed, “Lord, it’s wonderful for us to be here! If you want, I’ll make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

No doubt, the disciples could hardly believe their eyes! Then Peter, probably very excited and not knowing quite what to say or do, suggested that he make three shelters for them.

Matthew 17:5

But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him."

While Peter was speaking, a cloud came over the disciples and God spoke to them. God was telling Peter to stop talking and listen to Jesus.

Matthew 17:6

The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground.

The awesome voice of God terrified the disciples and they fell on their faces! Hearing God's voice from the heavens convinced the disciples that Jesus was truly God the Son!

Today we seldom hear the voice of God out loud, but we do have the Bible. It is the way God speaks to us. The Bible tells us everything we need to know for life and godliness.

God wants us to read His Word to find out how we are to live. And He wants us to be obedient to His word even when others try to get you to do things that would displease God.

Poor Peter, James and John, when they heard God's voice they were so afraid they fell to the ground and hid their faces. And, as they were lying there, Jesus comforted them.

Matthew 17:7-8

Then Jesus came over and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." (8) And when they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus.

When Jesus told the disciples to get up, they were suddenly alone with Him. This was a night they would never forget; there was no doubt in their minds that Jesus truly was the Christ, God the Son!

Matthew 17:9

As they went back down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Jesus told them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after He had risen from the dead. Do you think they obeyed Jesus? It would have been hard not to want to tell others of the marvelous event they had just seen, but because they knew that God Himself told them not to tell anyone, I'm sure they were obedient. Wouldn't you be?

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your Word. It is truly living and active and full of wisdom and truth. We are so glad that You have guarded it and not allowed any man to change it in all these thousands of years. We can read it with confidence knowing it is You speaking to us through the written word. Now we have Your plan for our lives. Halleluia! In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Have children draw pictures of what they think Jesus, Moses and Elijah looked like in their glorious bodies.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Which disciples were Jesus' closest friends? (Peter, James and John.)
2. What does it mean that Jesus was "transformed" before them? (His appearance changed.)
3. What was different about Jesus when his appearance changed? (His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.)
4. When Jesus was transformed, who were the other two men that the disciples saw in their glorified bodies? (Moses and Elijah.)
5. What were Moses and Elijah probably talking to Jesus about? (His death.)
6. What crazy thing did Peter say when he saw Jesus and Moses and Elijah in their glorified bodies? (Shall I make three shelters for you?)
7. What happened when the bright cloud overshadowed them? (Suddenly God's voice came out of the cloud, saying "*This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him!*")
8. What did the disciples do when they heard God's voice from the cloud? (They fell on their faces in fear.)
9. How did this change in Jesus change Peter's, James' and John's understanding of who He was? (Jesus' true nature as God shone through His human body. They realized that He was God the Son.)
10. How do you hear God's voice? (Through reading His Word, the Bible.)
11. As the disciples were lying on the ground in fear, what did Jesus do to comfort them? (He touched them and said, "*Get up. Don't be afraid.*")
12. What did Jesus tell them to do as they came down the mountain? (Not to tell anyone what happened until after He rose from the dead.)
13. Has your relationship with Jesus changed your life?

