



THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS

Matt 17:1–8, Mark 9:2–8, Luke 9:28–36

Memory Verse

From the cloud a voice said, “This is My own dear son, and I am pleased with him. Listen to what he says!” Matthew 17:5

Context/Background

This story is recorded in three gospels – and is in the middle of two of the gospels. It happens after Jesus has predicted his own death. This moment emphasises Jesus as divine, and connects him with the prophetic Old Testament figures of Moses and Elijah. This confirms Jesus' identity and ministry, and is an exciting moment for James, John and Peter, but Jesus tells them to keep it secret until after his resurrection.

The Transfiguration festival has been called a day of tension because it stands at the end of the season after Epiphany, where we see the glory of Jesus and his mission revealed in various ways, and at the doorway to the Lenten season, which looks towards Jesus' death on the cross.

Summary

Jesus takes three of his disciples, Peter, James and John up to a mountaintop to pray. Jesus begins to shine with bright rays of light, his face and clothes radiant. Then Old Testament figures Moses and Elijah appear with him, and he speaks with them. Then they are covered by a cloud, and Jesus is called the Son by the voice of God the Father, who says to listen to Jesus. The disciples are initially afraid and fall in terror at God's voice, and Jesus says not to be afraid, and they look up to see only Jesus.

Relevance/Application

Themes: Hope, transformation, listening to Jesus, purpose.

Younger students:

- Jesus is special – he is God's Son (He is God and human at the same time).
- We should listen to Jesus and follow him.
- Jesus is amazing! In our lives we have special moments where we feel and amazed and excited like the disciples when they saw Jesus glowing brightly.

Older students:

- Identity and Purpose – Jesus' true identity and purpose is revealed in this moment. We can reflect on questions of identity and purpose in our own lives.
- This is a true mountain-top spiritual experience.
- Listening and Discernment – how can we “Listen to him!”?
- For Jesus, the transfiguration is a clear sign of God's approval of him and his work, strengthening him for his work and for his suffering and death. As for the disciples and for us, we can have confident assurance that Jesus is the glorious Son of God.

Christian Studies Framework

Christian Beliefs

Key Idea 1: Christians believe God is one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Key Idea 2: The person and work of Jesus the Christ is central to Christianity

Catechism Connections

THE SECOND ARTICLE OF THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

When God spoke from the cloud, he told the three disciples, and us too, that Jesus was his Son. In the creed we are saying the same things. We are saying that Jesus is God's Son and our Lord. That means we belong to him and are ruled by him. Because he is God's Son and our Lord, we listen to him, follow him and trust him.

Discussion/Wondering Questions:

Early Years

- Why do you think Jesus clothes became so bright?
- How do you think the disciples felt when all of this was happening?

Primary

- What do you think the transfiguration tells us about who Jesus is?
- Why do you think Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus in this story?
- Why do you think Peter wanted to build shelters there for Jesus, Moses and Elijah?
- Have you ever had a 'mountain top' experience - something that felt really special and exciting or made you feel closer to God?
- When Jesus went to heaven, a voice said, 'Listen to him'. How do you hear Jesus?

Secondary

- The voice from the cloud says: "This is my Son, whom I love. With him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" What do you think this means for Jesus' mission and teachings?
 - Why would Jesus tell the disciples not to tell anyone until after his resurrection?
 - Why would the presence of Moses and Elijah have been significant for the disciples?
 - How might the transfiguration relate to transformation and spiritual growth in our own lives?
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Images or objects to spark discussion

- Anything to do with transformation, brightness or clouds. Coke/fizzy drink and ice-cream 'spider' drink creates a 'cloud' – form is changed.
 - Transformer toy: <https://www.christianitycove.com/transformer-transfiguration-object-lesson/5298/>
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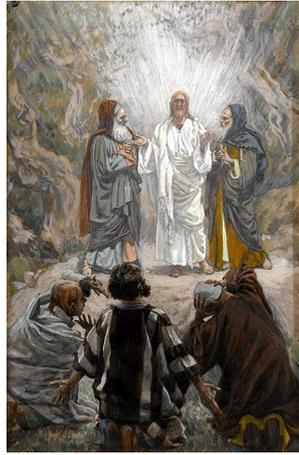


Figure 1 The Transfiguration (La transfiguration),
Source: [Wikimedia](#), Artist: James Tissot (1836–1902)

Telling the Story

Bibles: The Beginner's Bible
The Big Rescue Bible
The NIV Bible

Creative Storytelling:
[Short reader's theatre](#)

Tracts and Other Resources

GROW Ministries

[GROW Kids Year A - TRANSFIGURATION Matthew 17:1-9 Jesus is transfigured on the mountain](#)

Audio Stories/Podcasts

Bible.is - <https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/audio-bible-resources/bible-is>
Audio recordings of the Bible in many different languages and several English translations. All four gospels also available in film versions, searchable by book and chapter. Excellent resource for NESB learners.

Videos:

Early Years / Junior Primary

[Saddleback kids Transfiguration \(2:11\)](#)

[Kids on the move transfiguration \(2:58\)](#)

[Sharefaith Kids Transfiguration \(2:45\)](#)

Middle – Upper Primary

[Jared Dees the religion teacher whiteboard explanation of the transfiguration \(2:51\)](#)

[Superbook the transfiguration](#)

[Guided meditation on the transfiguration](#) - you might like to use this as the basis for a script rather than showing this video.

Secondary/Staff

[Feast of the Transfiguration devotion/explanation from LifeTeen Summit](#)

[The Jesus film – transfiguration scene](#)

[Lectio divina Matthew transfiguration](#) more for staff devotion

Invocation

From the cloud there came a voice:

This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him! (Mark 9:7 NRSV)

Glory to the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **Amen.**

God of the high and low, we come before you this day seeking your Holy presence. We come to sing praises, pray, and listen to the Word at your holy mountain. We come to experience metamorphosis, to be changed into your people. Change us so we might speak your Spirit of hope and grace to the world. We pray this in the name of Christ, AMEN.

Adapted from: Rev. Will Ryan, First Christian Church, Burlington, IA
<https://www.liturgylink.net/2017/02/26/transfiguration-invocation/>

Prayers

Prayer

Let us pray:

Almighty Father, whose Son Jesus Christ was revealed in majesty. Give us grace to see your glory, and see you at work every day. Strengthen us and change us more and more into your likeness. Thank you for the times we have mountaintop experiences and feel close to you, and be with us in the times we are down.

In Jesus's name we pray,

Amen.



Great and glorious God,
thank you for revealing your Son,
and for showing the light of his glory.
Let us always reflect his glory.
And as Jesus was willing to die for us,
may we give of ourselves to others.

Amen.

Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for revealing your glory as God's Son.
Lead us to follow you in faith.

Amen.

Father in heaven, thank you for the gift of your beloved Son. Please open our ears to listen to him and our hearts to obey him. **Amen.**

Mealtime Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this food. Bless it to our strength and to Thy glory. **Amen.**

OR

God our provider, you are full of love and full of might.
May we shine for you, with faith so bright.

Amen.

Blessing

Christ Jesus,
the splendour of the Father and the image of his being,
draw you to himself
that you may live in his light and share his glory;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.

OR

Go in peace. May the light of Christ shine in your hearts.

Thanks be to God.

Encourage participants to bless each other, using the following words (or you can make up your own).

(Name), may the Lord Jesus bring you peace as you look to him, now and always.

Music

["This Little Light Of Mine" - Listener Kids](#)
[To God Be the Glory | Roar VBS - Lifetree Kids](#)

[Build your kingdom Here – Rend Collective](#)
[Open the Eyes of My Heart, Paul Baloche](#)
[Light Of The World - We The Kingdom](#)
[How Great is Our God, Chris Tomlin](#)
[Shine on Us – William Matthews](#)
[Transfiguration Hillsong Worship](#)
[I'm listening Chris McClarney](#) – (more for reflection)
[Be Still for the Presence of the Lord, David Evans](#)
[Behold - Emu Youth](#)

Fairest Lord Jesus (Lutheran Hymnal 152) OR [Fairest - New Life Worship](#)
Christ be our light (All Together AT 313)
[Shine, Jesus, Shine - Graham Kendrick](#) (All Together 217)

Activities

Early Years:

- [Fake tealight candle craft](#)

Primary:

- [Paid reader's theatre script and colouring activities about the Transfiguration](#)
- Make a list on a whiteboard or sheet of paper of things that transfigure or go through a metamorphosis. For example, a caterpillar changes to butterfly; a tadpole turns into a frog.
- Go on a hike! Perhaps you have a mountaintop nearby to emulate this experience.
- Create a blanket fort or 'three tents'.
- Make popcorn, noticing how it is transformed, and talk about how Jesus' appearance was dramatically transformed at the transfiguration.

Upper Primary/Secondary:

- [Reader's theatre script](#)
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