

# JESUS' TRANSFIGURATION

Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36

## STRUCTURE

**Key-persons:** Jesus and Peter

**Key-location:** Mount Hermon

### **Key-repetitions:**

- Jesus' glory: his face shown like the sun (Mat 17:2); his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning (Mat 17:2); Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious splendor (Mat 17:3); three disciples woke up and saw Jesus' glory (Lk 9:32).
- Signs of Jesus' transfiguration: his face shown like the sun (Mat 17:2); his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning (Mat 17:2); Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious splendor (Mat 17:3; Lk 9:30-31).
- Number three: Jesus took three disciples (Mat 17:1); Jesus, Moses, and Elijah appeared in glorious splendor (Mat 17:2; Lk 9:30-31); Peter wanted to put up three tents (Mat 17:4).

### **Key-attitudes:**

- Jesus' glory.
- Disciples' tiredness.
- Peter's confusion when he spoke without knowing what he was saying.
- Disciples' fear when the cloud surrounded them.
- Disciples' terror when God the Father spoke.
- Disciples' confusion when Jesus spoke about rising from the dead.

### **Initial-situation:**

The third year of Jesus' ministry is divided into two halves. During the first half of the year, Jesus went on three retreats with his disciples. The first retreat began when Jesus received the news of John the Baptist's death. He got into a boat with his disciples to go to a deserted place. A crowd saw Jesus enter the boat and they went on foot around the lake. Jesus performed the miracle of feeding five thousand men. Afterwards, the people wanted to make Jesus king by force.

Jesus' refusal to lead revolutionary forces against King Herod was the decisive point that ended his popularity and began a series of painful rejections.

### **Initial-problem:**

Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him; and climbed a mountain to pray. Jesus was praying. Jesus' face changed in appearance and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.

**Final-situation:**

Jesus instructed the three disciples not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

**BIBLE STORY**

It had been about a week since Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ and Jesus had foretold of his death to the disciples.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him and climbed a mountain to pray. Jesus was praying. Jesus' face changed appearance and shown like the sun. His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor. They talked with Jesus about the way he would fulfill God's purpose by dying in Jerusalem (Lk 9:28-31).

Peter and his companions were sound asleep. They woke up and saw Jesus' glory and the two men standing with him. Moses and Elijah were leaving Jesus and Peter spoke up, "Master, it's good for us to be here. Let us put up three tents: one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." Peter spoke without knowing what he was talking about (Lk 9:32-33).

While Peter was babbling, a cloud appeared and surrounded them. The disciples were frightened. A voice spoke from the cloud, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen. Listen to him!"

The disciples heard the voice, and they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. Jesus went over, touched the disciples, and said, "Get up. Don't be afraid." They looked around and only saw Jesus (Mat 17:6-8; Lk 9:34-35).

As Jesus and the disciples were going down the mountain, Jesus instructed the three disciples not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They kept the matter to themselves, but discussed among themselves what "rising from the dead" meant (Mk 9:9-10).

**GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS**

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story?                  | 5. How did the characters face their problems?                                       |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems?  |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story?                  | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face?                     | 8. What does the story tell about God?   |

**SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. It had been six days since Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, and Jesus foretold of his death. Why is that important for what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration?
2. What does it mean that Jesus was transfigured?

3. What is significant about Moses and Elijah joining Jesus on the mountain?
4. Why were Peter's words inappropriate?
5. When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, what did Peter tell Jesus, and what did the voice from the cloud tell Peter?
6. What was your most profound experience with God?

### LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Solitude prayer is important.** Jesus took Peter, James and John and went up a mountain to pray (Lk 9:28). Jesus withdrew from the crowds to be alone with God.
2. **Jesus is the Son of God and that makes him superior to everyone else.** During the transfiguration, Peter said, "Let us put up three tents: one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." Peter was suggesting that Jesus, Moses, and Elijah were equals. The voice of God answered with a scream, "This is my Son!" (Mk 9:2-8).
3. **The transfiguration confirms the testimony of the Law (Moses) and of the prophets (Elijah) that Jesus was the expected Messiah, the Son of the Living God.** However, Jesus is greater than Moses or Elijah because he is the Son of the Living God (Lk 9:28-35).
4. **Zeal combined with ignorance needs correction.** Peter had a zeal to build three tabernacles: one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. Moses and Elijah had no need for tabernacles; they were at home in heaven. Christ had foretold of his sufferings, and had warned his disciples to expect the same. Peter desired to build tabernacles on the mount, out of the way of trouble. A voice spoke from the cloud correcting Peter, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him!" (Mat 17:4-5).
5. **Jesus should be heard and obeyed.** Peter tried to tell Jesus what to do (Mk 8:31-32; 9:5). God got Peter's attention, "This is my Son; listen to him!" (Mk 9:7).

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

#### **Role-playing Pantomime:**

The storyteller informs listeners that he will tell the Bible story one time. Then he will repeat the story with three volunteers standing in front pantomiming the action as he narrates the story a second time.

- One volunteer will pantomime the actions dealing with Jesus.
- The second volunteer will pantomime actions dealing with Elijah.
- The third volunteer will pantomime actions dealing with Peter.