

Preparing the Lesson

The Transfiguration

Matthew 17:1–9

Date of Use

Key Point

At the transfiguration, Jesus' glory was unveiled before the disciples. Today, His glory is unveiled for us in the Word, in the water of Baptism, and in the bread and wine of His Holy Supper. In heaven, we shall see Him in all His glory!

Law/Gospel

As a sinner, I tremble at the sound of God's voice, for I deserve punishment and am unworthy to see Him face-to-face. **As God's child, I have nothing to fear, for in His Word and Sacraments, Jesus gives me pardon and peace through His death and resurrection, making me worthy to stand face-to-face with God my Father.**

Context

Jesus' Galilean ministry is quickly drawing to a close. Soon, He will set His face toward Jerusalem and the cross. Jesus leads the inner circle of His disciples—Peter, James, and John—up a high mountain. Tradition locates the transfiguration on Mount Hermon, just north of Caesarea Philippi in Galilee. While praying, Jesus is transfigured before them and is joined by Moses and Elijah. Six days earlier, Peter had confessed Jesus to be “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16), but then rebuked Jesus when He spoke of His Passion. Peter wanted the Christ without the cross, salvation without suffering, glory without Golgotha. Moses, Elijah, and God the Father, however, confirm Jesus' words foretelling His Passion.

Commentary

In the Nicene Creed, we confess that Jesus is both true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and true man, born of the Virgin Mary. In the transfiguration, Jesus reveals His divine glory hidden under the veil of His human flesh, and God the Father declares Him to be His beloved Son.

The children of Israel were afraid they would die if God spoke to them directly, so they pleaded with Moses to speak to them for God (Exodus 20:18–19). Scripture records that God spoke to His people through men such as Moses and Elijah—His prophets. God spoke with Moses from the burning bush on Mount Horeb (Sinai). Later, God spoke with Moses from the thick, smoky cloud covering Mount Sinai and gave him the Ten Commandments. God spoke with Elijah on Mount Horeb in a low whisper—not in the strong wind, the earthquake, or the fire. God promised to send Elijah as His messenger to prepare His way before Him.

On the Mount of Transfiguration near Jerusalem, Jesus spoke with Moses and Elijah about His departure (literally, “way out” or “exodus”; Luke 9:31). Moses and Elijah represent the Law and the Prophets (the Old Testament), which foretell Jesus' death and resurrection—our “way out” of death to life. God the Father confirmed Peter's confession and Jesus' Passion prediction; Jesus is His beloved Son, and we must “listen to Him” (Matthew 17:5).

Today, Jesus speaks to us in Scripture; we hear His sweet words especially as spoken by the pastor in the words of Absolution and in the sermon, where He veils His divine glory under the pastor's voice. As servants of the Word, pastors speak in the stead and by the command of Jesus. Jesus sprinkles us with His sin-cleansing blood veiled under the water of Holy Baptism. Jesus feeds us with His glorified body and blood veiled in, with, and under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. At the resurrection on the Last Day, we will see face-to-face all His heavenly glory, and we will live forever!

To hear an in-depth discussion of this Bible account, visit cph.org/podcast and listen to our Seeds of Faith podcast each week.

Lesson 5

The Transfiguration

Matthew 17:1–9

Connections

Bible Words

The Word became flesh . . .
and we have seen His glory.
John 1:14

Faith Word

transfigured

Hymn

How Sweet the Name of Jesus
Sounds
(LSB 524; CD 2)

Catechism

Apostles' Creed: Second Article

Liturgy

Absolution

1 Opening (10 minutes)

Introducing Concepts

To Prepare: Hang or set out the attendance chart with attendance stickers (Student Pack). Set out the offering basket. Prepare Activity Page 5A (found at the end of this lesson) by cutting along the bold lines as marked and then folding the cut sections over the pictures at the dashed line.

Warmly greet your students as they arrive. Introduce yourself to any new students, and make sure that they are introduced to the other children. Direct the students to place their offerings in the basket and post their attendance. Show the parts of Activity Page 5A that are not covered.

Ask Under these flaps are pictures of things that some people are scared of. Can you name the item even though you can't see the entire picture? Allow the children to make predictions and then take a peek under the flaps, one at a time.

Did the small parts of the picture give you an idea of what was pictured? Some people are afraid of spiders, some of snakes or storms, some of the dark, or even dogs.

What frightens you? Let the children tell about situations in which they are afraid.

Say In today's Bible story, three disciples become afraid when someone they love all of a sudden looks different. Let's find out what happened and how the whole experience is God's good news for us!

MATERIALS NEEDED

1 Opening	2 God Speaks	3 We Live	4 Closing
Teacher Tools Attendance chart CD	Teacher Tools Poster B Storytelling Figures (optional) Background A (optional)	Student Pack Craft Page 5	Teacher Tools CD
Student Pack Stickers	Student Pack Stickers Lesson Leaflet 5	Other Supplies Activity Page 5C (TG) Light blue construction paper Glitter or shiny nail polish (optional)	
Other Supplies Activity Page 5A (TG) Resource Page 1 (TG)	Other Supplies Glue stick Coins or paper scraps Yellow construction paper Activity Page 5B (TG) (optional)		

Rituals and Routines

To Prepare: If your class gathers with others for the Opening, begin the lesson with part 2. If you prefer to develop your own opening, a suggested outline follows. For an extended opening, use Resource Page 1 in the back of this book.

Gathering Song: "Father, Bless Our School Today" (SGL, p. 83; CD 8)

Invocation: **In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**

Amen. Make the sign of the cross.

Offering

Catechism: Second Article

Other Prayers

Celebrations: Birthdays and Baptism birthdays



2 God Speaks (20 minutes)

Introducing God's Word

To Prepare: You will need the Faith Words Poster (Poster B), the Faith Word *transfigured* cut from Poster B, a restickable glue stick (available from cph.org), and a copy of Lesson Leaflet 5.

Say **Close your eyes.** Slowly read the following list of words. **Imagine the sun, fireworks, lightning, headlights, the beam of a flashlight, a computer screen in a dark room, a camera flash. What do all these things have in common?** (They are bright to our eyes.) **Imagine seeing someone that looked bright. In our Bible story from the Book of Matthew, Jesus' body shone brightly, like the sun. His clothes became as white as light. We say Jesus was *transfigured*. That is the act of being changed. It is when Jesus showed His divine glory.**

Show the illustration on the leaflet cover. Ask one of the children to use the glue stick to post the Faith Word on Poster B.

Say **Let's find out when and how it all happened and learn more about the meaning of the word *transfigured*.**

Telling God's Word

To Prepare: Hand out stickers (Student Pack) and Lesson Leaflet 5.

Say **Open your lesson leaflet. Find the grid that looks like a bingo board. As you listen to the Bible story, put the stickers anyplace on this Glory board. It doesn't matter where you place them, but you need to wait until you hear about the figure in the story before you add that sticker.**

Review the names of the people on the stickers. Begin the activity by adding the four cross stickers anywhere on the board, one per square.

Option: Tell story using Storytelling Figures 5-1 to 5-6 and the glue stick. Place them on Background A at the same time the stickers are placed on the leaflet.


**Engaging
Activity!**

Say A few weeks before Jesus was to die on the cross, He took His best friends with Him up a mountain. Jesus, Peter, James, and John all walked up a tall mountain. Pause so the children can add the Jesus, Peter, James, John, and mountain stickers to the Glory board. **All of a sudden, Jesus' body looked different. His face was shining as bright as the sun! His clothes were pure white as light.** Pause so the children can add the white clothing sticker. **Then something remarkable happened. Moses (MOE zez), who was given the Ten Commandments, and Elijah (ee LIE juh), the prophet, were there too. They were talking with Jesus about Him dying on the cross.** Pause so the children can add Moses and Elijah.

Peter said to Jesus, "It's good to be here, Lord! I'll make three tents up here so You can have shelter—one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Then a bright cloud came over the top of them. Wait for students to add the tents and cloud stickers to the board. **A voice from the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son. I am so pleased with Him. Listen to Him."**

The cloud was so bright and God's voice was so awesome that the disciples fell to the ground. Their hands covered their faces. The disciples were terrified. They trembled in fear. Jesus put His hand on them and said, "Don't be afraid. You can get up." When they looked up, they saw only Jesus.

It wasn't long after the transfiguration that Jesus walked up another mountain. That mountain was named Calvary, and this time, Jesus was carrying a cross. There, Jesus died for you and for me, for our sins and for our salvation.

Now, in the cross of Christ, we glory. His victory over sin, death, and the devil is ours. He gives His glory to us.

Lesson Leaflet Review

Discuss the illustration on the leaflet cover. Review the Bible story by playing Glory, a Bible bingo game about the transfiguration. Pass out coins or paper scraps to serve as markers. Randomly call out pictures and review their role in the Bible story. The first person to cover five squares in a row yells, "Glory!"

Ask Who wanted to build three tents to make the visit last longer? (Peter)

Where did Jesus go with His disciples? (A mountain)

Whom did Jesus talk to that reminds us of God's Law? (Moses)

Whom did Jesus talk to that reminds us of how God talks to us through prophets? (Elijah)

What were they talking about? (Jesus dying on the cross)

What two brothers were two of Jesus' closest friends?

(James and John)

What overshadowed everyone? The voice from it said, "This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him." (A cloud)

What did Peter say they should set up as shelters for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah? (Three tents)

Option: Review the story using Activity Page 5B. Consider using a device or several devices to record the children retelling the story. Use social media or email to share the video with parents so the story will be reviewed at home. As always, secure parental permission before posting something publicly, or limit access to those you invite.

Bible Words

The Word became flesh . . . and we have seen His glory. John 1:14

To Prepare: From yellow craft paper, cut a large circle for the sun and nine strips for sunbeams. Write the word *glory* on the circle. On each of the sunbeams, write one of the remaining words from the Bible Words. Have the glue stick available.

Say **Jesus was both God and man at the same time. In our Bible Words, we say, “The Word became flesh.” Jesus is God’s Word who became flesh. Jesus had a body. He breathed, slept, ate, and cried.**

In the Apostles’ Creed, we confess that we believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary. Inside Jesus’ body was hidden His godliness. On the day of His transfiguration, Jesus’ godliness was shining. Let’s say the Bible Words together.

Give each student a chance to use the glue stick to mount a sunbeam around the circle (on the board) as the class practices the Bible Words together, adding one word at a time.

3 We Live (20 minutes)

Growing through God’s Word

To Prepare: To complete this section, hand out a copy of Activity Page 5C to each child. Plan to use the board or a large piece of craft paper.

Give each child a copy of Activity Page 5C and scissors. Tell the children to cut out the mountain pieces. Have them place the pieces in order by size, starting at the bottom of the mountain.

Say **Let’s talk about two *g*-words with five letters. One word is *glory* and the other is *guilt*. Write the two words on the board. We are all sinners. So we are all guilty of breaking God’s Law. What are some sinful things we think, say, and do? Do we ever tell a lie? Do we ever disobey our parents? Do we ever take things that aren’t ours without asking?** Give the children time to reflect. Read the bottom (largest) piece of the mountain together. **Are parents pleased when we sin? (No) Is God pleased when we sin? (No, God hates sin.) We want to hide our sins, don’t we? Let’s draw a sad face by the word *guilt*.** Do so.

Jesus came from heaven on a mission. Jesus was God, but He was also a real human being. He had to be both to save us. He came to earth to take care of sin and all its guilt. Soon after He was transfigured, Jesus went to another mountain, to another place where we see His glory in a different way. Do you know where He went? Accept responses. **That’s right. Jesus went to die on a cross. Three days later, He appeared again, at the glorious resurrection. Jesus’ glory was hidden on the cross, where He took care of our sins.**

At the transfiguration, God said He was pleased with Jesus. Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, the pastor tells us this Good News too. He says that God forgives our sins. The pastor speaks God’s words of love and grace in Baptism, in the absolution of our sins, in the preaching of God’s Word, and in the Lord’s Supper. Your sins are forgiven and gone.

Key Point

At the transfiguration, Jesus’ glory was unveiled before the disciples. Today, His glory is unveiled for us in the Word, in the water of Baptism, and in the bread and wine of His Holy Supper. In heaven, we shall see Him in all His glory!

Read the middle piece of the mountain together. Ask the children to set it above the base of the mountain while you draw a cross by the word *glory*.

What wonderful news! Our sins are gone! Jesus gives us His pardon and peace. God's glory is ours. Tell the children they can add the top piece to their mountain. Read the words together.

Because of Jesus, we are worthy to stand face-to-face with God the Father. Someday, we will see God in all His glory. When will that be? (In heaven) **Until that time, we can tell others about Jesus and take them with us to church, where they can see and hear about Jesus' glory.**

If you have time, the children can glue the pieces on a piece of light blue paper and draw a cloud at the top to remind them that God speaks to us too. Sing "All Glory Be to God Above" (*SGL*, p. 32) or "Glory Be to Jesus" (*LSB* 433; *SGL*, p. 19).

Craft Page

To Prepare: Hand out Craft Page 5 (Student Book) and scissors. Have tape on hand. As an option, enhance the project with glitter or shiny nail polish.

Say **Let's make a story strip to show and tell others about the glory of Jesus.**

To make the "See God's Glory" story strip, cut on the bold line to separate the strip from the viewing window. Set aside the rectangular story strip. Carefully cut the bold lines inside the star. You may have to model this for the children. Fold the viewing window on the dotted lines and tape the edges together. To complete the story strip, ask the children to draw a picture of their face in the blank section.

Option: Add glitter or sparkling fingernail polish as desired.

Finally, slip the story strip into the viewing window and see a picture of God's glory revealed.

4 Closing (5 minutes)

To Prepare: Use the CD. Gather materials to send home.

Gather the children for the Closing. Each week, follow the same routine.

Say We see Jesus in His glory as God's own Son.

Sing "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds" (LSB 524; CD 2) or "Child of God" (SGL, p. 61)



Say The Word became flesh . . . and we have seen His glory. (John 1:14)

Challenge Challenge the children to think of Jesus' glory and their glory whenever they look at something bright this week. For example, whenever they walk outside into the sun, turn on the lights, or look at headlights, they can be reminded of Jesus' divine glory and God's glory shining through them.

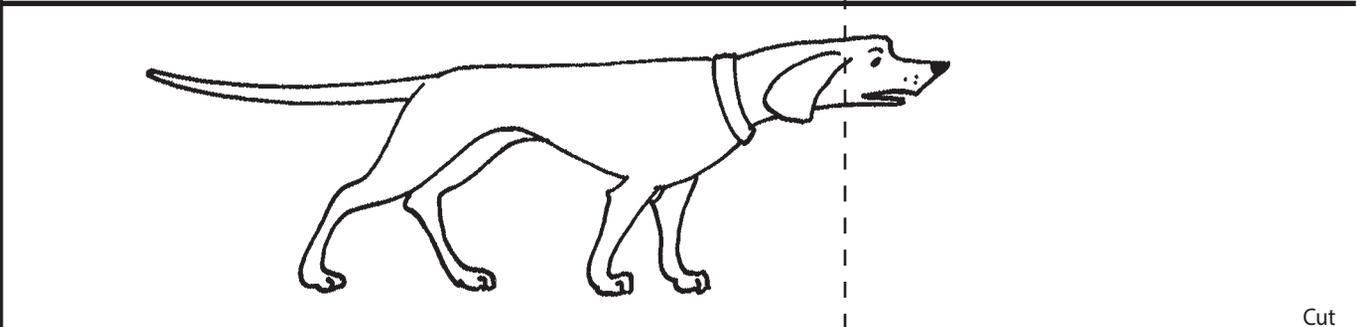
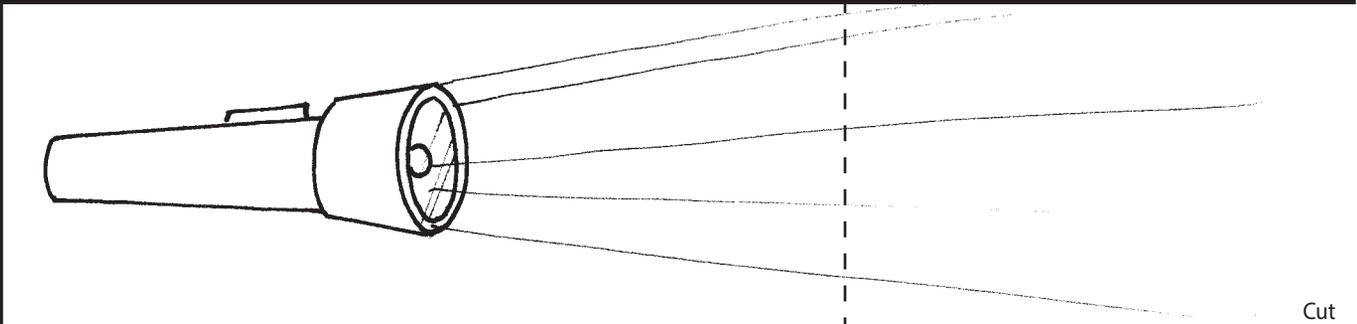
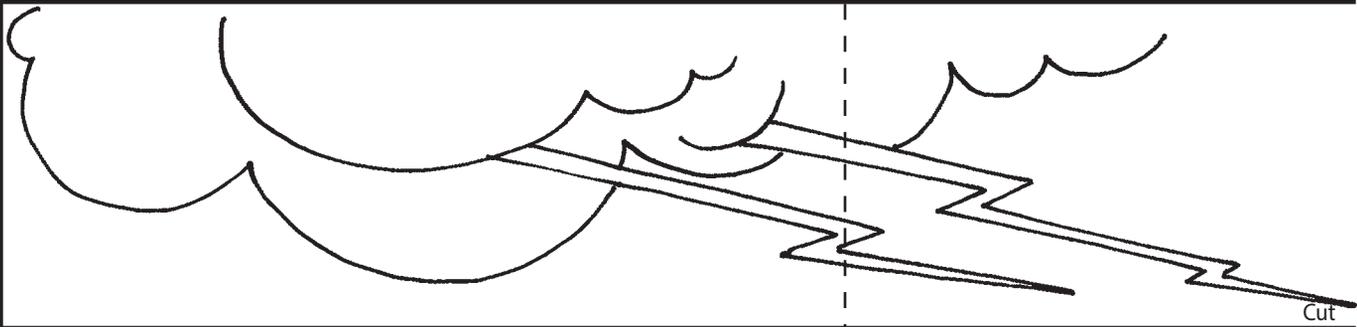
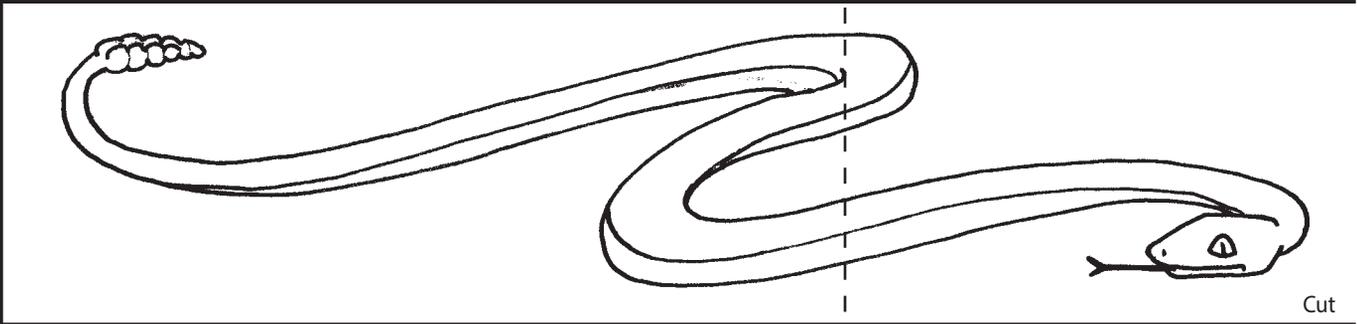
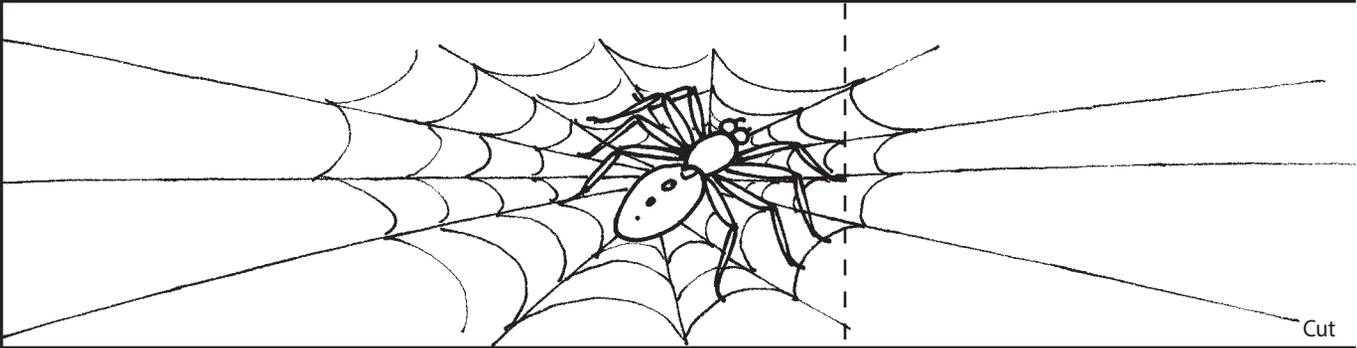
Pray Glorious Jesus, You were both God and man, and You saved me by Your death and resurrection. Thank You that my sins are forgiven so God is well pleased with me. Amen.

As the children leave,

Say Because of what Jesus has done, you are worthy to stand face-to-face with God your Father.

Reflect When you take time to explain words that are unfamiliar or abstract, you set the stage for learning. Make a list of problematic words in today's lesson. How did you preteach them?

What is hidden? What frightens you?



The Transfiguration

