

# The Transfiguration

## Lesson At-a-Glance

Scripture Reference  
**Matthew 17:1-13**

Lesson Focus  
**God's love changes everything.**

Bible Memory Verse  
**"This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" Matthew 17:5**

### Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<b>Arrival Activity</b> Kids climb a mountain and talk about what they see and feel.	Spark Activity Pages, Spark Coloring Pages	Colored pencils
<b>Circle Time</b> Kids talk about mountaintop experiences and how they can change us.	Spark Song CD, Spark Songbook	Music source
<b>Opening Prayer</b> Kids ask God to change their hearts.	None	None

### Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<b>The Transfiguration Story</b> Kids act out the story as it's read.	Spark Story Bibles, Spark NRSV Bible	None
<b>A Mountaintop Experience</b> Kids make a story wheel and retell today's story.	Leaflets	Scissors, paper circles (4-inch diameter), pencils, crayons, brass fasteners

## Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<b>The Change Game</b> Kids play a guessing game with their buddies about all the things God's love can change.	Leaflets, Spark Bible Stickers	Pencils, crayons
<b>Spread Your Wings</b> Kids make coffee filter butterflies to remind them of God's power to change things.	None	Coffee filters (white), chenille stems, watercolor paints, paintbrushes, cups of water

## Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<b>Closing Conversation</b> Kids look at Faith on the Go! and share ideas.	Leaflets	None
<b>Closing Prayer</b> Kids thank Jesus for changing their hearts.	Spark Family Pages	None

## Bible Background

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When Jesus appeared on the scene, the people of Israel expected the Messiah, a savior of the people. Some expected a king, others waited for a prophet, others looked for a great high priest, and still others expected a servant for the task of justice. Jesus' ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing attracted large crowds and brought speculation about his identity. Had John the Baptist come back to life? Or maybe Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets? Peter gets it right when he confesses, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). This is true, and the reader has known it from verse 1. But part of the truth remains hidden. Jesus explains that he must suffer, die, and be raised. This is too far from Peter's expectation of the Messiah.

## Why This Story Matters

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Kids often experience a disconnect between knowing *about* Jesus and *knowing* Jesus. They may have ideas of who Jesus is and what Jesus did, but might be frustrated that they can't see and know Jesus in a concrete way. Kids need to be reassured that Jesus is more amazing and wonderful than anyone can understand, and the more they know Jesus in their lives, the more Jesus changes them and the world around them.

## Gather (10 minutes)

### Arrival Activity

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If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of the Activity Page and Coloring Page and set them out for kids to try.

**Today we're going to go on a mountain-climbing expedition! What do we need to get ready to climb a mountain?** Engage kids in a discussion about supplies for climbing a mountain. **Ready to climb? Let's go!** Take the kids on an imaginary climb up a mountainside. Act out how tired you are, take drinks from your canteen, wipe sweat from your brow, and encourage the kids to do the same. Point out things you might see as you climb. Encourage kids to share what they "see."

#### Spark Resources

Spark Activity Pages  
Spark Coloring Pages

#### Supplies

Colored pencils

### Circle Time

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**Whew! We've made it to the top of the mountain! Let's sit down and rest for a while.** Have the kids sit in a circle. **Doesn't it feel great to make it to the top of the mountain? What can you see from here?** Encourage kids to describe the incredible view and share what it feels like to accomplish something like a mountain climb. **Do you think you would feel any different at the top of the mountain? Would a mountain climb change you?** Have a conversation about what might feel different. **The Bible is full of stories where people meet God up on mountains. Moses**

#### Spark Resources

Spark Song CD  
Spark Songbook

#### Supplies

Music source

**and Elijah, very important prophets to Jesus' people, met God on a mountain. In today's story, Jesus climbs a mountain with some of his disciples and they definitely have a mountaintop experience! While on the mountain, Jesus changes, God speaks, and the disciples are changed too!**

## MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Song 1: "Go Tell It on the Mountain" (tracks 6 and 23 on Spark Song CD, page 32 in Spark Songbook)

Song 2: "Change My Heart, O God" by Eddie Espinosa

## Opening Prayer

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**We're going to say a mountain-climbing prayer asking God to change our hearts. After every sentence I say, you answer, "Change our hearts, O God!"** Have the kids stand and mime climbing a mountain with you while you pray.

**Dear God, sometimes we don't listen.** (Change our hearts, O God.)

**Sometimes we are afraid.** (Change our hearts, O God.)

**Sometimes we get angry.** (Change our hearts, O God.)

**Sometimes we hurt others.** (Change our hearts, O God.)

**Help us to know you better.** (Change our hearts, O God.)

**Help us to listen to you.** (Change our hearts, O God.)

**Help us to trust you.** (Change our hearts, O God.)

**Amen.**

### Spark Resources

None

### Supplies

None

## Open the Bible (15 minutes)

### The Transfiguration Story

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Invite kids with Spark NRSV Bibles to each find and stand next to a buddy with a Spark Story Bible.

**While I read today's story, we're going to use our faces and bodies to mime what's going on.** Read the story and pause along the way to demonstrate (1) climbing the mountain, (2) shielding your eyes from the brightness, (3) reacting to the voice of God, (4) peeking up at Jesus, and (5) climbing back down the mountain. Demonstrate facial expressions. Be generous with time so kids can experience the story fully.

Invite the older kids to look up the story in their Spark NRSV Bibles on page 1079, and the younger kids to find The Transfiguration on pages 358-359 of the Spark Story Bible. Older kids can help younger kids when they have found their own pages.

### Spark Resources

Spark NRSV Bibles  
Spark Story Bibles

### Supplies

None

**Look at the orange box on page 1079 in the Spark NRSV Bible. Older kids, read "Know It!" to your buddy. Can you find the answer in the Spark Story Bible?** Give the kids a chance to do this together. **Now read "Think About It!" and talk to your buddy about it. Your buddy can help you place an "I wonder" sticker next to that question, or next to something else in the story that made you wonder.**

## Bible Memory Verse

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"This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" Matthew 17:5

Have older buddies read the verse to their younger buddies a little bit at a time, and have the younger buddies repeat it. Challenge each pair to see if they can recite the entire verse together.

## A Mountaintop Experience

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Before kids arrive, cut one 4-inch circle out of white paper for each kid.

**We're going to illustrate the story and make a story wheel. Buddies, help each other draw a line across the center of the circle. Above the line, draw a picture of Jesus and the disciples standing on the mountaintop. Then turn the circle upside down, and draw a picture of Jesus transfigured, with Moses and Elijah.** Encourage the kids to be as detailed as they like, drawing the disciples afraid, the cloud, rumbling thunder, etc. **Now we're going to cut a window on our leaflets along the dotted line on the front.** Encourage older kids to help younger kids with this. **Put the circle on the back of your leaflet so that your picture shows through the window. Fasten it with a brass fastener.** Demonstrate, and have older kids help their buddies. **When you've finished, retell today's story to your buddy using the wheel. At the moment when Jesus is transfigured, turn the wheel to change the picture. Then when everything goes back to normal, turn the wheel again to return to the original picture.** Give the kids a chance to tell the story to one another. **Now that you've retold the story, work together unscramble the key words above the story wheel.**

When kids have finished retelling the story, invite them to read and discuss the Bible Bits together.

### Spark Resources

Leaflets

### Supplies

Scissors  
Paper circles (4-inch diameter)  
Pencils  
Crayons  
Brass fasteners

# Activate Faith (15 minutes)

## The Change Game

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**God's power changes everything! When God told the disciples that Jesus was his beloved Son and that they should listen to Jesus, the disciples saw Jesus in a different way, and they were changed too. On the back of your story wheel, draw and decorate an arrow pointing to the edge of the circle. Then, with your buddy, play The Change Game. Pick one of the blue-outlined pictures and turn your arrow toward it. Then your buddy should turn their arrow to point to one of the red-outlined pictures that shows what God's love and power could change it into. After you've done that a few times, change the game by turning your arrow toward a red-outlined picture and *not* telling your buddy. See if they can guess the right blue-outlined picture to match! Notice the blank blue circle and the blank red circle. Draw your own pictures to show how God's love can change a situation.** Give the kids an opportunity to play through the game a few times.

Ask for volunteers to read the Did You Know? items aloud. Invite kids to place a sticker or special mark next to the item they found the most interesting.

Spark Resources  
Leaflets  
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies  
Pencils  
Crayons

## Spread Your Wings

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**Nature is full of examples of God's transforming power. One is when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. Butterflies are often used as a symbol for new life in Jesus. We're going to make butterflies to remind us of the way Jesus' love changes us every day.** Distribute supplies. Have each kid take a single coffee filter and fold it like a paper fan, in a tight z-fold. Secure the center of the folded filter with a chenille stem. Next, have the kids get their paintbrushes very wet and wet down the colors they'd like to use. They can drip wet watercolors onto the filters to give their butterflies color. (Optional: Use additional short pieces of chenille stems to make antennae.) Encourage kids to share their finished butterflies with the group.

Spark Resources  
None

Supplies  
Coffee filters (white)  
Chenille stems  
Watercolor paints  
Paintbrushes  
Cups of water

# Send (5 minutes)

## Closing Conversation

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**Look at the Faith on the Go! ideas on your leaflet. Who wants to share one idea they think they can do this week?** Encourage kids of different ages to share. **Remember that God is always doing amazing things to change our hearts and help us see Jesus in a new way.**

Spark Resources  
Leaflets

Supplies  
None

## Closing Prayer

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Distribute Spark Family Pages to kids and point out #2 under Family Conversations. Encourage the kids to continue the conversation you've had in class today with their families.

**We're going to close with a prayer thanking God for Jesus' power to change us. After each line I say, you say, "Thank you for changing my heart."**

**Dear God, when we don't want to listen, open our ears so we can say . . .** (Thank you for changing my heart.)

**When we're afraid, give us comfort so we can say . . .**

**When we are angry, help us to forgive so we can say . . .**

**When we hurt others, help us to make things right so we can say . . .**

**Help us to know you better so we can say . . .**

**Help us remember to listen to you so we can say . . .**

**Help us to trust you in all things so we can say . . .**

**Amen.**

As you say goodbye to kids, make sure they take home the leaflet and Family Page.

### Spark Resources

Spark Family Pages

### Supplies

None