

Matthew 17:1-9

Transfiguration Sunday



The Season after Epiphany began with the three wise ones following the star and ends with the bright lights of Jesus' Transfiguration on the mountain. Epiphany means "showing forth," and it is during this season when we are called to look for how God makes Godself known throughout the world. In his poem, *Epiphany*, Biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann wrote the following: "We are—we could be—people of your light. So we pray for the light of your glorious presence as we wait for your appearing."

YEAR A



Scripture

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will set up three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." And when they raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."



Questions

- Who are the characters in this story, and where are they going?
- What happens to Jesus on the mountain, and how do the disciples react? Share a moment in your life when you reacted strongly to something surprising.
- Before Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain, the disciples saw him as a teacher and leader. What new realizations did the disciples have about Jesus while they were on the mountain?
- On Transfiguration Sunday, we learn something new about Jesus. Tell a story of a time when you saw something change suddenly before your eyes.
- Take a look at the liturgical calendar in the top corner. Next week, the season of Lent begins. Lent is 40 days plus 6 Sundays when we intentionally remember and follow Jesus to the cross. Lent ends when we celebrate Jesus' empty tomb on Easter Sunday. How can we follow and listen to Jesus more closely during the coming season of Lent?

Look it Up!

Look up the mountain ranges in your region or on your continent.

Did you know Earth's mountains are constantly changing (height, shape, etc.)? How old are they, and how did they form? Which mountain would you most like to visit someday?



mini
REVOLUTIONS





Activity

The story told in this passage is referred to as the Transfiguration, when Jesus' true nature as the Son of God is revealed to his closest disciples: Peter, James, and John. It's an important moment, but it can be a confusing story to read. And based on how the disciples reacted, it was confusing for them too! If the Transfiguration happened today, it would probably be a big news story. Let's imagine how that would go. What questions might a reporter ask the people who were there?

Assign someone to be a news reporter on site at the Transfiguration. Assign others to be the disciples, Jesus, and even Moses and Elijah! Have the newsperson introduce the story as if they are reporting for a news show. Then, have the reporter interview each character in the story to hear their version of events. The reporter should ask what they saw and what they heard, as well as what they feel about the events.

If you have more people, feel free to think up some other roles (i.e. a second reporter for interviews, people the disciples saw before or after they were on the mountain, a bird flying overhead, a camera person, etc). You can also rotate roles, act out the scene more than once, or have a few different news crews so everyone has a turn.

At the end, share how each of you might feel if you were on the mountain and saw the Transfiguration happen. Would you want to tell someone even though Jesus said not to? How do you think people would react if you told them what happened?

Alternate Activity

Materials:

Visual puzzles or optical illusions (examples here: <https://kids.niehs.nih.gov/games/riddles/illusions/>)

Peter, James, and John saw and heard something extraordinary on the mountaintop with Jesus. Jesus suddenly glowed, Elijah and Moses appeared, and God's voice spoke from above. They were stunned by what they saw and heard because, even though they had spent a lot of time with Jesus, they had never seen or heard anything like this before.

Sometimes, what we can see, hear, or understand doesn't tell us the whole story. Maybe we need glasses or contacts to help us see better or hearing aids to help us hear better. Perhaps we need more experience to understand fully. Sometimes, our senses are just playing tricks on us.

As a group, look at some visual puzzles together. Discuss how what you see might be different from what is really there. What other examples can your group suggest for how our senses might trick us?



Micropractice

Can a time-out be a good thing? Jesus and the disciples took journeys away from crowds to rest and see things in a new way. Plan a time-out for yourself this week, even if for a short moment.

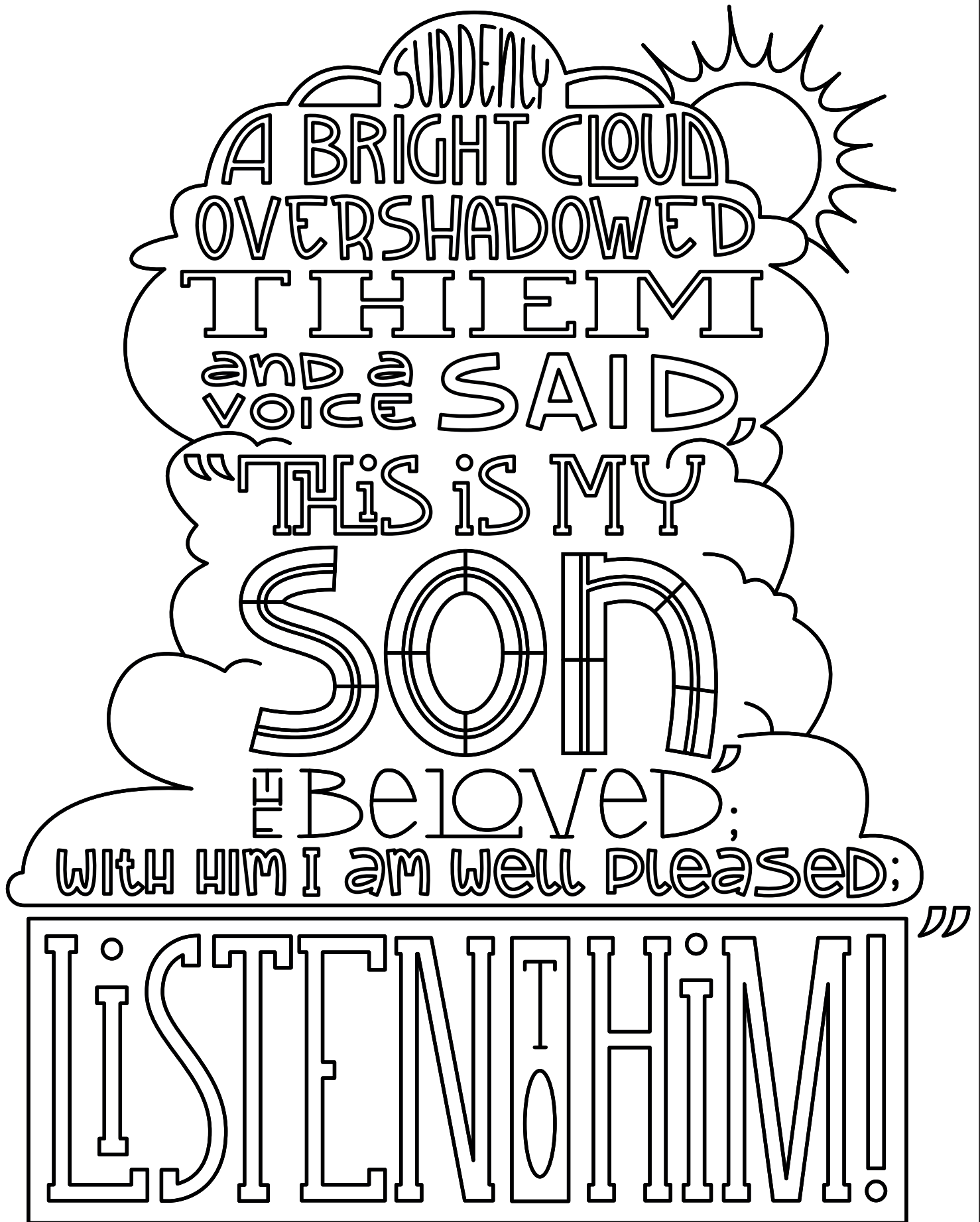


Download a graphic to share with your community and on social media. You can download it here: illstrdm.in/minirevATransfiguration

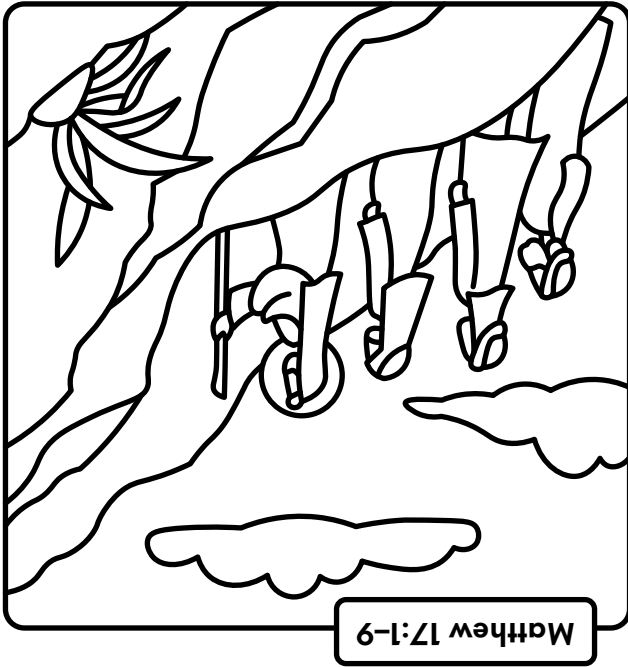


Prayer

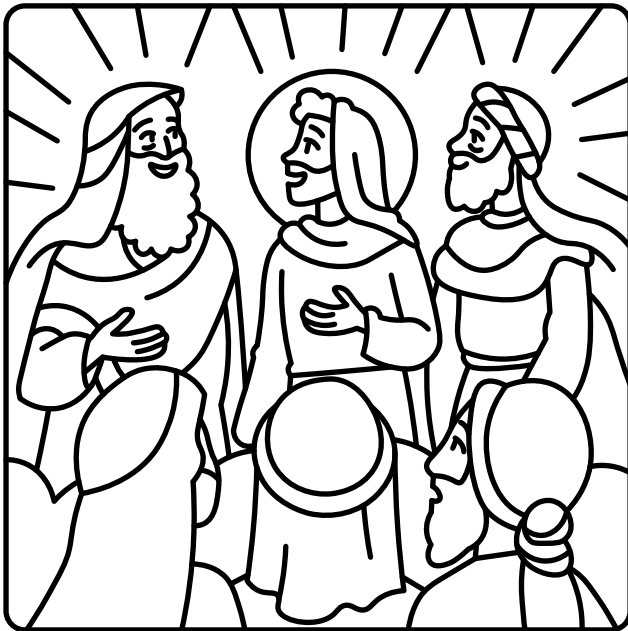
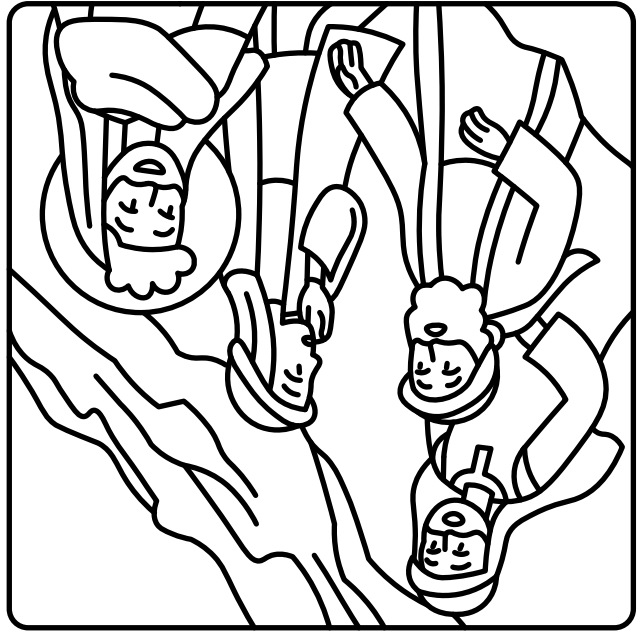
Holy God, thank you for showing us who Jesus really is. Help us use our eyes, ears, minds, and hearts to learn from, and follow, Jesus. Amen.



1. Jesus, Peter, James, and John had been traveling for a long time, and Jesus was beginning his last journey to Jerusalem. On their way, Jesus took them all to the top of a high mountain.



4. As they were leaving the mountain, Jesus said, "Don't tell anyone about this vision until after I've risen from the dead." Wondering what this meant, the disciples continued on to Jerusalem with Jesus.



2. Right in front of their eyes, Jesus was transformed! His face and clothes glowed like the sun. Suddenly, Moses and Elijah, beloved leaders of their faith who lived long ago, appeared and spoke to Jesus.



3. A bright cloud passed over the group and God spoke, "This is my Beloved Son. I'm proud of Jesus; listen to him!" The disciples felt afraid and fell to the ground, but Jesus told them to have no fear.