

# Coming through the Cloud

The revealing of Jesus' glory marks the end of Jesus' ministry in Galilee and the beginning of his journey toward Jerusalem. Mark describes Jesus' transfiguration and, with the disciples, we sense the sacred moment; we will see things in a new way from this time forward. This week, we also catch Elisha's vision of the sacred as Elijah is caught up to heaven; and with Paul and the psalmist, we give thanks that God's light shines forth through us.

## Focus scripture: Mark 9:2–9

Jesus' transfiguration marks the end of Jesus' ministry in Galilee and the beginning of the journey towards Jerusalem. Just before today's reading, Peter declares that Jesus is the Messiah. But Peter does not understand Jesus' teaching about the kind of Messiah Jesus has come to be.

Six days later, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John to Mount Hermon. On the mountain, Jesus' appearance is transfigured – Jesus shines. The voice here describes Jesus in the same terms used when he was baptized.

The disciples see Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah. This event has echoes of Hebrew scriptures. Moses' face was transfigured on Mount Sinai when he was in God's presence and received the Law. Elijah also experienced God's presence on Sinai. Elijah's return will announce the coming of the Messiah. For Mark, Jesus fulfils the work of the Law and the prophets.

Jesus' shining garments mark him as one who has triumphed through martyrdom. Jesus' changed appearance – a "metamorphosis" – reflects his nature as both divine and human.

Peter grasps a sense of the sacred and wants to preserve it; he offers to build three tents. The word used for "tent" can mean "tabernacle," the same word used in John 1:14 to describe the incarnate Jesus "dwelling" among us. This word also connects with the Exodus story of the tent in the wilderness and the ark where God's glory dwells.

A cloud comes over the mountain. The divine presence is often described as being in clouds and speaking from clouds. Through the cloud comes a voice repeating the words from Jesus' baptism: "This is my Son, the Beloved." In Mark's account of Jesus' baptism, only Jesus hears the voice from heaven. Here,

the disciples hear the voice telling them to listen to Jesus.

This mountaintop time must have been a terrifying and amazing experience for the three disciples, but Jesus cautions them not to tell anyone about it. We have seen this before in Mark's gospel. It is not yet time for the disciples to proclaim the good news. The meaning of Jesus' messiahship is to remain a secret for the time being. As we move into the Season Lent, we feel the tension building as Jesus' ministry continues.

**2 Kings 2:1–12** The prophet Elijah is carried up to heaven, and Elisha glimpses the sacred and comes to a fuller understanding of who Elijah is. Elisha receives a double portion of the spirit of Elijah and is thus known as a prophet in true succession.

The awe-inspiring image of God's majesty and our response to it are central in the other texts. In **Psalms 50:1–6**, God shines forth with light. In this psalm of judgment, the writer acknowledges that God's righteousness is recognized and experienced in nature.

Paul, in **2 Corinthians 4:3–6** concludes that we often do not see the Christ or understand the gospel message because a veil separates us from God. Paul argues that the veil that hides the gospel is the worship of other gods. It is in the proclamation of the Christ that generates light and builds community.

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"Epiphany" means "showing forth." During this season, we explored ways in which God's glory is revealed in the life and work of Jesus and the disciples. Where and when have you sensed the sacred or caught glimpses of God's presence? How do such moments define your life as a disciple and a church?



## Focus scripture

**Mark 9:2–9**

## Additional scriptures

**2 Kings 2:1–12**

**Psalms 50:1–6**

**2 Corinthians 4:3–6**

**We hear of your divine voice, transforming God, and hope for new and deeper understandings of the ministries to which you call us. As we inherit the mantle of ministry from those who have preceded us, may we experience a broader understanding of what it means to be disciples of the Christ. Amen.**

## Lecture Connection

links current events with this week's scriptures. Go to [www.seasonsonline.ca](http://www.seasonsonline.ca) and click on the link.

## The Focus for Ages 3–5

Young children use their imaginations all the time. They pretend to be dragons or fairy princesses or bears or astronauts. They are more comfortable with mysteries and the unknown than their elders. Although they are gaining knowledge and understanding at an amazing rate, they still have a lot to learn about how the world works. They make discoveries every hour of every day, gradually learning to distinguish between the ordinary and the unusual. Much of their learning comes through observing, especially observing people and their relationships, and you will often hear them asking

“Why?” or “Who?” or “How?” or “When?”

This week’s story of the Transfiguration gives the children a new perspective on Jesus. It is a story with lots of drama and mystery: “dazzling” clothes, visiting prophets, and a voice from above. Children will be invited to use their imaginations to enter into the story, to “climb” up the mountain with Jesus and his friends. Imagining the sights and sounds will help the children to experience and remember the story. Pray that the children’s imaginations will be captured by the story of Jesus’ transfiguration and that they will be affirmed that, with Jesus, they are also God’s beloved.

## Prepare

### Before the session

- ☐ Read and prayerfully reflect on this week’s focus scripture, Mark 9:2–9, and [biblical background](#) material (p. 69).
- ☐ Prepare a worship space with a white cloth, candle, matches, offering basket, Bible with a bookmark placed in the gospel of Mark.
- ☐ Bring [basic supply kit](#) (p. 2), resource sheet [“Additional Songs”](#) (p. 76 and, if possible, *Seasons Songbook* (Volume 7), *Seasons Music CD* (Volume 7), *Seasons Growing Faith (SGF) Songbook*, *Seasons Growing Faith (SGF) Music CD*, and CD or MP3 player; downloadable sheet music and MP3 recordings are available for purchase at [www.seasonsonline.ca](http://www.seasonsonline.ca).

### Gather

- ☐ Bring, if possible, “Circle Song” (p. 10 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 7; #11 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 7).
- ☐ Option: bring a puppet (see information on p. 2).

### Engage

- ☐ Bring a sturdy table and a plain sheet or blanket.
- ☐ Bring resource sheet [“On the Mountaintop”](#) and the figures of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah from the [Storytelling Poster 2](#).

- ☐ Bring biblical costumes or headdresses and a white shirt.

### Respond

Choose from the options provided. Prepare and bring the materials.

- ☐ **Story puppets:** copies of resource sheet [“Transfiguration Characters”](#) (p. 81), craft sticks or paper tubes
- ☐ **Window hanger:** copies of this week’s resource sheet [“Window Hanger,”](#) cooking oil, cotton balls, construction paper; follow instructions on resource sheet for making construction paper frames and glueing together (one per child).
- ☐ **Response centre:** variety of craft materials (such as foil, shiny metallic wrapping paper, fluorescent markers, sequins, glitter, metallic buttons, yarn, paper scraps, glitter glue, craft sticks, streamers, used CDs)

### Bless

- ☐ Bring, if possible, the song “God Is With Us” (see [“Additional Songs,”](#) p. 76)



February 14, 2021

# Coming through the Cloud

## Scripture

Mark 9:2–9

**FOCUS** To listen to God's message about Jesus on the mountaintop

## Gather

Welcome children by name.

### Opening ritual

**Gather** around the worship table and invite a child to help light the candle, a reminder that God is with us. Point out the white cloth in the worship space, marking this as a special day. Point out the Bible and say that this day we will hear a special story about Jesus. Receive the offering.

**Sing** "God Is With Us" (see ["Additional Songs,"](#) p. 76) or "Circle Song" (p. 10 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 7; #11 on the *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 7).

**Pray** Dear God,  
thank you for this special day,  
and for this time together. Amen.

Extinguish the candle to signal that the opening ritual has ended.

### Moving into the theme

Choose one of the following:

#### ☐ Puppet conversation

**Priscilla:** Hi everyone! I've been trying to remember some of the stories about Jesus that we have heard.

**Leader:** Let's help Priscilla remember some of the things that the Bible tells us about Jesus. (*Help children to remember things, such as Jesus loved everyone, he made everyone feel welcomed, he helped people who were sick or lonely, he taught people how to share with others, and to take turns whispering these into Priscilla's ear.*)

**Priscilla:** Wow, my ears are getting full!

**Leader:** I'm sure they are. We have heard lots of things that Jesus taught about how to live in God's way.

**Priscilla:** I think I'll go and tell some others about Jesus. (*Says goodbye.*)

- ☐ **Listening game** Invite the children to take turns whispering something they have learned about Jesus into another's ears. Ask the "listener" to repeat aloud what they have heard. Continue until everyone has had a turn.

## Engage

### Before the story

Invite a child to bring the Bible from the worship table and use the bookmark to open it to the gospel of Mark. Explain that today we will hear a story about something very special that happened to Jesus on the top of a mountain. Invite the children to help create a "mountain" using a chair on top of a sturdy table and covering with a sheet or blanket. Place nearby the figures of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah from the [Storytelling Poster 2](#). Sit a distance away from the "mountain" and use

the resource sheet ["On the Mountaintop"](#) to help the children experience the story.

### After the story

**Dramatize the story** Provide costumes and invite children to act out the story, with volunteers taking the roles of Jesus, Moses, Elijah, and the three disciples. "Jesus" can use the white shirt at the appropriate time. Read the story again (without the refrain) or ask children to tell the story as they remember it.

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## Respond

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Choose from the following activities.

- ❑ **Story puppets** Invite children to make their own story figures to share the story with others. Distribute copies of the resource sheet "[Transfiguration Characters](#)" (p. 81) and invite the children to colour the figures. Help them cut the figures out and glue onto craft sticks or paper tubes. Encourage children to practice telling the story of Jesus on the mountaintop.
- ❑ **Window hanger** In this week's story we hear how Jesus shone with a mysterious light. Give each child a prepared "Window Hanger" to decorate with crayons. Show them how to rub a little cooking oil on the picture to make it translucent. Encourage children to hang this in a window so the sun shines through it, as a reminder of the story.
- ❑ **Response centre** Children can experience the sacred in many ways. Encourage children to use the materials to create their own imaginative responses to the story.

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## Bless

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**Gather** around the worship table and light the candle again.

**Sing** "God is With Us" (see "[Additional Songs](#)," p. 76)

**Pray** Thank you, God,  
for your love,  
and for the love of Jesus,  
and for the love that surrounds us. Amen.

**Send** each child out with the words, "(child's name), let your face shine with God's love."

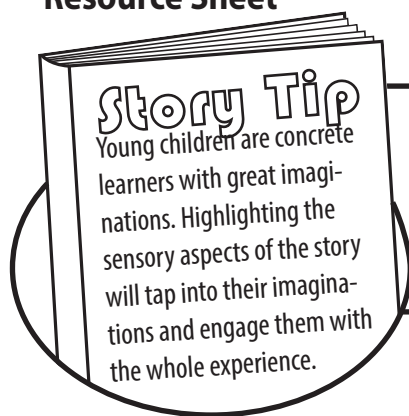
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## Reflect

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In what ways did this session help to stimulate the children's rich imaginations? Please take a moment to complete the evaluation form (at the end of this resource or in Library at [www.seasonsonline.ca](http://www.seasonsonline.ca)). The developers of the *Seasons of the Spirit* resources appreciate hearing about your experiences with the materials.





# On the Mountaintop

(based on Mark 9:2-9)

*(Sit a distance away from the “mountain” that the children created earlier. In the story, each time you say, “Come with me and see,” beckon to the children and move a bit closer to the mountain. Finally they will be at the base of the mountain to hear the rest of the story.)*

What a day it is for three of Jesus’ disciples!  
Peter, James, and John are going on a hike.

Up, up, up they go.

**Come with me and see.**

It is Jesus’ idea. Jesus is taking his friends  
Peter, James, and John somewhere important.

Up, up, up a mountain they go.

**Come with me and see.**

Jesus goes all the way to the top, but Peter,  
James, and John stop part way.

They wonder what will happen next.

**Come with me and see.**

*(Place the Jesus figure on the top of the “mountain.”)* “Look at Jesus!”

“Wait! Do you see two more?” *(Add the figures of Moses and Elijah.)*

“Count the people: 1, 2, 3.”

Peter, James, and John can hardly believe their eyes.

**Come with me and see.**

“Is that really Jesus?”

“His clothes – they’re bright white!”

“I’m shading my eyes from the dazzling light!”

**Come with me and see.**

“Who are the others? Can you tell?”

“Could one of them be Moses? Yes, Moses is here with Jesus!”

“The other is from long ago, too: the prophet Elijah!”

**Come with me and see.**

“Listen! “What do you hear?” *(pause)*

Peter, James and John hear God say,

“This is my beloved; I love him. Listen to him!”

**Come with me and see – and hear.**

*(Arrive at the base of the mountain. Remove the figures of the two prophets.)* And suddenly it is only Jesus on top of the mountain. The other two people have gone.

Jesus smiles and says, “Don’t be afraid. Let’s go now.”

And down, down the mountain they go.

Quietly Peter, and James, and John wonder about what they saw.

They have so much more to learn about Jesus.

**Come with me and see – and wonder.**



# Window Hanger



## Instructions:

1. Trim the edges of the sheet around the outside border.
2. Cut a construction paper frame using the border area of this picture as a pattern.
3. Glue the frame over the picture.





# Additional Songs

## We Are Waiting

(tune: "Frère Jacques" or "Are You Sleeping?")

We are waiting, we are waiting,  
every day, every day,  
to celebrate a birthday,  
to celebrate a birthday,  
Jesus' birth! Jesus' birth!

## Ring the Bells

(tune: "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

Ring, ring, ring the bells.  
Ring the bells today.  
Jesus comes to share God's love.  
Ring the bells today.

## God Is With Us

(tune: "Frère Jacques" or "Are You Sleeping?")

God is with us, God is with us,  
all the time, all the time,  
comforting and loving,  
comforting and loving,  
Thank you, God. Thank you, God.

## If You're Happy and You Know It

The musical notation is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. It includes four lines of music with lyrics and actions. Chords F, C7, Bb, and F are indicated above the staff. The lyrics are: "If you're hap - py and you know it, clap your hands. stamp your feet. snap your fingers. If you're hap - py and you know it, then your face will sure - ly show it. If you're hap - py and you know it, clap your hands. stamp your feet. snap your fingers." The actions are: "clap your hands", "stamp your feet", "snap your fingers", and "clap your hands", "stamp your feet", "snap your fingers".

Other verses:

If you're sad and you know it, cry boo hoo.  
If you're tired and you know it, give a yawn.  
If you're angry and you know it, stamp your foot.  
If you're excited and you know it, give a jump.  
If you're loving and you know it, throw a kiss.

## God Loves Us

(tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

We are all God's family. (Open arms wide.)  
Look around and you will see.  
(Shade eyes with one hand and look around.)  
God loves you and God loves me.  
(Place hands over heart.)  
We are all God's family. (Open arms wide.)  
Look around and you will know.  
(Shade eyes with one hand and look around.)  
God's love helps us all to grow.  
(Bring arms up and hold hands above head.)

## We Will Follow Jesus

(tune: "The Bear Went Over the Mountain")

We will follow Jesus  
We will follow Jesus  
We will follow Je-sus  
and do what Jesus did (clap clap).  
and do what Jesus did (clap clap).  
and do what Jesus did (clap clap).  
We will follow Jesus  
We will follow Jesus  
We will follow Je-sus  
and do what Jesus did.



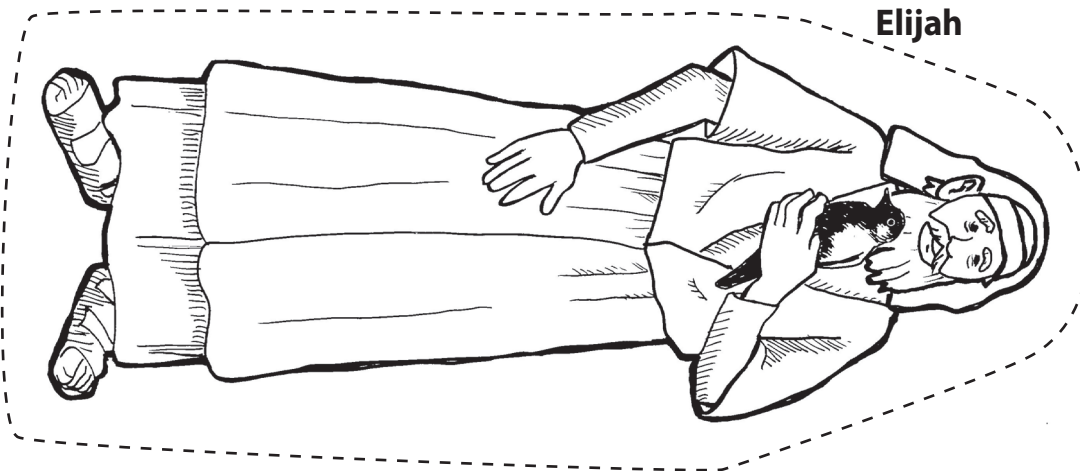
# Transfiguration Characters



Jesus



Moses



Elijah

