Preschool–Grade 6

The Transfiguration

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Listen to Jesus. The disciples saw His glory, and the voice from the cloud said, "hear ye him."
Bible passage: Matthew 17:1–9. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." *Matthew 17:5 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Hear It Straight (5–10 minutes)

Kids sit in a line. Whisper this sentence to the first child: "Jesus took Peter, James and John up into an high mountain." Each child whispers it once to the next. The last child says it out loud. Then read the real sentence from Matthew 17:1. Compare them. Play once more with Matthew 17:2. Ask: *Why did the message change? What is the best way to know exactly what Jesus said?* Say: "Today we will read about a day when God said, 'hear ye him': listen to Jesus Himself."

2. Bible story: Hear Ye Him (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Matthew 17. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Up the mountain. Look up Matthew 17:1. After six days, Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother up into an high mountain **apart**, away by themselves.

Transfigured. Look up Matthew 17:2. Jesus was **transfigured** before them: His whole look was changed. His face did shine as the sun, and His **raiment**, His clothes, was white as the light. The three disciples saw Jesus' glory with their own eyes.

Moses and Elias. Look up Matthew 17:3. Moses and Elias appeared, talking with Jesus. Moses was the man God used to give His law to Israel (John 1:17). Elias is the New Testament way of writing Elijah, the prophet.

Peter's idea. Look up Matthew 17:4. Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here," and offered to make three **tabernacles**, tents or shelters, one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elias.

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The voice from the cloud. Look up Matthew 17:5. While Peter was still speaking, a bright cloud **overshadowed** them, covered over them, and a voice out of the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." **Hear ye him** means listen to Him.

Be not afraid. Look up Matthew 17:6–7. When the disciples heard the voice, they fell on their face and were **sore afraid**, very afraid. Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and be not afraid."

Jesus only. Look up Matthew 17:8. When they lifted up their eyes, "they saw no man, save Jesus only": no one but Jesus.

Coming down. Look up Matthew 17:9. As they came down from the mountain, Jesus **charged** them (told them firmly), "Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead." The **vision** is what they had seen. Jesus already knew He would rise from the dead.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Jesus' face shone as the sun (17:2). What does that show the disciples about who Jesus is?
2. Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (17:4). When have you felt it was good to be close to Jesus, at church or at home?
3. The voice said, "hear ye him" (17:5). What are some ways we can listen to Jesus today?
4. The disciples were sore afraid, and Jesus touched them and said, "be not afraid" (17:6–7). What does that show about how Jesus treats people who are scared?
5. In the end "they saw no man, save Jesus only" (17:8). What would it look like to keep your eyes on Jesus only this week?

Recall questions

1. How many days passed before Jesus went up the mountain? *(Six days, Matthew 17:1)*
2. Who appeared talking with Jesus? *(Moses and Elias, 17:3)*
3. What did Jesus tell them not to do until He was risen from the dead? *(Tell the vision to anyone, 17:9)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **spake** means spoke, **behold** means look, **overshadowed** means covered over them, **beloved** means dearly loved, and **hear ye him** means listen to him. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "On the mountain, Peter, James and John saw Jesus' glory. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4), just as He told the disciples on the way down the mountain (Matthew 17:9). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: read one of Jesus' sayings in the Bible every day (start with Matthew 5–7), and do one thing He says.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Matthew 17:1: What kind of mountain did they go up? *(An high mountain apart)*
2. Matthew 17:2: What was Jesus' raiment as white as? *(The light)*
3. Matthew 17:4: What did Peter offer to make? *(Three tabernacles)*
4. Matthew 17:5: What kind of cloud overshadowed them? *(A bright cloud)*
5. Matthew 17:6: What did the disciples do when they heard the voice? *(They fell on their face and were sore afraid)*
6. Matthew 17:7: What did Jesus do before He spoke to them? *(He came and touched them)*
7. 2 Peter 1:18: Peter wrote about this day later. Where did he say they were? *(In the holy mount)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for showing the disciples how glorious Jesus is. Help us listen to Jesus and do what He says, and help us not to be afraid, because He is with us. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks who spoke from the cloud: say what the Bible says. Matthew says it was "a voice out of the cloud" (17:5), and Peter wrote that it was a "voice which came from heaven" (2 Peter 1:18). God spoke, and He told the disciples to hear Jesus.

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