Preschool–Grade 6

The Transfiguration

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus is glorious, and of all the voices in your life, His is the one to hear and follow.
Bible passage: Matthew 17:1–9. Students read it out loud themselves.
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)* and "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." *2 Peter 1:16 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Matthew 16:28–17:9 and 2 Peter 1:16–18. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses.

1. Opening game: Loudest Voice (5–10 minutes)

Write on the board: friends, phones and videos, music, teachers, parents, your own feelings, the Bible. Students each rank them from 1 (the voice that shapes my choices most) to 7 (least), privately on paper. Then ask: *Which voices are the loudest in your week? Which ones are the most trustworthy? Are they the same?* Say: "Today we read about a day when God spoke out of a cloud and told three disciples which voice to hear."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Matthew 17:1–9. Students take turns, a verse or two each. Old words in this passage:

- **after six days** (17:1): six days after Jesus' words in Matthew 16:28; **apart**: away by themselves
- **transfigured** (17:2): changed in form, so His glory showed; **raiment**: clothes
- **Elias** (17:3): the New Testament way of writing Elijah, the prophet
- **if thou wilt** (17:4): if you want; **tabernacles**: tents or shelters
- **while he yet spake** (17:5): while he was still speaking; **overshadowed**: covered over them; **beloved**: dearly loved; **hear ye him**: listen to Him
- **sore afraid** (17:6): very afraid; **arise** (17:7): get up
- **save Jesus only** (17:8): no one except Jesus
- **charged them** (17:9): told them firmly; **the vision**: what they had seen; **Son of man**: a name Jesus often used for Himself

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Look closer. Point out these details with the class:

- **They were eyewitnesses.** Years later Peter wrote, "we have not followed cunningly devised fables… but were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16), and "this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount" (2 Peter 1:18). The Transfiguration is not a made-up story; Peter saw it and wrote it down.
- **Moses, Elias, and Jesus only.** Moses was the man through whom "the law was given" (John 1:17), and Elias was one of the great prophets. Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17). Peter wanted three tabernacles, one for each (17:4), but the voice said "hear ye him," and at the end they saw "Jesus only" (17:8).
- **Glory and kindness together.** Jesus' face shone as the sun (17:2), yet when the disciples fell on their faces in fear, He came and touched them and said, "Arise, and be not afraid" (17:7).
- **Pointing to the cross and the empty tomb.** On the way down, Jesus spoke of being "risen again from the dead" (17:9). The glory on the mountain came before His death, burial and resurrection.

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. What did the disciples learn about Jesus from seeing His face shine as the sun (17:2)? Why might Jesus have shown this to them before the cross?
2. Peter's idea put Jesus, Moses and Elias side by side (17:4). Why do you think the voice interrupted with "hear ye him" (17:5)?
3. Look at your ranking from the opening game. What would it take for Jesus' voice to be number one in your choices?
4. The disciples were sore afraid, and Jesus touched them (17:6–7). What fears do you need to hear Jesus say "be not afraid" to?
5. "They saw no man, save Jesus only" (17:8). What crowds your view of Jesus, and what would it look like to see "Jesus only"?
6. Peter called himself an eyewitness (2 Peter 1:16). How does knowing the Bible's account comes from people who were there help your faith?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Matthew 17:5: **spake** means spoke; **behold** means look; **overshadowed** means covered over them; **beloved** means dearly loved; **hear ye him** means listen to Him. In 2 Peter 1:16, **cunningly devised fables** means clever made-up stories, and **eyewitnesses of his majesty** means people who saw His greatness with their own eyes.

Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Matthew 17:5 this week; keep working on 2 Peter 1:16 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "On the mountain, three disciples saw the glory of Jesus. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter, who was on that mountain, preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Which voice is the loudest in my life right now, and is it leading me toward Jesus or away?
2. One thing Jesus says in the Bible that I need to "hear" and do this week is...
3. Write a short prayer asking Jesus to help you hear Him, not be afraid, and see "Jesus only."
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: read Matthew 5–7, a little each day, and underline one thing Jesus says to do. Do it.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus is glorious and that He is also kind to people who are afraid. Help us hear Him above every other voice and follow Him. Help us see Jesus only. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks who spoke from the cloud: keep to 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. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16).

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