

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MOUNTAINS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Transfiguration (Matthew 17: 1-9)

The season of Epiphany is concerned with the theme of revelation, how the presence and power of God is made known through the person of Jesus. On the first Sunday of Epiphany the voice from heaven spoke to Jesus alone (according to Mark and Luke) saying, ‘You are my Son’. Today the same voice speaks at Jesus’ transfiguration and proclaims to the world, ‘This is my Son’. This divine revelation takes place, appropriately, on a high mountain, where heaven and earth meet.

The image to stimulate reflection on the transfiguration of Jesus is *mountains*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Matthew 17: 1-2; for reflection throughout the week)

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 dazzling white.
Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah,
talking with them.

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
your disciples saw your glory
on the mount of the transfiguration.
Change our lives by the power of your glory,
that we may see you more clearly
and follow you more closely;
for you are our God.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Matthew 17: 1-9

The Transfiguration

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 dazzling white. 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 make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice 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 looked up, 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.'

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Matthew 17: 1-9)

Begin to explore Matthew's account of the transfiguration of Jesus by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- What is the significance of the high mountain?
- What is the significance of Moses and Elijah joining them?
- How does the divine voice change from when it spoke at Jesus' baptism in Mark 1: 11?
- What do you understand by the bright cloud overshadowing them?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Compare Matthew's account with Mark and Luke.

- Mark 9: 2-8
- Luke 9: 28-36

Explore the period of six days in the story of Moses on the mountain.

- Exodus 24: 15-16

Compare this account of the transfiguration with Mark's account of the baptism.

- Mark 1: 9-11

Compare Jesus' insistence on secrecy in

- Matthew 8: 4
- Matthew 12: 15-16

Compare the disciples' response with

- Genesis 17: 3-4
- Ezekiel 1: 28

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Matthew's account of the transfiguration of Jesus by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- The transfiguration of Jesus
- Mountains in the Bible
- Transfiguration of Jesus in Christian art

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Matthew's account of the transfiguration of Jesus is *mountains*. Draw on your experience of mountains. For example:

- When and where have you experienced mountains?
- How do mountains make you feel?
- Why do people connect mountains with religious experience?

What have you learned about mountains?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Matthew's account of the transfiguration of Jesus or by the image of mountains.

- Make a poster about Jesus at the transfiguration.
- Create a collage of images of mountains.
- Create a mural featuring a mountain landscape.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Jesus at the transfiguration or the image of mountains.



EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



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