

FAITH @ HOME

Week of February 23, 2020

Last Sunday after the Epiphany (Transfiguration)

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Matthew 17:1-9

REFLECT: The disciples were surprised when Jesus' face turned bright like the sun and suddenly two prophets called Moses and Elijah appeared. It was also probably a little scary, too, when God said, "Listen to him!" This was a way for God to show them that Jesus was special. But the disciples were afraid. They were so afraid they fell to the ground. Maybe because they were surprised and they had never seen anything like this. Fortunately, Jesus told them, "Get up and do not be afraid."

Jesus reminds us that we do not have to be afraid, even when we see things that are surprising or a little scary. Going to a new place, like a new classroom, or meeting new people can sometimes be a little scary. We also learn new things from new people we meet, our classmates, and new places we visit. The disciples learned that Jesus was very special on the mountain. It was a little scary at first, but God was with them just like God is with us. They don't have to be afraid, and neither do we.

RESPOND: Talk to an adult about times you have been a little afraid. You can draw a picture of those times if you'd like. If you draw a picture, add a picture of God or Jesus to the picture. How does it feel to think of those times you were afraid when you remember that God was with you?

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: JEREMIAH SIERRA



Jeremiah Sierra is currently the communications manager for Cities of Service, a nonprofit that works to change the way local government and residents work together. He has worked for a variety of other nonprofit organizations and Episcopal churches, most recently Trinity Church Wall Street, where he was the managing editor of the quarterly magazine. He has written for *Forward Day by Day* and other publications about faith. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife and three-year-old daughter.

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ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: Matthew 17:1-9

REFLECT: Jesus goes up on the mountain much like Moses did when God called him to receive the Ten Commandments. But unlike Moses, Jesus doesn't go to be in God's presence alone, and he takes two of his followers, James and John, with him. Like everything Jesus does, he knows that in bringing two of disciples along for the journey, they, too, will be transformed by the power and awesomeness that is God. And perhaps most importantly, Jesus reminds the disciples to not be afraid, as God has done to God's people throughout the ages. We are continuously reminded, even today, to not be afraid as we are transformed by the power of God, and we are often reminded that that power, by way of the Holy Spirit, lives and abides within each of us. We are all God-bearers in the world, and in our own transformations, we are called to walk without fear--to keep going as we put our trust in God's goodness and ability to again make things new. In this role, we are Jesus' hands and feet, bringing light and love to all those around us, paying particular attention to those people who need to be loved and nurtured the most.

RESPOND: With your grown-up, go for a walk outside (if the weather allows). If you can, find a nearby hill or mountain (if you live near mountains, that is), and go for a hike a part of the way up. You might want to invite a sibling or friend with you. When you get a way up or to the top, look around you. What sights do you see? Share your thoughts with those who are walking along with you.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: ERIN WOLF



Erin Wolf is a Youth Minister hailing from Little Chute, WI where she lives with her four kids. She serves both All Saints Episcopal in Appleton and the Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac. Her focuses include children & youth, camp & retreats, music, service work, interactive prayer for all ages, and more. You can connect with her via email at ewolf@diofdl.org.

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ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: Matthew 17:1-9

REFLECT: On the mountain, Peter and James were overcome with fully recognizing the presence of God. They were enveloped in the light, and it felt good. I suspect it was warm and felt very safe. They offer to build dwelling places for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. It was a genuine offer to honor God and the prophets. It was probably also a tad bit self-serving. If they constructed dwellings, perhaps they too could stay where they were, in a safe place while they basked in the presence of God.

Do you ever feel like that? Do you ever spend time with God either alone or with others—perhaps at a retreat—and feel such a closeness, such security and love that you don't want to leave? Do you ever think, "I want it to be like this all the time?"

Like the disciples, we too must leave those places and go back down the mountain—go back into the world. But like the disciples those times change us. We see the goodness of Jesus and we are challenged once again to become more and more like him—to take on his likeness, not just for ourselves but for the world.

RESPOND: What attribute of God do you find particularly difficult to emulate? Is it compassion, inclusiveness, generosity, unconditional love, forgiveness, mercy, grace, or something else? Draw a picture of what that attribute looks like or simply write the word on a piece of paper. (Maybe write the word and then outline it in multiple colors until the page is full.) Put the paper somewhere you will see it daily. During Lent, which begins February 26, ask God to help you be changed into God's likeness in this particular way.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: KATHERINE DOYLE



Katherine is the Coordinator for Youth and Young Adult Ministries and the rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Kentucky. She lives in Louisville with her husband and whichever of her four young adult children happen to be home at the time. Katherine's greatest joy is being a mama: first to her own four and then to all the children, youth, and young adults who call her Mama Doyle. She often finds God in the ordinary messiness of everyday life and writes about it on her blog thesixdoyles.blogspot.com.

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ADULT AND ADULT

READ: 2 Peter 1:16-21

REFLECT: The Christian life this side of heaven is headed one direction: becoming more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit is working in us, through us, around us, and for us to complete this work. One of the ways the Spirit does this work is through Scripture. It is important for us to hold fast to the Bible and truth therein. It is God's revelation of Godself to us. It is through God's Word that we know God better and know ourselves and come to understand the difference between the two. We have Scripture and the community of our local church to help us walk through this life. We hold fast to the truth of God's Word because it has proven right, true, and timeless for centuries now. Scripture and community are a means of grace that God has given us in the effort to be transformed into the image of Jesus. Do not neglect these good gifts God has given us, along with other spiritual disciplines such as prayer and fasting. All of these combine with the Holy Spirit to help us reach the end goal: looking, being, and living more like Jesus.

RESPOND: Celebrate the ways in which God has made you more like Jesus. Think of your life as a Christian and how God has transformed you in that time. Do something fun to celebrate.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: CJ QUARTLBAUM



CJ is a writer and speaker from Brooklyn, NY. He spends most of his time hanging with his family, playing with his daughter, playing basketball, and reading. He's passionate about seeing the gospel spread in his city, in Brooklyn as it is in heaven. You can catch up with him on Twitter @CJ_Quartlbaum or at CJQuartlbaum.com

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