



## STORY 70

# Glory Mountain

## MATTHEW 17

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Matthew 17.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

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### THE BIG PICTURE

*Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}*

In the Biggest Story some big things happen on mountains. Do you remember what happened to Noah's Ark? After many days, "the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat" (Gen. 8:4). From there God told Noah to bring his family and all the animals off the ark. Do you remember what happened to Abraham when he took Isaac to Mount Moriah? God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son, and God provided a ram in Isaac's place. Do you remember what happened to Moses on Mount Sinai? He received the Ten Commandments. Do you remember what happened on Mount Carmel? God sent down fire from heaven to consume Elijah's sacrifice. There are other important mountains in the Bible, like Mount Zion (where Jerusalem sits), and Mount Eremos, where Jesus is believed to have preached the Sermon on the Mount. Today's story takes place

**1**  
**Read**

**2**  
**Teach**

on another mountain. It's officially called Mount Tabor, but we'll call it Glory Mountain because of something glorious that happened there. Before I tell you the story, I'll give you one hint. It involves a strange word: *transfigured*. Not *transformed*. Not *Transylvania*. *Transfigured*.

## TELL THE STORY

Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
The Biggest Story  
Bible Storybook



Play The  
Biggest Story  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

**Big Truth**  
Jesus is the  
glorious Son  
of God, who is  
perfectly holy.

Have you ever climbed a big hill? How did you feel when you reached the top? Were you out of breath? One day Jesus took Peter, James, and John on a long hike up a high mountain. We don't know if they were out of breath when they reached the top, but we do know that they saw something awesome. Jesus was *transfigured*! That word means he was changed. But he wasn't transformed from a robot into a semitruck or a caterpillar into a butterfly. Jesus wasn't transformed into another thing. He stayed human; he just showed himself to be who he really was. Peter, James, and John saw Jesus in all his glory. He was human but he was more than just human. "He was transfigured," Matthew writes, "and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light" (Matt. 17:2). Talk about a light show! This was a light show that *showed* Jesus is as pure and glorious as God. The transfiguration showed that Jesus is God's very own Son.

But the light show wasn't over. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, Moses and Elijah appeared and started talking with Jesus. But they didn't look normal either. They also "appeared in glory" (Luke 9:31). Peter and his two friends were seeing a glimpse of what Jesus's forever kingdom would look like. And Peter liked it. Remember, he wanted Jesus to get the crown without the cross. So,

in a moment of confusion, he said, “This is great. I’ll set up a tent for each of you. We can make this last for a while” (see Matt. 17:4). But that was the wrong thing to say. Jesus had just told him how there could be no crown without the cross. No Glory Mountain without Mount Calvary. Peter needed to listen to Jesus. And that’s what led to the third glorious moment. Right after Peter spoke, a thick cloud rolled in. A talking cloud! God the Father himself was speaking. And here’s what he told Peter, James, and John: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him” (Matt. 17:5). The disciples fell on their faces in fear. Jesus “touched them” and said, “Do not be afraid” (see Matt 17:7). When the disciples looked up, everything was back to normal. The “glory” was gone. And Jesus continued his trek to Mount Calvary.

### GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Last lesson we looked at the right answer to Jesus’s all-important question, “Who do you say that I am?” (Matt. 16:15), and we learned that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of the living God. Here, on Glory Mountain, what else do we learn about Jesus? We learn that he is the *glorious* Son of God, who—like God the Father and Spirit—is perfectly holy (like the brightest light in the universe). That’s who Jesus is.

Now think about this. It would be surprising if a good man died for our sins. It would be amazing if a very important person—like a king or queen—would take the punishment that we deserve. It, then, is truly astounding that Jesus—the King of glory—should lay down his life for us and die in our place. Peter, James, and John were confused, afraid, and surely stunned on the day Jesus took them atop the mountain. And while we should be amazed, we should not be fearful because we can take comfort in knowing Jesus died for us on Mount Calvary, a hill outside Jerusalem. He showed his glory to us by dying and rising again. What a glorious King!

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### DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** What important things happened on mountains in the Bible? Whom does Jesus bring on the mountain to learn more about who he is?

3

Engage

**TAKEAWAY:** God uses mountains in the Bible to teach important things about himself.

2. **QUESTION:** What did prophets do? Who were the two greatest prophets in the Old Testament? Why do you think they appeared with Jesus on the mountain? Who was the only prophet left after God spoke?

**TAKEAWAY:** Although Moses and Elijah were great prophets, Jesus is greater because he speaks as God's Son.

3. **QUESTION:** What did God say about Jesus on the mountain? And what did he tell the disciples to do? How do we obey God's command today?

**TAKEAWAY:** God commanded his people to listen to Jesus.

4. **QUESTION:** What happened to Jesus on the mountain? What was the disciples' response? How do you think you would have responded? Why do you think Jesus wanted his disciples to see him transfigured?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus showed his glory at the transfiguration.

**Memory Verse**  
For the LORD  
is a great God,  
and a great King  
above all gods.  
In his hand are  
the depths of the  
earth; the heights  
of the mountains  
are his also.

PSALM 95:3-4

## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10-15 minutes}

K-2nd

### Option 1: Caterpillar Race

*Supply List: none*

Divide children into groups of five or six. Each team chooses a team name and then forms a "caterpillar" by standing in a single file line and placing their hands on the shoulders of the child in front of them. On "Go" the first person in each line takes one step forward. The second person then takes one step and so on until every team member has taken one step. After taking her step, the last person in line yells out the team's name. The first person can then take another step. This process repeats until one team reaches a designated finish line. If a team breaks apart or steps out of turn, they must return to the start and begin again. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butter-

flies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.

### **Option 2: On the Mountaintop**

*Supply List: none*

Have children lie on their backs. When the leader says, "Jesus went up on the mountain," children must jump up to a standing position. The last child to stand is out. Have the leader also yell out silly statements like "Jesus went up on the monkey" or "on the Mickey Mouse." Any child who starts to stand for one of the silly statements is also out. The last child remaining wins. Remind children that when Peter, James, and John saw Jesus in his glory, they fell on their faces in fear. Jesus told them, "Get up, don't be afraid."

3rd–5th

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### **Option 2: Crazy Caterpillar**

*Supply List: plastic toy hoops*

*Before Class: Set an odd number of hoops around the room.*

Divide children into two teams. Have each team form a "caterpillar" by lining up shoulder-to-shoulder and holding hands. On "Go" each team runs to a plastic toy hoop with hands joined. The first person picks up the hoop with her free hand and puts it over her head. The team must then work together to move the hoop down the line without letting go of each other's hands. When the hoop gets to the last person, he holds the hoop and yells "Butterfly!" Teams continue to collect hoops until they are all collected. If hands separate at any point, the

team must start over with the hoop they are working on. The team that collects the most hoops wins. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butterflies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Handprint Butterflies

*Supply List: scissors, pencils, construction paper, glue, large craft sticks, permanent markers, googly eyes*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Set supplies on tables. Have children use a pencil to trace their hands onto construction paper (with help, if needed). Children then cut out the hands and glue them to a craft stick so the palms overlap and the fingers point outward like wings. Have children add googly eyes to the craft stick and draw in a mouth with permanent markers. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butterflies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.

### Option 2: Egg Carton Caterpillars

*Supply List: cardboard egg cartons, pipe cleaners, plastic tablecloths, tempera paints, paper plates, paintbrushes, cups of water, glue, googly eyes*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut egg cartons into three-egg strips (one per child). Poke two holes at the top of the strips. Cut pipe cleaners in half. Cover tables with plastic tablecloths. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child an egg cup strip. Set supplies on tables, with paints on paper plates. Have children flip their strip so the outside of the carton is facing up. Children then insert the pipe cleaners into the premade holes and bend them

to make antennae. Have them glue googly eyes under the antennae and then paint their caterpillars. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butterflies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Glory Mountain

*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, yarn (white, gray, brown, yellow, and orange), glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a simple mountain scene: a large triangle-shaped mountain, a circle for a sun, and the Memory Verse (one per child). Cut random lengths of yarn. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a mountain scene. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children glue white, gray, and brown yarn pieces to fill in their mountains, and yellow and orange yarn pieces to fill in their suns.

### Option 2: Coffee Filter Butterfly

*Supply List: coffee filters, clothespins, watercolor paints, cups of water, paintbrushes, tiny googly eyes, glue, pipe cleaners*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut pipe cleaners in half. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a coffee filter and clothespin. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children fold their coffee filter in a tight accordion fold and secure in the middle with a clothespin. Have them use paintbrushes to drip different colors of paint onto their coffee filter until it is completely covered. They then carefully open and fan out the two sides of the coffee filter, keeping the clothespin in place. Next, the children can glue two googly eyes to the clothespin, bend a pipe cleaner, and glue it above the eyes to make antennae. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butterflies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.