

One truth shared: Jesus gives us glory through his cross.

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Matthew 17:1-9

The Glory of the Lord

“I don’t wanna leave,” Lauren whispered. “We can’t leave. I just wanna stay here forever.”

Lauren was standing on a mountaintop overlooking the beach, the ocean, and a picture-perfect sunset. Tears started welling up in Lauren’s eyes as she thought about going down that mountain leaving. This glorious sunset was the perfect ending to a perfect vacation. Her family’s first time in Hawaii. A week of no homework and no worries. She even got to bring along her bestie Ellie for the trip. “I don’t wanna leave either,” Ellie said. “I don’t wanna go back to *that*.”

You know what *that* is, don’t you? That non-stop pile of assignments which never gets smaller. That relationship drama. That worrying about what you’re doing and where you’re going in the future. That fighting with parents. That aching pain from heartbreak. That devastation when disaster or death strike.

No wonder Lauren and Ellie wanted to stay in that glorious Hawaiian moment on the mountain. Who wants to worry? Who wants to ache? Who wants to suffer?

Maybe it’s not so hard to understand why Peter said what he did on the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus had been shining with the glory of the Lord and as bright as the sun. Moses and Elijah, heroes of faith, had appeared. And all the worries and problems of life seemed to be left down below. Who would want to leave that glorious moment? Who would want to go back down the mountain to all the pains and problems, suffering and sadness of everyday life? “Lord, it is good for us to be here.” No kidding!

But while it surely was good to be there, Peter’s comment was short-sighted and missing the point. Jesus didn’t come to give a momentary flash of glory on the Mount of Transfiguration—he came to win eternal glory on the mount called Calvary. Peter’s comment, though understandable, had a rather worldly focus to it. He was attracted to the glory here, in that moment, not in the greater glory that was yet to come. Peter forgot that before the glory comes the cross.

We often do the same with Jesus. We spend a lot of time and effort looking for glory here in this world. We want those glorious sunset moments of endless blessings all the time. “Lord, it’s good to be here,” we are so quick to think. But then

when we suffer, when we get sick, when we have troubles, we become angry or frustrated. We doubt or question God. “Jesus, why can’t we stay here on this mountain?”

God forgive our short-sighted, misfocused hearts! Jesus did not come to give us worldly moments of glory here. Jesus came to give us eternal glory in heaven. The Son, whom the Father loved so dearly, needed to go to the cross so that we could be dearly loved children with whom the Father is so pleased. First came the cross of Christ, so that we can later see the glory of Christ in heaven.

So also in everyday life, first must come the cross. No cross, no Christian. Just as Jesus needed to go down that mount so he could go to the cross on Calvary, so now we must first take up the cross of following Christ as we suffer in a sin-filled world. But this “mount” of suffering is not the end for us. Someday soon, Jesus will take us home to Mount Zion, our heavenly dwelling, where we will see Jesus face to face in all his glory and for all eternity.

Dear teen, take heart! First comes the cross, then comes the glory. May the Savior who overcame the cross with his victory strengthen you each day until that joyful day when you will see his glory and never leave.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to keep my eyes on you and your cross. Because you suffered on the cross on Mount Calvary, I will receive glory on Mount Zion in heaven. Give me strength to endure suffering now until the day you call me home to glory in heaven. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

Year A – Transfiguration

The Glory of the Lord

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The Glory of the Lord

***Starting the Discussion:** This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

- Share the most glorious thing you have seen or experienced that made you not want to ever leave. What makes it so difficult to leave those “glorious” moments?
- It is easy to get frustrated or angry with God when life is less than glorious. What might we think is the reason? *(Answer: God must not want me to be happy.)*
- Share a moment from this past week when you felt that way.

***Connecting:** This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they’ve looked at it.*

It’s never easy to leave a place that gives you happiness and peace. Today, let’s understand “the big picture”—a mountain-top experience that teaches this truth: first the cross, then the glory.

Digging In: Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.

- If you were Peter, James, or John, how would you have felt to see Jesus shining in glory on that mountain? Why?
- What was the other time that the Father spoke from heaven, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased”? What is the connection between these two events?
- This event was clearly significant for so many reasons. Read 2 Peter 1:16-21 and explain how Peter uses this event to enhance our trust in God’s Word.

Conclusion: Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the “connecting question” above.

- Anticipate that you will have a moment of “suffering” this week. What did you learn from today’s Bible study that you want to remember in that moment?
- Instead of resenting suffering, what might you replace it with?