



Jesus Is Transfigured

Matthew 17:1–8



LESSON GOAL

Students will prepare their hearts for the coming of the Son of Man.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- The disciples saw the “Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (Matt. 16:28).
- The events at Jesus’ transfiguration proved that He is God.
- God revealed that Jesus is His Son and should be obeyed.

KEY VERSE

“...and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.”
—Matthew 17:2

APPLICATION

- Please Jesus with your every action.
- Listen to Jesus through God’s Word.
- Look forward to the coming of the Son of Man.

NEXT WEEK

Jesus Confronts the Rich Young Ruler
Matthew 19:16–26

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



4 Age Group

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to...

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are...

- _____
- _____
- _____

Materials Needed:

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point them to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

In Matthew 16, Jesus revealed many surprising truths to the disciples about the coming of the Messiah. Following Peter’s confession of Jesus as the “Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16), Jesus told the disciples that He was going to die and rise again on the third day (16:21). Because the death of the Messiah did not fit into his plans, Peter told Jesus He was wrong (16:22). Jesus rebuked Peter for being man-centered in his thinking. He then told His disciples that, contrary to their expectations, the only way they could be His disciples was by dying to themselves, picking up their crosses, and following Him (16:24). Those who followed Christ would be rewarded when the “Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father” (16:27). The disciples must have been surprised and discouraged by Jesus’ revealing that He would die, that His disciples must die to themselves daily, and that their reward would wait until Jesus returned. Their expectations for the Messiah had been much different from what God had planned.

Jesus finished the succession of surprising truths by finishing with one more revelation. Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (Matthew 16:28). Jesus confirmed the previous statement of His future glorious return by telling that some of His disciples would see the Son of Man in His majestic splendor before they died. After six days had passed, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a mountain where they saw Jesus transfigured, saw the prophets Moses and Elijah, and heard the voice of God the Father. Although the disciples weren’t permitted to speak about what they saw and heard until after Jesus’ resurrection, the events surrounding the transfiguration were dramatic testimony that Jesus, the Son of Man, was the Messiah who was coming to judge His enemies and reward His disciples.

The Testimony of the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–2)

Six days after Jesus had promised His disciples that some of them would see Him “coming in His kingdom” (16:28), Jesus took Peter, James and John up a mountain to be alone with Him while He prayed (Luke 9:28). (The exact mountain Jesus went up is unknown.) Of all the disciples, Jesus was closest with this group of three. The Gospel of Luke records that while Jesus prayed, the disciples “were heavy with sleep” (9:32.) When they awoke, the disciples saw something incredible: Jesus had been transfigured (17:2)! Just as Jesus had promised, the disciples saw “the Son of Man in His kingdom” (16:28).

Jesus’ appearance was remarkable: “His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light” (Matt. 17:2). Unlike Moses, whose face only reflected God’s glory on Mt. Sinai, Jesus’ face shone with His own glory. Jesus had

many times revealed His glory through miracles but He had never so fully revealed His glory as the Son of God. The disciples were deeply affected by the event. Peter would later write of being the “eyewitness of His majesty” when Jesus “received from God the Father honor and glory” (2 Peter 1:16–17), and John wrote in the beginning of his gospel that “we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The glory of the Son of God was so great that even His clothes were transformed. Mark wrote, “His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them” (9:3). The revealed glory of Christ was powerful proof that Jesus was the Son of Man.

The Testimony of the Prophets (Matt. 17:3–4)

When Peter, James and John awoke, they not only experienced the glory of Christ but also saw Moses and Elijah talking to Jesus (Luke 9:32; Matt. 17:3; Mark 9:4). Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about “His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31). The Law and the Prophets, the two broad divisions of the Old Testament, were embodied in the persons of Moses, the man chosen by God to write His Law, and Elijah, the man chosen by God to defend His Law. The presence of Moses and Elijah was a testimony not only to the Son’s identity but also to the Son’s announcement that He must die. Instead of trying to prevent Jesus’ suffering as rash Peter had done, Moses and Elijah accepted the place in God’s plan for the death of God’s Son. During their earthly lives, both of these Old Testament prophets had longed for intimacy with God and for the reconciliation of Israel. They realized that only through the death of God’s Son could the Old Testament be fulfilled. Their presence vividly proclaimed that the Law and the Prophets, all of Old Testament Scripture, pointed to Christ.

The presence of the glorified Jesus as well as Moses and Elijah proved too much for the disciples. The disciples “were greatly afraid” and “did not know what to say” (Mark 9:6). When he saw Moses and Elijah leaving (Luke 9:33), Peter impulsively asked Jesus for permission to build three tabernacles (temporary dwelling structures), one for Jesus, one for Elijah, and one for Moses (Matt. 17:4). Although Peter was not really aware of what he was saying, he began his request with “Master, it is good for us to be here” (Luke 9:33). Whether Peter desired to prevent Moses and Elijah from leaving because he wanted to spend time with them, or to escape the suffering waiting for Jesus and His disciples, Peter was perfectly willing for God’s plan to be put on hiatus. Because Peter had yet to appreciate the incomparable beauty of Christ, Peter placed Moses and Elijah on equal footing with the Son of God. The glorious Son of God was not enough to satisfy Peter.

The Testimony of God Himself (Matt. 17:5–8)

Before Peter had finished speaking, “a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’” (Matt. 17:5). The men on the mountain were engulfed in the glory of God manifested as a cloud. God’s glory had been previously revealed as a cloud when God led Israel in the wilderness, indwelt both the Tabernacle and the Temple, and appeared to Isaiah at His commissioning. When they entered the cloud, the disciples were afraid (Luke 9:34). Their fear only grew when they heard God’s voice. The disciples then “fell on their faces and were greatly afraid” (Matt. 17:6). Peter had not recognized God’s glory in the face of the Son, but God’s glory in the cloud and voice was unmistakable. The disciples were fearful as they realized how holy God was and how unholy they were.

The Father testified to four truths about Jesus. When He called Jesus His Son, the Father testified to the Son’s divine relationship with the Father (Matt. 17:5).

Although there are three person in the Godhead, the Father, Son, and Spirit are one God in being. The Father also declared the status of the Son's relationship with the Father. The Father called His Son "beloved." For all eternity and through all eternity, the Son will enjoy the Father's love. The third truth testified by the Father was that Jesus had been well-pleasing. The Son had perfectly obeyed the Father (Matt. 17:5). Approximately two and a half years had passed since Jesus' baptism, and Jesus had still perfectly pleased the Father, despite unending rejection and opposition (Matt. 3:17). The Father lastly testified to the Son's authority. The Father commanded the disciples to hear the Son. Jesus must take the highest place of authority in the disciples' lives regardless of what He required from them. They must submit to His call for them to deny themselves, pick up their crosses, and follow Him. They also must submit to the revelation that He was going to suffer, be killed, and rise again. The disciples often possessed little faith and had been hard-hearted. The Father's command required the disciples submit to Christ as they would God Himself.

Jesus graciously calmed the disciples who were still hiding from the glory of God. Jesus "came and touched them and said, 'Arise, and do not be afraid'" (Matt. 17:7). When the disciples obeyed Jesus, they looked up and saw only Him (17:8). Moses and Elijah had returned to heaven, and the glory of God had departed.

Conclusion

Just as Jesus had promised, Peter, James, and John had indeed seen the "Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (16:28). The testimony of the transfiguration, of Moses and Elijah, and of the Father's voice were all powerful proofs that the Son of Man would indeed "come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to His works" (Matt. 16:27). When the Son returns, "all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30). Knowing that Jesus will come with rewards and punishment must cause us to examine our lives and make sure that we are ready for the coming of the Son of Man.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

What did Jesus ask His disciples?

Jesus asked them, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" (16:13).

Who did some people think that Jesus was?

Some people believed He was John the Baptist. Others believed that Jesus was a former prophet, like Elijah or Jeremiah that had come back to life.

What did God reveal to Peter?

Peter said to Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16:16). God the Father had revealed to him the truth about Jesus' identity.

What did Peter say when Jesus said that He would die?

Peter refused to listen to what Jesus had to say and instead corrected Him. Peter said, "this shall never happen to You!"

How did Jesus answer Peter?

Jesus said, "Get behind me Satan." Peter did not have God's plan in mind but rather his own.

What did Jesus say that people who want to follow Him must do?

If any one wanted to follow Jesus as His disciple, Jesus said that they would have to follow His example by denying themselves, taking up their crosses and follow Him.



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Transfiguration

A transfiguration is a change in form. In the case of Jesus, He supernaturally changed from His human form to His godly form as Lord and Savior. This concept may be difficult for young children to understand but can be explained by discussing disguises. When someone wears a disguise it hides who that person is. Have a person come in with some type of disguise and explain that this disguise is hiding a person's identity. When a person takes off the disguise you can see what he really looks like. In today's lesson Jesus will be transfigured. His body was like a disguise that hid His glory as God.



Moses and Elijah

Review with the children who Moses and Elijah were. Begin the class by coloring the pictures from Moses or Elijah lessons. Ask the children what they remember about the two prophets. Either the teacher or children can act out an event from either of the two prophets' lives and the other students can guess what event is being acted out. Ask the children what these prophets would have liked to talk to Jesus about if they were alive when He was on the earth. Tell the children that in today's lesson they are going to get to find out what Moses and Elijah were talking about.



Understanding the Transfiguration

A classic example of transfiguration is the progression from caterpillar to butterfly. Bring in pictures to the class of each stage of a butterfly's transformation: caterpillar, cocoon, and butterfly. Perhaps a video of metamorphosis can be acquired from a local library to show the class. Young children will be fascinated to learn about the wonders of God's creation. Ask the children if Jesus ever changed. Discuss how God the Son added on humanity when He became a man. Describe how He grew from infancy to manhood. Then explain how He was transformed and showed His glory to His disciples at the transfiguration.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.” —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Jesus had given the disciples several opportunities to see that He was, indeed, the Son of God. After seeing the many miracles Jesus performed, and sitting under Jesus teaching for some time, they understood that Jesus was the Messiah. However, they were still learning His purpose for coming to earth. They wanted Jesus to be their earthly king so that He would make their nation great. That was not Jesus’ plan though. He had told them that He would suffer under the hands of the religious leaders of Israel, that they would eventually kill Him, but that He would arise from the dead three days later. They must have been disappointed to learn that He would not be the king that they expected.

Jesus also revealed something else of importance. He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there are some here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom” (16:28). Some of them would actually see Jesus in His glorious kingdom before they died! Six days later, that very thing happened. Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a mountain to be alone with Him while He prayed. While Jesus prayed, the disciples grew very tired and fell asleep. When they awoke, they saw something amazing, like nothing they had ever seen before. Jesus was standing before them shining with the glory of God. The Book of Matthew says that “His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light”(17:2). The Book of Mark says that “His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them” (Mark 9:3) What happened here was called the transfiguration.

As if that was not amazing enough, beside Jesus stood Moses and Elijah who came from heaven to talk with Him. The disciples were overwhelmed by what they saw. They were so scared that they could not speak. Peter finally spoke and asked Jesus for permission to build three tabernacles, one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus, so that they would have a place to stay. But before Peter had finished speaking, a bright cloud came over them, and suddenly a voice came from the cloud and said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, Hear Him!” (17:5). What God said was very important. God reminded them that Jesus is His Son, that He loved His Son, that He was pleased with His Son’s perfect obedience. God told the disciples to hear the Son.

The disciples knew that it was God speaking, and they fell down on their faces and were very afraid. Jesus came to the disciples and comforted them, saying, “Arise, and do not be afraid” (17:7). When they looked up, they saw only Jesus; Moses and Elijah had returned to heaven and the glory of God had departed.

Just as Jesus had promised, Peter, James, and John truly saw the “Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (16:28).



Lesson Questions

Where did Jesus take the disciples?
Jesus took them to the top of a mountain.

Who did Jesus take with Him?
Jesus took three disciples and they were Peter, James and John.

What happened when they got to the top of the mountain?
When they arrived on the mountain Jesus was transfigured.

What does it mean to be transfigured?
Jesus is God. For just a moment the disciples saw Jesus' glory as God. It was very bright, like the sun.

Who did the disciples see with Jesus on the mountain?
The disciples saw Elijah and Moses with Jesus.

What did the disciples hear God the Father say?
A cloud came down onto them and they heard God's voice from heaven. God said that Jesus is His Son and that they should listen to Him.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



Falsely Accused

Help the children understand the importance of the testimony the three disciples received concerning Jesus' identity. Tell a story with puppets about two children who are in a grocery store when one of them gets accused by the store manager of breaking something. While the one child can testify that the other child did not do anything, the store manager will not believe it. But when several adults came and testified to the boy's innocence, the store manager had no choice but to admit he was wrong. Tell the children that in today's lesson they are going to hear several testimonies about who Jesus is. Tell them to listen closely for them.

Praise and Worship

Fairest Lord Jesus

Holy, Holy, Holy

We Declare Your Majesty

Jesus, Name Above All Names

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



The Son of a King

A prince is often a very powerful and wealthy person. Much of this wealth and power comes from being the son of a king. Because a prince is the king's son, he often receives the riches of his father's kingdom and authority over all the land. In the same way, Jesus being God's Son meant a great deal. As His Son, Jesus was able to enjoy and possess all that God had. He was also given all the same power and authority that God possessed. In today's lesson God confirmed that Jesus is indeed the Messiah by calling Him His own Son. God's Son had come to the earth with all power and was sent by the Father to offer salvation to all those who would believe in His name. To believe in His name is to believe that Jesus is the one and only Son of God and that He alone can take away sin.



The Cloud and Transfiguration

Using the coloring sheet of the transfiguration, instruct students to color and decorate the cloud that descended during the transfiguration with cotton balls. Small gold or silver streamers could also be glued or a highlighter used on the coloring sheet to represent the light that came from the transfigured Christ.



"Do You Believe?"

Materials: copies of "Do You Believe" craft pages, scissors, glue crayons

Directions. Have students cut out both crosses and glue them back to back. Next have them cut out the eye, ear, and mouth shapes. Have them glue the shapes to the appropriate part of the cross. Fold the cross on the dotted lines in the numbered order.

Coloring Pages

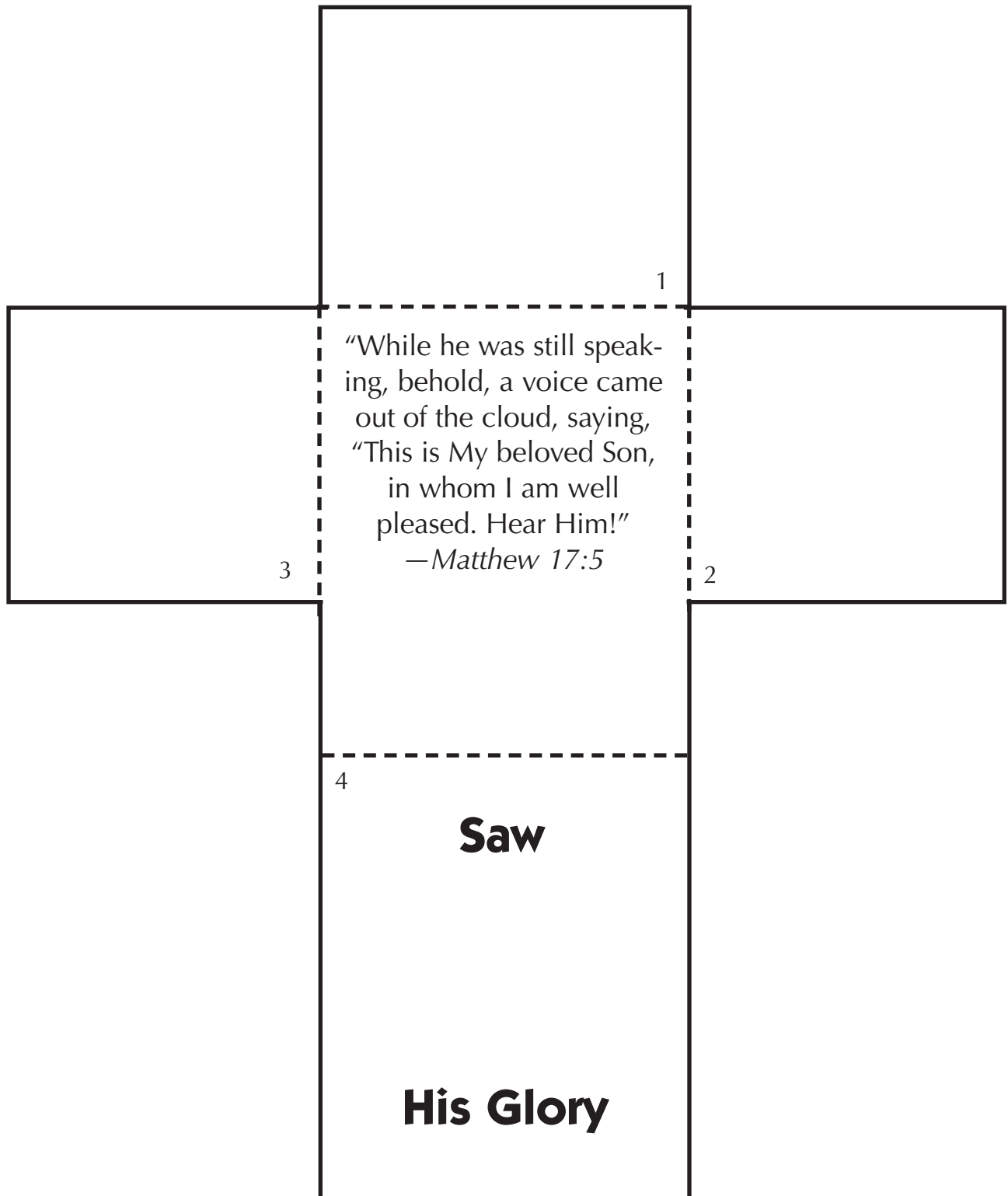
Give each child a copy of the coloring pages at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



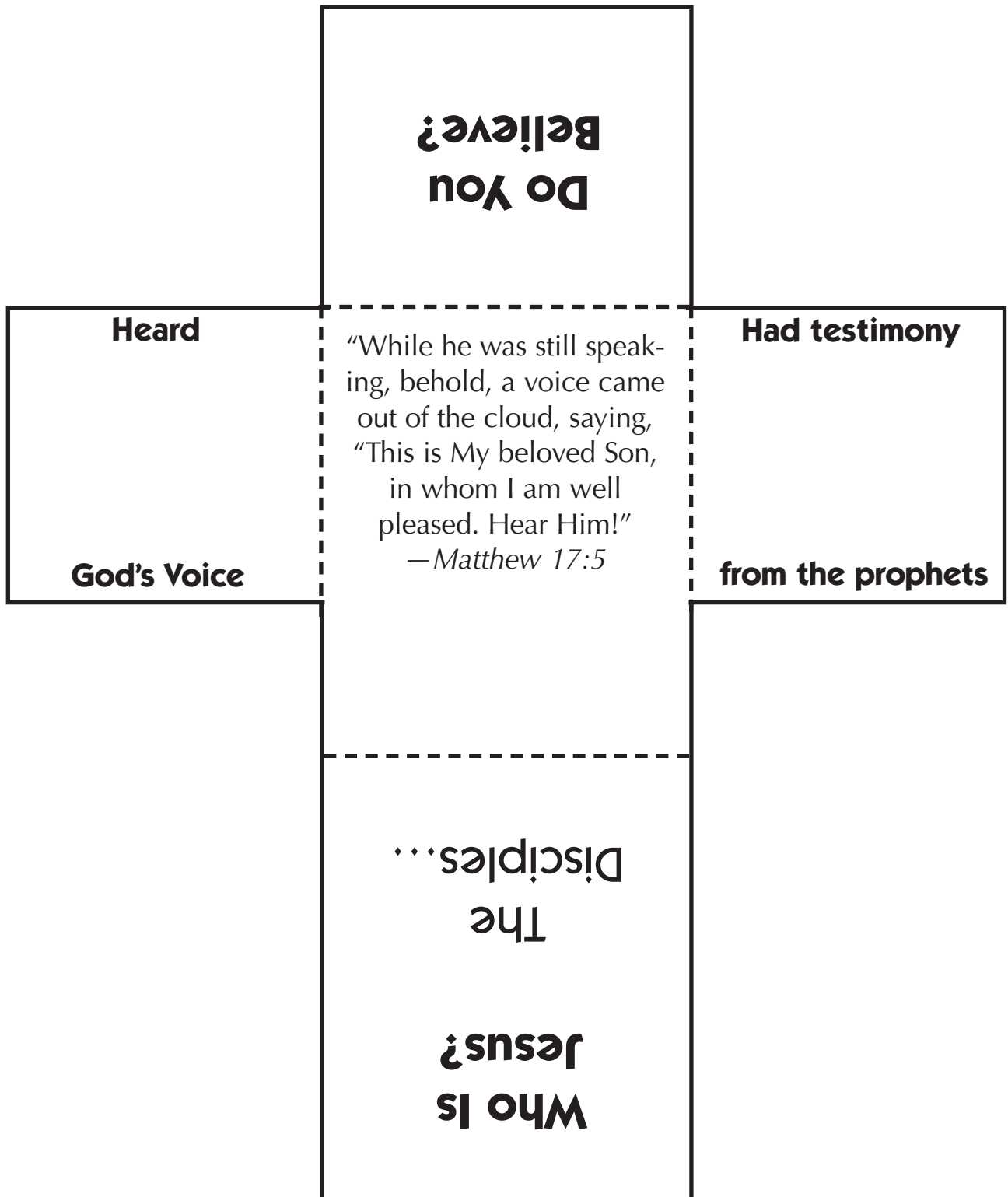
MEMORY VERSE

"...and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light." —Matthew 17:2

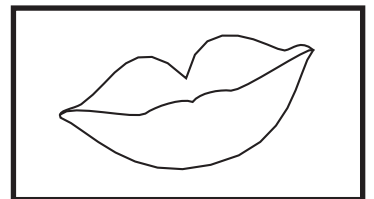
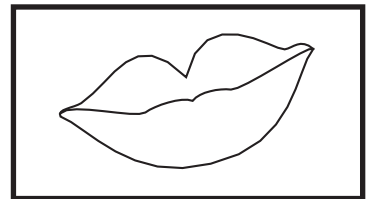
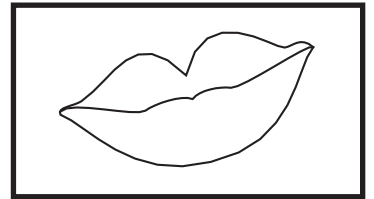
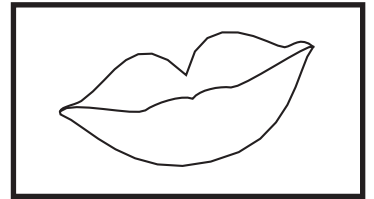
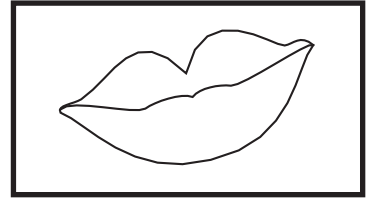
Do You Believe?



Do You Believe?



Do You Believe?





“And He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.” —Matthew 17:2–3



**“But Jesus came and touched them and said, ‘Arise, and do not be afraid.’
When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”**

—Matthew 17:7–8

