**JOURNEYING TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Session 4 of 4

# Jesus is glorious

### MEETING AIM

To explore the story of the transfiguration and see Jesus in his full glory.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 17:1-13

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your particular situation.

After Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus begins to talk in ways that disturb and puzzle his disciples – especially Peter, who gets short shrift for asserting that he won’t let Jesus die! Jesus begins to talk about his glory and the way he’ll come into his kingdom.

At the beginning of chapter 17, we see Jesus on the top a mountain with his three closest disciples – Peter, James and John. While there, a dramatic change comes over him and two ancient heroes of the faith show up too. Peter wants to stay here in this moment and suggests putting up some tents, but God the Father interrupts and declares who Jesus is – the Son of God. As they come down the mountain, Jesus begins to explain things in a way that starts to make things clearer for the disciples.

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### GETTING STARTED – 5 mins

Welcome the young people with refreshments. If you want to use a conversation starter, try: What’s the most surprising or incredible thing you’ve ever seen happen in real life?

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** postcard-sized pieces of card; felt-tip pens

Ask everyone to draw a picture of Jesus. They can work in pairs if they prefer. After a few minutes, stop and ask people to share their pictures with the group. Why have they chosen to depict Jesus this way? Each person should hold on to their picture as they’ll need it later in the session.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** Bibles; smartphones; suitable props

Begin by reading today’s passage together and then challenge the group to make a film version, using their phones. Depending on the size of the group, you can split into as many groups as you like for this activity. Perhaps provide suitable dressing-up clothes – dressing gowns, tea towels, belts, white sheets etc. Ask the group to think about how they’ll show Jesus’ transfiguration – a quick change of clothes or a special effect on their phone? It’s probably a good idea to say that the finished video mustn’t be any longer than a minute or two, otherwise you might get some feature-length epics! If you can, show the finished video(s).

Bear in mind that you will need to have permission from parents or guardians to film the young people. Not all young people will want to or be allowed to be filmed, so ensure that these young people have roles that aren’t in front of the camera. Also, you will need to tell the group not to upload these videos to any social media channels or share them widely in any other way.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Chat about the story using some of these questions. These are intended to be a starter – let the young people guide the conversation (providing you don’t go off on too many tangents!):

* How might Peter, James and John have felt, seeing Jesus changed in this way? Would it have been frightening or exciting?
* Why do Moses and Elijah show up?
* What is behind Peter’s thought process of wanting to put up tents?
* Why does God speak from the clouds?
* What does this story show us about who Jesus is?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE – 10 mins

**You will need:** the pictures from ‘Intro activity’; postcard-sized pieces of tracing paper or cellophane; sticky tape; permanent markers or glass-paint pens; glitter pens

Give each person a piece of tracing paper or cellophane. Put it over their picture from the beginning and use a piece of sticky tape along one side or the top to hinge the original picture and cellophane or tracing paper together so they open like a book or greetings card.

Decorate the new piece of paper or cellophane to add extra colour or detail that will show the transfiguration happening on top of their original image. If you are using tracing paper, you can just use coloured pens and glitter. If you are using cellophane, you’ll need permanent pens or glass paint pens. You might choose to add some words to the new piece too. You’ll now be able to show before and after pictures of the transfiguration in today’s story.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** transfigured Jesus pictures from ‘Creative response’

Ask everyone to find a comfortable place to lie down and close their eyes if it feels safe to do so. They could use their pictures of the transfigured Jesus from ‘Creative response’ as a stimulus, if they wish. Read the following meditation, leaving pauses for the group to respond silently:

Imagine you are with Jesus on the top of a mountain. Can you draw a picture in your mind of what it’s like up there? What can you see? What can you hear? What does it feel like to be so far above the world? What does Jesus look like? Can you picture him in your mind?

Perhaps you would like to have a conversation with Jesus, while you are on this mountaintop. Jesus is interested in anything you have to say. What will you talk to him about? Things you are worried about? Excited about? Sad about?

Suddenly, everything changes. Jesus looks different – shiny and glorious. Can you paint a picture of this in your mind too? How does it feel to be with this Jesus? What might you say to Jesus now? Does it feel different to be talking to a Jesus like this?

We talk about worshipping Jesus. What might it be like to worship this glorious Jesus on this mountaintop? What would you do or say?

Jesus is changing back to how he was at the beginning of this time. Together you walk down the mountain. What questions do you have for Jesus on the way down the mountain?

What do you think Jesus would say in answer to your questions?

When you are ready, wriggle your fingers and toes, take a stretch, open your eyes and come back into the room.

**JENNY CHEUNG**

is a mum to teenagers, church planter and choir-nut! She pioneers The Voice Project Scotland – a missional expression inviting young people and their families to find their voices and sing together with others.