

FAITH @ HOME

Week of March 3

Last Sunday after the Epiphany

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Luke 9:28-36

REFLECT: This is a story full of fantastic imagery. We hear that Jesus' clothes turn dazzling white. Men appear out of nowhere. Glory is revealed to Peter and John and James. Emotions are flying: wonder, amazement, terror, and even confusion. Embrace all of the imaginative wonder of this story with your children. Dig out white sheets and cardboard boxes to theatrically perform this story. Draw pictures of this event on the mountain top. Look up words in the dictionary that are new or interesting. Talk about what it must have been like for Jesus, for Peter and his companions, and even for Moses and Elijah.

RESPOND: If you are able to, take a walk or go on a hike. Find the biggest hill, or "mountain," your little one's legs (or your legs) can handle. Climb to the top just like Peter and John and James. On the top of the "mountain," look at the clouds that overshadow you. Maybe it even feels like you are inside a cloud, if it is foggy. If you are unable to take a walk or hike, find photos to look at that were taken at the top of a mountain. Consider that people have thought that you had to be way up high to get close to God. Pray together that you and your child will always feel close to God even when you are not so very high up.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: ELSA ANDERS COOK



Elsa Anders Cook is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ who has served churches in New York, Maine, Washington and Pennsylvania. She volunteers at church now while supporting her husband in his service as a Major in the United States Army. Together, they have a toddler and a baby on the way. She blogs at cookingwithelsa.org.

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ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: Luke 9:28-36

REFLECT: You might recall that we are in the season after the Epiphany, and this is the last day of that season. Epiphany in the church is a time of revealing. Each Sunday in this season Jesus has showed us, or revealed to us, something about who he is – his nature. And today is the culmination of that revealing, when he reveals to us that he is indeed human, a brother and friend, but he also affirms and reveals that he is God. While he is praying with Peter, John, and James, Jesus is transfigured before them. His face and clothes are changed right in front of them, and Moses and Elijah, who have died and live with God, show up and speak with Jesus, revealing his divinity, or his Godly nature. This is the moment when followers of Jesus come to know that the one they love, trust, and believe in, is truly God.

And all of this happened on a mountaintop, which is why sometimes people say to each other that they had a “mountaintop” experience. But mountaintop experiences don’t have to happen on mountains. They can happen in church, when we are by ourselves, or anytime God wants to speak to us or show us something important. The timing of Jesus’ transfiguration in front of Peter, John, and James, is significant, and mountaintop experiences usually are. No matter where they happen, they happen at a certain point in time when we most need them. In this case, Jesus is preparing to endure a challenging time, which in church we remember though the season of Lent. Peter, John, and James are going to need to hold onto and remember the transfiguration, their mountaintop experience, for times when it is hard to see and believe that Jesus is God. And we need to hold onto and remember our mountaintop experiences, because they make us stronger and faithful when it is not easy to be.

RESPOND: Draw and color a mountain, or find a picture of a mountain, and tape it somewhere that you will see it regularly. This can be on a bathroom mirror, on your nightstand if you have one, or taped to any of your school supplies. When you see it, remember that Jesus has always appeared to those that follow him, and will always appear when we need him.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: APRIL CABALLERO



April is a young-ish adult with a passion for curating relevant and meaningful experiences of Christ through liturgy and creative expression. April is the Executive Assistant for the Office of the Bishop at the Diocese of Olympia, serving the Episcopal Church in Western Washington state from the foothills of the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

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ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: Luke 9:28-36

REFLECT: This week's reading from Luke tells the story of Jesus' transfiguration. In the story, Peter, James, and John go "up a mountain" with Jesus and witness a major transformation. This transformation brings the disciples into a state of awe and wonder, and they don't know how to respond. In this "mountaintop experience," the disciples see the glory of God in front of their very eyes. We, too, have experiences in our faith journeys that show us the glory of God and transform us, bringing us closer to the divine. Many times, these experiences happen through the expression of the church (i.e. youth group, retreats, a mission trip, etc.) However, God's glory can be revealed to us through other experiences we have in our everyday lives.

RESPOND: Find a notebook or diary (or even a few sheets of paper stapled together) that can be used as a journal. Each day this week, write or journal about a way in which God's glory has been revealed to you. It could be through an interaction with another person, through something you experienced in a church community, or in another way. Each night, share with each other what you wrote in your journal. If you want to challenge yourself, see if you can keep up this practice every day during Lent!

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: VICTORIA HOPPES



Victoria Hoppes is the Camp Director at Waycross Camp and Conference Center and the Youth Ministry Coordinator for the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis. She has ministry experience with youth, family, and camping programs at both the parish and diocesan levels. She holds degrees from Texas Lutheran University and Luther Seminary. She also holds a certificate in Youth and Family Ministry from Forma's Faith Formation Academy. You can follow Victoria on her website, www.ministryincontext.com, or on social media (@vlhoppes).

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ADULT AND ADULT

READ: Exodus 34:29-35

REFLECT: Today's reading from Exodus summarizes Moses' encounter with God in the book of Exodus. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush. Moses saw the burning bush and approached it, the Lord spoke to him saying, "I have surely seen the mistreatment of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to rescue them. Come now, I will send you to Egypt." What a sight that must have been for Moses. Imagine Moses's surprise when he heard a voice speaking to him from the burning bush. And imagine his relief when God told Moses that God would rescue the people. I'm sure Moses was excited until God told Moses to return to Egypt. God is still speaking to people, giving them instructions. And people are still telling God to use somebody else. But God desires to use you and me. God wants to use regular people to do great things for God's kingdom. Are we willing to be used? Are we ready to go where God tells us to go? Are we willing to say what God tells us to say? We know how Moses's story ends. He leads God's people to the Promised Land but isn't allowed to enter in himself. There are people God wants us to lead to the Lord. We must be obedient to God's voice and do what God wants us to do.

RESPOND: Has the Lord given you instructions that you've been slow to heed? Do you have a hard time believing God wants to use you? Pray and ask the Lord to strengthen you for the works God prepared for you to walk in (see Ephesians 2:10).

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: ARETHA L. GRANT



Aretha Grant serves her local church as a Bible teacher and elder. She loves writing and is the author of *Overcomer: 25 Keys to Walking Victoriously*. Aretha resides in Hagerstown, MD with her husband and two youngest children. You can read Aretha's blog at www.arethagrants.com.

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