

The Transfiguration

KEY VERSE

Matthew 16:16



Lesson Overview (TEACHER)

TRANSITION

In Lesson 9, Jesus used parables to reveal truths about the kingdom, salvation, and judgment, while calling hearers to genuine faith. Lesson 11 shifts to the Gospel writers gathering testimonies from angels, magi, disciples, Samaritans, Martha, Peter, God the Father, and even a Roman centurion who unmistakably declared Jesus' identity.

CENTRAL TRUTH

Believers recognize Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 2:1–2; 9:27; 16:1–17; 17:1–8; 18:35–39; Mark 9:2–13; Luke 2:10–14; 9:28–36; John 1:29–34, 43–51; 4:19–30; 7:25–27, 40–49; 11:27

SPOTLIGHT ON THE GOSPEL

From His birth to His death, witnesses proclaimed Jesus as King, Lord, the Lamb of God, the Savior, and the Son of God. Peter's confession captures the truth: He is the Christ. Only by trusting in Him, who died for our sins and rose again, can we be forgiven and receive eternal life. Believe in Jesus today as your Savior and Lord!

Family Devotional (PARENT)

This section explains what the Family Devotional covers for parents to use with their children each day of the week. Each devotional reinforces the lesson taught in Sunday School.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Day 1 **The Transfiguration** (Sunday School review)
Matthew 2:1–2; 9:27; 16:1–17; 17:1–8; 18:35–39; *Mark 9:2–13; Luke 2:10–14; 9:28–36; John 1:29–34, 43–51; 4:19–30; 7:25–27, 40–49; 11:27*

Day 2 **The Magi Confess Christ**
Matthew 2:1–2; Luke 2:10–14

Day 3 **John the Baptist's and Jesus' First Disciples**
John 1:29–34, 43–51

Day 4 **The Woman at the Well**
John 4:19–30; *7:25–27, 40–49*

Day 5 **Martha Confesses Jesus Is the Christ**
Matthew 9:27; 18:35–39; *John 11:27*

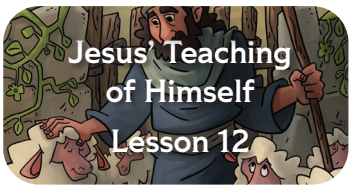
Day 6 **Peter's Confession**
Matthew 16:1–17

Day 7 **Jesus' Transfiguration**
Matthew 17:1–8; *Mark 9:2–13; Luke 9:28–36; 2 Peter 1:16–18*

LAST WEEK



NEXT WEEK



The Transfiguration

NOTE: Do not read this commentary aloud to the children. The commentary is designed to help educate and prepare the teacher for the lesson. The teacher's goal in studying the commentary is to better understand the lesson.

AT HIS BIRTH AND EARLY MINISTRY

One of the main themes of the gospel writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—was the identity of Jesus; they wanted their readers to know who Jesus was. They recorded the testimonies of many who encountered Jesus, each of whom provided a particular insight into Jesus' identity. Matthew began his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus (Matt 1:1), which had three parts: from Abraham to David (vv2–6a), from David to the Babylonian captivity (vv6b–11), and from the captivity to Joseph, the husband of Mary (vv12–16). Matthew is careful to say Jesus was born of Mary, but he did not say that Joseph was His father (v16). These genealogical links established that Jesus was a descendant of Abraham and of David (vv1–17); because of His national and family heritage, Jesus was the one to inherit and fulfill the promises (covenants) the Lord made with Abraham (see Gen 12:1–3; 15:5,18–21; 17:1–8) and David (2 Samuel 7; Psalm 89). Also in his genealogical account, Matthew himself called Jesus "the Christ" (Messiah; Matt 1:16b,17b). Luke traced Jesus' genealogy back to Adam to establish His genuine humanity (Luke 3:23–38).

Matthew recorded the testimony of the Magi (wise men) who, even before His birth—and even though they were Gentiles—identified Jesus as the "king of the Jews" (Matt 2:1–2). Luke recorded the words of the angel Gabriel to Mary, who told her that her son would be called "the Son of the Most High" (Luke 1:32a). Gabriel also noted that her child—as a descendant of David (see v32b)—would reign as king over Israel ("the house of Jacob," v33). When Mary was carrying Jesus, she visited her cousin Elizabeth, who testified that the one in Mary's womb was her "Lord" (v43). Luke also recorded the testimony of the angels who at Jesus' birth informed the shepherds of Bethlehem that Jesus was born as "a Savior" and that He was called "Christ the Lord" (2:11). John recorded the witness of John the Baptist who saw Jesus and identified Him to his disciples with the declaration, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29,36). After John the Baptist's disciple Andrew began to follow Jesus, he found Simon Peter—his brother—and Andrew testified to Peter that Jesus was the Messiah (Christ; v41). At this same time—as recorded by the apostle John (the gospel writer)—an enthusiastic testimony came from another new disciple of Jesus, Nathanael, who called Jesus "Rabbi," "the Son of God," and "the King of Israel!" (v49; see the indirect witness of Jesus' person from Simeon and Anna in Luke 2:22–38).

DURING THE COURSE OF HIS MINISTRY

The gospel writers recorded a number of times when different people gave testimony to Jesus' person during the course of His ministry. In a notable encounter, Jesus met a Samaritan woman near a well (John 4:7–42); in the course of this meeting, the woman first identified Jesus as a prophet (v19), and after Jesus had spoken to her, she (indirectly) testified to her people that He was "the Christ" (v29). After meeting Jesus for themselves, the people of Samaria called Him "the Savior of the world" (v42b). The apostle John recorded a testimony of Jesus from a private conversation with Martha, the sister of Lazarus. After Lazarus' death, Jesus was consoling Martha and told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me…shall never die" (11:25–26a). When Jesus asked her, "Do you believe this?" (v26b), her response was, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world" (v27). Martha's response indicated that she not only agreed with what Jesus claimed about Himself but she believed more than that; she believed He was the Christ—the Messiah.



THE TRANSFIGURATION

Matthew recorded two incidents that took place one after the other, but when taken together, they became a turning point in establishing Jesus' identity. The first happened when Jesus and the disciples went to "the district of Caesarea Philippi" (Matt 16:13a; Caesarea Philippi was north of Galilee; this location was strategic because it was away from the crowds and Jesus' opposition). Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (v13b); the name "Son of Man" was a favorite way for Jesus to speak of Himself (see Matt 12:32; 13:37; Luke 12:8; John 1:51). The disciples answered: "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets" (Matt 16:14). The suggestion that Jesus was John the Baptist may have come from the fact that John the Baptist and Jesus both preached the message of repentance, and that the kingdom of God was at hand (Matt 3:2; 4:17; the people may not have known John had been killed or that he had risen from the dead as Herod believed [see Matt 14:1–2; Mark 6:14–16; Luke 9:7–9]). The suggestion that Jesus was Elijah likely arose from the belief that Elijah would return in the end times (see Matt 17:10; Mal 4:5–6), and because Jesus did miracles and was as bold as Elijah. The suggestion that Jesus was Jeremiah may have come from the similarities between them and their messages. Jeremiah was a prophet who foretold the coming judgment, but also promised a future blessing of the nation. The suggestion that Jesus was one of the prophets may have come from the way Jesus taught the people with authority, just like the Old Testament prophets (see Matt 7:28–29). Then Jesus asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" (16:15). The answer to this had profound implications but Peter answered quickly and boldly (and Matthew likely intended his readers to understand that Peter was speaking for all the disciples); Peter declared, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v16). Jesus responded with a blessing on Peter (v17a), which indicated that He approved of Peter's confession.

A few days after Peter made his great confession (see 17:1a; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28), Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on "a high mountain" (Matt 17:1b). These three disciples witnessed an amazing event; Matthew recorded that Jesus was "transfigured before them" (v2a). Matthew described this transfiguration: "his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light" (v2b), which indicated that the light was not a reflection but was light that came from within Jesus Himself. At the same time, Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus (v3); Luke recorded that they appeared "in glory" and were conversing with Jesus about what was about to happen in Jerusalem—namely, His death and resurrection (Luke 9:30–31). Matthew recorded that Peter began to speak (Matt 17:4) but that he was cut off when "a bright cloud overshadowed them" (Matt 17:5a) and a voice from the cloud—God the Father—declared, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (v5b). This testimony from the Father—near the end of His ministry—was the same as the Father's testimony at the outset of His ministry (at His baptism; see Matt 3:17), and both confirmed that all the other testimonies about who Jesus was were true. Peter later recalled this event (2 Pet 1:16–18) and assured his readers that he was an eyewitness to the transfiguration. Mark recorded a final testimony from an unlikely witness—a Roman centurion, who was taking part in Jesus' crucifixion. Mark recorded that when this centurion witnessed the "way he breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was the Son of God'" (Mark 15:39; see Matt 27:54).

LESSON SUMMARY

Matthew's genealogy established Jesus as Abraham's and David's descendant, the Christ. Magi called Him King of the Jews; Gabriel announced the Son of the Most High; angels declared Him the Savior; John the Baptist identified Him as the Lamb of God. Martha believed He is the Christ, the Son of God, the resurrection, and the life. At Caesarea Philippi, Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ. At the cross, the centurion affirmed, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

Personal Preparation

The following section is provided for you to use as a devotional. This will help you prepare for your upcoming Generations of Grace lesson time. *Check off your progress as you go.*

- ☐ **PRAY** for wisdom to understand what you are about to read and to effectively teach the lesson.
- ☐ **REVIEW** last week's lesson and the central truth.
- ☐ **IDENTIFY** this week's central truth along with the transition, key texts, and key verse(s) from this lesson's title page.
- ☐ **READ** this week's key texts from Scripture and choose which passages you want to read aloud to the children during your lesson time. Record on the right hand page under **READ**.
- ☐ **STUDY** the commentary and identify the italicized sentences to summarize the lesson and central truth below.

- ☐ **SUMMARIZE** your notes from above into the **LESSON OUTLINE** on the right hand page. Add any additional questions that you want to reference while teaching your lesson (one question provided per point).
- ☐ **PREPARE** your activity, craft, or coloring page for this week's lesson by visiting our website's additional resources page. Select the introduction, illustration, or application that you would like to use in your classroom along with any visual aid you may decide to use while teaching.
- ☐ **PLAN** your music time by choosing songs that pertain to this week's narrative theme. Check the additional resources on our website for recommendations.
- ☐ **RE-WRITE** this week's spotlight on the gospel in your own words on the teaching outline under **CONCLUDE** on the right hand page.
- ☐ **PRAY** about how you can apply this lesson to your life and that you would communicate the central truth and spotlight on the gospel clearly in your lesson.

Additional Resources
gracecurriculum.org

Teaching Outline



This section is designed to be used as a clean copy of your notes for teaching the lesson. Follow the teaching outline below as a step-by-step guide during your Sunday School lesson.

☐ **PRAY** with your class that the children would understand the central truth and gospel message, and that you would teach the children effectively.

☐ **REVIEW** last week's lesson and the central truth to begin your lesson.

☐ **INTRODUCE** this week's lesson and the central truth using the selected introduction, illustration, or application from our additional resources page.

☐ **READ** the key texts from Scripture you selected that connect to the central truth.

☐ **TEACH** your class using your summarized notes and questions from the **LESSON OUTLINE**. The points provided are the main headers from the commentary. Use the visual aid you selected and always connect your lesson back to the central truth.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **AT HIS BIRTH AND EARLY MINISTRY (MATTHEW 2:1–2; LUKE 2:10–14)**
   - What are some titles people used to describe Jesus, and what do these names tell us about who He is?

2. **DURING THE COURSE OF HIS MINISTRY (JOHN 4:7–42; 11:25–27)**
   - What did the Samaritan woman and Martha say about who Jesus is after they met Him?

3. **THE TRANSFIGURATION (MATTHEW 16:1–17; 17:1–8; MARK 9:2–13; LUKE 9:28–36)**
   - What is the transfiguration?

☐ **CONCLUDE** this week's lesson with the spotlight on the gospel and tie it into the central truth and the lesson you just taught.

☐ **PRAY** for the children hearing this lesson that they would be saved and follow the LORD.