



A Workshop Rotation Model Lesson Plan from rfour.org

The Transfiguration | Mark 9:1-8; 14-29

Season 1. Session 7: Science, Movement & Games, Storytelling, Arts & Crafts

OVERVIEW SECTION

How to Read This Lesson Plan

The **Overview Section** is the foundation of this lesson plan. The questions and activities for the class that you will be teaching on Sunday morning have been based (sometimes loosely) upon what you read in this section. The **Overview Section** is composed of five components (each component is underlined in the lesson plan):

How to Read This Lesson Plan (defines all components of the lesson plan)

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation (a reminder of why we do this)

Scripture(s) for the Session (a reminder that the scripture is to be read in every class)

Key Verses & Theology (background for teachers to ponder)

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture (the ideas that the session's lessons are based on)

The actual lesson is found in the second section, **The Sunday Morning Experience Section**. Think of this section as the step-by-step instruction guide to your Sunday morning teaching experience. There are four components to this section (again, each component is underlined in the actual lesson plan):

Preparation (including supplies needed)

Classroom Statement (a brief explanation of what will be taught/happening in the classroom)

Step-by-step process of the lesson (including the scripture to be read)

Suggested variations for age groups (Self-explanatory but not always applicable)

We encourage you to read the rest of this **Overview Section** before reading the **Sunday Morning Experience Section**.

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation

The purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation is, with God's help and in community, to hear and interact with the stories of our faith tradition, to pray, worship and play together, and to equip and support the building of relationships with God and with each other.

Scripture(s) for the Session: Mark 9:1-8; 14-29 (from The Message)

Please READ this aloud in every class you teach. The actual words to the scripture can be found in **The Sunday Morning Experience Section: Step-by-Step process of the lesson**. When

reading to the class, please read it from the lesson plan (not an actual Bible) as the wording of the scripture has been modified to help clarify some language issues.

Key Verses & Theology: These are provided to help the teachers think about and build a framework for understanding the story to help in answering some of the questions that the students might raise in class.

"I'm not just talking about the distant future. Some of you who are standing here are going to see the kingdom of God arrive in full force." 2 Six days later, three of them did see it. The kingdom of God exists where God is allowed to be king. The Kingdom of God is not just heaven. It is not just a place that we go to when we die. It is much more than that, and starts in the here and now. Jesus is trying to get his disciples to understand this by letting them know they'll be seeing it soon, while they are still alive.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain to pray. Once they were up there and praying, Jesus' appearance changed from the inside out, right before their eyes. Prayer is how we let God be king in our life. In prayer, we are both offering to God and receiving from God. We are offering praise and admitting need. And we are receiving comfort and direction. In this give and take with God in prayer, we are changed. Jesus' change in appearance symbolizes this change we experience in prayer. Also, when we are listening and speaking with God, we see things we wouldn't normally see on our own. The arrival of Moses and Elijah symbolize this "insight" that comes in prayer. All in all, the arrival of the Kingdom of God is an arrival filled with transformation.

But then Peter interrupted Such transformation that comes in prayer can be unsettling and sudden and uncomfortable. We will feel a desire to push away. We might do this in many ways. A common way is to interrupt our praying by thinking of our own plans and desires. This is what Peter does. Here, God is transforming Jesus and offering insight in the form of Elijah and Moses. But how does Peter respond? By interrupting with his own plans. In that moment, Peter stops God from being king. Peter offers his own commands instead...and it stops everything.

"This is my Son, marked by my love. Listen to him." But not all is lost when Peter interrupts (or when we interrupt). Jesus and others who are listening to God are still available to help us and talk with us. Also, we are all marked by God's love. God does not remove that mark from us. We might ignore God's claim of love upon us, but God does not remove it from us. So once we realize that our interrupting is getting in the way, we can turn back to God's love, we can re-engage in prayer and go back to letting God be king in our life.

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture: Themes are provided to help teachers understand the teaching of the *session* (not necessarily the class). Sometimes an activity in one class may not match up with any of the themes.

Kingdom of God – The Kingdom of God is wherever we choose to let God be king. Be that in our minds, in our chores, in our relationships, in our work, in our finances, in our lives – wherever we invite and choose to let God be king, that is where the Kingdom of God is. To let God be king requires a few things from us. 1. That we seek to be aware of what God wants to have happen in

God's kingdom. 2. That once we are aware of what God wants to have happen, then we do it. 3. That we keep checking in, seeking to be aware of what God wants to have happen.

Prayer – There are two types of prayer: Conversational and meditative. In conversational prayer, the conversation with God that takes place mostly within our head/brain. Prayer is how we become aware of what God wants to have happen in God's kingdom. Prayer involves our words and our listening. This conversation, if we continue it, if we keep doing it, will shape and form us. Then, because our thoughts and actions are shaped by prayer, our doing becomes an extension of our prayer life. How we think, how we see, how we respond to others will be shaped and formed in our conversing with God. We bring the Kingdom of God to the here and now by having a conversation with God.

Light – Light illuminates. In order that we may see, light is required. In this story of transfiguration, God is the source of this light. Jesus in prayer lights up. A cloud that God speaks from is filled with light. Light, however, in and of itself, cannot be seen. Only by the things that stand in the light, can light be seen. Nighttime is a perfect example of this. The moon reflects the light of the sun that is behind us. But we can't see the light as it flies past the earth. We don't see it until it hits the moon. If we *could* see the light from the sun, the night sky would be brilliant white instead of deep black. The implications of this is that if we choose to stand in the light of God, we will shine and reflect God's light to others, just as Jesus does for the disciples.



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THE SUNDAY MORNING EXPERIENCE SECTION

Preparation

- Print out this lesson plan and bring it with you on the Sunday Mornings you are teaching
- Arrive at pre-arranged time to join other teachers, shepherds and staff for an opening prayer.
- Supplies Needed: Story and costume.

Classroom Statement

This Storytelling class consists of telling the story of the Transfiguration and then doing two versions of an activity (the Word association game) as a way to illustrate what impulsiveness looks like and a way that we can invite God into our thinking.

Step-by-Step Process of Lesson

Shepherd comes in with students

SHEPHERD ASKS "Question of the Day."

INTRODUCE yourself

Hi, my name is ____ and I want you call me (tell the students how they may address you).

PRAY (Short and simple is perfect)

God, thank you for this day and for each other. We need your help. Help us to learn about you this day. Amen.

TELL

- We're going to read a story today where Jesus takes a few of his disciples to a mountain top to pray.
- While they are praying, Jesus is transformed.
- This story is usually called the "Transfiguration Story" and the word transfiguration means to change in appearance.

READ MARK 9:1-8; 14-29 (from The Message)

1 Then Jesus drove his point home by saying, "I'm not just talking about the distant future. Some of you who are standing here are going to see the kingdom of God arrive in full force." 2 Six days later, three of them did see it.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain to pray. Once they were up there and praying, Jesus' appearance changed from the inside out, right before their eyes. 3 His clothes shimmered, glistening white, whiter than any bleach could make them. 4 Elijah, along with Moses, came into view, and were in deep conversation with Jesus. 5 But then Peter interrupted, "Rabbi, this is a great moment! Let's make it last forever. We can build three memorials - one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah." 6 Peter blurted this out without thinking, stunned as they all were by what they were seeing. 7 Immediately, a cloud filled with light enveloped them, and from deep in the cloud came a voice: "This is my Son, marked by my love. Listen to him." 8 The next minute the disciples were looking around, rubbing their eyes, seeing nothing but Jesus, only Jesus.

TELL

- So now I'm going to read the story to you again, only this time, it's from the perspective of one of the disciples who went along with Jesus.

DO STORYTELLING

My name is James. John is my brother. He and I follow Jesus. We're disciples. The other disciples sometimes call us the sons of thunder because of our dad, Zebedee, who can't hear very well and so he's always yelling in this really deep, rumbling voice. We've been following Jesus for about 9 months now. And he keeps talking about the Kingdom of God and how it's right here, right now and that we just don't have the eyes to see it yet. But just the other day he said we would see the Kingdom of God very soon.

That was a few days ago. Now Jesus has taken Peter, my brother and me up a mountain. He says we're going up this mountain to have some extended time in prayer – so that we won't be interrupted by others. This seems like a good idea since people are always interrupting Jesus. They are always wanting something from him. And he usually lets them interrupt. John and I once tried to chase some mothers and their young children away from Jesus. That was a mistake. Jesus was not happy with us that day. He told us very sternly that we are to welcome people, not stop them from coming to him. The other disciples started calling us the sons of dumb after that day. But it seems Jesus has forgiven us since he invited us, the sons of dumb and not the other disciples, to come pray with him.

So Jesus is praying a few feet away from us. He's just sitting there. He's been that way for an hour or so. Sometimes he says words out loud. But then a lot of times he's just quiet. When we asked him what he's doing, he says he's listening for what God is telling him. Then without warning, Jesus stands up. I'm about to ask him if we're going back already when suddenly the mountain top is much, much brighter. I'm squinting and am using my hand to shade my eyes. I have no idea what's happening. I look over to where Jesus was and that's where all the extra light is coming from. It's Jesus, but he looks different. Cleaner and brighter and...younger somehow. And next to him are two old dudes. I mean, they're ancient! But they look healthy, like they could arm wrestle my brother and me and win, no problem. And as I keep looking at them, I just know in my heart that it's Moses and Elijah. I don't know how I know, 'cuz it's not like they're wearing name tags or anything like that, you know? But it's them. I know it is. And seriously, how cool is that?! Moses and Elijah!

But now Peter's saying something. He's saying something like, "Hey Jesus! Let's build a house so we can all stay up here and chill forever!" Jesus is shaking his head, and I'm pretty sure Moses smacks his hand against his forehead. Then before Peter can say anything else, there's a cloud surrounding us, like it got foggy all of a sudden, but everything is still super-bright and there's this

voice saying, "I love Jesus and I love you. All of you are my children. But right now, Jesus knows more than you do. So stop telling him what to do and listen to what *he* tells *you*." And then, boom! Everything's back to normal. No cloud, no bright light, no ancient dudes. Then John and I start hitting Peter, smacking him on the top and back of his head and shoulders. "Why'd you interrupt, you bonehead!" We yell this and other things at him. The whole reason Jesus brought us up here was so there wouldn't be an interruption. And then Peter went and interrupted anyways. And they call *us* the sons of dumb? I don't think so!

Jesus comes over and tells us to stop. So we do. We had heard what God told us and so we were going to listen to Jesus. Then Jesus tells us that what Peter suggested about building a house won't help because the Kingdom of God isn't on this mountain top. The kingdom of God is wherever *we* let God be king. So whether we are on a mountain top or at home or walking the streets with Jesus, as long as we're letting God be the king of us and what we're doing, then we're living in the Kingdom of God. We ask Jesus about all that bright light. Jesus tells us that if we're letting God be king in our lives, then that light is God's light shining through us. And the more God's light is allowed to shine, the better we can see.

That makes sense. I immediately start praying. By praying, I mean, I start thinking inside my head and asking God, "How can I let you be King of what I'm doing today?" I haven't had any clear ideas on anything yet. Jesus says it takes time and practice to hear God. But I'm excited! This has been an exciting day and I can't wait to tell the other disciples this story! Thank you for listening to my story. I hope that you, too, try letting God be king of your life.

ASK

- Why did Jesus, Peter, James and John go up the mountain? (to pray, to not be interrupted)
- But what did Peter do while Jesus was praying? (he interrupted)
- Why do you think Peter interrupted? (he was excited; he didn't want what was happening to end)
- Do you do this sometimes too? When you get excited about something, do interrupt what's happening?

TELL

- I do what Peter does sometimes too.
- What Peter did was what we call "impulsive."
- Sometimes being impulsive can be fun.
- We're going to do an impulsive activity now.
- I'm going to say a word and then you say the very first thing that comes to mind.
- Then the person next to you says the first thing that comes to their mind.
- And so on.
- I'll start with this person here and we'll go around the circle.
- Try to think as little as possible.
- There are no wrong answers.
- We're just trying to be impulsive, like Peter.
- Try to have as little time as possible pass between your neighbor's talking and your talking.
- Just say the very first thing that comes to mind.
- Ready? Here we go!

DO Impulse (aka Word Association game)

- Words to start with: cat; school; dessert; soccer; shoes; pajamas
- Feel free to let the game go around the circle a number of times OR feel free to start over with a different word every time after going around the circle.

ASK

- Did we say some strange things? (yes)
- Did some of the things we say make no sense? (yes)
- At other times, did what we say make a lot of sense? (maybe)

TELL

- So being impulsive isn't bad.
- Sometimes what we said made sense, sometimes it didn't.
- However, one thing that impulsiveness doesn't allow is for us to check in with God first.
- If we're asking God to be King of our lives, but then we're just saying words without thinking or talking to God about it, then just like with Peter, we're just interrupting.
- So this time, we're going to do the same exercise, only this time, when it's your turn to say a word, before you answer, I want you to think this thought, "God please help me to say your words."
- Then say the first thing that comes to mind.
- Remember, we're not trying to get the right words.
- We're simply practicing inviting God into our answering.
- That is a way that we can invite God to be King in our lives.

DO Impulse (aka Word Association Game)

- Words to start with: fish; music; books; curtains; McDonalds; cars; lamps
- Feel free to let the game go around the circle a number of times OR feel free to start over with a different word every time after going around the circle.

TELL

- The Good News today is that wherever we go, God is with us.
- And if we invite God into our doings, we're letting God be king over us.
- And wherever God is King, that is where the Kingdom of God is.

CLEAN UP

DISMISS