Scripture

We see God’s glory in Jesus Christ.
* Jesus takes his closest friends to the top of a mountain, where God’s power changes him in their sight to a radiant figure of glory.
* Mysterious changes are part of every young child’s life. They are willing to accept the mysterious change in Jesus, but the meaning it has for them still lies in its concrete details: Jesus dazzles with light.
* In today’s session, we explore with children the story of Jesus’ transfiguration, as well as beginning to open up its larger meaning: in Jesus, we see God’s love.

Question of the Week
When have you experienced transformation or great change?

Core Session
* Getting Started: Glitter Art *(glitter crayons, markers or glue pens)*
* Gospel Story: Jesus on the Mountain
* Action Rhyme
* Praying Together

Enrichment
* Discover the Good News
* Singing Together
* Music and Movement: Daria’s “Child of God”
* Art: Twins Seven-Seven’s *Golden Fishes in the Dark Sea*
* Info: Young Children and the Gospel
* Lenten Tour
* Info: Toys for Throwing and Catching
* Info: Where You’ll Find Everything Else

Helps for Catechists
* More About Today’s Scriptures
* Reflection
* The Scriptures and the Catechism
* The World of the Bible: Covenant
Getting Started (5-10 minutes)
Explain:
- Today is the 2nd Sunday of Lent. Lent is a season of the Church year that helps us get ready for Easter.
- During Lent, we try to spend extra time praying, listening to God’s word and helping people as Jesus taught us.
- During Lent, we hear special stories, too.

To help children enter the story of Jesus’ transfiguration, use glitter to make pictures of Jesus dazzle.
- Use the pictures as a way to define dazzle, a word that will be used in today’s story and activities.
- Dress the children in smocks.
- Distribute paper and felt pens or crayons.
- Ask the children to draw pictures of Jesus.
- Include glitter supplies (crayons, markers or glue pens) and ask children to make their pictures shine and dazzle.

Gather children with their pictures. Encourage children to talk about the effects of light on their pictures. Use the words shine and dazzle several times in your conversation, for example, “Our pictures dazzle in the light.”

Gospel Story (5-10 minutes)
Jesus on the Mountain
Story Focus: Children put their shining pictures of Jesus in the middle of the story area. When telling the story, pause and draw attention to the shining pictures of Jesus.

“Let’s go for a walk, friends,” says Jesus.
“I’ll come,” says Peter.
“I’ll come,” says James.
“I’ll come,” says John.

Jesus and his friends walk to the mountains. They climb up and up—all the way up to the top of a mountain. “I want to pray,” says Jesus. He lifts his arms and prays.

“Look!” says Peter.
“Jesus shines!” says John.
“Jesus dazzles!” says James.

A cloud covers the mountain. Peter, James and John hear a voice from the cloud. “Jesus is my dear Son,” says the voice. “Listen to Jesus.”

“I’ll listen,” says Peter.
“I’ll listen,” says James.
“I’ll listen,” says John.

The cloud goes away. Jesus and his friends walk back down the mountain.

Peter thinks, “I’m glad I was with Jesus.”
James thinks, “I’m glad I saw Jesus shine and dazzle.”
John thinks, “I’m glad I saw what God’s power can do.”

Action Rhyme (5-15 minutes)
Teach children to move together to this action rhyme version of today’s story. Begin by standing in a circle with the children. Teach children the words and movements (italics) to this story:

We are climbing, up with Jesus,
Up the hill, a long, long way.
(Circle right, making climbing motions with your feet and hands.)

When we reach the top, we’re tired,
(Hold back of hand to forehead.)
So we sleep, while Jesus prays.
(Pillow head on hands.)

When we wake, we look at Jesus.
(Shade eyes with hand.)
Jesus shines as bright as light!
(Thumbs beside eyes, spread out fingers.)
“Listen to my Son,” we hear.
(Cup ear with hand.)
“My Son will teach you what is right.”
(Extend arms to front, palms up.)

Praying Together (5 minutes)
Discuss with the children, “What do you think God’s power can do?” Affirm as many of the children’s answers as possible with a thanksgiving to God. For example, if a child says, “Make Jesus dazzle!” you can respond, “Thank you, God, for making Jesus dazzle.” Close by praying:

- Thank you, God, for making Jesus dazzle. Thank you for telling Jesus’ friends to listen to Jesus. Thank you for all that your power can do. Amen.

Note: If you use At Home with the Good News, either distribute this week’s papers to the children before they leave or e-mail the papers to their families.
Discover the Good News (5-10 minutes)
On page 1 of today’s Discover the Good News you’ll find an illustrated guide to the season of Lent. You can invite children to try each Lenten activity: hunting the room for the color purple, acting out ways to care for others and saying a short prayer together.

You’ll also find a simplified version of today’s story on page 2, together with lyrics to one song used in Singing Together, below. You’ll also find a To Parents activity for use at home.

Singing Together (5-10 minutes)
From Singing the Good News, sing together:
◆ “I Promise” (p. 40 of the songbook, also available as an MP3)

Note: To access both the songbook and its attached MP3 files, open your Spring-C Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Singing the Good News.

Music and Movement (10-15 minutes)
Daria’s “Child of God”
Play for children the African-inspired song of affirmation, “Child of God.” (Open your Spring-C Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Companion Music for options on obtaining this music.)

Explain that Jesus wants to hold people just as close as mother Mary held baby Jesus. Jesus wants us to stay close to one another, too.

Today you can also teach children simple movements to go with the second verse of the song. Movements for verse one are on page 3 of the session for the 1st Sunday of Lent.

Mary rocked the cradle,
Cradle arms and rock an imaginary baby.

Peace on earth,
Open arms wide, as if reaching out to hug the child on your left and on your right.

For every little child of God.
Cross arms over chest.

Art (10-20 minutes)
Seven-Seven’s Golden Fishes in the Dark Sea
Place the image Golden Fishes in the Dark Sea by Twins Seven-Seven (attached to this document) where the children can see and touch it. You’ll explore the image more than once this season.

We use the image in this session as a way to help children talk about staying close to one another in Jesus.

Invite the children to talk about what they see in the image:
◆ What colors do you see?
◆ Can you trace the fish that you see?
◆ How close together do the fish stay?
◆ Can we all move as close together as the fish in the poster?
◆ Why do fish stay close together?

Jesus reminded us that chickens stay close to their mother, too. Invite them to move close together as chicks do to their mother.

Explain that Jesus invites us to stay close to him and to each other, just as fish stay so close together and just as baby chicks do to their mother hens. If time allows, children can draw pictures of themselves close to Jesus or to other people who love them.

Note: Learn more about Twins Seven-Seven and view more of his paintings at http://www.indigoarts.com/gallery_africanart_twin77.html.
Children and the Gospel

In today's gospel, Jesus takes only his closest friends up a mountain, where he is transfigured in their sight. For young children, we focus on the physical details of this story: Jesus shone with radiant light.

Children, however, can teach us the deeper meaning of the story not through articulate words but through their fully present lives. What God revealed in Jesus is what God seeks to reveal throughout all creation: God’s own love and glory hidden in human flesh.

This is the perception that animated Thomas Merton, when he wrote, after an ordinary visit to downtown Louisville, Kentucky:

I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers...And if only everybody could realize this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.

Lenten Tour (10-15 minutes)

If time allows, you can invite children to tour the building and look for signs of Lent.

Mention again:
◆ Today we begin the season of Lent, a special time to get ready for Easter.
◆ In Easter, we celebrate Jesus’ new life.
◆ In Lent, we get ready to celebrate Jesus’ new life.

Then take the children into the church to look for things that show that Lent is a special time. You may need to point out purple hangings or Lenten stations of the cross.

The most typical changes of Lent are not in what we add, but in what we remove. Do the children see any places made bare where there were once hangings or pictures?

Where You’ll Find Everything Else

◆ Attached to this Session Plan you will find:
  — Backgrounds and reflections for today’s readings, titled More about Today’s Scriptures.
  — An optional lenten activity titled God’s Gifts.
  — A version of today’s reading from the Old Testament titled Gifts for Abraham.
  — An optional game titled Children of Abraham and Sarah.
  — An optional art activity titled Star Headbands,
  — Twins Seven-Seven’s Golden Fishes in the Dark Sea, for use in today’s Art activity.

◆ Open your Spring-C Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Seasonal Articles to find:
  — Information on Spring-C’s Models of the Faith.
  — An article for catechists titled Why Use Art in the Curriculum?
  — An article for catechists titled Creative Writing in Faith Formation.
  — A helpful guide to viewing and responding to art titled First Impressions.
  — An article for catechists titled Using Visual Arts.
  — An article for catechists titled Looking at a Medieval Sculpture.
  — An article for catechists titled Keeping Lent.
  — For catechists and parents, a PowerPoint Presentation titled Why Use Lectionary-Based Faith Formation?
  — The Introduction for Preschool/Kindergarten for Living the Good News.
More about Today’s Scriptures

Today’s readings invite us to trust in God’s covenant promises. In Genesis, Abram’s confidence in the Lord’s promise is counted as righteousness. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, trusts in the coming of the Savior and the transformation of his body. God’s covenant promises—as embodied ultimately in Jesus—find confirmation in Jesus’ mountaintop transfiguration.

**Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18**

At this point in the Book of Genesis, the perspective changes from the story of humanity to the story of Abram, who will become Abraham, and of God’s chosen people. Today’s reading repeats earlier promises to Abram of descendants and of a land. It describes the sealing of the covenant between God and Abram in a symbolic ceremony that portrays the fate of those who break the covenant—they will be torn apart as were the animals offered in sacrifice.

Because of his childlessness, Abram is relying upon the custom of adopting a slave as an heir. But in response to God’s promise of descendants, Abram “believed the Lord,” that is, trusts God to fulfill the promise though it looks impossible, which puts him in a right relationship (“righteousness”) with God.

**Philippians 3:17–4:1**

Paul’s invitation to imitate him as he imitates Christ reflects the reality of the Christian life as response to a person rather than as belief in a set of dogmas.

The identification of the “enemies of the cross of Christ” is not certain; they are Christians who are misunderstanding or misusing their faith. Paul, using a political metaphor, summons the Philippians to recognize their true allegiance. Philippi was a Roman town, and its inhabitants were proud of their Roman citizenship. Paul reminds the Christians of the transformation awaiting them when the Savior returns, and he therefore encourages them to be steadfast now.

**Luke 9:28b-36**

Luke’s account of the transfiguration points back to Old Testament parallels and forward to Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension. Luke sets the account in the context of Jesus at prayer. The Old Testament references center primarily upon Moses. Jesus’ countenance is changed, as was that of Moses. Moses and Elijah, who represent the law and the prophets—both fulfilled by Jesus—speak with Jesus “of his departure,” literally his *exodus*, the new exodus he will lead through his death.

Peter wants to enshrine their presence in “dwellings” (literally *tents*) as God’s presence was enshrined during the exodus journey, but suddenly God’s presence is manifested in the cloud as at Sinai.

God’s voice confirms what it proclaimed at Jesus’ baptism: Jesus is the Son, the Chosen, fulfilling the roles of Moses, of the Davidic king and of the servant. The disciples are to listen to him as to the “prophet like Moses” (Deuteronomy 18:15). Jesus’ glory, however, is his own, not a reflected glory as Moses’ was.
Reflection
If we’re fortunate, we’ve experienced moments of transfiguration. We may look at something we’ve looked at hundreds of times—and suddenly we see it with fresh perspective.

Perhaps dew covers blades of grass, and for the few moments that the rising sun illuminates the lawn, it becomes a shining, jeweled path. Or snow softens the hard lines of tree branches, fences or park benches and we see them as black and white sculptures. Perhaps we realize the positives about a person or an experience we’d once seen in a negative light.

From that natural level, we can imagine a bit of what the disciples experience on the mountain with Jesus. Briefly, they see what is most true about him, which he had camouflaged for much of his earthly life.

Shortly before this event, Jesus had predicted his passion. He prays on the mountain to find the strength to deal with what lies ahead. What Jesus sees as a place of renewal, Peter sees as a place of escape. Eager but misguided, he proposes tents, which may echo his familiar experience of the joyous feast of Tabernacles.

Despite Peter’s befuddlement, the cloud or Shekinah, which in the Old Testament symbolized the presence of God, seems to kindly envelop them all.

The Scriptures and the Catechism
Today we consider the long preparation that God made for the covenant community into which Jesus invites us (CCC, #543, 758–62). But our passport to this new kingdom community is the conversion of our minds and hearts (CCC, #1430–39). In Jesus’ transfiguration, we recognize that Jesus will enter into glory only through his suffering and death (CCC, #554–56). Our lives must also be transformed by a passage from death to new life. Lenten living calls for a more radical transformation into Christ-like persons.

The World of the Bible
Covenant
A covenant is a formal agreement between two persons or parties that spells out the obligations of their relationship. In the biblical world, the general expectations were modeled on the customs that guided relationships between persons of unequal honor, status and wealth. These relationships were voluntary and freely entered into and were not required by law.

The covenant bound the parties in mutual and reciprocal obligations. The “patron” or more powerful person (like God) promised to provide for and protect the less powerful “clients” (from the Latin word for dependents). In return, to enhance the honor and reputation of the patron, the clients offered respect, praise and gratitude and other favors when requested.