

# Planning



Sunday, February 19 – Saturday, February 25 • 2023

## Sacred Encounters

The Season after the Epiphany closes with extraordinary sacred encounters on ordinary mountains, and we are invited to carry God's glory and mystery as we enter the Season of Lent.

### This week...

#### Ecumenical prayer calendar

France, Germany, Monaco

As listed in *Pilgrim Prayer: The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, edited by Ester Pudjo Widiastih and Karen L. Bloomquist. (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2018). <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle> offers valuable aids for intercessory prayers, prayer on behalf of and in solidarity with others.

#### Personal reflection

The Transfiguration is an awesome moment in scripture. With the disciples, we are witnesses to Jesus' light. In the Season after the Epiphany, we've journeyed with Jesus as he lived the light of God's love among us. As this season draws to a close, we are challenged to carry that light forward.

Look for the transformations happening around you.

- **What is changing in nature?**
- **What is changing in your relationships with friends or family?**
- **How are you changing, and how have you been changed during the Season after the Epiphany?**

*The planning page is provided in text format for copying, adapting, and adding to your bulletin or online worship resources or website or social media (see Text folder, Worship Outline).*

#### February 19, 2023

Last Sunday before Lent  
Transfiguration Sunday

#### Revised Common Lectionary (Year A)

Exodus 24:12–18  
Psalm 2 or Psalm 99  
2 Peter 1:16–21

#### Matthew 17:1–9

the focus in age-level materials

**Liturgical colour** white

#### Notes

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### Online Resources

#### Lection Connection

Essays and discussion prompts linking current events with this week's scriptures. Use for sermon preparation, Bible studies, and small groups or share on social media at <https://www.seasonsonline.ca/10/>

#### Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home

An easy-to-share, weekly online resource supports the spiritual lives and faith formation of individuals and families at home. It is provided in the [Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home](#) folder.





Exodus 24:12–18

Psalm 2 or Psalm 99

2 Peter 1:16–21

Matthew 17:1–9

the focus in age-level materials

O Sacred Love, you encounter us in places where we seek you and in places where we flee from you. Ease our fears. Open our ears and eyes to you, wherever and in whomever you reveal yourself to us. Prepare us to journey as you call. Amen.

# Sacred Encounters

The Season after the Epiphany closes on a holy mountain where God may be found. It is a place of sacred mystery, where shining and shadow convey holy presence. It is a place of community across time, where God's people past and present meet. It is a place of silence and witness, where visions are kept quiet, and God says of Jesus, "Listen to him."

**Exodus 24:12–18** A cloud and mountain mark a new accessibility of God, as well as a time of secrecy and anticipation. Moses ascends Mount Sinai, and Joshua accompanies him partway. A cloud covers the peak for six days, and on the seventh day Moses is invited to enter the cloud. God's glory meets Moses in shadow and light.

The words of **Psalm 99** balance God's holiness with an affirmation of God's justice. The "holy mountain" of the temple on Mount Zion continues to offer a place of resting in God's presence.

The messianic poem of **Psalm 2** distinguishes between the kings that disregard God and the one whom God sends to change the world. God's coronation words: "You are my son; today I have begotten you" mark the authentic claim of this messianic ruler. These words are echoed throughout Matthew's account of the life of Jesus and in the author's account of the Transfiguration in **2 Peter 1:16–21**. Second Peter is presented as the final testimony of Peter and recalls his witness of this moment in the life of Jesus as a pivotal point in his life and to the lives of those who will attend to its prophetic nature.

**Matthew 17:1–9** The word transfigured in verse 2 translates the Greek verb *metamorphoo*. Elsewhere in the New Testament, that verb suggests changes deep within a person. The story of Jesus' transfiguration uses outward details to hint at the deeper mystery of metamorphosis. The report of how three of Jesus' friends react to it reveals the tension between the desire humans have for illuminated truth and empiric-

ally demonstrative truth. Peter tries to contain the surprise and delight he feels at the shining Jesus before him by building three dwellings for the apparitions that are loosening his tight grasp of truth.

In the Season after the Epiphany, we celebrate revelations big and small. We call out the need to be present in the moment to catch them, and we track how memory, contemplation, and reflection on them change us. Epiphany culminates in the dazzling vision of Jesus on a mountaintop in which heaven and Earth, history and future, all come together with sun, cloud, past prophets, and a voice from above to reveal the unique and beloved nature of Jesus as God's son.

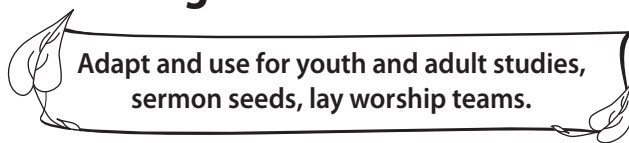
Epiphany began with the revelation of the promise of the change a child's life will bring to the magi and ends with the secret of the freedom that Christ's death and resurrection will bring. Throughout, we are reminded of how extraordinary the ordinary can be. In this season and at all times, we must live in the potential of the mundane to become sacred through revelation and reflection and in the challenge to make perfect love more real through action and devotion. To do this, we are called to be present and open ourselves to the numinous experience at any time and in any place.

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Epiphany began with light as the magi followed a star to find Jesus. Indeed, the whole season is about revealing the light – a light of God's love made manifest as Jesus is revealed in new ways. In the story of Jesus' transfiguration, the light is brighter than ever before, but it doesn't last long; the moment passes all too quickly. When have you felt like that, reaching a moment of revelation or sacred encounter, only to have the moment pass and you have to move on? As we enter the Season of Lent, when the light of Epiphany diminishes, what echo of God's glory and God's mystery do you carry with you?



## Reflecting on the Word



### Connecting with life

Mysticism is rooted in the ability to experience the present and the unity of all creation. Either discuss or write about the following:

- Describe a time when you felt yourself living most fully in the present.
- From what you described, consider what atmosphere or personal state makes you more open to experiencing the mystical.

### Scripture

**Exodus 24:12–18** Moses witnesses the cloud for six days before he is invited into it.

- How does anticipation affect our ability to meet God?
- What do you think it was like for Moses to have his community watching him climb towards the great cloud and then to disappear from them for 40 days?
- How do you carry the anxiety, expectations, or separation of others as you strive to meet God's call on your life?

**Psalms 2 and Psalm 99**

- What do these readings suggest about the mystical dimensions of faith?
- What do they say about being present and listening to God?

**2 Peter 1:16–21** addresses the act of witnessing and interpreting prophetic visions and messages.

- What does being attentive to the prophetic message mean to you and your community?

- How do you or your community see the relationship of prophecy and interpretation?

**Matthew 17:1–9** Building a shelter for Jesus felt imperative to Peter in the moment.

- What cultural or personal significance do you think this held for Peter?
- What significant act would you be compelled to do if you witnessed transfiguration?

The voice from the cloud makes the same affirmation that Jesus heard at his baptism (Matthew 3:17). The one difference is the command, "listen to him."

- If we hear "listen" as more than just listening with our ears, but listening with our hearts and responding, how might this influence our decision to follow Jesus?
- What are some of the places it could lead us?

In verse 7, Jesus says to the disciples, "Get up and do not be afraid."

- What does this story suggest about being open to God's transforming presence?
- What message would you like to extend in the face of the mystery of our faith?

### Connecting scripture and life

**Write** a poem about your experience of a sacred encounter.

**Consider** what you will do, individually and as a church, to create space for sacred encounters.

## Focus for Worship, Learning, and Serving

Transfiguration can be a complex concept to grasp. For even in the account, we see the desire of Jesus for that moment to remain somewhat beyond our reach. But the fluid nature of the ordinary and the extraordinary is something we can experience every day when we enter a room with others and call it a sanctuary, then find ourselves in worship; when we listen to others and feel we have learned something new; or when we offer our time or skill and

discover we have served the needs of others. Consider the ordinary places where sometimes extraordinary events occur. On your own or as a group, take photos throughout the week of ordinary places where extraordinary things happen. As you do this, attend to the potential of each moment and place to become places of sacred encounter and places that reveal God's realm.

# Sacred Encounters

## Prepare

**NOTE:** The following suggestions are mere starting points. You are invited to adapt, delete, add according to your local needs and context. If a community is gathered in person, they may speak the **bolded** lines. If worshippers are not physically present, consider having a different individual say the bolded responses. Instructions are *italicized*.

- ❑ Recruit volunteers needed for worship: three to cover and uncover items in the prayer of confession and words of affirmation; two for Psalm 99; two for the prayers of the people.
- ❑ Choose an option for hearing Matthew 17:1–9. For the Bible story, arrange for a storyteller to present “[Mountainop Mystery](#)” on p. 186. Alternatively, for younger children, arrange for a storyteller to present “[On the Mountainop](#)” in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week’s materials. For the drama, arrange for an actor to present “[Regrets](#)” on p. 185.
- ❑ Bring items for setting the worship space.
- ❑ You might choose to print [Red Ladder to Safe Harbour](#) on or in your bulletin. See “[Connecting with the Art](#)” on p. 8 for background to the art and artist.
- ❑ Bring song such as “The Anointing” (Printed music and recording are also available at <https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order>).
- ❑ Set [stations](#) as described on pp. 187–188.



## Music Suggestions

### Be God’s

Danielle Rose; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9

### Jesus, Face of God

James Maher; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9

### The Anointing

James Maher; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9

### Fresh as the Morning

Shirley Erena Murray, Tony E. Alonson; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 8

### God Grant That We May Be Transformed

Zimbabwe traditional; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 7

### Behold, I Make All Things New

John L. Bell; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6

### Lord of All Hopefulness

Jan Struther



A chart that shows the licence holder(s) for each song in each of the 9 *Seasons of the Spirit* Music Volumes can be found at [www.seasonsonline.ca](http://www.seasonsonline.ca). Click on Library; Seasons Music Information. Please contact a licence holder for permission to duplicate.

## Gather

### Call to worship

Let us see a wonder  
a vision never seen.  
Do we dare to journey?  
**Yes, for God is there.**

Let us start a journey  
close to God’s hill.  
Let us tell the world  
what God will now fulfill.  
Do we dare to journey?  
**Yes, for God is there.**

Let us start a journey  
to worship in this place.  
Let us seek our God  
and meet God face to face.  
Do we dare to journey?  
**Yes, for God is here.**

### Opening prayer

We may not be able to climb a hill for you, O God,  
but we gather to worship you in this place.  
We may never see you transfigured in glory in our presence,  
but we witness to your transforming power in our living.  
We may not have the words to explain all that you are,  
but we have hearts that want to worship all that you are.  
Enable us to meet you in your glory around us,  
that we may worship you in truth and love.

### Prayer of confession

*Use large pieces of material to cover pieces of church furniture during this confession. You will need material enough to cover a cross, a lectern/Bible, Communion table, and an unlit Christ candle.*

O God, for those times we have not followed your call:  
when we have thought the cross too heavy,  
and its way too rough for us,  
when we have walked a more comfortable path,



## Worship Outline • February 19, 2023

and hidden the way of love by doing so, we pray...

**Have mercy, gracious God.**

For those times we have not followed your word,  
when it has been too honest with us,  
convicting our way of living,  
when we have reinterpreted it to suit our way,  
and hidden the truth of the gospel by doing so, we pray...

**Have mercy, gracious God.**

For those times we have not shared your table,  
by keeping your goodness to ourselves,  
tipping the scales of justice in our favour,  
and leaving folks hungry in doing so, we pray...

**Have mercy, gracious God.**

For the times we have hidden your light,  
by living in the shadows,

remaining hidden by the darkness,  
embarrassed by your truth,  
and hiding your glory in doing so, we pray...

**Have mercy, gracious God.**

### Words of affirmation

*Uncover those objects you have hidden and light the candle. During the revealing, you might sing "Behold I Make All Things New" (Seasons Songbook, vol. 6, also #4 on Seasons Music CD, vol. 6. Printed music and recording are also available at <https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order>).*

May the God of glory  
set you on the way of the cross, renewed,  
fill you with the word of love, rekindled,  
find in you a place of sharing, re-created,  
and rekindle the light within you to be light in the world.

## Engage

### Opening the word

#### At the foot of the mountains

*Based on Psalm 99*

*Ancient peoples looked up to the fearful heights of mountain peaks as the habitation of the gods.*

**VOICE ONE:** Like a halo of holiness, the spirit of God envelops Earth. In the deep stillness of space, God's spirit gives life;

**VOICE TWO:** let us acknowledge our interdependence.

**VOICE ONE:** Look up if you would see God;

**VOICE TWO:** raise your sights beyond repetitive routines.

**VOICE ONE:** But do not attempt to face God as an equal –

**VOICE TWO:** fling yourself face down on the earth  
before the creator of heavens.

**VOICE ONE:** Almighty God, you love to do right.

In your dealings with your creation, you are always fair.

**VOICE TWO:** We humans grovel before your greatness.

**VOICE ONE:** Humbly, we kiss the earth from which you fashioned us.

**VOICE TWO:** You are holiness itself.

**VOICE ONE:** The humus holds the recycled cells  
of those who came this way before us.

**VOICE TWO:** Step by step, they searched for you until you found them.

**VOICE ONE:** By a pillar of fire and by whispering breeze,  
by bonfire and whirlwind, by prophecy and parable,  
you showed them your way.

**VOICE TWO:** Because they tried to follow you,  
you forgave them for their failings.

**VOICE ONE:** So come – pledge allegiance to our God!

Gather at the foot of the mountain,  
where even the rocks reach up towards our God.

**ALL: God, you are holiness itself.**

*From Everyday Psalms by James Taylor.  
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### Exodus 24:12–18 *An introduction to the reading*

What do you think of when you think of mountains – the Himalayas, great towering peaks jutting up into clouds, large behemoths that block winds or keep rain from one side or the other? The mountain God invites Moses to ascend doesn't look like much, at least not like the movies or paintings imagine. Yet, on this insignificant mountaintop, God begins to shape a people for a new life.

**2 Peter 1:16–21** In addition to providing, as it were, an eyewitness account of the Transfiguration (the only mention outside the gospels), 2 Peter 1:16–21 provides a marvellous image that took root in the early church. Jesus as the morning star (Venus) heralds the dawn of God's resurrection life for all.

**Matthew 17:1–9** *the focus scripture for age-level materials in ENCORE*

Choose from the following.

**Bible story** Arrange for a storyteller to present "Mountain-top Mystery" on p. 186. Alternatively, for younger children,



tell the story “[On the Mountaintop](#)” (in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week’s materials).

**Drama** Arrange for an actor to take the role of Peter and present “[Regrets](#)” on p. 185.

**If gathering in person, invite children, young people, and all who wish to move to the stations.  
Others will remain seated for proclaiming the word. For those participating at home,  
you might encourage them to use materials that have been sent.**

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## Respond

**Sing** or listen to a song such as “The Anointing” as people gather again (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9, #5 on *Seasons Music CD*, vol. 9. Printed music and recording also available at <https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order>).

### Prayers of the people

**VOICE 1:** In a world that is closed in,  
where we focus on only our own,  
seeing our own needs,

**VOICE 2:** we pray for a world that is open,  
looking outwards,  
seeing beyond ourselves.

**May this be a holy transformation.**

**VOICE 1:** In a world where the few hold so much power,  
where food and opportunity is so unfairly divided,

**VOICE 2:** we pray for a world that shares,  
recognizing each other’s needs,  
and sharing each problem together.

**May this be a holy transformation.**

**VOICE 1:** In a world where conflict is the chosen way,  
and might feeds every prejudice,

**VOICE 2:** we pray for a world that lives in peace,  
where differences are celebrated,  
and variety brings wholeness.

**May this be a holy transformation.**

**VOICE 1:** In a world whose value is financial,  
and global warming the imagining of fools,

**VOICE 2:** we pray for a world that values what it has,  
and values its diversity and beauty,  
as a blessing from you.

**May this be a holy transformation.**

### Prayer of dedication or offering prayer

Call us out of our complacency, generous God. Open our ears to your voice, our eyes to your brilliance, and our hands and hearts to share the blessings that you have made possible for us. We dedicate these gifts and our lives to your service. Send us out to follow the Christ, the one with whom you are well pleased, and in whose name we make our prayer. Amen.

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## Bless

In every journey,  
may we encounter the Christ.  
On every mountaintop,  
may we encounter glory.

In every story,  
may we hear a word of grace.  
And in every moment,  
may we encounter the transforming power of God.





# Regrets

*If Peter had kept a journal...*

Today was one of those days. I meant well. I really did.

I had the chance to go with Jesus – James and John went, too – to climb a mountain, something I’ve always wanted to do but have been too busy to take the time. I’ve wondered what it might be like – the view from the top.

No sooner had we reached the top and caught our breath when I turned around to see Jesus, well – *shining*. Truly, he was shining, like when I was out on the boat and looked up directly at the sun on a cloudless day. One minute he’s just Jesus; the next, his entire face was shining, and that dusty old tunic he always wears shimmered and shone.

But that wasn’t all. I also saw Moses and Elijah – standing there talking to Jesus. It was amazing. And so, of course, I had lots of questions I wanted to ask them – I’ve heard their stories all my life, and there they stood, so close I could reach out and touch them. Was this really fulfillment of what had been predicted for so long?

So, I offered to build them each a tent, proper places to worship; we could all stay as long as necessary. Why rush into anything?

That’s when things got really bizarre.

I was still talking – seems I never know when to stop – and a bright cloud covered all three of them up. A very mysterious voice – and I don’t think it was Jesus’ – said: “This is my son whom I dearly love. I am very pleased with him.” And

then the voice practically yelled (and I swear it was aimed directly at me): “LISTEN TO HIM.”

My knees buckled, and I fell flat on the ground, trembling. It was a humbling, awesome moment I’ll never forget. It was like being in the presence of the Almighty.

Jesus came over and tapped us on the shoulder. He told the three of us to get up and not be afraid. Easy for him to say. When I looked up, the only one there was Jesus. I don’t know what happened to the other two.

Jesus led us back down the mountain but made us swear we wouldn’t say a word about these strange happenings until the Human One was raised from the dead. He talks like that a lot – in riddles – we often have to ask him what he means. I’m pretty sure he’s the One.

I do wish we could have stayed up there longer – basking in that brilliant light – and hearing more from that mysterious voice. The view was incredible – I even thought I saw the boat I left on Galilee. But Jesus never stays in one place. I should have known. When I chose to follow him, I left my boat and my other life behind.

Note to self: Next time – don’t make ridiculous suggestions in the middle of a miracle. It’s *Jesus*, Peter! Just. Follow. Him.

- **Write your own journal entry of a sacred encounter.**
- **What would be its title?**



# Mountaintop Mystery

Based on Matthew 17:1–9

**W**ell, hi there! We're going on an adventure today. Want to come along? We're going to the mountaintop like Jesus and Peter and James and John did. We're going to follow in their footsteps. I hope you have your hiking stick – it's going to be quite a climb.

Let's start walking. Do you know where we're going? You know, when Peter, James, and John agreed to go on this adventure with Jesus, they had no idea where Jesus would take them, or what they would do, or what they would even see when they got there. Peter, James, and John had so many questions...but that's the fun thing about an adventure – you don't know what you will find. It's a mystery and a discovery.

That day there was quite a mystery to behold when they got to the top of the mountain.

We are getting close – should we hurry up and get there so we can see what the mystery is? Let's hike a little faster; go, go, move a little faster, and...oh! We're approaching the rock field. Step high. Step over the rocks. This mountain has a lot of rocks. Climb over the rocks...oh dear! Here are the low hanging branches of the trees. Stoop down to go under the branches. All mountains have lots of trees. Uh oh, even lower. This branch is pretty low; better crawl on the ground to get under this branch. Almost cleared it! Ah. Good. Getting higher. Walk faster. The trees are gone, but that means the wind. Oh, gosh, the wind starts blowing. We're so high on this mountain that the wind is blowing hard! Moving forward is hard. Sometimes it blows you back a step. Can you make it? We're almost there! Keeeeep

gooooing! The wind issssss sooooo stroooooong. And whew! We made it! We're at the top of the mountain!

Jesus took Peter, John, and James to the top of this mountain. What do you see? Can you see far in the distance? Can you see the town below? Are you closer to the birds? Are you closer to the clouds? Look at all those clouds! What do you hear? Is it quiet? Can you hear the wind? Do you feel the sun on your face? It's warm. Do you feel closer to God here? I do. I bet Peter, James, and John did as well, on the day Jesus brought them up here.

What about the mystery? On this adventure, James, John and Peter saw something really different. The clouds surrounded Jesus, and the wind blew around him, and it seemed as if Jesus changed! He transformed. Jesus' face was suddenly like the sun! His face was bright and shining, and his clothes were dazzling – wow! That would be pretty amazing to see. Peter, James, and John thought it was pretty amazing – but that wasn't all. When they looked again, Jesus was talking to his ancestors; he was talking to Moses and Elijah. How did they get here? How did Jesus become like the sun? How did his clothes change? Well, I don't know, but that is the beautiful thing about a mystery...It gives you something to think about, dream about, and imagine. How did Jesus change? How do you change? How do you grow taller? Another mystery...right there inside yourself. Keep asking, keep dreaming, keep exploring and discovering, and I'll see you on the next adventure.

Bye for now.

A recording of this story is available in MP3 format in the Audio Stories folder.



## Bible story

### Materials

- Basic supplies
- Paper or drawing pads
- Recording of this week's story "Mountaintop Mystery"
- Alternatively, arrange for a storyteller to present the story

## The practice of storytelling

### Directions

1. Listen to the story "Mountaintop Mystery."
2. Use art supplies to record your response to the story.





## Living, Learning, Growing as Disciples

The following stations might be set up around your worship space, or in other places around the church, in your home, or outdoors. Choose one or more practices, depending on your space and numbers. Display the [directions](#) for all to see onscreen or in person. Adapt stations for use when physically distancing and above all, follow the safe practices of your congregation and local health officials.

For your convenience, directions are formatted for printing and available in the Stations folder.

### Health and Safety Practices

**Basic supplies** pens, pencils, markers, crayons, white glue/glue sticks, scissors, hand sanitizer, wipes placed in a basket or bin, two containers marked “clean” and “used”

**Setting the space** Utilize large spaces where people can maintain a safe physical distance. Spread out chairs around a large table or use tape to mark off the space around stand alone chairs.

**Keep it clean** Wipe down and disinfect places used for stations. Provide enough arts and crafts supplies to reduce sharing and mark containers “clean” and “used.” Remind people to use hand sanitizer as they begin and as they end stations.

### Kaleidoscope prayers

#### Materials

- Basic supplies
- Several kaleidoscopes
- Kaleidoscope colouring pages (mandala colouring books may also be used, or images may be found using your Internet search engine)
- One completed colouring sheet as an example/prompt placed on the table



Suitable for all ages  
working together

#### Praying with our eyes

##### Directions

On the mountain with Jesus, Peter wants to hold on to the moment forever. But Jesus says no, they have to come back down. Sometimes we want to keep things as they are, just like we want to keep the kaleidoscope image. Yet, when the pattern shifts, it often makes something beautiful that we did not expect.

1. Hold the kaleidoscope up to the light and look through the eyepiece. See how beautiful it is!
2. Turn it and see how the colours shift and change into something also beautiful.
3. As you look in the kaleidoscope, say a prayer to God.
4. When you have finished, take one of the sheets and use crayons and markers to decorate it while you keep praying to God in your mind and in your heart.
5. You might leave your picture on the table so others may pray with you or take it home as a reminder of God's beauty, even when things change.

### Above the clouds

#### Materials

- Basic supplies
- Display of photographs of “[above the clouds](#)” such as the one provided in the Images to Project and Print folder (an Internet search will also provide results)
- Questions printed or written on paper or card stock to hang among the images
- Scrapbooking paper with images of clouds or precut cloud shapes



Suitable for all ages  
working together

#### Praying with photographs

##### Directions

In the Bible readings for today, we hear about people's sacred encounters. The voice of God was heard in these “holy mountain” experiences. God is continually speaking.

1. Look at the pictures, and then reflect on the questions (or talk with a partner about them).
  - What do you see in these pictures?
  - What would you tell a friend about what you see here?
  - How do these photos make you feel?
  - What do these pictures tell about God?
2. When you have finished, take a piece of cloud paper and write a prayer to God.
3. Fix it to the display board or attach it to the wall (see below).

Fix the images interspersed with the questions to a bulletin board, fixed to a wall with painter's tape or reusable adhesive, or spread out on a table. Write one prayer and affix it to the bulletin board/wall as a sample.



## Retreat

### Materials

- Basic supplies
- Paper



**Suitable for  
ages 9–adult**

## The practice of contemplation

### Directions

In this week's gospel reading, the disciples leave the hustle and bustle to go into a secluded space where they encounter God and mystery. Can we do the same?

1. Take a couple of pieces of paper and a pencil or crayons.
2. Leave the noise behind.
3. Go to a quiet place...
4. Write a letter or draw a picture to God. As you write, experiment with how you communicate with God. Imagine God as your best friend, as your mother or father, as a stranger on the street. Write part of your letter from these different perspectives. How does the conversation and language change? Do you always imagine God one way, or does your image of God transform? What are some ways you transform as your image of God transforms?

*The article "[Connecting with the Art](#)" on page 8 provides background to this season's posters and art engagement ideas for individuals and groups. You might add an Art station and select one of the art engagement ideas.*



Story and activities for the very young to use in church or at home.

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## On the Mountaintop

A story based on Matthew 17:1–9

One day Jesus and three friends, Peter, James, and John, climbed up a mountain.

Soon they were so high that the trees and houses below looked tiny.

At the top of the mountain, it was very quiet.

Suddenly, Jesus' face began to shine like the sun.

Jesus' clothes were bright white.  
Suddenly two other people seemed to be talking with Jesus.

Jesus' friends didn't understand what was happening.  
A cloud came down around them.

They heard a voice saying, "I love Jesus. Listen to him."

Peter, James, and John knew it was God's voice.

They were frightened and covered their eyes.

Then they heard Jesus say, "It's OK. Don't be afraid."

The three friends stood up and looked all around.

Jesus was standing beside them, and everything else had disappeared.

What a mystery!

There was so much to think about as they all walked down the mountain.

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## Sun Masks

Jesus' face began to shine like the sun. God's love shines in Jesus, and God's love shines in you.

**You will need** a paper plate with the middle cut out, yellow marker, yellow construction paper (cut into different sizes of triangles), glue.

### Directions

1. Glue the paper triangles around the edges of your paper plate, like sun rays.
2. Look through your sun mask and say: "I'm shining with God's love."



Transformation means to change in appearance, shape or form. Water can transform in many ways. It can turn into ice when it is cold, or it can turn into steam when it is hot. Water turns into steam and clouds, which then turn into rain or snow. When the sun comes out, the water turns to steam again. We can't know what Jesus' transformation looked like; we can only imagine how his appearance changed.

Use crayons and markers to decorate the picture. Draw your own snowflakes for water as ice, draw your own raindrops for water as liquid and draw your own clouds for water as gas.

