

February 19, 2023

# SACRED ENCOUNTERS

Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home

In stories and teaching that turn our world view upside down, we glimpse a re-imagined realm and, together and apart, we reflect on our call as individuals and as a community.



The Season after the Epiphany begins with words of affirmation, “You are my beloved.” We hear echoes of that blessing in the weeks that follow, in the beginnings of discipleship and the ways that we are invited to see ourselves.

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This week, 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.

## Awe, Wonder, Mystery

**Read** [Matthew 17:1–9](#) or **listen** to the audio story “[Mountaintop Mystery](#)” or gather around as someone tells the story “[On the Mountaintop](#)” in this week’s Exploring Our Faith.

Once we realize that we are loved, called, blessed, invited... we begin to shine, grow, and follow. Then, we can be sent. The transfiguration story of Jesus reminds us that once we learn something new about someone, we can never see them the same way again. The same is for us. Once we realize that we are everything God deemed good about creation, we cannot go back to the person we were before we gained that knowledge. We are changed people. The Transfiguration, in a nutshell, tells us that “we’ve seen it, so now it’s time to move on.” We are a sent people. We have purpose and are part of God’s grand, cosmic, chaotic, elevated plans.

- **Talk together and wonder about why Jesus chose these disciples to experience this mystery with him. Why do you think a mountain was the place for these holy moments? What are some sacred places for your family? In what ways do you feel close to Jesus in these places?**
- **Visit a place outside that is sacred to your family. Sit quietly for a few moments. What new things do you notice? How is the beauty and glory of God revealed in this place? Consider a simple song of praise you can sing together or bring along a book about Jesus and read it aloud.**

## Wonder, Create, Decorate

Peter, James, and John had so many questions on their adventure walk with Jesus, but that’s the fun thing about an adventure – you don’t know what you will find. It’s a mystery and a discovery.

**Watch, listen to the story** “[I Wonder](#)” by Annaka Harris and illustrated by John Rowe. Wonder with Eva as she takes a walk with her mother and encounters a range of mysteries.

- **What do you wonder about?**

### Sun mask

Follow the [directions](#) on this week’s Exploring Our Faith and create a sun mask.



**Activity sheet**

**Decorate** this week's [activity sheet](#), then draw your own snowflakes, raindrops, and clouds.

## During the Week

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 in our everyday living.

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?**

**Prayer**

God of wonder and mystery,  
thank you for your child, Jesus.

Be with us as we journey through this week  
and bring us ever closer to living your way.

Amen.

**Listen** to the song "Jesus, Face of God" (MP3 available [here](#) for purchase and download).  
**Visit** [Lecture Connection](#) for current events that connect with this week's scriptures.

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