



Sermon Discussion Guide

February 15, 2026

Matthew 17:1–9

1. Read God's Word Together

Read Matthew 17:1–9 out loud.

2. Big Picture: What Is This Sermon About?

Main ideas in simple language:

1. **Jesus shows his glory on the mountain** (the Transfiguration), but then leads his disciples back **down into the dark and confusing parts of life**.
2. We would love **easy, bright, clear answers right now**, but often God's "alleluia" is **hidden** and only becomes clear **over time**.
3. God the Father says: **"This is my Son, whom I love; listen to him."** That's the heart of discipleship: **listening to Jesus**, especially in the dark.
4. Jesus goes **down the dark road to the cross** so that our road, no matter how dark, always leads to **resurrection alleluia**.

3. The Red Banners Story

1. Why do you think the original artist made "alleluia" hard to see from the back?
2. In the sermon, the pastor said, "We are uncomfortable with mystery."
 - Where in your life do you really want an answer right now?
 - How do you feel when you don't get it?
3. Can you think of a time when something that didn't make sense at first finally became clearer later?
 - What changed? How did that feel?

For younger kids:

- Ask: "What do you like better—a picture you can understand in one second, or a picture that you discover more and more as you look at it?"
- Talk about how God sometimes works like the second one—we understand more and more as we walk closer with Jesus.

4. Mountain Tops and Dark Valleys

The disciples had a "mountain-top" moment: bright glory, Moses and Elijah, God's voice. Peter wanted to **stay there**. But Jesus leads them **down** into real life—confusion, failure, sickness, death, questions.

A. Our "mountain-top" moments

Discussion:

1. What are some "mountain-top" moments in our family's faith life—times when God felt close and everything felt clear?
 - A retreat, camp, baptism, Christmas or Easter service, answered prayer, etc.

2. If you could stay in one of those moments forever, which one would you pick? Why?

B. Our dark and confusing times

The sermon mentioned:

- Struggles in marriages and families
- Scary medical news
- Failing again at a sin you promised you'd avoid
- Feeling far from God, confused, or ashamed

Discussion (adapt as appropriate for your kids' ages)

1. Without sharing anything too private, when have you felt:
 - Scared about the future?
 - Unsure what God was doing?
 - Like the "alleluia" was hidden?
2. When you feel that way, what "voices" do you tend to listen to?
 - Friends? Social media? Your own worries?
 - Which of those voices sometimes makes things worse?

Reassure children:

Emphasize that it's normal to feel scared, confused, or sad—even disciples felt that way. It doesn't mean God left them, and it doesn't mean God leaves us.

5. The Father's Command: "Listen to Him"

On the mountain, God the Father said:

"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

A. What does it mean to "listen to Jesus"?

Discussion:

1. In our everyday life, how do we listen to Jesus?
2. How is that different from listening to:
 - Whatever is loudest online?
 - Our fears and what-ifs?
 - People who tell us "easy" answers but ignore God?

For younger kids:

- Ask: "If God told you, 'This is my Son; listen to him,' what do you think Jesus would want to say to you today?"

Help them name:

- "I love you." "I forgive you." "Don't be afraid." "Follow me."

B. Listening in the dark, not just on the mountain

The sermon emphasized:

God's command "listen to him" is **not just for the bright mountain**, but especially for the **valleys**.

Discussion:

1. When is it **hardest** for you to listen to Jesus?
 - When you're busy?
 - When you're angry?
 - When you're embarrassed or guilty?
2. What is **one simple way** our family could "listen to him" more this Lent?
 - A short daily reading
 - Coming to midweek worship
 - Praying together once a day
 - Turning off other "voices" for a bit

6. Jesus' Touch and His Words

On the mountain:

- The disciples **fell face down in fear**.
- Jesus **wrapped up his glory again in his humanity**, came close, **touched them**, and said:

“Get up. Don’t be afraid.”

Discussion:

1. Why were the disciples so afraid?
2. What does it tell you about Jesus that he comes close, touches them, and speaks gentle words?
3. If Jesus came to you in a scary moment and put his hand on your shoulder, what do you imagine he might say?

7. The Dark Road to Alleluia

The sermon connected the Transfiguration to the Cross and Easter:

- On the mountain, Jesus’ clothes are as bright as the sun.
On Good Friday, he is stripped and hangs in darkness.
- On the mountain, his face shines.
On the cross, his face bleeds and is mocked.
- On the cross, he cries, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
The Resurrection answers that “why”: For you.

Discussion:

1. How does it change your view of your own “dark road” to know that:
 - Jesus has walked a darker road than yours?
 - He did that for you and walks your road with you?
2. The sermon said: “He invites you to follow Him down a long road to that alleluia.”
What might that “long road” look like in:
 - Your school life?
 - Your friendships?
 - Your work, or your marriage, or your worries?
3. In your own words, what is the “alleluia” Jesus is leading us toward?

8. “Hidden Alleluia” and Lent

The sermon talked about:

- A church where turning off the lights left a glowing afterimage of “alleluia” in the darkness.
- Saying “goodbye” to “alleluia” in worship during Lent until Easter morning.

Discussion:

1. Why do you think the church stops saying “alleluia” during Lent?
2. How might that help us:
 - Take sin seriously?
 - Remember the darkness Jesus walked through for us?
 - Long more deeply for Easter?
3. The lady in the story loved how “alleluia” hung in the dark even when the lights went out.
 - What does it mean to hold onto “alleluia” in your heart even when you can’t see or say it?
 - Can you think of a Bible verse that is like a “hidden alleluia” in your heart?

Possible verses to suggest:

- “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:5)
- “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)
- “Do not be afraid.” (many places)
- “Because I live, you also will live.” (John 14:19)

9. A Simple Family Practice for Lent

(or create your own):

A Weekly “Listen to Him” Night

Once a week in Lent:

1. Light a candle.
2. Read a short passage about Jesus (e.g., from the Gospels).
3. Ask:
 - What did Jesus do?
 - What did Jesus say?
 - What does this tell us about his love for us?
4. Pray briefly: “Lord Jesus, help us listen to you.”