

God in the Clouds

By Julie Filby



Make a cloud in a jar to accompany the story of Jesus' transfiguration, when God spoke of Jesus with love and approval. To the disciples, God appeared to be speaking from a cloud.

For
Young Family

Season
Summer; perhaps near August 6, when Roman Catholics observe the Feast of the Transfiguration

Needed

very hot water, clear jar or drinking glass, metal bowl to set on top of the jar or glass, ice cubes or freezer, Bible, bookmark

Prepare in Advance

Place a bookmark at Matthew 17:1-13 in your Bible. Fill the metal bowl with ice cubes or place it in the freezer to make it very cold. Heat some water.

Activity Plan

1. Gather the family around a table and begin with prayer:

Bless our time together, O God, and open our hearts and minds to learn from your Word. Amen.

2. Ask someone to read aloud Matthew 17:1-13 from your Bible or from the text at the end of this activity.
3. After reading the story, work together to make a jar of clouds:
 - Carefully pour one inch of very hot water in a clear jar or drinking glass.
 - Place the metal bowl (dump out the ice first) on top of the jar or glass.
 - The vapor rising from the hot water will meet the cold air sinking from the bowl, causing condensation—a cloud.
4. As you admire your cloud, discuss how the apostles might have felt when they heard God's voice from the cloud. Do you think the presence of the cloud made them pay more attention to the words? Why or why not? What do you think the disciples learned from this experience? What do you learn from their story?
5. Talk about the ways Christians today might hear God's voice. (For example, in prayer, worship, Bible reading, or the words and actions of another person.)



Matthew 17:1-13

¹ And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁵ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." ⁸ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead." ¹⁰ And the disciples asked him, "Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" ¹¹ He answered, "Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. ¹² But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands." ¹³ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

