

TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY CHANCEL DRAMA

This program followed a two week Bible study in Sunday School on the scripture lessons for Transfiguration Sunday. We looked up all the cross references and discussed the background of the text. We made lists and discussed "mountain top" experiences in the lives of young people.

Six youth served as readers and eight youth acted out the gospel lesson.

Gospel drama characters needed:

Narrator reads Matthew 5:38-48 from Bible

Jesus, Peter, James, John, Moses, Elijah, voice of God

We used "Sunday School pageant" costumes and a spotlight to shine on Jesus at the appropriate time. The voice of God came from the sacristy using a handheld microphone from the sanctuary PA system. All other characters simply pantomimed their parts as the narrator read.

When the gospel drama was finished, the six readers took positions in the chancel:
2 narrators and four "characters":

Narrator 1

Camp youth (dressed with camp sweatshirt, etc.)

Student (dressed in school clothes, with back pack, etc.)

Narrator 2

Ball player (dressed in baseball or softball uniform, carrying bat or glove)

Youth on vacation (casual clothes, fishing pole or net or other similar item)

All parts are written so that they could be performed by either males or females. Our Bible characters were portrayed by mostly girls!

Narrator 1: When our class studied this scripture lesson, we tried to think of mountain top experiences of our own. We've never climbed a mountain with Jesus. What do we have in common with the disciples?

Narrator 2: It was kind of hard to imagine why this was supposed to be a special story. We did some thinking about when we have felt like the disciples. It was easy to think of being in the pits. It was harder to think of having mountain top experiences.

Camp Youth: Going to camp is a mountain top experience, even if the camp is in Iowa! You have a week of great times really different from going to school or being at home doing the same old things. You get really close to some people. You feel God's presence in a powerful way. And then you have to go home!

The last day of camp is full of mixed feelings. You begin to realize that the experience is almost over. That makes you realize what a great week it has really been. That makes you sad that such a great week is almost over. That makes your friends hug you and promise to write. That makes you feel like you really have some extra special friends. That makes you

wish that you could stay like this forever.

Ball Player: Being on a championship team is a mountain top experience. You have a strong feeling of accomplishment. You worked hard with your teammates. You suffer pain and frustration. You deal with bad weather or bad ump's or bad attitudes. But when things go your way, you feel on top of the world.

That final game is a killer. It's hard to actually enjoy it at the time. The pressure can be strong. Celebrating the victory is so great, though! Everybody on the team feels close to one another because only they know all that you endured to get the victory. You don't want it to end. You wish you could have this feeling forever.

Youth on Vacation: Going on a special vacation is a mountain top experience. Sometimes it's a drag doing things with your family, but this is different. It's hard to explain, but it can be a time of great peace with your family.

You do all these things together. Especially like discovering a new area together. It's the same for everybody in your family, because nobody has been there before. Like camping in the Grand Tetons, and seeing a bear, and dunking your dad in the river, and hiking in the rain, and staying the final night in a nice hotel ... you have this feeling that you've got the greatest family in the world. You forget about the problems and the every day stuff and just want the experience to go on and on.

Student: Getting an "A" in your hardest class is a mountain top experience. You were so scared that you'd fail. You dreaded taking the class. Then you find out that the teacher is great. Their love of the subject makes you love it, too. You get excited about what they're teaching. The assignments are hard, but you feel that you can do well anyway.

When you get that final grade, you really feel great. You think about all the hard work you put into it and how you didn't give up. You think about the great times you had in that class and how the teacher turned out to be fun after all. You wish you could just stay there and not have to go on to the next class. You feel really proud, but scared that the next class won't be so great.

Narrator 1: Jesus, disciples had a mountain top experience. They had a chance to be together with Jesus up away from the crowds. The disciples got a vision of Jesus together with Moses and Elijah, great leaders from the past. This vision reminded them of the scriptures where they had learned about God's plan. Everything they saw and heard reminded them of something that the prophets had predicted would happen when the Messiah came. It was like a light bulb lit up in them. They figured it out. Jesus was the real Son of God. God had chosen them to know the secret to Jesus' power.

Narrator 2: The disciples were scared by the vision of Jesus glowing and all. But they were also excited. Peter wanted to make shelters so that everyone could stay and keep talking to Moses and Elijah, their heroes from the past. The disciples probably felt that they didn't want to go back to the real world. Up on the mountain, everything was kind of pure with God.

Narrator 1: When the disciples went down from the mountain, they knew that many other people would not understand their experience. Maybe they would even think that they were crazy. It's easy to understand why the disciples didn't really want the mountain top experience

to end.

Narrator 2: Everybody who has a mountain top experience has to come down.

Camp Youth: You have to come home from camp. . .

Ball Player: You have to do other things when the ball season is over...

Youth on Vacation: You have to go back home and clean the garage...

Student: You have to go back to school with a new teacher...

Narrator 1: We wondered what the message was in this story about Jesus and the disciples on the mountaintop. Why did the disciples get this great vision and then get told not to tell anyone about it? Why did the disciples feel so great in the first place? Do we have to go up on the top of a mountain to know the truth about God?

Camp Youth: Jesus helped the disciples not feel so scared. He really cared about their feelings and wanted them to feel good about their experience on the mountain. He hugged them just like everybody hugs each other at the end of camp. We know that you don't always have to tell others exactly what happened at camp. They wouldn't understand. What's more important is to take your good feelings and friendships back home with you. You try to treat others differently because of what you learned on your mountain top experience.

Ball Player: Yeah. Jesus was kind of like a coach to the disciples. He led them and tried to teach them what they would need to know. He had to send them back down the mountain where it would be tough, just like the coach has to send you into the game. They try to prepare you for what is to come, and not baby you. Jesus probably felt the same way the coaches do when they're really proud of you.

Youth on Vacation: Jesus was the disciples' master but up on the mountain, he treated them kind of different. It was like enjoying a good time with your parents and they don't have to boss you around you're almost equals for awhile. Jesus didn't put the disciples down. He just let them experience something special. Jesus was still the one in charge, but the disciples were treated with dignity. Maybe they had a different view of Jesus after their experience. Later, they kept that better attitude. It can be that way with parents, too.

Student: Jesus was a teacher to the disciples. Maybe they didn't really want to learn all the things

he was trying to teach them. Maybe they didn't realize just what Jesus was trying to get at. Then, they had this great experience. It was like all the things they had been taught came together like doing a puzzle. Other people might have struggled all their lives learning facts and figures, but Jesus let the disciples learn the truth. It was like getting an "A" in religion! They probably didn't want to ever have anybody except Jesus.

Narrator 1: Back then, they say that the people were waiting for the Messiah. Life was rough. God had promised a savior who would bring justice and peace. The people waited and waited for God to send a new king to change the world.

Narrator 2: It didn't seem like the disciples were waiting, though. The disciples were just a bunch of fishermen. They didn't sit around the Temple thinking holy thoughts or anything. Peter, James and John worked long hours, sweating and hauling loads and loads of smelly fish. They were too busy to even think about God's promises.

Narrator 1: Maybe it was illogical for Jesus to pick disciples who weren't even really waiting for the Messiah to come at all. Jesus just came up to them and said, "Follow me." But the disciples did follow, even though they didn't exactly know why or what would happen. They followed Jesus up the mountain and back down again.

Narrator 2: We're always busy with something. We're going from problem to problem. Sometimes, we don't even think to ask for help. We just figure it has to be that way, tough luck. Jesus helped his disciples learn the truth, even though they didn't deserve to be chosen. Maybe being with Jesus is like having those mountain top experiences. Maybe it even means being able to survive the rotten experiences when you come down to reality.

Narrator 1: Jesus tries to help us experience goodness, even if we're not waiting for it.

Camp Youth: Like giving us a week at camp...

Ball Player: Like giving us a winning ball team. . .

Youth on Vacation: Like giving us a peaceful family vacation...

Student: Like giving us an "A" grade

Narrator 2: If we can see the truth about God that Jesus loves us and helps us when we're high up on that mountaintop, maybe we can take that truth down into the pits. Jesus said, "Do not tell anyone what has happened." It's hard to keep quiet about the great things that happen in our lives. But Jesus wants us to act differently in the future, not just talk about the past.

Camp Youth: Like being more caring to your friends.

Ball Player: Like becoming an umpire in Tball next summer.

Youth on Vacation: Like try to get a long better with your folks.

Student: Like being a teacher someday.

Narrator 1: When you leave this service today, don't tell anyone what you saw here. Just go back to your home or school or job and act differently.

Narrator 2: If Jesus can pick a bunch of fishermen or Iowa farmers or youth like us, he can pick you, too!