

Transfiguration of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ
Parents Explaining the Transfiguration of Jesus
to their Children - 'These Things We Believe'

The transfiguration of Jesus is celebrated every year on August 6. Parents can prepare their children to attend the divine liturgy" on this day by reading to them the Biblical account of this event in St. Matthew 17: 1-9 (also Luke 9:28-36)." If the children are young, the event may be read from a suitable Bible storybook which has also a picture of the Transfiguration which can be shown to them.

The following story will help parents explain the real meaning of the transfiguration. A little boy was suddenly awakened one night by a sound in his room. Upon opening his eyes he saw a shadowy figure moving about the room. It scared him and he cried out, "Who is it?" What he did not know was that it was his father who had come to close the windows in his room because it had started to rain.

Because he wanted to reassure his son and at the same time not awaken the other children, the father simply shined his flashlight. Not at the boy because that would have blinded him and frightened him more .. , but at himself. on his own face.

The little boy said, "Oh, it's you,. Dad," and he turned over and went back to sleep.

St. Paul writes, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). This verse helps explain the transfiguration of Jesus. God, Whom we cannot see, has turned the flashlight of His revelation full force into the face of Jesus. The divine nature of Jesus shines forth in all its splendor at the Transfiguration. God, Who is light, shines in the face of Jesus with a brightness that is brighter than the sun.

The divine nature of Jesus, the fact that He is God, could not remain hidden. It burst forth at the Transfiguration. The divine light that shone through Jesus was so bright that the disciples could not bear to gaze upon it. They immediately fell to the ground to cover their faces. "

The Transfiguration reminds us how much God had to empty Himself; how much He had to tone down the brightness of His divine glory when He took on human flesh and became man in Christ. The transfiguration reveals the true Jesus. the God-man. Here we see the divine nature of Jesus shining through His human nature with all the brightness of God's glory. God's voice is heard from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased: listen to him.

Ask the children to relate from memory other incidents when Jesus showed Himself as God. Some answers: when He performed "miracles: when He was resurrected from the dead, etc.

The Divine Liturgy as a Mount Tabor Experience

The Transfiguration, which occurred on Mt. Tabor, happens in every divine liturgy. Through the liturgy we are brought into the very presence God. The Holy Spirit is present. He transforms our gifts of bread and wine into the very Body and Blood of Jesus. Jesus is present. Like the disciples on Mt. Tabor, we, too, fall on our faces before Him penitently expressing our unworthiness to stand in His holy presence. But we also enjoy being in His "presence. Like St. Peter we say, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you will, let us stay here. Let us make three tents: one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.'

It is "good" to be with Jesus in the liturgy, to hear Him speak to us, to receive the Holy Spirit, to be ushered before the throne of God's presence, to receive Christ within us. It is the greatest "good" on earth. But we cannot "stay" there as Peter wanted to stay on Mt. Tabor. There is work to be done in the world. We must go back. We must take Christ with us to help solve the world's problems. There is no greater example of this than Jesus. Immediately after the Transfiguration He went down from Mt. Tabor to help heal a sick person (Matt. 17: 14-21).

Blessing of Fruit

This custom of blessing fruit in thanksgiving to God by the Orthodox Church is adopted from the Old Testament, which prescribes that fruit be brought to the Temple of the Lord, "you shall carry the first-fruit of the corn of the ground to the house of the Lord your God." Exodus 23:19. In Leviticus we read: "When you shall have entered the land which I shall give you, and shall reap your corn, you shall bring sheaves of ears, the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest" (Lev 23: 10). This blessing was prescribed in the 3^m and 4th centuries when prayers were prescribed.

At the 6th Ecumenical Council (691), it spoke of bringing the first-fruits to church for blessing, grapes of the vine and wheat. As time went on apples or other fruits were added. We thank the Lord for the weather, fertile soil, temperate weather, drops of rain, and all the other ingredients necessary to produce the fruits of the earth which we need to sustain our lives, and the purification of our Sins. Shop together as a family, and prepare your "Basket of Fruit" as a family, and as a family bring it to church to harvest blessed and sanctified with the sprinkling of the Holy Water, to bring to your home and all those partaking of these first-fruits of the earth; peace, health, concord and plenteous increase of every kind of good thing profitable to all who share of the first-fruits harvest of summer. "We praise You, O Life-giver Christ, and we venerate the most glorious transfiguration of your most pure body."