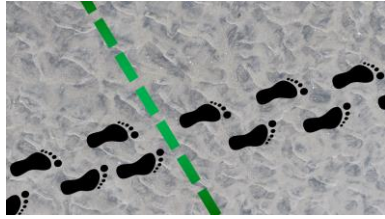


## Interactive lesson



*background picture from MMMS collection*

What does “crossing over” mean to you?

<Let them respond>

When I googled “crossing over” I got information first about cellular meiosis, where DNA strands get mixed up, and then lower down stories about immigrants crossing the border.

What are some boundaries or experiences in life that we must cross? <Let them respond>

What are some of the characteristics of crossing over those? <Let them respond>

Does everyone cross over every challenge/opportunity they encounter? Why not? <Let them respond>

Do we always know when someone is (or we are) crossing over into something new? <Let them respond>

How does it feel to watch a loved one cross over into something where you cannot join them?

<Let them respond>

What boundaries/experiences would you encourage your loved ones to cross? Why? <Let them respond>

What kind of things do you think God would have us cross over, and into what? <Let them respond>

Why do you think God would have us go through that?

<Let them respond>

Life is full of growing into new experiences and opportunities. I pray that you find the transitions joy-filled and your new situations better than the old, wrapped in the grace of God, the love of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

## Gospel lesson

We jump now to the special story of the day, in the same Gospel from which we have been reading.



picture from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexandr\\_Ivanov\\_015.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexandr_Ivanov_015.jpg);  
"Transfiguration" by  
Alexandr Ivanov, 1824

### Mark 9:2-9 (NRSV)

<sup>2</sup> Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them,

<sup>3</sup> and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.

<sup>4</sup> And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

<sup>6</sup> He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

<sup>7</sup> Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

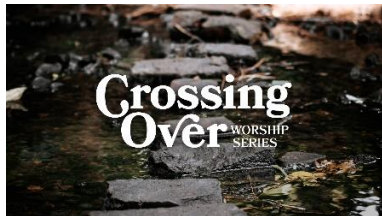
<sup>8</sup> Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

*The word of God for the people of God*

<Hymn "O Splendor of God's Glory Bright"      UMH #679>

## Message: Crossing Over



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/crossing-over/transfiguration-sunday-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/transfiguration-sunday-year-b-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Astonishing Lord who includes us in Your glory,  
as we take time now to further consider today's  
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may have courage to cross over into the  
grace-filled community where You would have us live

and bless others with the power of Your love. Amen.

We are “Crossing Over” this week from “Becoming the People of God” to the “Depths of Love” we find in committing to Jesus:

“Here we are, once again, at the cusp of a change in the season. Sometimes we treat Transfiguration as if it’s the last Sunday in the season after Epiphany, a kind of exclamation point to the Ordinary Time that takes us from Epiphany to Ash Wednesday.

But this year, we ~~chose to make this a stand-alone Sunday, which is appropriate given~~ [consider] that this day belongs not to Ordinary Time or Lent but in the liminal space between the two.”

Yesterday I was blessed to have my granddaughter visit. Tim & Tiffany brought Vivian in time for lunch and some playtime. At ten months, she is somewhat mobile, crawling and pulling herself up to stand at the coffee table. I held her hands to steady her and sang, “put one foot in front of the other” as she wobbled forward toward her grandpa.

She is not walking yet, but I know it will not be too much longer before she crosses that development mark and is running everywhere that she is allowed to go. I look forward to it with joyful anticipation – and a little trepidation, because I am not sure how well I

will be able to keep up with her.

When a child wants to do something new, those caring for it may encourage or try to stop them from doing it, depending on what they think the effects on the child are. Some tend to be overprotective, advising against risk or struggles. Yet without striving, how is anyone to reach greatness?

On the flip side, the youngster wants those they depend on to stay where they can find them. A youngster may cling to them when the parents have to leave to take care of things where the youngster may not go. Sometimes loved ones must depart for a while.

We see that kind of care for loved ones between Elijah and Elisha. Elisha does not want Elijah to cross over; he wants his mentor to stay, but Elijah knows that it is time to go. For his part, Elijah wants to encourage Elisha, but knows that receiving the eldest's share of inheritance, the double portion, comes with responsibilities and difficulties.

Yet for each to grow further, they had to part. They each had to cross over the river into a new situation – Elijah into the heavenly realm and Elisha into being the lead prophet for all of Israel.

It can be confusing and scary, setting out into

something new to which God brings us. The psalmist speaks of God as the mighty one with a storm around him, calling for the faithful ones to come be judged. Knowing that we all sin, that would tend to make me run the other way, except that I know Jesus.

Jesus came that we might know God in a loving relationship rather than just be terrified of the holiness and power. By Mark chapter 9 the disciples have been going about the countryside with Jesus for a while. They have seen miracles and heard wisdom enough for Peter to call Jesus the Messiah!

But when Jesus describe that He would be killed and rise again in 3 days, the disciples did not trust that He would be back. Peter tried to take Him aside and rebuke Him for this apparent death wish, but Jesus remained firm in teaching them God's plan. Yet still, they were like young children fearing that their parent would not be back.

So God invited them into a deeper relationship. Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power."

Six days later, Jesus led three of those men up a mountain to see that evidence. It was reassurance for them that Jesus' "cross"-ing over was necessary and that they would see Him alive again afterward.

And how did they react? They were blown away with terror. How do you reconcile that the Almighty has seen you at your worst, at your silliest, and yet stands before you expecting interactions? What do we do when God stands before us?

Peter went to the familiar: Jewish history had the people building a place for God to dwell among them. But Jesus was already dwelling among them and Elijah and Moses were not staying. The disciples were not there to continue old customs, but to grow in faith and learn the new way of relationship with God that Jesus was teaching.

It was not something the world could know or understand until after the cross and resurrection. If word spread that this really was the Son of God, there may have been much more bloodshed before He was crucified because of how people rally to protect what they deem precious or important. So having strengthened the trust of the disciples, Jesus told them not to talk about that experience until after He had risen from the dead.

God reveals Godself to us in the ways that are healthiest and most nurturing for us as individuals and for humanity as a whole. Jesus, as revealed on the mountaintop, was the bridge between God and humanity. God still wants a relationship with each of

us. Only instead of the risen Messiah walking about, now we have the Holy Spirit working in our hearts and through us for others. We are the ones who must introduce our neighbors to God!

Paul wrote about this to the Corinthians, that “the God who said, “Let light 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.” What an incredible blessing and honor!

But we act like the gospel is veiled to us, as though we are confused, like Peter, about how to respond. Instead of sharing the good news through love with everyone we meet, we hide, we stay silent. We miss opportunities to grow in faith and to help others get to know our incredible God and Savior!

So, what should we do? First, trust and seek God, even when others give you a hard time about it. Yes, it is worth it to get up on a Sunday morning and come to church. Those Superbowl players did not get where they are by sleeping in; they put great effort in every day to be the best they can be at what they do.

Our best comes from putting our efforts where God guides us to. Let God guide you into and through accountability with love, that in repenting and appropriate atoning, sin may be truly forgiven.



Share the gospel and the joy you have found in Jesus with others. Be you, unique and loved by God, and let others know they too can flourish that way. In the harmony of our diversity comes great beauty!

Do not fear crossing over to new joy and new life in the experiences and opportunities God puts before you. Seek to build a nurturing community filled with the love of Christ and led by the Holy Spirit for the glory of God. Let God's holy light shine through you, that the world may be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit because of our love in Jesus! Amen.