

Jesus at the Temple

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 2:40-52

MAIN POINT: Jesus came to earth to do His Father's plan.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 1:15

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.

Leader BIBLE STUDY

The Book of Luke records just two narratives about Jesus' childhood: His dedication (Luke 2:21-40) and His time at the temple when He was 12 years old (Luke 2:41-52). Both stories set the stage for Jesus' ministry on earth as an adult.

Mary and Joseph were faithful Jews. They had dedicated the baby Jesus according to the law of Moses, and they traveled to Jerusalem each year to celebrate Passover. God had commanded the men to appear before Him three times a year to observe certain festivals. (See Deut. 16:16.) Once a year, those who followed God's law would travel to Jerusalem—often in large groups—to celebrate Passover.

In Bible times, a Jewish boy became a man at 13. His father would train him to take on all the responsibilities of adulthood, social and spiritual. Joseph was a carpenter, and he likely trained Jesus in his trade. When Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem, Joseph might have taken Jesus around the city to teach Him the significance of the temple and explain the purpose of the Passover feast.

Jesus' parents started the journey back home after the feast. They assumed Jesus was among their traveling companions, but He wasn't. Jesus had stayed behind at the temple. Mary and Joseph traveled for a day before they noticed Jesus was missing. They went back to Jerusalem and found Him at the temple.

When Mary asked why He had done this, Jesus answered Mary's question with a question: "Didn't you know that I had to be in My Father's house?" Mary and Joseph did not understand. But Jesus is God's Son, and it was necessary that He honor His true Father. In all this, Jesus did not sin.

The Bible does not give many details about Jesus' childhood, but we do know that as Jesus got older, He grew

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in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people. Jesus carried out God's plan to reconcile the world to Himself. (2 Cor. 5:19)

***Christ Connection:** Even as a child, Jesus wanted to do His Father's plan. As Jesus grew up, He became strong and wise. God blessed Jesus as He got ready to follow His Father's plan: to die on the cross and rescue people from sin.*

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Small Group OPENING *(before Large Group...)*

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, ask them about a time they got separated from their family in a public place. Ask them how they felt and how they were reunited.

SAY • Getting lost in a public place can be one of the scariest experiences, both for kids and parents. In today's Bible story, we will learn about a boy whose parents left without Him and where they found Him again.

Session starter - Grow, growing, grown

There will be a long sheet of paper taped vertically to the wall. Use a tape measure to find the height of the kids in your group. Ask them to guess how tall you are, then measure your own height. Allow kids to stand safely on a step ladder or stool to measure how tall they think they might be when they grow up.

SAY • Each of you will grow taller than you are now. Some of you may even grow taller than I am! Jesus grew up too. Last week we learned about when Jesus was born, but in today's story, He was 12 years old! He grew up like us, but He was also different from us. He never sinned His whole life!

Session starter – Hot and cold

Select an object to hide in the room. Direct kids to find it by telling them they are getting warmer as they approach it or cooler as they stray away from it. When the kids find it, discuss if it would be hard to find without clues.

SAY • Jesus' earthly parents took Him to Jerusalem for the Passover festival each year. One year, they left without Him! When they went back to find Him, they forgot about the biggest clue that would have helped them find Him sooner. That clue was the identity of His Father!

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Where does it belong?

There will be a set of index cards with the following written on them:
astronaut, surgeon, basketball player, and taxi driver.

Form four groups of kids. Give each group an index card. Instruct them to work together to draw the environment or location where the person on their card would be found. Direct kids to not include the person in their drawing.

When kids finish, prompt them to display their drawing for the rest of the kids. Challenge the other groups to guess what person belongs in the place drawn on the poster. Reveal each group's person.

SAY • You wouldn't be surprised to see each of these people in these environments; that's where they belong! In today's Bible story, Mary and Joseph couldn't find Jesus, but they found Him exactly where He was supposed to be! We will find out soon where He was.

Transition to large group...

Small Group LEADER *(after Large Group...)*

Activity choice (10 minutes) — What's the plan?

SAY • God had a plan to save people from their sin. Jesus came to earth to do His Father's plan. Even as a child, Jesus wanted to do His Father's plan. He went to the temple, His Father's house.

As Jesus grew up, He became strong and wise. God blessed Jesus as He got ready to follow His Father's plan: to die on the cross and rescue people from sin.

Invite kids to complete a project that requires making a plan. Form groups of three or four kids. Give each group a piece of paper and a pencil.

Explain that each group will receive a bundle of chenille craft stems. Groups will have five minutes to build the tallest tower. Encourage kids to spend a couple of minutes making a plan for building the tower.

Then give each group an equal number of chenille craft stems. Allow groups to work for about five minutes. Then compare their structures. Ask how closely they followed the plan they made before they began building.

SAY • Jesus followed God's plan because He loves us. We deserve to die for our sin, but Jesus came to take the punishment in our place. When we trust in Him, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life.

Prayer (5 minutes)

Prompt kids to share questions they have about Jesus, the Bible, or church. Encourage kids to seek out answers to their questions this week—through church leaders, their parents, or the Bible.

SAY • When Jesus was only 12 years old, He stayed at the temple to ask questions about God and grow in His understanding of the truth. Jesus treasured the things of God, and He cared about His relationship with God the Father more than anything else.

Even though you are still a kid, you can treasure

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the things of God too. You might be too young to do certain things in this world, but you are not too young to follow God and be part of His kingdom. God wants to teach you the truth, train you in wisdom, and use you mightily in His kingdom.

Lead kids in prayer, thanking God for His Word and for sending His Son. Ask Him to show grace to kids as they grow in wisdom and understanding.