

The Boy Jesus Visits The Temple

Luke 2:39-52

MEMORY VERSE

LUKE 2:52

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

2"x2" cards with consecutive numbers on each card to equal the number of children in your class.

Props or costume pieces to re-enact Mary and Joseph's search for Jesus in Jerusalem (optional).

A measuring tape, a marker and a piece of butcher paper.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Search for the Missing Number

Hand out a number to each child in your class on a 2"x 2" card. The numbers should be in consecutive order. Before class hide the number one card somewhere in the classroom that would be fairly easy for the class to find.

Have the class work together to put the numbers in order on the floor.

When it is discovered that the number one is missing, have the class search for the missing card. When the card has been found, regain the attention of the class with the attention getting signal. Explain to the class that you will be referring back to this activity later in our lesson today.

LESSON TIME!

A few weeks ago, we learned that Joseph and Mary offered a sacrifice to the Lord at the Temple in Jerusalem and dedicated Jesus to the Lord. There, Simeon recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah, the light of the world. Anna the prophetess also gave thanks to God, bore witness of Jesus, and boldly proclaimed that the Messiah had come.

Then we learned about the wise men or Magi who came with gifts for Jesus. Next, we learned about an angel who appeared to Joseph in a dream to flee with Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape the wrath of King Herod. They stayed in Egypt until the angel of the Lord told them it was safe to return to their home.

Today we will see Jesus as a boy in the Temple. We don't know a lot about Jesus' childhood, but the few accounts that we have are fascinating. Our story today teaches us that even at a young age Jesus knew that He had to "be about His Father's business." He knew that He had a call upon His life and sought to obey the will of the Father. We also learn that **God is worthy of our obedience.**

LUKE 2:39

So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.

What a blessing it is to have parents who are obedient to the Lord. Joseph and Mary performed everything according to the Law of the Lord. Jesus would be nurtured and raised up in the ways of the Lord. Joseph and Mary were parents who lived in obedience to God, and they desired to raise Jesus in the same way. Joseph and Mary knew that **God is worthy of our obedience.**

If your parents bring you to church and raise you in the ways of the Lord then you are very blessed. When our parents are obedient to the Lord they train us to be obedient also. Joseph and Mary loved the Lord and wanted to raise Jesus according to God's plan. Also when you grow up and have families God will want you to raise your family according to His word.

God knows what's best for us. He gave us his word so we could live in obedience to Him. Because Joseph and Mary were obedient, God chose them to raise His Son, Jesus.

"Mother, May I?"

Have your class stand in rows facing you and play "Mother, May I?"

Call on a name of an individual and give them a command, i.e. "Johnny, please put your finger on your nose." Johnny should respond by saying, "Mother, may I?" You then respond by saying, "Yes, you may."

If the child does not respond by saying, "Mother, may I?" he must sit down, and is out of the game.

With this illustration, explain to the children the importance of obedience.

LUKE 2:40

And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

Though Jesus grew up just like you and I, He had a heart and mind of divine wisdom. The young Messiah demonstrated wisdom beyond His years, which is not surprising since He stayed in close contact with His Heavenly Father. Like Jesus, we can grow in wisdom by walking with the Lord. James 1:5 tells us "If any of you

lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him". God is willing to give us wisdom, too.

LUKE 2:41-42

His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.

Here we see the obedience of Joseph and Mary again. According to God's Law, every male was required to go to Jerusalem three times a year for the great festivals. These festivals included the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover), the Feast of Weeks (Pentocost), and the Feast of Tabernacles (Exodus 23:14-16). In the spring, the Passover was celebrated. Joseph and Mary were faithful to travel the long journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem, even though they did not have much money. It was important to them to be obedient because they knew that **God is worthy of our obedience.**

LUKE 2:43-45

When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it;

but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

At the age of twelve Jesus was considered close to adulthood, so He probably wasn't with Joseph and Mary during the entire festival.

People going to Jerusalem for the festivals usually traveled in caravans with the women and children in the front and the men behind to protect their party from the ambush of robbers along the roads. Also several members of a family would usually travel together in groups. Jesus could have been in either group, leaving Joseph and Mary to assume He was with the other or with family members.

Where is My Son?

Pick a couple of children to play the parts of Mary and Joseph.

Ask them to re-enact for the class the search for Jesus, first in the caravan of people from Nazareth, and then in the city of Jerusalem. Try to imagine the feeling that Joseph and Mary must have had when they realized that Jesus was missing. Ask the children if they have ever been lost or separated from their parents. Were they afraid? Were their parents afraid?

LUKE 2:46-47

Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

After three long days, Joseph and Mary finally found Jesus in the Temple. At the time of the Passover, the greatest rabbis of the land would assemble to teach and discuss great truths among themselves. The coming Messiah would have no doubt been a popular topic of discussion, and here was Jesus, listening and discussing deep questions among the rabbis. It wasn't His youth that astounded them, but the divine wisdom and knowledge He had.

LUKE 2:48

So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

Joseph and Mary were astonished to find Jesus in the Temple, the center of attention and respect, with these learned men. They were looking for a boy, but they found a young man astounding the religious leaders of their day with questions and answers. With tenderness and affection, Mary examined Jesus. So many awful things must have tormented her and Joseph as they searched for their son.

Search for the Missing Number Discussion

Refer back to the Attention Grabber game played at the beginning of class, "Search for the Missing Number."

Ask the children to describe what it felt like to discover one of the numbers missing. Ask the child who found the missing number to explain how he felt when he found the missing number.

LUKE 2:49-50

And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

This is the first biblical reference to Jesus' knowledge that He is the Son of God. Even though He knew His real Father, he did not reject His earthly parents. Jesus wasn't lost; He was in His Father's house and in His care. Jesus, at the age of twelve, was devoting Himself to do His Father's will, putting everything else aside.

We can have the same devotion. We can pray, study God's word and obey Him. Jesus is our example of putting the will of the Lord first because **God is worthy of our obedience**. Though Joseph and Mary knew that Jesus was God's Son, they didn't fully understand what His mission here on earth was all about. Could you imagine what it would be like to raise the Son of God?

LUKE 2:51

Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

Though Jesus desired to attend to His Father's business, He continued to subject Himself to His earthly parents as they guided and directed Him. The Bible likewise tells us that we need to obey our parents, just as Jesus obeyed His. This meant a lot to His mother, because she treasured all these things in her heart, hoping someday to understand what God was going to do through her son.

LUKE 2:52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

"My, How You've Grown"

Gather a marker, a ruler or tape measure and a piece of butcher paper. Measure the height of several children in your class.

Discuss how they have grown physically and will continue to grow. Talk about the similarities and differences of physical and spiritual growth. Explain to the children the importance of spiritual growth in their lives.

The Bible doesn't record for us any other events of the next eighteen years of Jesus life, but He was learning and maturing. In the perfection of His divine nature, there could be no increase

since He was fully God, but He increased in His humanity in that He was also fully man.

Jesus was unique in that He is the Son of God, but He had a childhood like you and me. There were normal routines of daily life. Jesus experienced everything we experience; He understands our struggles. Hebrews 2:18 tells us, "For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."

He wants us to trust in Him to save us from sin and overcome temptation. Jesus knows what we are like, because He became like us. He lived life here just like us, except that He knew no sin; He was perfect, and because He is perfect. **He is worthy of our obedience.**

OPTIONS FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Hide some blocks or stickers around the room. Instruct the children to find one each and then bring them to you. Use this game to explain to the children what Mary and Joseph did when they were searching for Jesus.

To demonstrate obedience, place an object in the middle of the room. Ask one of the children to pick up the object and give it to another child in the room. Give the next child an instruction for the object as well. Get each child involved with a direction for the object. Use this game to point out that Mary and Joseph were obedient to what the Lord commanded them to do.

Explain to the class that Jesus was once little just like them. Measure their height and tell them that they will continue to grow just like Jesus did. Tell them that Jesus loves them and knows every inch they grow.

Trace the outline of each child's hand on a piece of white paper. Let the children color the hands however they want. Encourage

them to take the papers home and save them to watch how they will grow.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer requesting that the Lord will help them to be obedient to Him. Ask that the Lord will help them grow spiritually as well as physically. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.