

Young Jesus in the Temple

Luke 2:39-52

PPT Title

Young Jesus in the Temple

Main Point: We should follow Jesus' example by abiding with God.

Key Verse: *Dear children, remain joined to Christ.* - 1 John 2:28a

Props: two oven mitts, one mitten, one glove; simple house made of Lego® blocks, and an identical set of blocks that is not assembled.

Note to Teacher: This passage, perhaps more than any other, speaks to the duality of Christ. He was fully God and fully man. As God, He had full knowledge of all Scripture (John 1:1), and He was omniscient, knowing the thoughts and hearts of men (Luke 5:22, Psalm 94:11, Luke 16:15). These divine powers of knowledge and omniscience may or may not have been limited when He was sent to earth as a child. If these powers were limited for a time, we can be sure it was a voluntary act on the part of Christ (Philippians 2:5-11).

We know that God willfully choose to place upon Himself all the physical restrictions of having a human body. Just *how* this was possible may be the most incomprehensible aspect of the Incarnation (God's assuming human form). As a human child, He had to grow physically, as well as experientially. When Luke 2:40, 52 tells us that Jesus grew in wisdom, it was in His human nature. (See Strong's Concordance definition, "sophia.") He became "wiser" in things like how to run and learning carpentry skills from Joseph. Even Jesus' speech grew in wisdom as Jesus learned how to speak from the time He was a baby, growing in vocabulary and maturity of speech. None of this detracts from the fact that He was still 100% God, endowed with the knowledge of all creation from all time in all places.

Luke 2 is a beautiful chapter, displaying the fact that Jesus was the perfect God-man. Throughout Luke chapter 2, we see the Godhood side of Jesus. The shepherds said that Jesus was Christ the Lord (v.11), Simeon confessed that this child was Christ (v.26-35), the prophetess Anna praised God upon seeing Jesus (v.36-38), Jesus acted on His God-knowledge as a young boy when He talked to the teachers of the temple and the people were amazed at His "answers and understanding" (v.47), and finally Jesus referred to God's temple as His "Father's house" (v.49). All of this speaks to His Divinity while verses 40 and 52 speak to his humanity. Having stepped into creation, submitting Himself to being born of a woman, being cared for as an infant by fallible parents, He would now have to grow physically, and become full in wisdom of human experience. What an awesome picture of what God was willing to do to reconcile us to Himself.

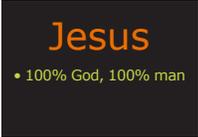
BACKGROUND

Note to Teacher: After Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary, she and Joseph had other children in the "natural" way (Matthew 1:25). Matthew 13:55-56 lists 4 of Jesus' brothers by name, and mentions all His sisters, denoting at least two, but probably more.

Say: The evil King Herod had plotted to kill the infant King Jesus, but God protected His Son. After it was safe to return to Israel, Joseph and Mary settled in Nazareth and



raised their family there. After Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had other children. I have SO many questions about Jesus' childhood! I wonder what He was like as little boy. I want to know what His first word was. I *really* want to know how His brothers and sisters felt about having a PERFECT brother! But we are not told very much about Jesus as He grew up. We are only given one story that happened between the time He was a baby, and the time He was an adult. Today we'll study this story and try to get a glimpse of God's Son when He was growing up. This is such an interesting story, and not every part is easy for us to understand. But some things we know for certain because the Bible is very clear about them. Let's list the things we know for sure. First, Jesus was fully God, and He was fully human. This is one of the hardest things to understand in the whole Bible.



The book of John tells us that Jesus has always existed (John 1:1, 30). Jesus was with God in the beginning, and He was God (John 1:2, 14) Jesus is so full of God's truth that He IS truth (John 14:6). But when the time was right, God sent Jesus to earth, contained in a human body. Now, for the first time, Jesus had **limitations**. Let's look at it this way. **Ask:** Who in this room is good at building Lego's®? **Call on a volunteer.** **Show him or her your Lego house sample.** **Now ask the volunteer to recreate the house with the loose bricks.** **Say:** Wow. You did a great job. You are a master at Lego's®. **Disassemble the house.** **Ask:** But what if I put a limitation on you? **Hold up the oven mitts.** **Ask your volunteer to rebuild the house wearing the mitts.** **Allow them to try for a few minutes.** **Say:** You still possess the **ability** to build the house, but now your awesome Lego® skills have **limitations**. Thank your volunteer. This is a very simple example, it helps us to understand limitations. Before Jesus came to earth, there was nothing He could not do. He was the Creator, He knew truth, and He was the truth. When He came to earth, He was still all of those things, but He willingly chose to put limits on Himself so that He could fulfill God's plan to save mankind.

Now, we are not certain if God allowed Jesus to use His full knowledge of everything from the time He was put on the earth, or if He started with a great limit on His knowledge, and God lessened the limits a little at a time as He grew up, like this. **Teacher:** **Put on the oven mitt, then exchange it for a mitten, then a glove, then a bare hand.** **With each exchange, say that your hand is a bit less limited.** Either way, the wisdom He received was given to Him by God (Luke 2:40), and by the time He was 12, it was clear to everyone that He had an amazing amount of wisdom.



Secondly, we **know** that Jesus NEVER sinned. Never means never. He never sinned as a boy or as a grown man. Let's keep these truths in mind today.



Because Mary and Joseph had faith in the Lord, they did everything just as God had instructed. As an obedient Jewish couple, they would have taught God's word to their children from the day they were born (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). Jesus and His brothers and sisters would have been taught God's word, and they would have started memorizing it when they were very young. The Bible says, "(Jesus) grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on Him." (Luke 2:40 NLT)

THE TEMPLE (Luke 2:41-52)



Say: God had instructed His people to celebrate the Passover Feast each year. God wanted them to remember the incredible night when He delivered the Israelites, or Jews, out of their slavery in Egypt. On that night, God provided a rescue plan to spare His people from death and to deliver them from bondage.



Mary and Joseph obeyed God by celebrating this Feast. Every year, they traveled sixty-five miles to the Temple in Jerusalem. This was a trip that thousands of Jews would take. Many times, families and friends would travel together in large groups. As the group made its way down the dusty trail, parents would talk, and children might run ahead to play with their cousins or friends. When Jesus was 12 years old, His family

once again made the familiar journey to Jerusalem for the important Feast.

After the Feast was over, His parents left to go back home. The boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But they were not aware of it. They thought He was somewhere in their group. So they traveled on for a day. Then they began to look for Him among their relatives and friends. They did not find Him. So they went back to Jerusalem to look for Him. - Luke 2:43-45



Let's imagine this scene for a moment. Mary and Joseph were traveling with a group of friends and relatives. The Bible tells us that Jesus had at least six brothers and sisters. Then there were cousins and friends. We can imagine that the women were all chatting with each other, and the men were probably doing the same. The children were running between families, all the parents assuming their children were safely with the group. Mary probably made sure the youngest children were with her. But Jesus was the oldest of her children. Surely she did not worry about Him running off. Since He never sinned, Mary never had to worry about Him being in the wrong place. But after a day of traveling homeward, someone must have asked, "Have you seen Jesus?" Soon, Mary and Joseph realized Jesus was not with the group. So Mary and Joseph turned around and traveled back to Jerusalem.

Note to Teacher: The amazing events of Jesus birth had occurred over 12 years before this day. Although Mary could never forget Who Jesus really was, twelve years is a long time. It is very possible that everyday life with seven or more children had dulled Mary and Joseph's memory. Had they began to think of Jesus as a "normal" child? As *their* child? He was definitely no ordinary child. This child would impact the entire human race. Did they feel the weight of their responsibility bearing down as they searched?



They searched for Jesus, not for hours, but for days. We can only imagine what Mary and Joseph were thinking as they searched all over Jerusalem for Jesus. Did the memories of Herod trying to kill their son flood back? Did they wonder if perhaps someone else had plotted to harm Jesus? More than likely, their emotions changed from slight worry to total fear. Did their search remind them that this was no ordinary child?



After three days they found Him in the temple courtyard. He was sitting with the teachers. He was listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at how much He understood. They also were amazed at His answers.

When His parents saw Him, they were amazed. His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us like this? Your father and I have been worried about You. We have been looking for You everywhere."

"Why were you looking for Me?" He asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?" But they did not understand what He meant by that. - Luke 2:46-50

Ask: Where did Mary and Joseph find Jesus? *In the temple courtyard.* **Ask:** Was Jesus doing anything wrong? *No.* **Say:** Jesus was in the Temple, discussing Scripture with the greatest Jewish teachers of the time. There is nothing wrong with that. It is possible that Jesus had told His parents He was going to go there, but they did not hear or understand Him.

Note to Teacher: It is possible that He didn't ask if He could go because He knew they would not give their permission, but, being fully God, He knew it was where He should be. Obviously, this is not the path our kids should dare to walk because none of our kids share Jesus' divine nature!



Ask: What was Mary’s reaction when she saw Jesus? *Amazed, frustrated, angry.* **Ask:** How do you think you would you have felt if you were her? *Confused, angry.* **Say:** Like any mother would have been, Mary was frantic, looking for her child. When she saw Him, her worry turned to frustration. Mary saw that Jesus was not lost, hurt, or held against his will. He had **chosen** to be at the temple. Instantly, Mary was confused and hurt. It appeared to her that Jesus had done something wrong - He had caused her and Joseph to worry. And her reaction is totally understandable. But we know that Jesus was not wrong. Jesus was doing what He needed to do, and Mary simply did not understand.

Mary said, “Your father and I have been worried about You. We have been looking for You everywhere.” (Luke 2:48) Though Mary probably spoke these words very sternly, she was more kind than many parents might have been! It is interesting that Mary mentioned Jesus’ *earthly* father, but Jesus referred to His *heavenly* Father. Jesus said, “Why were you looking for Me? Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?” (Luke 2:49)

Jesus’ response tells us that Mary and Joseph should have known where to look for Him right away. We wonder where else they looked for three whole days. They did not have skate parks back then. Maybe they looked at the market, or at the inn where the whole family had stayed while they were there for the Passover. Maybe they just went door to door asking if anyone had seen their 12-year-old. But it appears from Jesus’ question, that it should have been easy to figure out that He would be in the temple.



The best translation from the original Greek language tells us that Jesus may have said a question closer to, “*Didn't you know I absolutely had to be with My Father?*” In the original language, each word was rich with meaning. The word for Father describes God as having united Jesus to Himself in the closest bond of love and intimacy, that He freely told Jesus all of His plans, He chose Jesus to explain and carry out the plan of saving all people from their sin, and that God the Father and Jesus share the same God-nature. (Strong’s Concordance: 1163, 1722, 3962)



Let’s look closely at what Jesus was doing at the temple. The Bible says, “He was sitting with the teachers. He was listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at how much He understood. They also were amazed at His answers.” Like we said, we are not exactly sure if Jesus could use His *full* knowledge at this age, but He had plenty of wisdom to amaze everyone who was listening.

The Bible tells us that Jesus listened to the teachers, and then asked questions. It would seem that He was not asking questions in order to learn from them, but to teach the teachers! The very next verse tells us that all who were listening were amazed at how much He understood, and at His answers. Jesus, Himself, had the answers to the questions He asked. This was the same way Jesus taught when He grew up. Very often He asked questions to make people think, and to make people realize that they didn’t know the answers themselves. Asking questions was also great way to show respect to the older men to whom He was speaking.

Why did Jesus choose to remain in the temple? The temple was originally built as the place where **God would meet** with His people (Exodus 40:34). Later in His life, Jesus said that the temple was built to be a house of prayer (Matthew 21:13). The young Jesus wanted to spend **time in prayer** with His Father. The temple was also where the Jewish priests made **animal sacrifices** to the Lord to cover the sins of the Jewish people. Jesus may have come to the temple to think about the time when He would become the sacrifice for the sins of all who would believe in Him (John 1:29).



Note to Teacher: The tabernacle, and later the temple, was actually a *symbol* of the heavenly truth of God’s salvation plan. The infinite Jesus stepped into finite time, and

entered the earthly temple - the symbol of what He had come to accomplish (Hebrews 8:5-6, 9:11-15).

Then (Jesus) went back to Nazareth with (Mary and Joseph), and He obeyed them. But his mother kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. Jesus became wiser and stronger. He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people. - Luke 2:51-52

Application: It is awesome for us to learn more about Jesus, and His time on earth. The Bible tells us to follow His example (1 Corinthians 11:1). We simply cannot do some things that Jesus did, because we are not God as He was! For example, we do not know more than our parents, and we should not make big decisions without them. And we cannot be perfect, because we all have a sin-nature which Jesus did not.

But Jesus was also fully human, and He is the best example we will ever see on how to live a life that brings glory to God. These are the things that we should follow:

- Jesus wanted to be near His heavenly Father. He felt that it was **absolutely necessary** to be with Him. Jesus abided with, or remained with, His Father. Likewise, we should abide with God: be with Him; remain in Him; rest in Him.
- Jesus spent time with His Father by praying to Him. We can pray anywhere, anytime.
- Jesus spent time discussing God's word with others. God's word was a part of who Jesus was (John 1:1, 14). For us, there is no better way to know God than by knowing His word.
- Jesus came to make the Father known (John 16:15, Luke 10:22). Jesus was sent to teach people the good news that He would take away their sin (Luke 4:43). We can tell others about God and His Son, Jesus, who came to take away the sin of anyone who puts his or her trust in Him.



PPT Verse

Key Verse: *Dear children, remain joined to Christ. - 1 John 2:28a*

PPT Main Point

Main Point: We should follow Jesus' example by abiding with God.