

# Jesus At The Temple

## Overview

### Materials You'll Need

- 🕯️ prepare a variety of ready-to-eat healthy foods (vegetables; fruit or whole wheat snacks)
- 🕯️ plates
- 🕯️ forks, spoons and napkins



### Scriptures

Lk 2:40-52

### Bible Truth Objective(s)

Jesus obeyed both God and His earthly parents

### Behavioral Objective(s)

To identify the things believers can do at church to worship God and learn His words

### Memory Verse

"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature."  
(Lk 2:52)



## Bible Knowledge

### Jesus Christ's Childhood

Many of us have a natural curiosity to learn more about Jesus' childhood. The Gospel of Luke is the only source of information we have about His early years. Although His conception was virginal, Jesus was born on earth as a baby, and grew up as any human being would. So He understands what it is like to be a child. And He didn't have an easy life. His father was a carpenter so He wasn't born into a rich family. He also had to move several times as a young child because Herod wanted Him killed. He lived in a foreign country for a while, and then in Galilee, in a town called Nazareth. In the minds of most Jews, Nazareth wasn't the best place to live. The Jews looked down upon Nazarenes as poor and not "pure" Jews. So even though Jesus is the Savior, His early life on earth was not necessarily a happy one.

Jesus had younger brothers and sisters. The names of His sisters are not known, but His brothers were: James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. Not everyone understood who He was and knew that

He was the Son of God because He had come into the world just as any other baby would have.

When Jesus turned twelve years old, He formally joined the religious community, and at that point was considered a man, responsible for keeping the Law. Keeping the Law included celebrating Passover at Jerusalem (see Ex 23:14-17). In fact, every Jewish man was expected to come to Jerusalem at least three times a year. During this particular trip, the boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem to learn more about God's words, which caused Mary and Joseph to anxiously seek for their missing son. When Mary found Him in the temple listening to teachers and asking them questions, she told Jesus how worried she was. Even though Jesus knew that His goal was to learn and do His heavenly Father's will, He obeyed His parents and went home with them.



## Understanding Your Students

For this Bible story, it is important to let the children know that even though they are young, they can still build a strong relationship with God by coming to Religious Education classes to learn more about God's words, singing hymns to praise Him, listening to Bible stories, and obeying their parents. This is just what Jesus did, for He was eager to learn everything there was to know about His heavenly Father. It is also important to point out that He was submissive to His earthly parents. As the key verse for this lesson (Luke 2:52) indicates, the boy Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Jesus is an excellent example for them to follow.

Students at this age love to hear about Jesus'

childhood stories. They might be amazed to realize that the almighty Lord Jesus was once a child, too, just like them. Talk about the kind of family Jesus grew up in. Being the oldest in a carpenter's family, Jesus had to help out His earthly parents a lot. Ask students if they do the same in their own home. Have them give examples of how they can be good helpers. It is important for the students to know that Jesus was not some kind of superhuman or superhero, even though He was born by the Holy Spirit. By relating these childhood stories, it helps them to understand that Jesus went through many of the same things they are also going through. That is why Jesus can really know how they feel. That is why they are always encouraged to talk to Jesus through prayer because there is nothing He can't help them with.



## Vocabulary

### Carpenter

someone who makes things out of wood (like chairs and tables) to earn a living

### Wisdom, Wise

knowing right from wrong

### Passover

a special holiday to remember how God saved His people from the Egyptians during the Exodus

### Honor

to show respect for someone



## Before You Teach

This lesson is a good time to reflect upon how the boy Jesus was able to grow strong in faith and be filled with wisdom, and how He also became a person who was well loved by God and the people around Him. As RE teachers, our biggest challenge is helping the students grow up in the Lord and remain faithful to Him, even as they head off for college. Although it was not easy, the boy Jesus was able to strive to do what was right in the eyes of God. Encourage your students to be more like Jesus. He is a good example of a person who went through daily struggles and conquered them. Today, the temptations may be different (e.g. excessive computer games, on-line chat rooms), but the way to overcome them is the same. Remind the students that every little thing counts, and it's up to them to make good choices every day! As you advise the students to make smart choices, you

might think about your past and the decisions that you made growing up. Was God a part of your decision-making process? What kind of priorities did you have? Did you seek to please God and men as a young child? Take this opportunity to share your own testimony for the Lord.

Another important part of this lesson is Jesus' obedience to His earthly parents. We can imagine how worried and frustrated they felt when Jesus was nowhere to be found. Later, when Mary found Him sitting among the teachers in the temple, talking to them peacefully, He was not showing any signs of anxiety over "losing" His parents. But, Jesus knew that His earthly parents would not understand why He stayed behind to talk to the teachers and the importance of studying God's words. So Jesus listened to Mary, and obeyed her, returning home without arguing further. Talk to the students about what it means to obey their parents. Give some examples of how one can truly be obedient to his or her parents.



## Bible Story

### Jesus Grows Up

When Jesus was born, He was just a tiny baby. He had little toes and fingers and a very small body. But He didn't stay little. He grew like you and me. He became taller, older, and smarter each day! Soon, he was not a baby anymore, but a boy who loved to help out in His family. He started to help His father Joseph. Joseph was a carpenter. That means he made things out of wood, like shelves and chairs. So Jesus would help his father with his wood-working. He also must have helped His mother to take care of some house chores. Every day He grew. Soon He turned ten years old, then eleven, then twelve! He grew strong and healthy, and was filled with wisdom. Children, what does it mean for someone to be filled with wisdom? When someone is filled with wisdom, this person understands many things in the Bible and knows how to make good decisions to be a good Christian. Children, how many of you think that you're also being filled with wisdom? (Raise your hand high, so I can see.) Can you think of some good decisions that you have already made to be a good Christian? For example, you decided to follow your parents to come to church today to learn more about God's words. You chose not to complain about coming to church. This is a wise decision you have made to be a good Christian. Are there any other examples you can think of? (Let students share.) The boy Jesus was just like you; He not only grew taller and older, but also wiser and stronger in faith.

### Jesus Goes to Jerusalem with His Parents

Every year, Jesus' parents, Mary and Joseph, took their family to Jerusalem to worship in the temple. They made this trip every year to show God that they loved Him very much and wanted to worship Him. When Jesus turned twelve, Mary and Joseph took their family again. But this time, the Jerusalem trip became even more special. That is because when a Jewish boy turns twelve years old, people will not call him a boy anymore, but a man. Even though he is not that old (share the name of a child within the local church who is around twelve years old so that the students have an idea of what that means), he is old enough to understand what is right to do and

what he should not do. A twelve year old Jewish boy has to begin to act grown up and be responsible. Therefore, when the Feast of the Passover came, Mary and Joseph took Jesus with them to go to Jerusalem to worship God.

Back in the old days, many people didn't live close to Jerusalem. And when it was time to go to the temple, the family had to walk on foot for hundreds of miles to get to Jerusalem to worship God. Do you know how far Jesus and His parents walked from Nazareth, where He lived, to Jerusalem and back? Does anyone want to take a guess? (Call on 3 to 4 students to share their estimates, and write the number on the board.) It takes about twelve days to walk 240 miles from Nazareth to Jerusalem and back. That was how far Jesus walked with His parents to go worship God! Can you imagine yourself walking for that long? (Give an example between two places that students are familiar with that are approximately 240 miles in distance to show them how far it really is. You can also use a Bible map to point out the distance between Nazareth to Jerusalem.)

### Mary and Joseph Cannot Find Jesus

Finally, after about twelve days of walking, Jesus and His parents arrived safely at the temple in Jerusalem. The festival was a special time when everyone went to worship God together. So many families and friends were also there to celebrate. When Jesus and His family got there, they had a wonderful time worshiping God and seeing their friends. When Passover ended, everyone started to head home again. Because so many people had come to Jerusalem, there was a big crowd traveling down the road. And because there were so many people, Mary and Joseph couldn't keep an eye on Jesus. After walking for a long time, they found out Jesus was not with them. At first, Mary and Joseph thought Jesus was walking with their friends. Soon, they found out that He wasn't. They looked up and down the road but they couldn't find Jesus anywhere. So they hurried back to Jerusalem to look for Him there. Children, let's say that you went to the supermarket to buy some food with your parents, and when it is time to go home, they could not find you. How do you think your parents might feel when they don't see you anywhere? (Let students share their thoughts.) They would probably

feel very nervous and worried about you, and this was how Mary and Joseph felt. As soon as they found out that Jesus was missing, they hurried back to the city of Jerusalem looking everywhere for Him.

### **Mary and Joseph Find Jesus in the Temple**

Jerusalem was a big city! Mary and Joseph looked and looked for a long time, but couldn't find Jesus in those places they looked. Can you guess where they finally found Jesus? They found Him in the temple. When Mary and Joseph arrived at the temple, they found Jesus sitting among the temple teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Jesus was also answering questions Himself. The teachers were very surprised that He knew so much about God.

When Mary and Joseph found Jesus, they were happy and upset at the same time. They felt happy because they knew that Jesus was safe. However, they also felt angry and upset, because Jesus didn't pay attention to the time. When it was time to go home and leave with His family, Jesus still stayed in the temple. He didn't even know His parents had left.

Mary walked up to Jesus and said, "Son, why have You done this to us? Your father and I are worried about you. We have looked for you everywhere."

Jesus answered, "I need to stay here and talk with the teachers to learn more about God. Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

Children, what do you think Jesus was talking about? Wasn't His father the carpenter Joseph? Who is the "Father" Jesus was talking about here? (Ask a few students to share their thoughts.) Yes, He was not talking about His earthly father, Joseph, but His heavenly Father, the almighty God. He stayed behind in the temple wanting to learn about God as much as possible, so that He would be prepared to do what God wanted Him to do when He grew up. So even at a young age, Jesus knew that studying God's word and doing what was right was very important.

Mary didn't understand what Jesus was talking about, but she kept all these things in her heart. Then Jesus went back to Nazareth with His family. He obeyed His earthly parents, Mary and Joseph, and followed the commandment to honor His parents. Children, how can you honor your father and mother today? (Have students give examples.) We can obey them, tell them the truth, be good helpers, and listen to what they have to say. Jesus did all these things, and the Bible says that He "increased in stature and wisdom, and in favor of God and men." That means that He grew smarter every day. And every day He loved God more and loved the people around Him more too. When we do the right things, and make smart choices every day, both God and men will be very proud and happy with us.



### **Check For Understanding**

- 1. Where did Jesus and His family go when He was twelve years old?** (They went to Jerusalem to worship at the temple.)
- 2. When it was time to go home, what happened to Jesus?** (His parents could not find Him. He had stayed behind in the temple.)
- 3. What was Jesus doing at the temple when His parents found Him?** (He was studying with the teachers, asking and answering questions.)
- 4. How did Jesus obey His earthly parents and God when He went home with them?**

(He listened to Mary and Joseph and went home with them because He knew they were worried about Him. He obeyed God by honoring His parents and following their instructions. He also knew it was important to study the words of God.)

- 5. What can we do to show that we are listening to our parents?** (Allow students to answer.)
- 6. What can we do to show that we are listening to God?** (Allow students to answer.)
- 7. The Bible says that Jesus grew in stature and wisdom. What does that mean and how can we be like Jesus as we grow up?**

(Allow students to answer; some possible answers: we need to grow strong both physically and spiritually; we need to keep our bodies healthy by eating the right

foods and exercising; we need to read the Bible, come to church and pray to grow strong spiritually. These things will make God and our parents proud and happy.)



## Life Application Story

### The Little Helper

The Lim family was getting ready for a big dinner. All their relatives were coming to their house today. It was Grandma's birthday. She was going to be eighty-one.

That afternoon, everyone was getting ready for the big dinner. Nicole washed the vegetables and Mrs. Lim chopped them up. Lisa was in the backyard. She was busy washing Togo, their dog. Benjamin was in the living room. He was putting away books and dusting the tables. Everyone was doing something- everyone except for little five-year-old Susie.

Susie sat on a stool in the kitchen. She swung her feet as she watched her mother and her sister Nicole. She wanted to help, too.

"Nicole, do you need help washing the vegetables?" Susie asked.

"No, Susie, you're too little to help. You won't be able to reach the sink," Nicole said. "Don't worry, just go and play," she added.

"Oh, okay," Susie said. Then she turned to her mom and asked, "Mommy, do you need help cutting the vegetables? I promise that I will be very careful."

"No, dear. You are too young to use a knife. You just might cut yourself with it," Mrs. Lim said. "Why don't you go and color your books?"

Susie frowned, and slowly walked out to the living room to look for her brother Benjamin instead. She saw Benjamin putting away books and magazines.

"Ben, do you think I can help you put away the books?" Susie asked.

"No, Susie. These books are too heavy for you," Benjamin said. "Why don't you go outside and play?"

"Ben, the books are not that heavy. See, I can

pick up my own toy box that is full of stuff. Look at me- I am strong! Can I pleaseeeeee help?" Susie begged.

"Don't be silly, Susie. I'm almost done. Just go outside and play. I'll come find you in a minute," Ben insisted.

Susie hung her head and went to the backyard. She found her sister, Lisa, washing their dog, Togo. Susie laughed when she saw Lisa. Lisa was all wet. She even had some bubbles on her face! Togo kept splashing around the big tub.

Susie walked up to her and asked, "Lisa, do you need some help washing Togo?"

"Are you kidding, Susie? You're too little to hold Togo down. You're going to get all wet," Lisa said.

"You are all wet, too. Why can't I get wet with you?" Susie said.

"Susie, don't be like that. I'll finish washing Togo in a few minutes, then we can play, okay? Now, just go and do something and wait for me."

Susie sadly walked to the front porch and sat down. It seemed like she was too little to do anything around the house, but she just wanted to help. She wanted to grow up, fast!

Just then, her father walked up to Susie. He had just finished mowing the lawn.

"Why the sad face, Susie?" Mr. Lim asked.

"I can't seem to do anything, Daddy. Everyone says I'm too little," said Susie.

"Oh, Susie, you can do a lot of things. Listen, even though you're little, you can still please God in many ways."

"How?" Susie asked.

"Well, for starters, you can smile. God loves happy children. You can also help us by praying. You can ask God to help us do good jobs, so we can get ready for Grandma's birthday dinner soon," Mr. Lim said.

Mr. Lim continued, "You know Susie, even though you are still young, you are growing every day. One day you will be big enough to do all the

things your brother and sisters are doing. But it makes me happy and proud that you want to help. That means your mind is growing."

"Like when I learn new things?" asked Susie.

"Yes, like when you learn new things. How about I teach you something now? Do you want to help me sweep up the grass?" asked Mr. Lim.

"Yes!" replied Susie with a big smile.

### Questions to Think About

1. **What occasion was the Lim family busy getting ready for that evening?** (Grandma's 81-year-old birthday dinner.)
2. **What was everyone doing to get ready?** (Nicole was washing the vegetables; Mrs. Lim was cutting the vegetables; Benjamin was dusting tables, and putting away books; Lisa was washing their dog, Togo; and Mr. Lim was mowing the lawn.)
3. **How did little Susie feel when everyone told**

**her that she was too young to help?** (Susie felt very sad. She wanted to be helpful, but no one would let her do anything because she was the youngest in the family.)

4. **What would you do if you were Susie? Do you help out in your own home? What do you usually do to help out in your family?** (Let students answer.)
5. **What did Mr. Lim say to Susie to make her smile again?** (Mr. Lim told Susie that even though she was young, she could still do many things to help. For example, she could pray to God for everyone to do a good job getting ready for the dinner.)
6. **How do we know we are growing everyday, physically and spiritually?** (Allow students to answer; some possible answers: we are growing taller, eating more food, learning more about the words of God, thinking about others etc)



### Activity 1

#### Jesus At The Temple

Help Mary and Joseph find Jesus at the temple by going through the maze.



### Activity 2

#### I Can Go To Church

What can we do at church? Finish each sentence.

1. I can go to church with my \_\_\_\_\_. (family)
2. I can go to church and \_\_\_\_\_. (pray)
3. I can go to church and see other \_\_\_\_\_. (brothers and sisters)
4. I can go to church and learn God's \_\_\_\_\_. (words)

During this activity sheet, be sure to talk about how all these things help us grow spiritually, closer to God. When we go to church and learn God's words, we are like Jesus at the temple.



### Activity 3

#### I Can Grow!

##### Materials:

1. prepare a variety of ready-to-eat healthy foods (vegetables; fruit or whole wheat snacks)
2. plates
3. forks, spoons and napkins

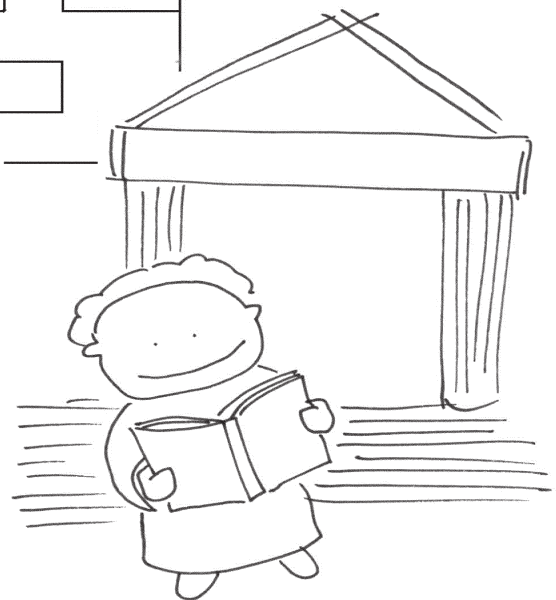
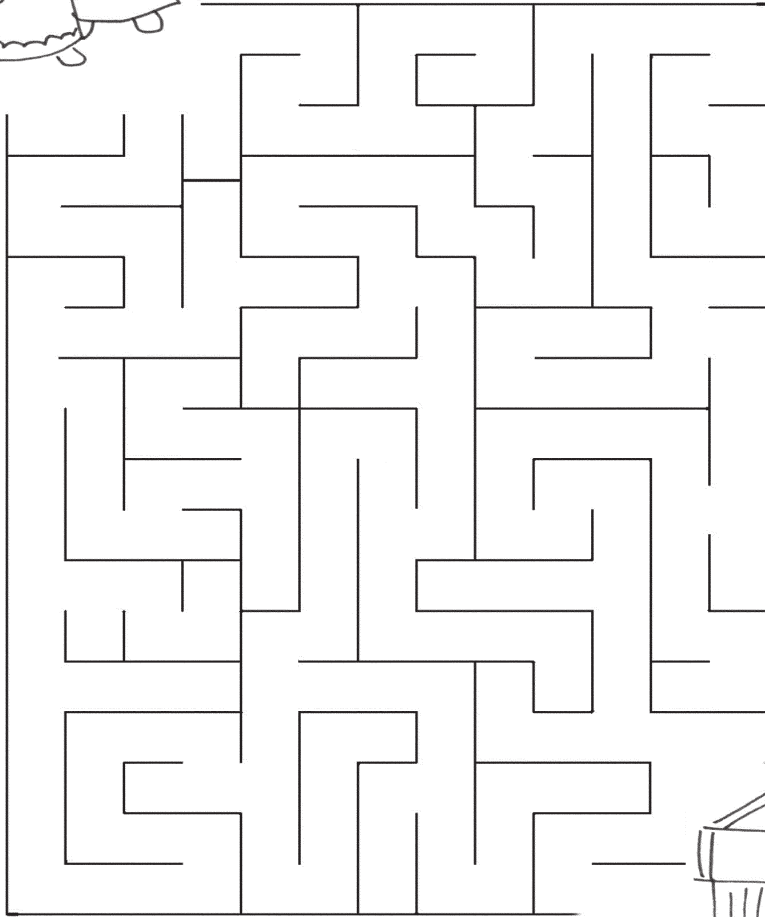
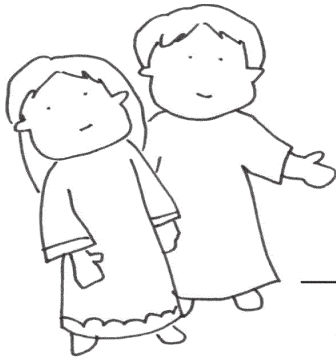
##### Directions:

1. Give each student a plate, napkin and fork or spoon.
2. Before you hold up each snack, talk about how we can keep our bodies healthy (exercise, good diet, being happy).
3. As you hold up each snack, talk about how it is a good and healthy choice (as opposed to chips, soft drinks or candy).
4. Ask each student why it is important to keep our bodies healthy physically and spiritually (review how we can keep our bodies healthy spiritually too if time permits).
5. Pass out some of the light snacks for the students to enjoy!

Activity 5:1

# Jesus At The Temple

Help Mary and Joseph find Jesus at the temple by going through the maze.



Activity 5:2

### I Can Go to Church

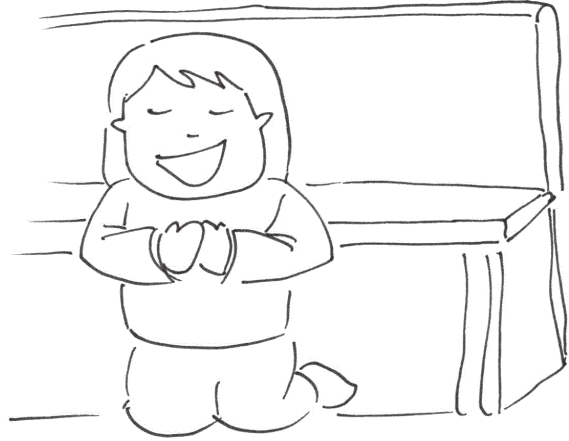
Look at each picture. What can we do at church?  
Finish the sentence. The words to choose from are:

**brothers and sisters, pray, words, family**



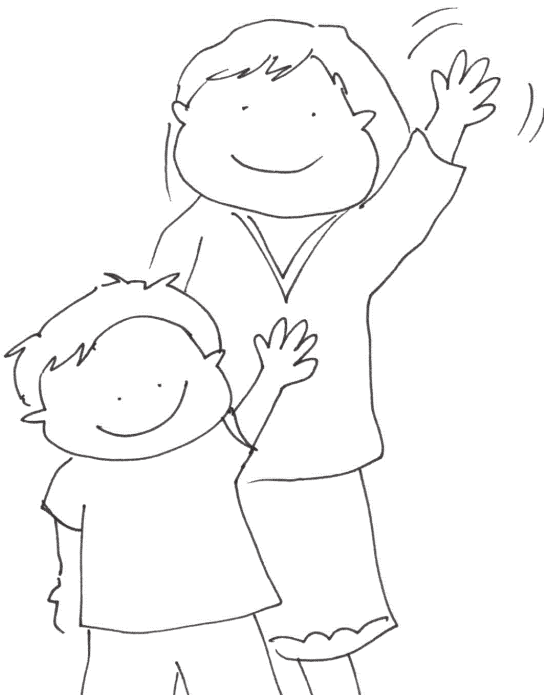
1. I can go to church with my

\_\_\_\_\_.



2. I can go to church and

\_\_\_\_\_.



3. I can go to church and see

\_\_\_\_\_.



4. I can go to church and learn  
God's \_\_\_\_\_.