

Jesus as a Child

Bible Passage: Matthew 2; Luke 2

Story Point: Jesus came to earth to do His Father's plan.

Key Passage: John 1:1

Big Picture Question: Is Jesus God or a human? Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

Christ Connection: Jesus came to earth to do God's plan, and even as a boy, Jesus knew that. Jesus got ready to do what God sent Him to do. God sent Jesus into the world to die on the cross and rescue people from sin.

Leader Bible Study

The Gospel of Luke records just two narratives about Jesus' childhood: His dedication (Luke 2:21-40) and His visit to the temple when He was 12 years old (Luke 2:41-52). The Gospel of Matthew includes another story: a visit from some wise men. These stories of Jesus as a child set the stage for Jesus' ministry as an adult.

After Jesus was born, God put a star in the sky as a sign. Wise men from the east followed the star to Jerusalem, looking for a new king. They found Jesus, who was probably 1 or 2 years old, in Bethlehem and they worshiped Him as King. Later, Jesus and His family settled in Nazareth, where Jesus grew up.

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 to celebrate Passover, Joseph might have taken Jesus, who was about 12, around the city to teach Him the significance of the temple and to explain the purpose of the Passover feast.

Jesus' parents headed home after the feast. They assumed Jesus was among their traveling companions, but He wasn't. Jesus had stayed behind at the temple. A full day passed before Mary and Joseph noticed Jesus was missing. They hurried back to Jerusalem and finally found Him at the temple. Jesus asked His mother, "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 know that as Jesus got older, He grew "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people" (Luke 2:52). Jesus carried out God's plan to reconcile the world to Himself. (2 Cor. 5:19)

The Bible Story

After Jesus was born, wise men came to Bethlehem to worship Him as King. When they left, an angel told Joseph in a dream to leave Bethlehem because King Herod wanted to hurt Jesus. So Mary, Joseph, and Jesus went to Egypt until Herod died. Then they went back to Israel and lived in Nazareth. Jesus grew up in Nazareth.

Every year, Jesus' parents took a trip to Jerusalem for a special celebration called Passover. On Passover, the Jewish people got together to remember when God saved His people from slavery in Egypt. They celebrated all the things God had done for them.

When Jesus was 12 years old, He went with Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem. After the celebration, Mary and Joseph started to go home. They traveled with a large group of people, but Jesus was not with them. Mary and Joseph thought that Jesus was somewhere in the group, but He had stayed behind in Jerusalem.

Mary and Joseph walked for a whole day. Then they started looking for Jesus. They searched among their friends and family, but they could not find Jesus anywhere! Mary and Joseph hurried back to Jerusalem. They looked for Jesus, but they could not find Him. Jerusalem was a big city, and Jesus was just a boy.

Finally, Mary and Joseph found Him in the temple. Jesus was listening to the teachers and asking them questions. The people were surprised at how much Jesus understood. Jesus' parents were surprised too. Mary said, "Son, why have You done this? Your father and I were worried. We've been looking everywhere for You."

Jesus asked, "Why were you looking for Me? Didn't you know that I had to be in My Father's house?"

Mary and Joseph did not understand what Jesus was talking about. Jesus went home with Mary and Joseph. He always obeyed them, and Mary remembered these things. Jesus grew taller and wiser. God was happy with Him, and so was everyone who knew Him.

Part One: Introduce the Story

Welcome time

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

Guide preschoolers to use the key to find and circle Jesus. Then circle Mary and Joseph.

Say • Jesus was 12 years old when He went to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration with His parents. After Passover, Mary and Joseph realized that Jesus was not with them. They found Him in the temple, listening to the church teachers and asking them questions. Listen to today's Bible story to hear why Jesus was in the temple.

Play “Where Is It?”

Look around the classroom and choose an item. Describe the item to preschoolers, mentioning its color and shape. Give additional clues and ask a child if he knows where the item is. Guide him to walk over and point to the item. Allow children to take turns describing items and guessing where each item is. Be prepared to offer assistance as needed.

Say • When Jesus was 12 years old, He went with His parents, Mary and Joseph, to Jerusalem. After the celebration, Mary and Joseph started traveling home with a large group of people. Later, they discovered Jesus was not with them! They did not know where He was. Listen to the Bible story to find out where Jesus was.

Measure height

Invite a child to stand tall with her back against the wall. Place a ruler horizontally on top of her head to determine her height. Print her name on a strip of tape and attach it to the wall to mark how tall she is. Allow her to stretch a tape measure and read the numbers to see how tall she is.

Say • The last two weeks, we heard Bible stories about when Jesus was a baby. In today's Bible story, Jesus was 12 years old. The Bible says Jesus got taller, just like you are getting taller! Listen to today's Bible story to hear about what Jesus was like when He was a kid like you!

Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Ask boys and girls to count to 12 as they move to Bible study. Ask for volunteers to tell what they think they will be like when they are 12 years old.

Teach the Story

Introduce the Bible story

Place a bookmark at Luke 2 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

Say • There is no other book like the Bible because only the Bible is God's Word. God's Word is true. Today's Bible story comes from the Books of Matthew and Luke. Listen to hear what Jesus did when He was a child like you.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

Say • Jesus' earthly parents, Mary and Joseph, were worried when they could not find Him. They were surprised to find Him in the temple talking to the church leaders. The people were amazed at how much Jesus understood. Jesus came to earth to do His Father's plan. Jesus was getting ready to do what God sent Him to do.

Practice the key passage

Place paper strips at John 1:1 in several Bibles. Place the key passage marker at John 1:1 in your Bible. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Invite boys and girls to take turns opening a Bible with a paper strip and touching the verse. Invite children to try to say the verse from memory as they point. Allow beginning readers to point to each word as they say it.

Say • The Word is Jesus. A few verses after our key passage says the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Jesus brought God's Word to life right here on planet earth! He lived with people. He knows what it is like to be like us, but He never sinned. Sing the key passage song, “In the Beginning,” and the theme song, “He Came Into the World.”

Learn the big picture question

Say • If Jesus is God, then how could He also be a 12-year-old boy? Is Jesus God or a human? Jesus is both fully God and fully human. Jesus came to earth to do God's plan. Even as a boy, Jesus understood that.

Missions moment

Show the “Brazil Flag.” Explain the picture shows the flag of Brazil. Ask preschoolers to name the colors.

Say • Like Jesus came to earth to do His Father's plan, missionaries do

God's plan. They tell people all over the world about Jesus. Let's add more stars to this flag and remember we all have a part in God's plan. Pray for the people of Brazil and missionaries there.

Pray and transition to experience the story

Experience the Story

Inspect Bibles

Stack several Bibles. Set strips of paper and markers nearby. Encourage boys and girls to open a Bible and become familiar with it. Look at pictures in an illustrated Bible. Show children the division between the Old and New Testaments. Locate the key passage in each Bible and invite preschoolers to mark it with a paper strip. Show preschoolers the name Jesus in Matthew 2. Challenge an older child to copy words from the Bible onto paper strips.

Say · This is the place in the Bible where we read that Jesus was a boy. Jesus knew that God planned for Him to be the One to rescue people from sin. Jesus came to earth to do His Father's plan, and even when He was a boy, He was getting ready to do what God sent Him to do.

Paint with cotton swabs

Print a "Cotton Swab Painting" printable for each child. Allow a child to choose the page she would like to paint first. Squeeze washable paint onto a paper plate. Show a child how to dip a cotton swab into the paint and fill in the circles on the worksheet to spell JESUS or paint a church. Mention that Mary and Joseph took Jesus with them to the temple in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.

Say · When it was time for Mary and Joseph to return to home, Jesus was not with them. When His parents noticed Jesus was gone, they worried. They returned to Jerusalem and began to search for Him. They found Jesus in the temple talking to the teachers. Jesus came to earth to do His Father's plan, and even as a boy, Jesus knew that. Jesus got ready to do what God sent Him to do.

Go on a scavenger hunt

Follow your church's security policies and if weather permits, go outside. Name an item commonly found outdoors and guide boys and girls to look or listen for it. Name things like a blade of grass, a gray rock, a pink flower, a green leaf, a bird's call, or a car's engine. Help a child discover each item with her eyes or her ears. If desired, collect nature items as they are discovered. If weather does not permit, look for inside items.

Say · Jesus' parents looked and looked for Him, and they were worried for His safety. They finally found Him at the temple asking the teachers questions. God had a plan for Jesus to rescue people from sin when

He was older. When His parents finally found Him, Jesus told them He needed to be in the temple, His Father's house. Is Jesus God or a human? Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

Toss and travel

Print, cut out, and assemble the "Movement Cubes." Consider stuffing the cubes with shredded paper for support. Arrange colored paper on the floor around the room. Invite a child to toss both cubes. Identify whether a child will hop, crawl, or gallop to the green, red, or blue piece of paper. Let another child toss the cube and move accordingly. Continue the play, taking turns and moving as directed.

Say · You have traveled all over the room. When Jesus' family traveled to Jerusalem, Jesus went with them. After the Passover celebration, everyone began to travel back home, but later that day, Mary noticed Jesus was not with them. She and Joseph hurried back to Jerusalem and found Him in the temple listening to the teachers. Jesus would one day die on the cross to rescue people from sin. Even as a boy, Jesus wanted to do His Father's plan. Is Jesus God or a human? Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

Pack for a trip

Set out luggage items such as suitcases, duffel bags, backpacks, or totes. Invite preschoolers to pretend to pack for a mission trip. They may pack classroom items, such as play food, toys, or books. Consider providing items, such as clothing and clean, empty toiletry bottles for preschoolers to pack. Include a Bible for each bag. Ask preschoolers what kinds of things they need to pack for a trip.

Say · In today's Bible story, Jesus and His family took a trip to Jerusalem. I wonder what they packed? Missionaries often pack for trips. Some missionaries go for a short trip and just need one bag. Other missionaries go to live in a new place. They need many suitcases so that they will have things they need. All missionaries need a Bible so they can teach people about God's plan. Jesus came to earth to do His Father's plan to rescue people from sin.

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve O-shaped cereal for snack. Lay a sheet of waxed paper over a clean copy of the “Cotton Swab Painting” printable for each child. Lead children to arrange cereal in the circles. Remind children that Jesus came to earth to do His Father’s plan.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

Why did Jesus’ family travel to Jerusalem? (for a special celebration called Passover)

How old was Jesus in today’s story? (12 years old)

What did Mary and Joseph realize after they were on their way home to Nazareth? (Jesus was not with them; they couldn’t find Jesus.)

Where did Mary and Joseph find Jesus? (the temple)

Why did Jesus stay at the temple? (to listen to the teachers and ask questions, to be in His Father’s house)

Is Jesus God or a human? (Jesus is both fully God and fully human)

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song. Ask them something that they enjoyed doing or did well during the session.

Where Is Jesus?

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the key to find and circle Jesus. Then find and circle Mary and Joseph.



Preschool Activity Pages

Unit 19• Session 5

Jesus as a Child

BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- Jesus traveled to Jerusalem with His parents when He was 12 years old.
- Jesus was not with Mary and Joseph when they started home.
- They went back and found Jesus in the temple with the teachers.
- Jesus came to earth to do His Father's plan.

KEY PASSAGE: John 1:1

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Is Jesus God or a human? Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- How did Jesus surprise the people at the temple? How did Jesus understand so much?
- What did Jesus mean when He said He had to be in His Father's house?
- What was God's plan for Jesus?
- How is Jesus part of God's plan for us?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Invite others in your neighborhood to join your family on a walk. Talk about how Joseph and Mary walked home with a group so large they didn't notice Jesus was missing.



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