

And Jesus Grew

(Luke 2:21-52)

Introduction

Last week we learned about Jesus' birth. Today we will learn a little bit about his childhood. [Teacher, review some of the highlights from last week's lesson. Show the children on a map where Jesus was born in Bethlehem and where He lived as a boy in Nazareth.]

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we want to grow up to be just like You. This morning as we learn about Your childhood, help us to want to be as kind and thoughtful as You were as a boy. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2:52)

Lesson

The Bible only tells us a little bit about Jesus' life as a child.

The first thing we learn is that Mary and Joseph had Jesus circumcised on the eighth day and named Him "Jesus" just as the angel had instructed them. "Jesus" means "the Lord is salvation."

Luke 2:21

Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived.

Then when Jesus was 40 days old, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the Temple to present Him to the Lord. [This is was like a Baby Dedication.]

Luke 2:22-24

Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (23) The law of the Lord says, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the LORD." (24) So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord—"either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

While they were at the Temple to dedicate Jesus to God for His service, they met an old man named Simeon. God had promised Simeon that he would see the Messiah before he died.

Luke 2:25-33

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him (26) and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. (27) That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, (28) Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, (29) "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. (30) I have seen your salvation, (31) which you have prepared for all people. (32) He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!" (33) Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him.

Simeon recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promise to him, so, he blessed the baby, knowing that He was holding the Messiah. In his praise, Simeon made it clear that he could now die with complete confidence that God would provide salvation for His people.

Luke 2:34-35

Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. (35) As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul."

Also at the Temple was an old woman named Anna. She was a prophetess. She also gave witness that Jesus would save Israel.

Luke 2:36-38

Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. (37) Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. (38) She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.

After Mary and Joseph had dedicated Jesus, they returned home.

Luke 2:39-40

When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. (40) There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

12 Years Later...

Every year Jewish families would plan a trip to the Temple at Jerusalem, to celebrate the Passover. They gathered together to praise God for sending Moses to rescue them from Egypt and lead them to the Promised Land. It was a great time of thanksgiving.

[Teacher, explain why the Jews celebrate Passover and what the Temple is.]

In Bible times, when a boy turned 12 years old, he was considered to be one of the men and was allowed to go to the Temple. When Jesus was twelve years old, He and His parents, and His aunts and uncles, and cousins, and many other people from Nazareth made the long walk up to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.

Luke 2:41-42

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. (42) When Jesus was twelve years old, they attended the festival as usual.

This was Jesus' first trip to the Temple in Jerusalem for the Passover. It probably took them several days to walk there from Nazareth. I'm sure as they were getting closer and closer to Jerusalem, they got more and more excited.

Jerusalem was a big city compared to Nazareth. Jerusalem has many little streets that wind around the city. The streets are lined with little shops and places to eat. And the celebration week is a busy time as many people gather there from long distances.

Jesus especially liked spending time at the Temple, taking part in the special services.

All too soon the celebration was over and it was time to start for home. Crowds of people were leaving the city, walking and talking about the wonderful time they had just enjoyed. Mary and Joseph and all their aunts and uncles and cousins were among the crowds of people leaving the city.

They had been traveling for a whole day when they began to wonder where Jesus was.

Luke 2:43-44

After the celebration was over, they started home to Nazareth, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn't miss him at first, (44) because they assumed he was among the other travelers. But when he didn't show up that evening, they started looking for him among their relatives and friends.

At first Mary and Joseph didn't notice that Jesus wasn't with them. They probably just thought He was walking along with one of His cousins. But that evening when they made camp and it was time for dinner, Mary started to worry. They couldn't find Jesus anywhere.

They looked for Him among the many people travelling with them, but He was nowhere to be found.

Would your mom and dad worry if they couldn't find you? How do you think Jesus' mom and dad felt when they couldn't find Him? They must have said, "Jesus should be here somewhere! What happened to Jesus? Did He get hurt? Is He lost?"

Luke 2:45

When they couldn't find him, they went back to Jerusalem to search for him there.

Mary and Joseph had to walk all the way back to Jerusalem to find Him. They looked and looked for Him. After three days of looking, do you know where they found Him? (Let's read on...)

Luke 2:46-47

Three days later they finally discovered him in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions. (47) All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

When Mary and Joseph walked into the Temple area, they could see the Temple teachers, huddled together, deep in discussion. They stopped in amazement. There was Jesus, sitting among the wise men of Jerusalem. He was talking to them and asking them questions! And, it says, they were amazed at His understanding and His answers!

Why do you think Jesus had this amazing knowledge when He was only 12 years old? (He was God the Son!)

Do you think Mary and Joseph were angry with Jesus when they finally found him?

I'm sure they were happy to finally find Him, but Mary scolded Him. She had been worried sick about not being able to find Him. Would your parents scold you if they couldn't find you?

Luke 2:48

His parents didn't know what to think. "Son," his mother said to him, "why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for you everywhere."

Jesus asks His parents why they came looking for Him...

Luke 2:49-50

"But why did you need to search?" he asked. "Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house?" (50) But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

Jesus knew that God the Father had sent Him to earth to be the Savior of the human race, but the Temple teachers and Joseph didn't understand that Jesus was the Son of God, the promised Messiah.

Luke 2:51

Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. And his mother stored all these things in her heart.

Although God was His real Father, Jesus lived with and obeyed Mary and Joseph, His earthly parents. Mary would never forget all the amazing things that happened that day; she kept all these memories in her heart.

Luke 2:52 (Our verse for today)

*Jesus grew in **wisdom** and in **stature** and in **favor** with God and all the people.*

As a boy, Jesus grew up going to school and learning how to read. He memorized scriptures, just like you do. As the years went on, He grew in His knowledge of the Word of God and His understanding of what it meant for Him to be the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

And as He did that, it says that he grew in **favor** with God and all the people. As Jesus lived His life in a way that pleased God the Father, everyone around Him loved and respected Him for that.

Jesus obeyed his parents and He was kind and thoughtful to His brothers and sisters and He was helpful around His house.

God wants us to live our lives just like Jesus. When we live our lives in a way that pleases God, everyone around us will love us all the more, too. Let's pray and ask God to help us to do that, too.

Closing Prayer

Father, as Jesus was growing up, the Bible tells us that He grew in **wisdom** and in **favor** with both other people and with God the Father. Jesus is our example. We want to grow up to be wise so that You will be very proud of us. Make our hearts tender towards Your ways so that we will always choose to follow after You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

To learn more about Jesus' life as a child, turn to Matthew 13:55-56 and discuss the following:

- ❖ How many brothers did Jesus have? (Matthew 13:55)

Jesus and his brothers went to school. The girls in Bible times did not go to school, but they stayed home and helped their mother with household tasks like going to the market and buying food and learning how to cook and sew.

- ❖ Did Jesus have any sisters? (Matthew 13:56)

We know he had more than one because it says, "sisters"!

Everyone in the family had work to do. Fathers taught their sons the family business.

- ❖ What kind of work did Jesus learn from Joseph? (Matthew 13:55)

As they worked, Joseph probably taught Jesus what it means to be a man of God. God knew that the best way for children to learn was by listening to their parents. At the time of Moses, God told Israelite parents to teach their children about Him and His rules.

- ❖ When were parents supposed to talk to their children about God? (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

Or, use the following review questions in a discussion or game of your choice:

1. How did Simeon know that this baby was God's promised Messiah? (Vs. 26-27; God revealed it to him)
2. What did Simeon prophesy that Jesus would be? (Vs. 30-32; Salvation, a light.)
3. What do you think Simeon meant when he said "a sword would pierce Mary's heart"? (Vs. 34-35; She would be broken-hearted when Jesus died.)

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4. Why did Mary and Joseph take Jesus to Jerusalem? (Vs. 41; To celebrate the Passover Feast.)
 5. What was the Temple? (The large beautiful building in Jerusalem where the Jews worshipped God.)
 6. How often did Mary and Joseph go to the Temple? (Vs. 41; Once a year to celebrate the Passover.)
 7. How old was Jesus when He went to the Temple? (Vs. 42; Twelve. At twelve, a boy was considered one of the men and was allowed to go with them to the Temple.)
 8. Why didn't Mary and Joseph realize that Jesus was missing right away? (Vs. 44; They thought He was going home with friends or relatives.)
 9. When they couldn't find Him, what did Mary and Joseph do? (Vs. 44; They went back to Jerusalem to search for him.)
 10. How long did it take to find Him (Vs. 46; 3 days.)
 11. Where was Jesus for those three days, and what was He doing? (Vs. 46; He was in the Temple talking with the teachers.)
 12. Why were the teachers in the Temple amazed at Jesus? (Vs. 47; They were amazed at his understanding and his answers.)
 13. Why did Jesus have this amazing knowledge when He was only twelve years old? (Vs. 47; He was God the Son.)
 14. What did Mary say to Jesus when they found him? (Vs. 48; She scolded him.)
 15. What did Jesus mean by "my Father's House?" (Vs. 49; God was Jesus' Father and the Temple was God's House.)
 16. What did Jesus do after Mary and Joseph came for Him? (Vs. 51; He obeyed them and went home with them.)
 17. What are the four ways that Jesus grew? (Vs. 52; Jesus grew in wisdom, in stature, in favor with God and in favor with people.)
 18. What do **wisdom**, **stature**, and **favor** mean? (Vs. 52)
 - **Wisdom** – Understood and did what was right and good
 - **Stature** – became taller and stronger
 - **Favor with God** – became of friend of God
 - **Favor with Man** – got along with people and became their friend

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