

THIS IS JESUS

UNIT ONE: THE MESSIAH NAMED JESUS PART 1: JESUS THE MESSIAH

Lesson 4: The Pre-Teen Messiah

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: That Jesus was once a young person, just like them. However, He still used many opportunities to point others to God.

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED: To live out the model that Jesus gives us in this passage.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: Luke 2:41-52

KEY TAKEAWAY: Even as a young person, Jesus demonstrated what it means to be devoted to God, respectful to others, and committed to growing in wisdom and favor.

OVERVIEW:

Most of the passages we read about Jesus display Him as an adult or as an infant. We rarely take the time to point out that there were many years in between when Jesus was just like our students! In a very typical childhood moment (a child is separated from their parent), we see Jesus respond with wisdom and faith. This lesson encourages students to consider how they, too, can honor their relationships and point others to God in their daily lives.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *This Is Jesus* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the lesson's main point as you prepare to teach.



BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. *The Details* give you background info for each book. *The Setting* informs you of what's happening in and around the passage. *The Main Point* gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CONTEXT"?** In every YM360 Bible Study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context," we mean, at the very least, helping students know *who* wrote the book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the *Bible Background* to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

Luke

- *Author:* Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian, and a companion of Paul.
- *Time frame:* The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 A.D.
- *Purpose:* TLuke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus so as to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

THE SETTING

Jewish Law required every adult male to take part in certain events. However, after the exile to Babylon, the Jewish people were scattered throughout the inhabited world. It became impossible for most to go to Jerusalem for these feasts. Nevertheless, many Jews who lived in Palestine would travel to the city for the most important of these celebrations: Passover. The Passover feast was a picture of God's deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt. While in Jerusalem, Jesus became separated from His parents. They found Him three days later. When they discovered Him, He was in the Temple engaged in dialogue with the rabbis.

THE MAIN POINT

This passage of Scripture is important for students because it helps them to identify with Jesus in a very unique way. In this passage, students encounter the student Jesus, who was 12 years of age. Jesus is both the teacher and student in this passage. Students should leave this lesson with the understanding that Jesus modeled a perfect way to live out our faith while still honoring those who love us most (such as a parent). Despite their young age, they are also encouraged to point others to God and to seek out the same wisdom that Jesus brought to the Temple during that Passover so long ago.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: an introductory activity called *The Lead In*; the Bible Study section called *The Main Event*; and an application-focused segment called *The Last Word*.

THE LEAD IN

- *Goal:* To introduce the story of Jesus being lost at the Temple, and encourage students to see that Jesus was once a teenager just like them.
- *Set-Up:* Make sure students have a Bible or Bible App.

FIRST, explain to students that today, you will be talking about a very special time in the Messiah Jesus' life: His teen years. Point out that although we often forget, Jesus was at one time a teenager just like all of your students! **Ask students:**

- **As a kid, were you ever lost in a store or an amusement park? Have your parents ever left you at church?**
 - *Answers will vary.* Allow students to share their best stories, if they have some!

THEN, read or have a student read Luke 2:41-52. **Say something like:**

- **Passover is an event recalling God's deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt. During the Passover feast, the Israelites sacrificed a lamb in remembrance of the lambs whose blood was spread on the doorposts in Egypt to protect the infant males from being put to death. Passover is celebrated at the same time of year that we celebrate Easter. In this passage, we see that Jesus, who was 12 years old at the time, went to this celebration with His family. What happens in this passage is very similar to the stories we just shared about getting separated from our parents. In fact, this passage is going to help us dive deeper into how Jesus lived as a young person. So let's get started!**

Make sure there are no questions, and then transition to The Main Event.

THE MAIN EVENT

- *Goal:* To help students examine Jesus as a young person, in both a human sense (He is like us) and a divine sense (He was still the Messiah).
- *Set-Up:* Make sure students have a Bible or Bible App.

FIRST, take a moment to give some back story on the passage you read during the Lead In. Explain that Jewish tradition held that when a boy became 13 years old, he was considered an adult and was expected to carry out all the responsibilities that came with being a Jewish Man, which meant he was to be a son of the Law (or covenant). At age 12, Jesus was on the verge of adulthood. Though boys were not under the same requirements as men, Jewish fathers took care to prepare their sons for the day when they officially entered into adulthood. It was common for the father to take his son to certain religious celebrations during the year before his 13th birthday to prepare him for his covenantal responsibilities.

THEN, **ask students:**

- **So Jesus' parents likely trusted Him to be out of sight for a few minutes at a time. After all, He would be entering 'adulthood' pretty soon. Kind of like all of you! But how long had Jesus been gone when His parents realized and set out to find Him?**
 - *Answer:* A whole day (verse 44).

Say something like:

- **A whole day! Can you imagine? Something like that would be highly unlikely today. Most of us can barely disappear for 20 minutes without getting a text that says, “Where are you?” But it was common for families to travel together during big festivals like this, and if you didn’t see someone for a few minutes, you would easily assume they were with someone else in the family. The really concerning part comes after they discover Jesus is missing. We read in verse 46 that it took Joseph and Mary three whole days to find Jesus.**

NEXT, ask students:

- **How do you think Joseph and Mary felt by the time they had found Jesus?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **Take a look at verse 48. What question did they ask Jesus when they found Him?**
 - *Answer: “Son, why have you treated us like this?”*

Briefly explain to students that this response likely only happened because Joseph and Mary knew Jesus was the promised Messiah. (They shouldn’t anticipate their parents ever being this chill if they go missing for several days!) It’s also important to note that when Jesus responds that they should have known He was “in His Father’s House,” he was not being sassy or trying to back-talk. Although it might be easy to read it like that, what we see from Jesus is a genuine question that reads like, “Of course I’m at the Temple discussing the meaning of God’s Word. Where else did you think I would be?” **Say something like:**

- **Most of us have had a similar moment with our parents. Maybe you disappeared after dinner with a sudden urge to get ahead on studying for that big test next week. You are in the middle of doing a good thing when you hear one of your parents yell down the hall, “You better not be in there playing video games again!” It makes you wonder if your parents truly believe the best of you, doesn’t it? Odds are, they do believe the best in you. However, we all fall short when it comes to believing in others and doing right by our parents. Not Jesus, though.**

THEN, explain that Jesus exposed Joseph and Mary’s lack of belief in Him by asking why they didn’t assume He would be in the Temple. **Ask something like:**

- **Imagine you are the parent of a 12-year-old. Just like Jesus did, your child has gone missing! But you know that your child is rotten to the core and is definitely up to something bad. Where might you look for your kid?**
 - *Answers will vary.* Encourage students to be creative and have fun with these answers. Would they find this child sneaking into an amusement park? Perhaps their kid would be caught building a treehouse in the park or stealing all of the free samples at Costco/Sam’s Club.
- **Do you think Mary and Joseph ran through a list of bad things Jesus might be up to when they were looking for Him?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **What would that say about their faith in the Son of God?**
 - *Answer:* It would seem like in their moment of panic, Mary and Joseph forgot the most important part of Jesus’ identity: He is the Messiah. The Anointed One. The Son of God!

NEXT, explain to students that this was Jesus’ most loving way of reminding Mary and Joseph that although their concern for Him was normal (notice that He didn’t dismiss their worry at finding Him), if they had stopped and remembered who He was, they wouldn’t have wasted so much time frantically searching for Him. **Say something like:**

- **Even in a moment where Jesus’ parents were upset with Him, He found a way to point them back to their faith in God, which meant their faith in Him. Now, none of us would ever be able to pull that off if our parents were upset with us, because we are not God in the flesh. However, there are a few really important things we can learn here.**

Read or have a student reread Luke 2:50-51. **Say something like:**

- **This wouldn't be the last time that people did not understand Jesus. His disciples would later be cited as confused multiple times throughout their time with Jesus. However, we do read that Mary treasured this experience in her heart. When you share the Gospel with others, there is a likely chance they won't fully understand. If you show kindness and continually point others to God in the way that Jesus did, even as a 12-year-old, you may not get the instant results that you are hoping for. You may never even witness how your God-centered life impacted someone else! But as followers of Jesus, we have a great calling to live like He did. And you may think that this is something that won't impact your life until you are old enough to drive, or get a job, or live in your own house. But that's not true!**

THEN, encourage students to think about the relationships they have right now. Some examples could be the relationships with their parents, with their siblings, their friends, their teachers, etc. **Ask:**

- **We read that Jesus, despite being the Messiah, still honored His parents as God's Law required. How can you honor the relationships in your life while also pointing others to God?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **We all have the same Heavenly Father as Jesus, and we should be involved in the business of our heavenly Father. Ask: What are some things God is doing in this world that we should also be involved in?**
 - *Answers will vary.*

FINALLY, explain to students that a seemingly small story in Scripture can have a lot to say to us. If we aren't careful, we could read this, do the Lead In Activity about a time we were lost in the grocery store, and move on. Hopefully, students are able to see that Jesus is modeling so much more in this moment than how to keep from getting grounded after you've been missing for three days. He is showing what it looks like to be obedient to God, respectful of others that God has put in charge of us, and how to take moments of misunderstanding and turn them into Gospel sharing moments.

Allow for questions, and then transition into The Last Word.

THE LAST WORD

- *Goal:* To give students a practical application of how to live like Jesus.
- *Set-Up:* Make sure students have a Bible or Bible App.

FIRST, point out the final verse in our passage, Luke 2:52. Read or have a student read this verse. **Then ask:**

- **What does this verse say Jesus grew in?**
 - *Answer:* Wisdom, stature, and favor (with God and man).

THEN, explain that for today, our challenge will be to set a plan on how we can grow in each of the ways that Jesus did. **Say something like:**

- **Perhaps growing in stature, or height, might not be so easy for us to accomplish or influence. It's definitely easier to commit to reading a book than it is to be a few inches taller by the end of the week! So let's focus on growing in wisdom and favor. The stature will happen in due time!**

Ask students:

- **How can you grow in wisdom this week?**
 - *Answers will vary.*

NEXT, briefly explain that when we talk about growing in favor with God and man, you don't want them to think of it as favoritism or acting a certain way just so others will 'like' us. This is about building a genuine connection with others and, most importantly, with God. **Ask:**

- **Let's start with something simple. Think of a person with whom you already have a great friendship. What is something that you could do to gain even more favor with this person?**
 - *Answers will vary.* If students struggle to think of something or seem off track, ask the question like "If you were planning to spend time with this friend, what special outing would you plan so that both of you have a great time?"

Say something like:

- **Our friends and family members are usually easier to gain favor with because we know them so well. We know what their favorite dessert is, which movie they have been eager for us to watch with them, and even when they might just want to go for a walk and chat. These are all ways that we build favor in relationships. Think about it like this... building favor is about us knowing another person well and treating them with love and kindness in ways that they ask for and understand.**

THEN, ask:

- **When it comes to our relationship with God, we have already been shown favor by Him. He loves and knows each of us super well. His favor is already there for you, so don't worry about earning anything. This is about how we build our relationship with God. How can we practice gaining favor in our relationship with God, based on what we've already discussed?**
 - *Answer:* Get to know Him, spend time with Him and His Word, live a life that honors Him, etc.

FINALLY, say something like:

- **Our passage today was about Jesus spending several days in the Temple learning all about Scripture and essentially spending time with God, doing what His Father asked of Him. When we think of gaining favor with God, this is the kind of action I want you to think of. It's a devotion to knowing God that gives us that growth in our relationship with Him.**

Allow Time For Any Closing Thoughts Or Questions From Your Students. Before Leaving, Close With A Prayer.

- Don't forget to remind students about their devotions this week. If you're posting them on Social Media or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.