Use Week of:

Jesus at the Temple

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 2:40-52

MAIN POINT: Jesus came to earth to do God's plan.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 1:15

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God's One and Only Son.

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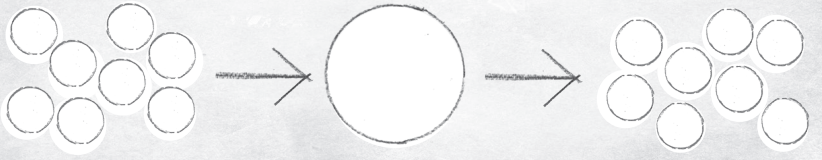

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

The Book of Luke records just two narratives about Jesus' childhood: His dedication (Luke 2:21-40) and His time at the temple when He was 12 years old (Luke 2:41-52). Both stories set the stage for Jesus' ministry on earth as an adult.

Mary and Joseph were faithful Jews. They had dedicated the baby Jesus according to the law of Moses, and they traveled to Jerusalem each year to celebrate Passover. God had commanded the men to appear before Him three times a year to observe certain festivals. (See Deut. 16:16.) Once a year, those who followed God's law would travel to Jerusalem—often in large groups—to celebrate Passover.

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

Jesus' parents started the journey back home after the feast. They assumed Jesus was among their traveling companions, but He wasn't. Jesus had stayed behind at the temple. Mary and Joseph traveled for a day before they noticed Jesus was missing. They went back to Jerusalem and found Him at the temple.

When Mary asked why He had done this, Jesus answered Mary's question with a question: "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 do know that as Jesus got older, He grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people. Jesus carried out God's plan to reconcile the world to Himself. (2 Cor. 5:19)

Additional resources for each session are available at *gospelproject.com.* For free training and session-by-session help, visit *www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.*

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Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Make it interactive:** Invite children to stomp their feet as if walking when you say a traveling word, make binocular eyes when you say a searching word, and point to heaven when you refer to God.
- **Invite guests:** Before class, invite two adult helpers to dress in Bible times clothes and pantomime searching for Jesus as Mary and Joseph. If you use a projector, project the Bible story picture when they "find" Jesus.

Jesus at the Temple

Luke 2:40-52

Every year, Jesus' parents took a trip. They **went to the city of Jerusalem for** a special holiday 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 Jesus. He was in the temple, sitting with the teachers. Jesus was listening to the teachers, and He asked 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?"

God is Jesus' Father, but Mary and Joseph did not understand what Jesus was talking about. **Jesus went home**

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with Mary and Joseph. He always obeyed them. Mary remembered these things.

Jesus grew taller and wiser. God was happy with Him, and so was everyone who knew Him.

Christ Connection: As Jesus got older, He became strong and wise. God blessed Jesus, and 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.

WANT TO DISCOVER GOD'S WORD? GET *MORE!*

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover that people were amazed at Jesus' understanding of God's Word. Jesus can help us love and understand God's Word with a whole heart. (Ps. 119:34) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out *www.lifeway.com/devotionals.*

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Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Jesus at the Temple
BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 2:40-52
MAIN POINT: Jesus came to earth to do God's plan.
KEY PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 1:15
BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God's One and Only Son.

Welcome time

- "What Makes Jesus Different" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit 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

- "Where Is Jesus?" activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Encourage preschoolers to use a crayon or their finger to trace the paths.

SAY • You traced the paths! In today's Bible story, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for Passover. [*Point to the first image.*] Mary and Joseph started for home, but they did not realize Jesus was not with them. [*Trace the path to the second image.*] They went back to Jerusalem to look for Jesus. [*Trace the path to the third image.*] Can you guess where they found Him from the picture?

Play "I Spy"

Gather preschoolers. Choose an object in plain sight in the room. Say, "I spy something [*adjective to describe the*

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object]." Invite preschoolers to guess the object. Offer additional adjectives until a preschooler guesses the object. When a child guesses correctly, allow her to choose the next object to guess by whispering the name of an item to you. Play as time allows.

SAY • Good job finding items in the room! In today's Bible story, Mary and Joseph were looking for something. Actually, Mary and Joseph were looking for Someone—Jesus! Listen to the Bible story to hear where Mary and Joseph finally found Jesus.

Make a class height chart

- large sheet of paper
- tape
- measuring tape
- markers

Tape a large sheet of paper to the wall. Invite a preschooler to stand against the wall. Use a marker to mark his height on the paper. Demonstrate how to use the tape measure to determine his height. Write each preschooler's name and height on the paper. Lead children to compare heights. Preschoolers may decorate the chart with markers.

SAY • Jesus was a baby in last week's Bible story. In today's Bible story, Jesus is 12 years old. Jesus grew taller as the years went on, just like you are growing taller every day. The Bible tells us that Jesus also grew wiser as He was growing taller. Listen to today's story to discover what Jesus was like at 12 years old.

Transition to Bible study

- countdown video (optional)

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Suggest children walk to Bible study as if they were looking for something that they lost.

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Large Group LEADER

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Introduce the Bible story

- valuable item

Hide a valuable item in plain sight in the room. Ask children to help you find the item. Cheer when it is found.

SAY • Isn't it a terrible feeling to lose something you value? In our story today, Mary and Joseph thought they had lost Jesus. They were so worried!

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- "Jesus at the Temple" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

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

SAY • God gave us His very own words when He gave us the Bible. We can believe the Bible because everything in it is true. Today's Bible story is in Luke.

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

Talk about the Bible story

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

SAY • **Jesus came to earth to do God's plan.** When Jesus was 12 years old, He stayed in the temple when His family went home. As Jesus got older, He became strong and wise. God blessed Jesus, and Jesus got ready to do what God sent Him to do. God sent

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Jesus into the world to die on the cross and rescue people from sin.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. What was Jesus' family celebrating in Jerusalem? (*Passover*)
2. How old was Jesus? (*12 years old*)
3. Why couldn't Mary and Joseph find Jesus? (*Jesus stayed behind in the temple.*)
4. What was Jesus doing in the temple? (*listening to the teachers and asking them questions*)
5. ***What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God's One and Only Son.***

Learn the big picture question

- Big Picture Question Poster

SAY • Jesus asked Mary and Joseph, "Why were you looking for Me? Didn't you know that I had to be in My Father's house?" ***What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God's One and Only Son.***

Practice the key passage

- Key Passage Poster
- "Into the World" song

Open your Bible to 1 Timothy 1:15. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, "Into the World."

SAY • Our key passage tells us that **Jesus came to earth to do God's plan.** God's plan was for Jesus to save sinners. Jesus was getting ready to do what God sent Him to do. God sent Jesus into the world to die on the cross and come back to life to rescue people from sin.

Transition to small groups

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Small Group ACTIVITIES

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• guests

Invite 12-year-olds to class

Contact someone in your church who leads a class with 12-year-olds before the session. Invite his or her class to visit your class. Ask each preteen to share his name, age, a few things he likes to do, and a Bible verse of his choosing. Give preschoolers an opportunity to ask the preteens questions.

SAY • Jesus was the same age as our new friends in today's Bible story! Do you think Jesus may have looked a little like one of our friends? ***What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God's One and Only Son.*** The people in the temple were surprised at how much Jesus understood. **Jesus came to earth to do God's plan.** Jesus came into the world to die on the cross and rescue people from sin.

• walking rope (optional)

Take a walk outside

Take the preschoolers on a walk outside and talk about the journey that Jesus and His family took every year to Jerusalem. Remind preschoolers that Jesus' family traveled with a large group of family and friends. Explain that there were no cars, buses, planes, or trains in Bible times. Jesus and His family had to travel by foot and it took a long time.

SAY • Every year, Jesus and His family took a trip to

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Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. During Passover, the Jewish people got together to remember when God saved His people from slavery in Egypt. **Jesus came to earth to do God's plan.** God sent Jesus into the world to die on the cross and came back to life to rescue people from sin. As Jesus got older, He became strong and wise. God blessed Jesus, and Jesus got ready to do what God sent Him to do.

Mary/Joseph, where's your son?

"Boy Jesus" printable

Print and prepare the "Boy Jesus" printable. Choose a preschooler to be *Mary* (*Joseph* for a boy). Guide *Mary* to sit in a chair with her back to the rest of the children. Place the Jesus cutout under her chair. While *Mary* closes her eyes and counts to 10, choose another preschooler to take the Jesus cutout and hide it behind his back. Then everyone will sing: "Mary, Mary [*Joseph, Joseph*] where's your son? Guess where He might be!" *Mary* will have three chances to guess who has the Jesus cutout. The child with the picture will be Mary or Joseph in the next round.

SAY • Mary and Joseph could not find Jesus when they were returning home from Passover because He stayed behind in Jerusalem. They found Jesus in the temple speaking with some of the leaders. As He was growing up, Jesus became stronger and wiser. **Jesus came to earth to do God's plan.**

Dig for people

- interlocking blocks
- people figures

Place a large number of interlocking blocks in a plastic tub. Connect some of the blocks so they look like buildings. Hide several people figures among the blocks. Lead preschoolers to dig through the blocks and find the people.

Option: Hide a plastic Jesus figure or the "Boy Jesus" printable among the blocks and people for preschoolers to find.

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Encourage preschoolers to take turns hiding the people and finding them.

SAY • Jerusalem was a big city with many people and buildings, and Jesus was just a boy. Mary and Joseph finally found Jesus in the temple. **Jesus came to earth to do God's plan.** As Jesus got older, He became strong and wise. God blessed Jesus, and 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.

Build a play dough Jerusalem

- play dough
- play dough tools
- people figures

Set out play dough and play dough tools. Lead preschoolers to form buildings out of their play dough to recreate the city of Jerusalem. Assign one or two preschooler to form the temple. Offer people figures for preschoolers to play out the Bible story.

SAY • Mary and Joseph looked all over the big city of Jerusalem until they found Jesus in the temple. **Jesus came to earth to do God's plan.** As Jesus got older, He became strong and wise. God blessed Jesus, and 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.

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Snack

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve graham crackers for snack. Guide children to break the crackers apart and arrange them to make a temple. Explain that by staying behind in the temple, Jesus was obeying His true Father, God. ***What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God's One and Only Son.***

Transition

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*

When a child finishes her snack, guide her to throw away any trash. She may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of what they think they will look like as they get older. Remind preschoolers that as Jesus got older, He became strong and wise. **Jesus came to earth to do God's plan.** We can ask God to help us grow stronger and wiser and to love His words in the Bible. Pray for the children.

SAY • God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to earth to do Your plan and rescue us from sin. Help us to grow stronger and wiser. Help us to love Your words in the Bible like Jesus did as a young boy. Help us to tell people about Your plan to rescue people from sin. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

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