

WONDERING ABOUT YOUNG JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

September 18, 2021

Bible Reading: [Luke 2:41-52](#); [Ephesians 2:10](#)

Unpacking the Story of Young Jesus at the Temple

The Boy Jesus at the Temple is the only biblical story of Jesus' childhood ([Luke 2:41-52](#)). Before reading this passage, ask God for wisdom and illumination, and then listen for God's voice as you read. As you wonder about this story together as a family, you might ask, "What did this passage mean to those who originally read it?" Because Luke wrote this story a long time ago and in an ancient culture, it might help to unpack scripture before we ask, "How does this apply to us today?"



Why did Jesus' family go every year to Jerusalem?

Luke wanted to teach his non-Jewish readers about the Passover. Lasting eight days, the Passover is the major feast celebrated at the beginning of the Jewish year. Passover commemorated the passing over of the death angel in Egypt as told in the Book of Exodus.

During this visit to the Temple, Jesus would have seen the preparations for sacrificing the Passover lambs. Did he wonder that this entire ritual pointed toward his own sacrifice?

Jesus was raised in a good Jewish home. In fact, his parents are profoundly strong in their faith! We've seen it in the way that they obeyed angels' commands and how they welcomed worshipping shepherds, and now we see that they follow God's law too.

Jerusalem was 80 miles away from where Jesus and his family lived in Nazareth, so they had to travel several days to get there. Because both Mary and Joseph made the trip each year, we see how much they loved and obeyed the law. Imagine what it would be like if *your* family had to hike several days to celebrate Christmas or Easter.

What happened to Jesus?

Imagine how a boy from the small town of Nazareth would feel when visiting the big city of Jerusalem and the temple. Has your family ever visited a big city for the first time? What was that new adventure like?

Luke doesn't tell his readers how Joseph and Mary traveled for a day before discovering that Jesus was missing, or why they hadn't been looking for him sooner. In verse 44, he says that they assumed Jesus was with friends or relatives. Traveling safely in a group, men would gather with other men and women with women. Children played together. Mary and Joseph were worried. What happened to Jesus? Did he get hurt? Was he lost?

Where was Jesus?

Luke shows that even from a young age, people could tell that Jesus was special. Luke shows that the young child Jesus spoke with real wisdom and authority as he sat among the teachers in the temple. He spoke that way because God is his Father! As was seen in a Jewish school at the time, Jesus was listening to the teachers and asking them good questions. They were amazed to hear such good answers from a twelve-year-old boy. It's interesting to wonder if some of these teachers of the law would many years later hear Jesus speak again and maybe even attend his trial.

What is Jesus' mission?

When Joseph and Mary finally found Jesus, they asked him why he had done this. Mary says, "Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." Now Jesus spoke his first recorded words in scripture. "'Why were you searching for me?' he asked. 'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?'" (v. 49). Jesus' parents—and Luke's readers—needed to understand that Jesus knew his mission. In hindsight we can see that Jesus was telling his parents that he is God's Son and that God has a purpose for him. At that time, the parents didn't understand.

Luke tells us that Mary "treasured all these things in her heart." Today, we can do that same thing—*wonder* at how Jesus is God's Son yet fully human, how amazing it is that he gave his life for us, and how we can do our Father's work that he has "prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10).

Some Wonderings

Here are some wonderings that you could share after reading the story. Perhaps your children might come up with these questions on their own in their own way.

1. Why is it important for Jesus to be 100% human?
2. Why is it important for Jesus to be 100% God?
3. How is it possible for Jesus to be 100% God and 100% human?
4. If Jesus is fully God, how did he grow up and learn things?
5. So Jesus knew, even at age 12, that he would have to die for our sins?
6. What was it like for Mary and Joseph to raise Jesus as their son?
7. What was Jesus like as a kid? How was he like me?
8. What mission has God chosen for me? What is God calling me to do?

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<https://familyfire.com/articles/finding-immanuel-our-god-who-longs-to-draw-close>

