

THE TEMPLE

CORE PASSAGE: LUKE 2:40-52

CONTEXT

The first few weeks of Jesus's life evidenced that He was not an ordinary child like the rest of us. Through announcements from angels, words spoken by strangers, and prophecies made over Jesus, He was identified as the Savior the world had been waiting for. That same Savior would grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man, always keeping His focus on His mission from the Father.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus, who is fully human and fully God, is the source of wisdom and knowledge.

As you examine Luke 2:40-52:

- Note that Mary and Joseph were obedient and faithful to God's ways.
- Meditate on the fact that Jesus longed to be in His Father's house.



TIMELINE

Jesus Is Born in Bethlehem
(Luke 2:1-20)

Wise Men from the East Search for
the Promised King (Matthew 2:1-12)

John the Baptist Calls People to Repentance
in Preparation for Jesus (Matthew 3:1-12)

Mary and Joseph Take Baby
Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem
(Luke 2:21-39)

**SESSION STUDY: Young Jesus
Remains in His Father's House**
(Luke 2:40-52)

John Baptizes Jesus
in the Jordan River
(Matthew 3:13-17)

Daily Readings

- Day 1:** Luke 2:40-42
- Day 2:** Luke 2:43-45
- Day 3:** Luke 2:46-47
- Day 4:** Luke 2:48-50
- Day 5:** Luke 2:51-52
- Day 6:** Psalm 122



Scan this QR code to access
this session's Scripture passages.

JESUS GREW UP LIKE ALL OTHER HUMANS YET DISPLAYED AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORD OF GOD (LUKE 2:40-47).

Underline the ways Jesus grew as an ordinary boy.

Highlight the clues in the text that He was anything but ordinary.

40 The boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God's grace was on him. **41** Every year his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. **42** When he was twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the festival. **43** After those days were over, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. **44** Assuming he was in the traveling party, they went a day's journey. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. **45** When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. **46** After three days, they found him in the temple sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. **47** And all those who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers.

When last we saw Jesus in Luke's Gospel, He was a baby in the temple being praised and proclaimed by Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:21-39). And within a couple of years, according to Matthew's Gospel, toddler Jesus was visited by the wise men (Matt. 2:1-12), after which He spent some time in Egypt before returning to the family's hometown in Nazareth (Matt. 2:19-23). We don't have any more inspired accounts of Jesus's first three decades except this one at the age of twelve. But we do have a brief summary that Jesus grew as a boy and experienced God's wisdom and grace, not an indication of sin but of God's favor (Luke 2:40).

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

JESUS'S HUMANITY: In addition to being fully divine, the Bible also affirms that Jesus is fully human. Not only does the Old Testament affirm that the Promised One (Messiah) would be a man (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Mic. 5:3), but the New Testament also affirms that Jesus's earthly life bore all the marks of being a human being, such as hunger (Matt. 4:2), thirst (John 19:28), weariness (Matt. 8:24), sorrow (John 11:35), and pain (the crucifixion).

While Jesus was growing in His humanity, Luke also chose to highlight the faithfulness with which Joseph and Mary raised Jesus. In Jesus's early years, His parents trusted the Lord to guide them, whether through warnings by angels or through prophecies of God-fearing elders. Luke made sure to note that Jesus's parents brought Him to the Passover Festival in Jerusalem each year (vv. 41-42). By their obedience to the law of God, Jesus took part in the celebration of Passover as was required of every faithful Jew.

LEADER NOTE: At twelve years old (v. 42), Jesus was on the threshold of adulthood in Jewish custom. At thirteen, a boy would formally become what is now called "a son of the commandment" (Hebrew, Bar Mitzvah) and obligated to keep God's law for himself.¹ So while Jesus was still a child in the eyes of the community, this visit to Jerusalem for the Passover came on the cusp of His cultural maturity.

What are some benefits for children who have believing and faithful parents and mentors?

With the conclusion of the festival, the time came for the family to return home with their caravan of friends and family, but Jesus was not among them, as His parents discovered a day later. Backtracking to Jerusalem, on the third day, Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the temple listening and asking questions of the teachers there.

The interactions Jesus had with those who taught the Word of God left everyone amazed. Amazement surrounding Jesus was a trend earlier in Luke 2:18,33, and here it was no different as Jesus set Himself apart from other kids His age and even the adults in the temple. He revealed an uncanny understanding of the Scriptures as He asked and answered questions about it, no doubt prodding the teachers in their own understanding of the Word.

LEADER NOTE: The rabbinic teaching of Jesus's day involved an extensive use of questions from students. Jesus likely was not teaching in a scenario like this, but the way He was asking questions of the rabbis revealed His unique and true understanding of the Law and the Prophets.

What might keep you from growing in your understanding of the Scriptures?

JESUS ACKNOWLEDGED GOD AS HIS FATHER (LUKE 2:48-52).**Highlight Jesus's response to Mary and Joseph's question.**

48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." **49** "Why were you searching for me?" he asked them. "Didn't you know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father's house?" **50** But they did not understand what he said to them. **51** Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart. **52** And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.

We can only imagine the level of fear Mary and Joseph felt at the thought of losing the Savior and Messiah (v. 11). They obviously were worried. But they were perplexed by where they found their Son. Jesus had stayed in the temple going on three days.

Young Jesus, the incarnate Word of God (John 1:1), remained in the temple to sit and discuss the written Word of God with the teachers there. Jesus wanted to be in His Father's house learning about His Father's work. But more than that, "it was necessary" for Jesus to be there (Luke 2:49), and Jesus believed His earthly parents should have known that. Mary and Joseph didn't understand what was going on, but Jesus was making it clear who is His chief authority—His heavenly Father.

LEADER NOTE: Verse 49 contains Jesus's first recorded words in Luke's Gospel. Here Jesus revealed both a gentle nature and a strong conviction to be about His Father's will. As Jesus would state later in John 6:38, He had not come to do His own will but the will of the Father who sent Him.

In what ways are you acknowledging God as your heavenly Father and your highest authority?

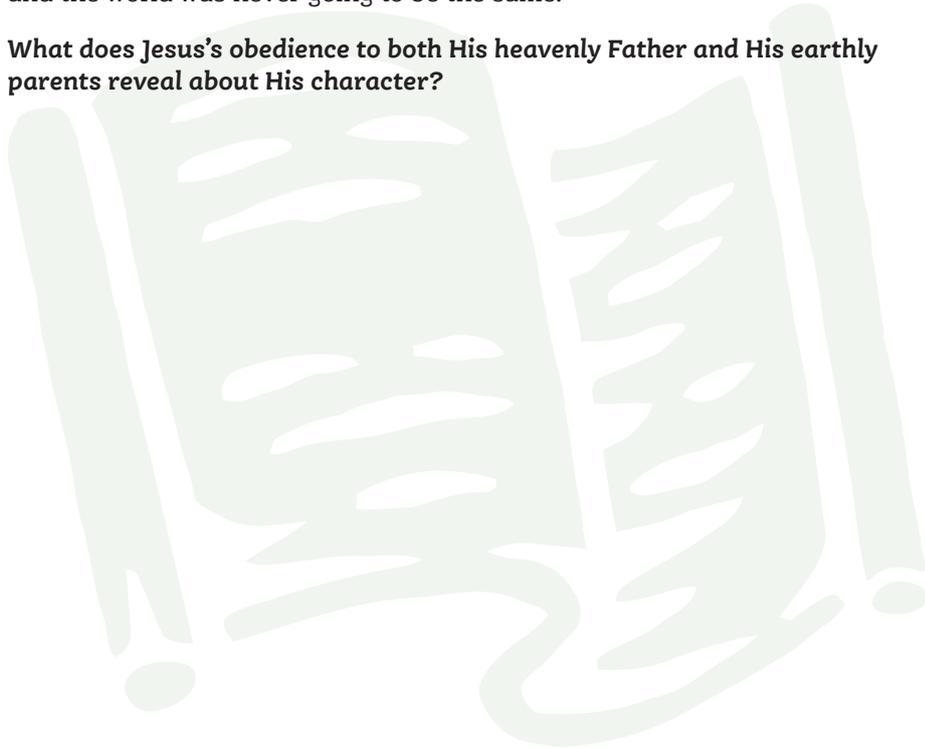
We find Jesus here in a bit of a conundrum. Jesus passionately yearned to learn more about His heavenly Father and to spend time in His house. But Jesus also was a Son to earthly parents whom He needed to honor and obey. Instead of arguing or making a scene as children often do, Jesus submitted to His earthly father and mother and went with them back to Nazareth. Mary and Joseph were not sinless parents—they were like us, sinners—but just as they had devoted themselves to obeying the law of God, Jesus obeyed the fifth commandment and honored His parents according to the Scriptures.

Key Concept: Jesus, who is fully human and fully God, is the source of wisdom and knowledge.

LEADER NOTE: The fact that Joseph and Mary were confused about Jesus's statement about being in His Father's house has more to do with Jesus's relationship to the Father than their relationship to Jesus. At this point, they could not fully understand what divine Sonship meant for Jesus in relation to the Father. Yet Luke said once again that Mary kept all of these things in her heart (Luke 2:19,51).

Jesus's character was beginning to stand out among the rest of humanity as He continued to grow physically, mentally, spiritually, and relationally. He loved both His heavenly Father and His earthly father and mother completely and fully. He had an understanding of the Word of God that did not make much earthly sense. He had a wisdom from above and favor with others that were steadily growing. The purpose of Jesus's incarnation was starting to take hold, and the world was never going to be the same.

What does Jesus's obedience to both His heavenly Father and His earthly parents reveal about His character?



GOSPEL CONNECTION

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Jesus, the divine Son of God, honored and obeyed His earthly parents completely in fulfillment of the law of God so that He could be the perfect sacrifice for our sins in our place.

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ARRIVAL

PLAY: Begin the group experience with a fun game. Invite three volunteers to the front of the room and give each volunteer four index cards and a pen. Say: “I’m going to give you a scenario, and I want you to write down the name of someone in our group whom you would ask for help in that situation because you know they have expertise in the area.” Call out scenarios such as “your car is making a rattling sound,” “your dog seems to be acting strangely,” “your toilet isn’t flushing properly,” “you’re not happy with your haircut,” or other skills you know people in your group have. Allow the rest of the group to guess the volunteers’ choices before they reveal their answer. After the names of potential experts are revealed, acknowledge the collective wisdom of your group.

TRANSITION: We might seek human wisdom and advice from people outside this group, and that’s fine. But sometimes we forget that God the Son came to earth as a human. Jesus is fully God and fully man, the source of wisdom and knowledge. We’ll consider how He exhibited that in today’s passage.

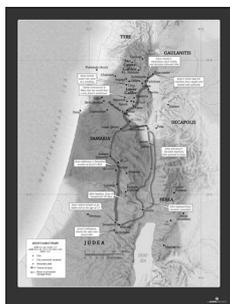
CONTEXT

REVIEW: (*Display Pack Item 2: Jesus’s Early Years, and use the map to help review previous sessions.*) Over the past few weeks, we’ve looked at Jesus’s early years, including His birth, His dedication at the temple, and the visit of the wise men, and today we look at His remaining in the temple without His parents’ knowledge. Each of these passages have pointed to His identity. There is no doubt that Jesus is fully God, but we must also remember that He is fully human and was being raised by parents who were fully human.

RECAP

ASK: What jumped out to you from the text as you studied this passage this week?

DISCUSS: It could be possible for some to read our core passage for today and conclude, “Jesus should have gotten in trouble for that!” But that would miss the purpose Luke had in recording in his Gospel this event with Jesus at twelve years old. So today, we’ll consider the following in our activity: What is the reason or reasons we should know and believe this passage from Luke 2?



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GROUP ACTIVITY

Notes

CHART: Direct your group to page 48 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find the activity titled “Main Ideas.” Recreate this chart on a board in your room so you can record the group’s findings as they interact with the Scripture text.

Main Ideas Read the passages below and write a brief summary of the main idea of each passage.	
LUKE 2:40-47	LUKE 2:48-52

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Luke 2:40-47 aloud.

ENGAGE: Challenge your group to consider one verse that exemplifies the primary focus of this first passage. Ask: “Why did you choose that verse? What does this verse reveal about the identity of Jesus?” Write on the board the verse most chosen by the group. Then direct them back to their Bibles to consider how the rest of the passage reveals truth about humanity, specifically through the descriptions of Jesus’s parents. Ask: “How can you relate to the earthly, human concerns of Mary and Joseph? How does this passage point to Jesus’s identity as fully God?”

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Luke 2:48-52.

ENGAGE: Continue the activity by finding the verse that draws out the main idea of this section of the passage, writing the most prominent answer on the board. Guide your group to consider not only that Jesus identified Himself as

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God's Son but that His life's goal was to be about His Father's will. As a group, consider what we can learn about ourselves by observing the words and reactions of Mary and Joseph.

RECAP: Guide your group to identify how Jesus's existence as fully God and fully human was revealed even in His childhood.

DEBRIEF

What should we learn about our Savior, ourselves, and how we ought to live from Jesus, His parents, and the teachers in this passage?

SUMMARIZE

Jesus is fully God and fully human. Even as a child, He possessed a holy understanding of God's Word and the desire to obey His heavenly Father. We, however, sin. We are limited, and we fail even in our best attempts at obeying the Lord. So we look to Jesus as our Savior to forgive us when we fall short of His righteous standard. *(Pass out copies of Pack Item 6: Jesus Is Human; highlight some points of significance for Jesus's incarnation, His taking on the flesh of humanity.)* When we consider that Jesus came in full humanity to save us as fallen human sinners, our only acceptable response is to worship Him.

HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 49). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Heart** section in this week's study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.

 **HEAD:** Along with an emphasis on Jesus's relationship to the heavenly Father, we cannot overlook the relationship Jesus enjoyed with the earthly parents God gave Him. He cared for them and honored them in every way He could. Even at His crucifixion, which He endured in obedience to His Father's will, Jesus was still mindful to entrust His mother's care to His disciple John (John 19:26-27).

What are some ways you can honor God and your parents in this stage of your life?

 **HEART:** Jesus, the perfect Son of God, set an example for us in His pattern of growth even as a young child (Luke 2:52). He grew physically, as we all do naturally. But Jesus also grew in wisdom, and He grew relationally with God the Father and with other people. If the Son of God, who is without sin, took steps to ask questions and committed Himself to obedience to authority figures, how much more should we commit ourselves to grow in the same?

In what ways do you need to grow as a child of God and a disciple of Jesus?



Key Concept: Jesus, who is fully human and fully God, is the source of wisdom and knowledge.



HANDS: As a young boy, Jesus exhibited a wisdom beyond His years in His understanding of God's Word, and He grew in this aspect of life more and more. That's because the Son of God came into the world to "become wisdom from God for us" and to be "the wisdom of God" for our "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:24,30). So many people in this world go through life aimless and ignorant of the God who made and loves them. They need to hear the good news of the Savior, the perfect Son of God who came to do the Father's will so He could be our way to the Father.

How will you help others see Jesus as the source of wisdom and knowledge, especially for our salvation?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this session.

- As you read and study the Bible this week, continue finding a focal verse in each passage.
- Consider how you might keep all God reveals to you in His Word in your heart through journaling, Scripture memorization, and conversations.
- Prayerfully consider how you need to grow in your life of faith and in your relationships with God and others. Plan steps to help you do so.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 49 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray through Psalm 122:1-4 with your group, giving thanks to the Lord that you can gather in His house and learn from His Word, growing in wisdom and knowledge.

References

1. Robert H. Stein, Luke, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 121.

Notes

