

Use Week of:

Unit 19 • Session 5

Jesus as a Child

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 2; Luke 2

STORY POINT:

Even as a child, Jesus wanted to do His Father's plan.

KEY PASSAGE:

John 1:1-2

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Is Jesus God or a human?
As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit ministrygrid.com/gospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

The Gospel of Luke records just two narratives about Jesus' childhood: His dedication (Luke 2:21-40) and His visit to the temple when He was 12 years old (Luke 2:41-52). The Gospel of Matthew includes another story: a visit from some wise men. These stories of Jesus as a child set the stage for Jesus' ministry as an adult.

After Jesus was born, God put a star in the sky as a sign. Wise men from the east followed the star to Jerusalem, looking for a new king. They found Jesus, who was probably 1 or 2 years old, in Bethlehem and they worshiped Him as King. Later, Jesus and His family settled in Nazareth, where Jesus grew up.

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 to celebrate Passover, Joseph might have taken Jesus, who was about 12, around the city to teach Him the significance of the temple and to explain the purpose of the Passover feast.

Jesus' parents headed home after the feast. They assumed Jesus was among their traveling companions, but He wasn't. Jesus had stayed behind at the temple. A full day passed before Mary and Joseph noticed Jesus was missing. They hurried back to Jerusalem and finally found Him at the temple. Jesus asked His mother, "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 know that as Jesus got older, He grew "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people" (Luke 2:52). Jesus carried out God's plan to reconcile the world to Himself. (2 Cor. 5:19)

The BIBLE Story

Jesus as a Child

Matthew 2; Luke 2

After Jesus was born, wise men followed a star to Bethlehem to find the new king of the Jews. The wise men worshiped Jesus as King. When they left, an angel told Joseph in a dream to leave

Bethlehem because King Herod wanted to kill Jesus. So

Mary, Joseph, and Jesus went to Egypt until Herod died. Then they went back to Israel and lived in Nazareth. Jesus grew up in Nazareth.

Every year, Jesus' parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Passover was the biggest holiday for the Jewish people. Many people traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate and remember when God saved His people from slavery in Egypt.

When Jesus was 12 years old, Jesus and His family went to Jerusalem together. When it was time to go home, Mary and Joseph began traveling to Nazareth with a large group of people. They didn't notice that Jesus was not with them; they thought He was among the group of travelers. But Jesus was not with the group. He

had stayed behind in Jerusalem.

Mary and Joseph had been walking for a whole day when they started to look for Jesus. They looked among their relatives and



friends, but they could not find Him. So Mary and Joseph went back to Jerusalem. They searched everywhere for Jesus. The city was so big, and Jesus was just a boy.

Finally, they found Him at the temple. Jesus was listening to the teachers and asking them questions. Everyone who heard Jesus could hardly believe how much Jesus understood. When Jesus' parents saw Him, they were surprised. Mary said, "Son, why have You done this? Your father and I were worried. We've been looking everywhere for You."

"Why were you looking for Me?" Jesus asked. "Didn't you know that I had to be in My Father's house?" But Mary and Joseph did not understand what Jesus was talking about. **Then Jesus went back to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph. Jesus was always obedient to them,** and Mary remembered all of these things.

As Jesus grew up, He became even wiser. God was pleased with Him, and so was everyone who knew Him.

Christ Connection: God sent Jesus to earth with a purpose. Even as a child, Jesus wanted to honor God. God blessed Jesus as He got ready to follow His Father's plan: to die on the cross and rescue people from sin.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Change positions:**
Move around the room as you describe Mary and Joseph's journey.
- **Use facial expressions:**
Reflect emotions of the story when Jesus was missing and when He was found.

INTRODUCE the Story



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KEY PASSAGE: John 1:1-2

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share about places they like to travel with their families. Are there any places they visit every year?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "List of Learning" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "List of Learning" on the activity page. Guide kids to list things they have learned how to do so far. (*how to walk, how to read*) Then encourage them to list things they might learn in the future. (*how to drive*)

SAY • Are you surprised by some of the things you can do even as a kid? You'll learn much more as you grow. Did you know God can use you in His kingdom? Today's Bible story gives us a picture of what Jesus was like when He was just 12 years old.

LOW PREP

- chalkboard or dry erase board
- chalk or markers
- eraser

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Amazing feats

Explain that several world records are held by kids who have accomplished amazing feats. Form two teams. Describe a

world record and ask a question. Team members should agree on a guess and write it on the board. Award one point to the team closest to the correct answer.

- A 9-year-old boy set the world record for most claps in 1 minute. How many times did he clap? (1,080)
- A team of 12 jumpers and 2 rope holders set the world record for most jumps over a rope in 1 minute. How many times did they jump? (230)
- A fifth grade girl set the record for longest distance to stretch homemade slime in 30 seconds. How many inches did it stretch? (88)
- A 17-year-old boy set the record for the world's largest drawing. How many square feet did it cover? (3,486)
- A group of children set the record for largest gathering of people dressed as rabbits. How many children participated? (1,119)

SAY • Those were some amazing feats! Did you know that when Jesus was 12 years old, teachers in the temple were amazed by Him?

OPTION 2: Seek and find

Before the session, hide people figures around the room. Challenge kids to find the figures. If time allows, choose volunteers to hide the figures again while the rest of the group faces a wall and closes their eyes. Then play again.

SAY • Finding those people in the room wasn't easy. Imagine looking for one person in a city of thousands of people! That's what Mary and Joseph had to do in today's Bible story.

• miniature people figures

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

· leader attire

· camera

· backpack

· Bible

· school yearbook

[Leader enters carrying a camera and a backpack. The backpack contains a Bible and a school yearbook.]

LEADER • Hi, everyone! I am so glad you're here. I'm [*your name*], a studio photographer. Have you ever gotten your picture taken at school for the yearbook? Do you like picture day? When I was a kid, picture day always made me nervous. I had to decide what I was going to wear and how to fix my hair. My mom saved my school picture every year and put them all in a frame so she could see how I grew over the years. *[Retrieve a yearbook.]* Sometimes schools hire me to take yearbook photos and I do my best to make kids feel comfortable. As a kid, you're changing so much! It's fun to be able to look back at pictures of when you were younger and see how you've grown.

[Retrieve a Bible.] I'm excited to share today's Bible story with you. It's about a Jesus' time as a child. The

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

Bible doesn't tell us a lot about Jesus before He was around 30 years old, but two particular events are recorded in the Scriptures. Let's find out more.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • First, does anyone remember our big picture question and answer? [*Allow kids to respond.*] ***Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.*** This can be kind of hard to wrap your mind around, but it's important to realize that when God the Son came to earth, He did not give up being God. He took on the likeness of humanity [*see Phil. 2:7*] and experienced life like we do, as fully human, to perfectly obey the Father and to rescue sinners.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. · Giant Timeline

LEADER • In today's Bible story, we'll hear about Jesus as a small child and also as a 12-year-old. Let's review what we've learned about Jesus so far. First, we learned about Jesus' family. **Jesus' family line proved He is the Messiah.** Before Jesus came into the world, John was born. God had plan for John's life. **John was born to prepare the way for Jesus.** Then, at just the right time, Jesus was born. Why was Jesus born? **Jesus was born to be God's promised Savior.**

When Jesus was about five weeks old, His earthly parents—Mary and Joseph—took Him to the temple to be dedicated. At the temple, **Simeon and Anna worshiped Jesus as the Messiah.** So what happened

between the time Jesus was dedicated and the time He was a grown man? Listen to today's Bible story: "Jesus as a Child."

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

- Bibles
- "Jesus as a Child" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

Open your Bible to Luke 2. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus as a Child."

LEADER • At the beginning of the story, we heard about the wise men visiting Jesus. Jesus might have been one or two years old when they came. He and His parents were still in Bethlehem. But they later moved to Nazareth, and that's where Jesus grew up. The next story the Bible records about Jesus is about 10 years later, when Jesus was 12 years old. Do you remember where they went? (*Jerusalem*) Why did they go? (*to celebrate Passover*)

When the feast was over, Mary and Joseph started traveling home. But Jesus stayed behind. How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when they realized Jesus was missing? They hurried back to Jerusalem and searched the city. When Mary and Joseph found Jesus, He was in the temple with the Jewish teachers. What did the teachers in the temple think about Jesus? Look at Luke 2:47. [*Allow kids to read the verse and respond.*] They were astonished at His understanding.

What did Jesus call the temple? Look at Luke 2:29. [*Allow kids to read the verse and respond.*] Jesus called the temple His Father's house. **Even as a child, Jesus wanted to do His Father's plan.** The Gospel of Luke says one more thing about Jesus as a child: As Jesus

grew up, He became wiser and increased in favor with God and people. [See *Luke 2:52.*]

Christ connection

LEADER • God sent Jesus to earth with a purpose. Even as a child, Jesus wanted to honor God. God blessed Jesus as He got ready to follow His Father's plan: to die on the cross and rescue people from sin.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 77 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 19, Session 5" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about how they feel about sharing the gospel with others. Guide them to discuss ways they can share their testimony with confidence.

• "Unit 19, Session 5" questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Display the photos from Brazil and ask a volunteer to read each caption. Ask the kids what they think it means for Christians to follow God's plan on mission in Brazil, or anywhere we go. Allow time for kids to discuss.

• "Photos from Brazil" printable

LEADER • **Even as a child, Jesus wanted to do His Father's plan.** Even though you are young, you can follow God's plan and be on mission wherever you go!

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together John 1:1-2.

• Key Passage Poster
• "The Word Was God (John 1:1-2)" song

LEADER • Memorizing God's Word helps us remember what is true about God and about ourselves. Our key passage tells us that God the Son is the Word. He has always existed, and everything was created through Him. He is God, and we are not. Let's sing our key

passage song together.
Lead kids in singing “The Word Was God (John 1:1-2).”

Sing (4 minutes)

· “Take It to the Lord”
song
· Bible

Open your Bible and read aloud 2 Corinthians 4:6.

LEADER • When God sent Jesus into the world, He sent light into darkness. When we know Jesus, we see God’s glory and greatness. ***Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.*** He is worthy of praise. Let’s sing.
Sing together “Take It to the Lord.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, thank You for Your Word. We want to honor You. Help us to trust You and follow Your plan. Give us wisdom. Thank You that our future is secure because of Jesus. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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KEY PASSAGE: John 1:1-2

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

· Key Passage Poster

Instruct boys and girls to stand in a circle. Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading John 1:1-2 aloud together. Assign each kid a number: 1, 2 or 3. Explain that kids will say the key passage together. When kids say “beginning,” the 1s will clap. When kids say “Word,” the 2s will clap. When kids say “God,” the 3s will clap. Repeat as time allows.

SAY • In his Gospel, John answered the question, who is Jesus? We know that Jesus is God the Son. We know that Jesus came to earth. **Even as a child, Jesus wanted to do His Father's plan. So *is Jesus God or a human?*** Let's say our big picture answer together: ***As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.***

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

· Bibles, 1 per kid
· Story Point Poster
· Small Group Timeline and Map Set
(005802970)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Luke 2. Ask kids to recall what the Gospel—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—are about. (*Jesus' life, death, and resurrection*)

SAY • We don't know a lot about Jesus' time as a child.

The Gospels tell us that wise men followed a star to Bethlehem and worshiped Jesus when He was a small boy. [*Point to Bethlehem (I4) on the New Testament Israel Map.*] He grew up in Nazareth with His earthly parents, Mary and Joseph. [*Point to Nazareth (E5).*] When Jesus was about 12 years old, He went with Mary and Joseph to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem. [*Point to Jerusalem (H4).*] In today's Bible story, we see that **even as a child, Jesus wanted to do His Father's plan.**

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 2:51-52. Then ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Who does God want us to honor and why? *Help kids connect from the story that like Jesus, we should seek to honor God. God commands us to honor our parents. We should also honor other believers. The Bible says we should outdo one another in showing honor.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 12:10.)

2. How can we grow in wisdom and obedience to God? *Invite kids to share their ideas. Emphasize that we grow through the power of the Holy Spirit. Encourage kids to read the Bible consistently, pray, and spend time in fellowship with other believers.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 10:24-25.)

3. How can God use you in His kingdom even while you are young? *Invite kids to share ideas of ways they can serve God when they are young. Emphasize that God can use anyone who is willing to obey Him. God's plan for us is better than any plan we can imagine for ourselves. We can rely on the Holy Spirit to lead us as we follow Jesus.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Eph. 1:9-10.)

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Service project

Involve your kids in a simple service project in the church. Here are some ideas: sort cans in the food pantry, clean toys in the nursery, pick up trash around the church building, sweep the hallways, or clean up the kitchen. Consider asking your church staff about a simple task for kids to complete.

SAY • You are a part of God’s plan right now. You are also an important part of this church. Everyone in the church can be a part of God’s mission by doing things that serve others. Let’s spend a few minutes doing a project in the church that serves others. Our mission as a church is to lead others to Jesus; so when we serve at church, we are a part of the mission.

LOW PREP

- Bibles
- chair

OPTION 2: Hot seat

Assign three volunteers the following roles: Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. Choose one role player to sit at the front of the room. Invite kids to interview the player, asking questions about the Bible story as if they are conducting an investigation.

Suggest kids ask “who, what, when, where, and how” questions. The player should respond as that person. Provide Bibles and allow players to refer to Luke 2:39-52.

Players may be creative with their answers, but strive for biblical accuracy. After several questions, select another role player to take the “hot seat.”

SAY • I wonder if Mary and Joseph asked Jesus more questions as they traveled home together. Remember our big picture question: *Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully*

human. God sent Jesus to earth with a purpose. **Even as a child, Jesus wanted to do His Father's plan.** God blessed Jesus as He got ready to follow His Father's plan: to die on the cross and rescue people from sin.

When we trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for His Word and for sending His Son. Ask Him to show grace to kids as they grow in wisdom and understanding.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Lost and Found" on the activity page. Kids should help Mary and Joseph find their way back to Jesus by following the path containing the words of today's Bible story point.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Lost and Found" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.