

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.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)

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TEACH THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)

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APPLY THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)

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

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

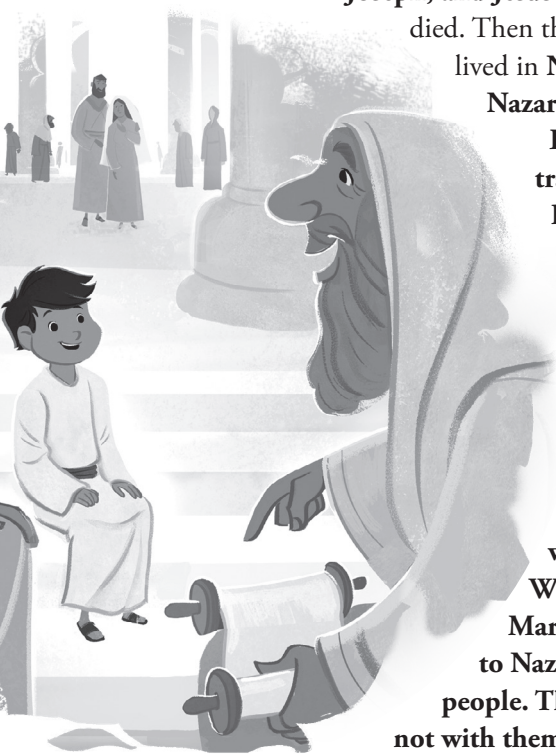
Matthew 2; Luke 2

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 discuss things they have learned to do and things they want to learn to do.

SAY • When we are born, we are basically helpless, and we must rely on others to take care of us. As we grow up, we learn many different skills and lots of information. Today, we will learn about a time after Jesus was a baby, but before He was all grown up. We will see that people were surprised by how much He understood despite His being a child.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Giving Treasure” activity page. Kids will use the space provided to draw a picture of something they treasure that they could give to Jesus to worship Him.

SAY • Those are some great treasures you all drew. Today we will hear about a time when wise men visited Jesus and brought Him treasures to worship Him.

- “Giving Treasure” activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Find the star

Hide a star-shaped paper cutout somewhere in the room.

Invite the kids to find the star and bring it to you. For a competitive twist, hide multiple stars and see who can find the most in a given time limit.

SAY • The wise men who visited Jesus followed a bright star.

When they found Jesus in Bethlehem, they presented Him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh—three valuable treasures. Jesus was no ordinary child, and His extraordinary nature would become more and more clear as He grew up. We'll learn more about it today.

- star-shaped paper cutout, 1 or more
- timer (optional)

OPTION 2: Tough questions

Invite the kids to come up with appropriate, silly questions to ask a child volunteer. The volunteer must attempt to answer the question without laughing or smiling. She may make up the answers, and the answers do not have to be accurate. Whoever makes her laugh gets to answer questions in the next round. Play as time allows.

SAY • Those questions were pretty silly. Sometimes though, we face real questions that are difficult to answer because they require more wisdom than we might have. Today we will learn about a time Jesus proved He understood difficult questions and had lots of wise answers, even while He was just a boy.

**LOW
PREP**

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 on a strap

[Leader enters wearing casual clothing and carrying a camera on a strap.]

LEADER • Hey, kids! Welcome to my photography studio.

You know, a large percentage of the photo shoots I do are kids' portraits. Parents love to have pictures of their children as they grow up. It can be lots of fun to look back on how we used to look or what we used to be interested in.

One day, each of you will be an adult, and chances are, the adults in your life now will say things like "I can't believe how grown up you are!" or "where has the time gone?" By getting pictures of you now, your parents, grandparents, or teachers can hold onto their memories of you as a child a bit more clearly.

You know, that reminds me of a Bible story. The Bible doesn't contain a lot of information about Jesus as a child, but there are a few stories. The Bible even

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

tells us that Jesus' mother held onto these memories of Jesus as a child and treasured them in her heart!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Remember, Jesus had an earthly mother—

Mary—and Joseph raised Jesus as his own son.

But Jesus is really God's Son. That brings us to our

big picture question and answer. *Is Jesus God or*

a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully

God and fully human. Jesus understands our pain,

sadness, and brokenness that come from sin, but He

never sinned. He carried God's punishment for sin.

Only Jesus could do both those things; only Jesus is

fully God and human.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

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

· Giant Timeline

LEADER • A few weeks back, we talked about Jesus' family.

We learned that **Jesus' family line proved He is the**

Messiah. Later we learned that **John was born to**

prepare the way for Jesus, and Jesus was born to be

God's promised Savior. When Jesus was dedicated

at the temple according to God's law, **Simeon**

and Anna worshiped Jesus as the Messiah. This

week, we will hear about something else from Jesus'

childhood.

· Bibles

· "Jesus as a Child"
video

· Big Picture Question
Poster

· Bible Story Picture
Poster

· Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 2; 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 • In any other circumstances, a mom and dad would probably be very worried if strangers showed up at their door with presents for their child. But Jesus was not an ordinary child. The wise men understood who He was and offered great treasures to worship Him. And we see more clearly who Jesus is from the next part of the story.

Some of you may have had scary situations where you got separated from your parents in a crowded place. It can feel terrifying—especially for a parent. Imagine how Mary and Joseph might have felt. God had given them the important job of raising the Messiah, and they left Jerusalem without Him!

But remember, Jesus was no ordinary child. While you or I might have been afraid or gotten ourselves into trouble without parents around, Jesus was in the temple discussing God with the teachers of the law! The Bible tells us that everyone there was amazed by Jesus' ability to understand the Scriptures.

Even as a child, Jesus wanted to do His Father's plan. He understood all along that He would glorify God by obeying God's plans.

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. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and makes us part of His family. When we trust God, He will use in amazing ways to spread the good news. That is His plan for believers, and we can all be a part of it.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided 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 God’s plans for them. Guide them to discuss how they can confidently tell others about Jesus and what He’s done for them.

· “Unit 19, Session 5”
Questions from Kids
video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Display the “Photos from Brazil” printable 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.** Though you are young, you can follow God’s plan and be on mission wherever you go! We live on mission by loving other people the way God loves us and by telling them about the forgiveness we can have through Jesus.

Key passage (5 minutes)

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

· Key Passage Poster
· “The Word Was God
(John 1:1-2)” song

LEADER • Our key passage reminds us that Jesus—the Word—has always existed. In the beginning, He was there with God the Father. He is God the Son and will continue to exist for eternity.

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • **Even as a child, Jesus wanted to do His Father’s plan,** which was to die to save us. Scripture tells us that there’s no better friend than that.

· “Take It to the Lord”
song

Sing together “Take It to the Lord.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, thank You for sending Your Son. Thank You that He wanted to obey Your plan to rescue us all along. We know that He is the best friend we could ever have. Help us love and obey 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 activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Tip: In some places, this game is known as "Down by the Banks."

Invite volunteers to say the key passage from memory. Praise each kid's efforts and encourage all the kids to continue working to memorize the key passage. Then instruct the kids to sit in a circle. Each kid will place her left hand under the right hand of the kid on her left. Kids will then take turns saying each word of the key passage in order.

As each kid says a word on his turn, he will move his right hand to clap the right hand of the kid on his left. Then that kid will say the next word, and so on around the circle. The kid to the left of the kid who says the last word of the key passage will try to move her hand before he can clap it. If he claps his own hand, she wins. If he claps her hand before she can move it, he wins. Play as time allows or until all kids have the verses memorized.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

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

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find Luke 2. Ask a volunteer to tell which division Luke is in (*New Testament, Gospels*). Ask another volunteer to tell which other books are in that division, and what they tell. (*Matthew, Mark, John; the story of Jesus' life and ministry on earth*)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why did Mary and Joseph travel to Jerusalem each year? (*for the Passover, Luke 2:41*)
2. How long did it take Mary and Joseph to find Jesus? (*three days, Luke 2:46*)
3. What about Jesus astounded people? (*His understanding and His answers, Luke 2:46-47*)
4. Why do you think Jesus' understanding and wisdom were so surprising? *Help kids understand that Jesus would have seemed like an ordinary 12-year-old just by looking at Him. Remind kids that Jesus is fully God and fully human. Jesus was able to understand and explain God's Word as One who had studied it for many years, despite His young age.*
5. Why do you think Jesus said it was necessary for Him to be in His Father's house? *Guide kids to understand that Jesus' Father is God. Remind them that Jesus is God the Son, and He knew God's plans for His life: to make the way for sinners to have eternal life. Jesus understood that He would need to rely on God's power to obey Him, and Jesus wanted to obey God always.*
6. How can we live out God's plans for us? *Discuss the idea that God's plan for all believers is for us to glorify Him by loving others, obeying Him out of love, and sharing the gospel throughout the earth. Remind kids that we can live on mission no matter where we are.*

SAY • Even as a child, Jesus wanted to do His Father's plan. He perfectly obeyed His earthly parents and all of God's commands, eventually dying for our sin.

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

· various cleaning supplies, such as vacuum cleaners, trash bags, or disinfecting wipes (optional)

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

LOW PREP

· wrapping paper rolls
· adhesive gift bows

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Live on mission

Work with parents and other ministry leaders to coordinate volunteer efforts so that your group has opportunities to serve your church and community. Consider leading a group of kids to the nursery to clean and disinfect toys or to the church grounds to pick up litter. Plan and run a food drive or challenge your kids to sweep or vacuum the classrooms in your kids ministry area.

SAY • By helping out in simple ways like these, you are a part of God's plan. You are an important part of this church. Everyone in the church can be a part of God's mission by doing things that serve 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.

OPTION 2: Give yourself

Form teams of about three kids. Provide each team with a roll of wrapping paper and an adhesive gift bow. Challenge the teams to select one kid to wrap. The first team to wrap a kid from head to toe and stick their bow on top wins. You may also alter the game by awarding points for wrapping style or coverage, and declare a winner not based on speed.

SAY • By the end of that game, some of you looked like giant presents that would have been fun to unwrap. In a way though, this isn't as silly as it sounds. We can give ourselves to God by trusting Him in all areas of our lives.

When we allow God to control our time, talents, money, or other treasures, we are giving Him ourselves. He can use us to glorify Himself and lead others to believe in Jesus. It doesn't matter that you

are still young either. **Even as a child, Jesus wanted to do His Father's plan.**

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

· pencils and crayons
· paper
· Bible Story Coloring
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.