

UNIT 19 | SESSION 4

JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

LUKE 2



CHRIST CONNECTION: As Jesus grew up, He was strong and wise. Jesus was getting ready to follow His Father's plan: to die on the cross and save people from sin.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us.

KEY PASSAGE: God loved the world and gave his one and only Son to everyone who believes in him. John 3:16

STORY POINT: Jesus came to earth to follow His Father's plan.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Jesus' visit to the temple as a boy reveals His obedience to His Father and Christ's desire to fulfill His plan for our salvation. Jesus continued to obey God's will all the days of His life, even to the point of death on a cross. We read of Jesus' oneness with His Father and the lengths Christ would endure to secure a right relationship with God for all who would trust in Him for salvation. Through Jesus' perfect obedience, Christians can abide with our Father, here on earth and forever as we dwell with Him in heaven and the new earth.

In Luke 2, the onlookers were amazed that Jesus, a 12-year-old boy, was sitting among the teachers, listening intently, asking and answering questions, and truly understanding the things of God. Jesus knew His Father and made Himself at home in His house, finding it necessary to be involved in the things of God and among His people. This desire to obey His Father and to do His will wasn't just something Jesus proclaimed in His youth; it was how He lived out each moment of His life.

Jesus' gift of salvation isn't earned through our obedience; rather, it is received by faith. When we repent and place our trust in His finished work on the cross—His righteousness in exchange for our sinfulness—we are saved from our sins and the punishment we deserve. Only Jesus could live a perfect life in full obedience to the Father, yet when we believe in Him, His Holy Spirit transforms us and helps us obey and abide in His strength.

Help the kids you teach see that Jesus came to earth to do His Father's will, which meant following God's plan perfectly from a young age to the point of death—even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). Guide boys and girls to see that even today, they can decide to follow God and that He will be faithful to lead them all the days of their lives.



Scan the QR code to listen to The Gospel Project for Kids Weekly Leader Training Podcast.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel

30-40 MINUTES



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60-65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tip scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



WELCOME

Hide and find travel items

- Big Picture Question Poster
- assorted travel items



LEARN

Find food

- toy food items
- large bowl

Tell the Bible story

- "Jesus at the Temple" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture Poster
- sticky notes

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Explore a sensory bin

- shredded paper
- small bin
- assorted Bibles
- paper scrolls

Explore travel items

- assorted travel items



LIVE

Pick up straws

- straws, craft sticks, or stir sticks

Missions activity

- "Annie Armstrong Portrait" printable

Snack and transition

- hand sanitizer (optional)
- "Search and Find Jesus" activity page, 1 per child
- Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Go on a journey

- scarves
- large box (remove top and bottom)

Measure kids

- large roll of butcher paper
- measuring tape



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers opportunities to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, the story point, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the room. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

HIDE AND FIND TRAVEL ITEMS

Hide assorted travel items around the room for kids to find. Lead them to gather the items and bring them to group time area. Place the Big Picture Question Poster nearby. As travel items are found, review the big picture question together.

SAY “ I’m so glad to see you at church today! I see you found all the travel items. Thank you for collecting them. Our big picture question asks, **Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us.** Today, we will begin learning about Jesus as an older child when He took a trip with His family. It was quite an adventure! But in all of the adventure, Jesus obeyed God, His Father. **JESUS CAME TO EARTH TO FOLLOW HIS FATHER’S PLAN.** ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





LEARN the Bible Story

1 EXPLORE THE BIBLE



Gather a children's Bible and invite the children to the large group area and to be seated. Hold up the Bible once everyone is settled and proceed with the "Say" portion.

SAY “ Does anyone know what this book is? It’s a very special book. [Allow responses.] That’s right! It’s a Bible. The Bible is God’s Word. Everything in the Bible is true and tells about Jesus. In our story today, we will learn about when Jesus was in the temple talking with the teachers about God and His Word. Let’s find out what happened! ”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Luke 2. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

SAY “ Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. During Passover, many people would come together to celebrate and remember when God rescued His people out of Egypt.

When Jesus was 12 years old, He went to Jerusalem with His family. When it was time to go home, Mary and Joseph began traveling with a large group. They didn’t notice that Jesus wasn’t with them. He had stayed behind in Jerusalem.

Mary and Joseph had been traveling for a whole day when they began to look for Jesus. They looked among their relatives and friends, but they couldn’t find Him.

So, Mary and Joseph returned to Jerusalem. They searched everywhere for Jesus, but the city was so big, and Jesus was just a boy.

Finally, they found Him. Jesus was at the temple, sitting with the teachers. Jesus was listening to them and asking them questions.

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 I had to be in My Father’s house?”

Mary and Joseph didn’t understand what Jesus was talking about. Then Jesus went home with Mary and Joseph. Jesus always obeyed them.

Jesus grew taller and wiser, and God was happy with Him. ”

Christ Connection: As Jesus grew up, He was strong and wise. Jesus was getting ready to follow His Father’s plan: to die on the cross and save people from sin.



3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Before the session, write several review questions on sticky notes and attach them to the walls around the room. Invite children to look around the room and retrieve the sticky notes. Read the questions and listen to answers from the children. Continue until all children discover and answer all the questions. Point out the Bible Story Picture Poster and recall portions of the Bible story as appropriate. Sample questions may include “Why did Jesus’ parents go to Jerusalem with Him?” (to celebrate Passover), “What were they celebrating with Passover?” (God rescuing the people out of Egypt), “How old was Jesus in the story?” (12), “Where was Jesus when Mary and Joseph started home?” (still in Jerusalem), and so on.

SAY “Mary and Joseph did not understand why Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. They didn’t think to look for Him in the temple until after they had been searching all over the city for Him. Jesus was in the temple talking with the teachers. He was listening to them and asking them questions. As Jesus grew up, He was strong and wise. Jesus was getting ready to follow His Father’s plan—to die on the cross and rise again to save people from sin.”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “The Wheels on the Bus”:

God loved the world and gave His one
And only Son to everyone,
God loved the world and gave His Son
Jesus is His name.

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 3:16. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Say the key passage phrase together several times while passing the Bible around the circle.

SAY “Our key passage phrase talks about God’s one and only Son. That’s Jesus! From today’s Bible story, we understand that Jesus was getting ready to follow His Father’s plan—to die on the cross and save people from sin.”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God that Jesus always obeyed His Father. Guide the children to ask God to help them obey their own parents.





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 GUESS WHICH HAND

Draw a stick figure on a small piece of paper to represent Jesus. Fold the paper into quarters. Hold both hands behind your back and place the paper into one fist. Hold both fists in front of you and lead preschoolers to guess which fist is holding the paper. Reveal the location and unfold the paper before playing again. Consider letting preschoolers take turns hiding the paper.

SAY “ You guessed and found the paper! Jesus’ family had traveled to Jerusalem for a festival. The family began traveling home from Jerusalem and realized that Jesus was not with them. Where do you think they finally found Him? [Allow responses.] He was at the temple learning about God. ”

2 EXPLORE A SENSORY BIN

Hide various Bibles and paper scrolls in a sensory bin under a layer of paper shreds. Place the bin on a low table and invite kids to find the hidden items.

SAY “ As Jesus grew up, He was strong and wise. Jesus was getting ready to follow His Father’s plan—to die on the cross and rise again to save people from sin. The Bible says studying God’s Word makes us wise. Jesus went to the temple to talk to teachers as part of studying the Bible. Bibles in Jesus’ time didn’t look like the Bibles we have today. They were written on scrolls by hand. ”

3 EXPLORE TRAVEL ITEMS

Allow children to play with the travel items from the Welcome activity. As children explore the items, talk together about packing for trips. Ask children to share items they like to pack. Share about the items and how they are useful for trips.

SAY “ Jesus and His parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. When it was time to go home, they were traveling back with a group of people. Jesus’ parents, Mary and Joseph, didn’t know Jesus was left behind in Jerusalem. They had to go back and look for Him—He was a 12-year-old boy in a big city. They searched and searched. Finally, they found Him in the temple talking to the teachers. Jesus asked, ‘Why were you looking for Me? Didn’t you know I had to be in My Father’s house?’ **JESUS CAME TO EARTH TO FOLLOW HIS FATHER’S PLAN.** ”

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 PICK UP STRAWS

Give each child a handful of coffee stir sticks, straws, or craft sticks. At your signal, children should toss their straws in the air and watch as they intermingle on the floor. Instruct children to listen as you clap your hands several times. Tell children to count the number of claps out loud with you and gather that many straws. Be sure to clap two times and twelve times.

SAY “ I clapped two times because Jesus had two parents who were searching for Him. I clapped twelve times because Jesus was 12 years old when He listened to the temple leaders and asked them questions. Jesus was getting ready to follow His Father’s plan: to die on the cross and save people from sin. ”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Print and display a copy of the “Annie Armstrong Portrait” printable. Invite preschoolers to join you in the block center or set some blocks in the middle of the floor. Remind preschoolers that Annie was a great leader. Form groups of four or five preschoolers and encourage them to take turns being the leader to determine what to work together to build.

SAY “ Annie Armstrong was a great leader who followed Jesus. She provided for people in need, told people about Jesus, and supported missionaries in North America. Annie worked hard to get people to work together to meet the needs of others. **[Lead a prayer.]** ”

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY “ As Jesus grew up, He was strong and wise. Jesus was getting ready to follow His Father’s plan: to die on the cross and save people from sin. ”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 FIND MESSAGES



Write short messages about Jesus on strips of paper and hide them inside Bibles. Allow children to find the messages. Read the messages aloud. Guide the conversation back to the Bible story points once all messages are found.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Luke 2. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

- When Jesus was 12 years old, He went to Jerusalem with His family to celebrate Passover. When it was time to go home, Mary and Joseph started walking, but Jesus stayed behind.
- After a day of traveling, Mary and Joseph started looking for Jesus. They couldn't find Him! They went back to Jerusalem and finally found Him. Jesus was at the temple with the teachers.
- Mary said, "Son, Your father and I have been looking everywhere for You!" Jesus asked, "Why were you looking for Me? Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?"
- Then Jesus went home with Mary and Joseph. Jesus always obeyed them. He grew taller and wiser, and God was happy with Him.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of "The Wheels on the Bus":

God loved the world and gave His one
And only Son to everyone,
God loved the world and gave His Son
Jesus is His name.

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 3:16. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage phrase. Lead the group to say the key passage phrase together while shielding their eyes as if diligently searching for someone in a crowd.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God that Jesus was getting ready to follow His Father's plan: to die on the cross to save people from sin.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 MAKE AND FOLLOW A PLAN



Guide kids to “make a plan” of movement activities (jumping jacks, hopping, and so on). Write the movements on a large piece of paper, so they can see the plan forming. Once each kid has added something, start at the top of the list and do each action.

SAY “ That was a great action plan! We did many movements together and in the correct order. God had a plan, too! He planned to send a Savior to the world to save people from sin. Even as a child, Jesus always obeyed God, His Father. Jesus was getting ready to follow His Father’s plan: to die on the cross and save people from sin. ”

7 GO ON A JOURNEY

Affix tape to the floor in a large U-shape. Remove the top and bottom of a large box and lay it sideways along the path for children to crawl through. Add other obstacles like a scarf and a small pile of blocks. Mark the key passage in a Bible and set it on the floor about halfway through the journey. Tell children to line up at the starting line and move one-at-a-time through the obstacle course. Stop children at the marked Bible. Open it and read the key passage before continuing.

SAY “ We went on a journey filled with obstacles. We jumped over a scarf, crawled through a tunnel, and hopped over a mountain of blocks. Jesus and His family traveled to Jerusalem. It was a long journey, and they had some challenges, especially when they realized that Jesus was not with them. **JESUS CAME TO EARTH TO FOLLOW HIS FATHER’S PLAN**, and even when He was 12 years old, He was learning about God. Jesus was getting ready to follow His Father’s plan: to die on the cross and save people from sin. ”

8 MEASURE KIDS

Unroll butcher paper and lay it on the floor. Cut each piece a little longer than the height of each child. Invite a child to lie on the paper and trace the shape of his body. Offer art supplies and encourage children to decorate their bodies. Use measuring tools to record a child’s height. Document the results somewhere on the child’s paper.

SAY “ When you heard today’s Bible verse, did you notice the part at the end? [Allow responses.] The family went to Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph realized Jesus was missing, and they found Him in the temple talking with the teachers. After they went back home to Nazareth, the Bible says that Jesus grew taller and wiser. Both God and people were pleased with Him. You are growing as Jesus did. You’re getting taller and wiser every day. **JESUS CAME TO EARTH TO FOLLOW HIS FATHER’S PLAN**. It was God’s plan for Jesus to die on the cross and rise again to rescue people from sin. ”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.