



CHRISTMAS LESSON 3

The Son of Man is identified in the temple

LUKE 2:39-52



Jesus' childhood shows that He is the human Savior.



“And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

Supporting Truths

1. Jesus grew like a normal child.
2. Jesus' love for and growing knowledge of God's word shows He is the Savior.
3. Jesus' devotion to God the Father shows He is the Savior.
4. Jesus' perfect obedience to His earthly parents shows He is the human Savior.
5. Jesus' favor with God and man shows He is the Savior.

Objectives

1. Recite Luke 2:52 to see that Jesus grew up as a real human.
2. Describe the reaction of the people to Jesus' questions and answers.
3. State that Jesus perfectly obeyed God's will for Him, even dying on a cross.
4. Contrast Jesus' obedience with Adam's disobedience, along with the results.
5. Explain that Jesus lived both by God's grace and for God's pleasure.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON



The Son of Man is identified in the temple • Luke 2:39-52

Lesson Summary

As Luke's account of Jesus' birth draws to an end, he provides one final witness: the testimony of young Jesus. When Jesus was twelve, He stayed behind in the temple, asking and answering questions that astonished Israel's wisest teachers. To His concerned parents, He expressed His true relationship to God and His devotion to God's mission for Him. All this confirms once again that Jesus is the human Savior of the human race.

Spotlight on the Gospel

As the human Savior, Jesus came to be the saving representative of the human race. He fulfilled the law on behalf of humans. He learned obedience, He resisted temptation, He satisfied the law, and He revealed the Father to mankind. As the human Savior, He died as man's substitute sacrifice, and rose again as a sympathetic high priest. He stands as the human example for us to follow, and one day He will return to fulfill man's purpose to rule over all creation.

TWO WEEKS AGO



The Son of Man is born
in Bethlehem
Luke 2:1-20

LAST WEEK



The Son of Man is
presented in Jerusalem
Luke 2:21-38

THIS WEEK



The Son of Man is
identified in the temple
Luke 2:39-52

THE SON OF MAN IS BORN

Lesson Commentary

Jesus' childhood shows that He is the human Savior.

Generally, Christians have no trouble thinking of Jesus as fully God. Yet we often struggle to remember that Jesus is fully human too. But the humanity of Jesus is essential to the Christian faith. Only a human can die for sins (Phil 2:8; Heb 2:16–17). Only a human could personally experience the struggles and sorrows we endure (Heb 4:15; John 19:28). Only a human can fulfill God's mission for humanity to rule the earth in obedience and so spread God's glory through the entire world (Gen 1:26; Ps 8; Rom 5:19). So Luke is very careful to show us that Jesus is a truly human Savior in His birth (Luke 2:1–7, 12), at His dedication (2:21), and now in His childhood (2:40–52).

Jesus grew as God's special child (2:40)

The child grew (2:40). That seems ordinary enough. But that's the point. Jesus was human. Not only was He born as a human (2:7) and grow as a human (2:40), but as a human He was also tired (John 4:6), hungry (Matt 4:2), thirsty (John 19:28), and dependent on Scripture (Matt 4:4), God (Matt 27:43), prayer (Heb 5:7), and the Spirit (Matt 12:28). In fact, His growth in wisdom (Luke 2:40) shows that He was limited in His knowledge as a human (Matt 24:36). Like all other children, He had to learn. It was likely through His ongoing study of Scripture that He realized, when He was 12 years old, the full reality of what He had been born to do (Luke 24:27).

Although human, Jesus was clearly a very special human. He was filled with **wisdom**, far beyond any that had come before or will follow after (11:31). He had **a deep understanding of the mind of God** and even at such a young age had **clear knowledge of the will of God**. Also, God's favor was on Him (2:40b). The

Father deeply loved His Son and rejoiced in Him (3:22). Jesus was not a child with superpowers, but a child with super commitment to and super dependence on God, Scripture, and the Holy Spirit. When we combine Jesus' ordinary humanness with His extraordinary wisdom and grace, we see that He is qualified to be both our Savior (Heb 2:14–17) and our example to follow (12:2).

Jesus grew to understand God's special mission for Him (2:41–50)

The account of Jesus' temple visit illustrates His growth, wisdom, and grace. His parents, proving their obedience once again (Exod 23:14–17), faithfully traveled to Jerusalem for **Passover**, the festival when Israelite families sacrificed a lamb to celebrate Israel's rescue from Egypt. Immediately following Passover was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a celebration lasting another 7 days. What might have been going through Jesus' mind as He watched the Passover lamb die each year? As He grew from toddler to child, He must have come to understand that this lamb represented Him. He must have realized that He Himself was the Lamb of God who would die for the sins of the world (John 1:29). It was a terrifying mission, but one He was resolved to perform (Matt 26:39). Truly, we celebrate an amazing child every Christmas.

When His parents left Jerusalem to return home, Jesus stayed behind (Luke 2:43). He was hungry for God's word and seized this opportunity to talk with Israel's foremost teachers (2:46). In the temple He asked and answered questions, following the customary method of instruction (cf. Acts 17:2). Not only did God's word show Him His own mission, but it also equipped Him to resist temptation (Matt 4:10), answer objections (22:17–40) and confound the Jewish teachers who later opposed Him (22:41–46). But though He continued to learn as a human, He possessed unparalleled wisdom, as illustrated by the teachers' reaction. All who heard



THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus was not a child with superpowers, but a child with super commitment to and super dependence on God, Scripture, and the Holy Spirit.

THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus was wiser than His teachers because He knew and loved God's Word (Ps 119:99).



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON



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Him were astounded by His understanding (Luke 2:47). For the rest of His life, Jesus would continually produce such wonder, for He is the most amazing human the world has ever known (Luke 2:18, 33, 48; 4:22, 32, 36; 5:9; 8:25; 9:43; 11:14; 20:26; 24:41).

After an anxious search, Jesus' parents finally found Him (2:44–46). As any normal mother would, Mary scolded Jesus for making her and Joseph worry so much (2:48). But Jesus hadn't done wrong. He didn't hide from His parents or resist their authority. Jesus' words to His mother gave Mary a glimpse into what Simeon meant when he said that a sword would pierce Mary's soul (2:35). Although Jesus was truly human, the son of Mary and Joseph, His unique calling meant that His primary responsibility was to His heavenly Father, not His earthly parents (2:49). Although Jesus perfectly obeyed His parents (2:51), He recognized that God was His true Father. His single-minded devotion to His mission caused Him to identify more with His spiritual family than His earthly one (8:21). This came to a climax when crucifixion completely separated Son from mother (John 19:26–27). Yet Mary's temporary loss would prove eternal gain—for herself and for all the redeemed.

Jesus' words to Mary are His first recorded words. Luke left no stone unturned in his effort to correctly identify Jesus (Luke 1:1–4). After providing so many witnesses before, during, and after Jesus' birth, Luke now presents the testimony of Jesus Himself. By the time He was 12, Jesus understood that God was His Father (2:49). God was known as the Father of all creation and especially of Israel, but no Jew claimed God as his personal Father. So when Jesus expressed His unique relationship with God (10:21–22), He was claiming divinity (John 19:7). He was also testifying to His mission when He said He had to be in His Father's house (Luke 2:49). Jesus was completely committed to doing His

Father's work. This 12 year-old knew He had been born as a human for a very special mission. Is this what you believe about Jesus?

Jesus grew into God's special man (2:51–52)

Jesus understood that His primary responsibility was to God, but He still continued in obedience to His earthly parents (2:51). Here again we see both His humanity and divinity. As a human, He learned obedience (Heb 5:8). He never disobeyed, and His obedience in small things as a child prepared Him to obey as an adult in increasingly difficult situations. Through it all His obedience never wavered. Nothing, not even the threat of death, could move Him from His commitment to God (Phil 2:8). As Savior, He perfectly fulfilled the law (Matt 3:15), including the 5th commandment which requires children to honor their parents (Exod 20:12). Thus He was qualified to die as the perfect sacrifice, a human Savior for human sinners (1 Pet 3:18).

Despite all they had seen and heard, Joseph and Mary still did not understand the full reality of their Son (Luke 2:50). Yet Mary continued to ponder all that had happened (2:51). What about you? As you read the testimony of 12 year-old Jesus, how do you respond? As the Christmas season draws to an end, will you continue to ponder like Mary? In the middle of the doubts and fears of this world, we can confidently look to Jesus. He is the certain answer to all our human hopes and fears, because He is our human Savior.



THINK ABOUT IT

A son is equal in nature to his father (John 5:18).

Lesson Outline

Jesus' childhood shows that He is the human Savior.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



We know Jesus is the human Savior because...

1. He grew up as a perfect human child (2:40, 51–52).
2. He learned His mission from Scripture (2:41–47).
3. He received His Father's mission (2:48–50).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Jesus grew as God's special child (2:40).
 - He grew in wisdom (2:40a).
 - He grew with God's grace upon Him (2:40b).
2. Jesus grew to understand God's special mission for Him (2:41–50).
 - He observed the Passover sacrifice with His family (2:41–42).
 - He stayed in the temple (2:43–46a).
 - He loved, learned, and understood God's law in an amazing way (2:46b–47).
 - He was devoted to God as His Father (2:48–50).
3. Jesus grew into God's special man (2:51–52).
 - He grew up obeying His earthly parents (2:51).
 - He grew up in every way: intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially (2:52).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Is Jesus still a baby in our story today?**
No. He began growing up, just like other humans.
- 2. What did the people think about Jesus' questions and answers?**
They were astonished! He was so wise because He knew and loved God's word.
- 3. What did Jesus call God?**
My Father. Jesus knew He was God's Son sent to save the world.
- 4. Did Jesus obey Joseph and Mary?**
Yes. He showed us that it is right to obey our parents.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Since Jesus was God, did He know everything during His life on earth?**
No. As a child, He grew in wisdom. He learned His mission from Scripture.
- 2. What did Jesus do with His family in Jerusalem?**
He joined in the Passover sacrifice, realizing over time that He Himself would be the final Passover Lamb.
- 3. What was Jesus doing in the temple after His parents left?**
He was asking and answering questions with the teachers of God's law. God's word would enable Him to live a perfect life even as a human.
- 4. Why did Jesus say He stayed in the temple?**
He said He had to be in His Father's house. He was devoted to doing the Father's will by being the Savior of the world.
- 5. When Jesus went home, how did His behavior show that He was worthy to be Savior?**
He obeyed His parents and lived in a way that earned approval from both God and man.
- 6. What does Jesus' childhood show us about Him?**
He is both human and God. He is the human Savior.
- 7. Why did Jesus have to be a human?**
To be our representative by living a perfect life on our behalf. To die as our substitute sacrifice. To show us how to live as a human example for us. To come again to rule as our representative king.
- 8. What did Mary do when she saw and heard all this?**
She did not understand it all, but she kept thinking carefully about it.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

INCREASED IN STATURE

Show the class pictures of babies, toddlers, and children. Ask the children: What do you call a person who is just born? (A baby.) What do you call a person who is two years old? (A toddler.) What do you call a person who is between about 3 and 12 years old? (A child or boy or girl.) Today we're going to see that Jesus was all of these, just like all of you.

ABCs

Bring in some magnetic refrigerator letters or letter flashcards. Show these to the children (one letter at a time) and ask the children if they can identify the letter and its sound. Ask the children if any of them are learning about letters at home or at school. Tell the class that today we're going to see that Jesus had to learn His letters and numbers just like us because He grew up as a human child.



ILLUSTRATE

THE LAMB OF GOD

Bring in a stuffed lamb. When you explain the Passover, use the lamb as a prop and explain that Jesus watched this every year, growing to realize that this lamb was showing what would eventually happen to Him. Ask the children to try to imagine themselves in that situation to help them grasp that Jesus was truly human even though He alone is Savior.

WHAT WE COULDN'T DO

Arrange a few activities for the children that are too difficult for them, but able to be accomplished by the teacher. Examples include: Trying to jump and touch an object, trying to jump across a great distance, opening a jar with a tightly screwed on lid, etc. After each child has tried and failed, ask them if they would like someone to do the task for them. Explain that this person is called a representative. Tell the children that Jesus was born as a man in order to represent us before God. He came to earth to do what we couldn't do: perfectly obey God's Law.



APPLY

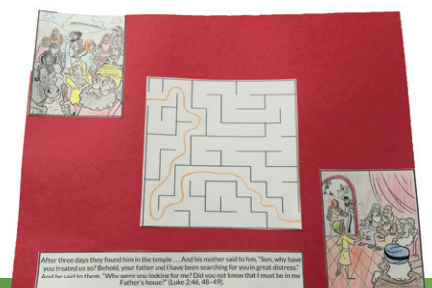
FINDING JESUS IN JERUSALEM

See *Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*.

Materials: Craft sheet, construction paper, scissors, glue, crayons.

Directions: Have children color and cut out the two pictures on the craft sheet. Cut out the maze and glue it to a sheet of construction paper. Glue on the two pictures, as shown below. Instruct the children to complete the maze.

Finding Jesus in Jerusalem
See *Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

JESUS, OUR REPRESENTATIVE

As the human Savior, Jesus came to be the saving representative of the human race (Rom 5:18–19). Introduce this truth by having the children perform some fun, 1 minute activities that are impossible to complete: (1) Cookie Face: Place two cookies on forehead and move both to mouth without hands; (2) Stack It Up: Stack 40 pennies using only one hand; (3) Red Cup, Blue Cup: Begin with a stack of 35 red cups and 1 blue cup on top. Move blue cup to bottom of stack and back to top by moving all the red cups. Later, explain how a representative would be needed to accomplish each task in their place.

THE BOY JESUS

It's common to think of Jesus in one of two ways: As a baby (around Christmas) or as a man (around Easter). However, Jesus grew just like us. Help the children understand the time that has elapsed from the previous weeks' lessons when Jesus was born to today's lesson when Jesus was left at the temple by displaying different size boy clothes from ages 1 to 12 at the front of the room (arrange the clothes from smallest to largest).



ILLUSTRATE

LIFELONG LEARNER

Ask the children the following questions: (1) What's your favorite subject at school? (2) Can anyone tell us something you learned this week? (3) Is anything hard to learn? (4) Do you have a favorite verse? (5) Can you recite it? (6) Is it hard to memorize verses? Thinking about all the things we are learning helps us to imagine what life was like for Jesus as a child, because he had to learn things just like you and me.

LEFT BEHIND

Talk about a time your parents accidentally left you behind and describe what you did and how you felt. Ask the children if any of them have had a similar experience.



APPLY

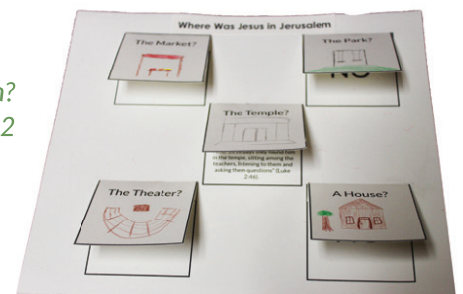
WHERE WAS JESUS IN JERUSALEM?

See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Craft sheets, scissors, glue, and crayons.

Directions: Have children cut out rectangles with places listed on them. Draw pictures that match each description on the rectangles. Glue rectangles onto template. Use the rectangle that says "The Temple?" on the space that says, "YES."

Where Was Jesus in Jerusalem?
See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

CHILD PRODIGY

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is one of the most famous composers of all time. He began to display his remarkable abilities at an early age. He was playing the keyboard by ear at age three and had begun composing his own music by the time he was six. He toured Europe as a child with his older sister, performing both private and public concerts. By the time he was eight years old he had already composed his first symphony. However, no child prodigy, no matter how extraordinary their abilities, can compare with the child Jesus. Even though He was an ordinary human child, Jesus was the most remarkable human being ever born.

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

Use the following references to Jesus' humanity in a series of sword drills to help prepare the children for today's lesson: Luke 2:52 (Jesus grew); John 4:6 (Jesus got tired); Matthew 4:2 (Jesus was hungry); John 19:28 (Jesus was thirsty); Matthew 26:37 (Jesus experienced human emotions); John 19:33–35 (Jesus died).



ILLUSTRATE

OUR SUBSTITUTE

When we trust in Jesus for salvation, He represents us before God. Jesus' sacrificial death satisfies God's righteous anger over our sin, and Jesus' perfect righteousness is credited to us (2 Cor 5:21). This may be illustrated by the following discussion. Tell the children to imagine they've been asked to compete in a variety of competitions. However, each child may pick any one person in the world to represent them in each competition. Which person would they pick for a game of one-on-one basketball? A 100 meter race? A vocal competition? Have the children explain why they would pick these individuals to represent them.

HE UNDERSTANDS

As we grow older, there may come a time when we feel like we're experiencing something that no one has ever experienced before. This may cause us to feel discouraged or hopelessly lost. However, talking with someone who has already gone through the same thing we're experiencing can provide much needed encouragement (consider sharing an appropriate example with the class). Tell the class that Jesus, because of His earthly life, perfectly understands our trials and struggles. He experienced all this life has to offer, yet He never sinned (Heb 4:15).



APPLY

HONOR MOM AND DAD

As a twelve year-old boy, Jesus understood that His primary responsibility was to God, but He still continued to obey His earthly parents (Luke 2:51). In so doing, He not only fulfilled the righteous requirement of the Law (Exod 20:12), He also provided us an example to follow. Identify three ways you can honor your mother and father this week, following in the footsteps of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.