



LESSON 1

JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Shows Us What God Is Like

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2

GOD'S BIG STORY: After visiting Jerusalem for the Passover Feast, 12-year-old Jesus stays behind at the temple while His family travels home. He talks with the Jewish teachers and amazes many with His insights.

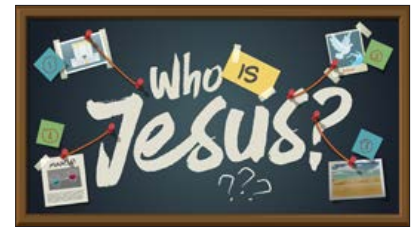
WORD OF WONDER: The Son is the exact likeness of God, who can't be seen. The Son is first, and he is over all creation. —Colossians 1:15

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: Which animal reminds you most of yourself: a dog, a cat, or a mouse? Why?
- Curiosity Questions
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Word of Wonder: Colossians 1:15
- Word of Wonder Activity
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Four Corners Response Stations



Notes! Use the Notes Pages on the back of the Coloring Sheet each week to help kids stay engaged and remember what they are learning. Encourage kids to make notes, draw pictures, and write questions throughout small group and large group. This also provides parents with resources to keep the conversation going throughout the week!



[Who is Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Shows Us What God Is Like

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WORD OF WONDER: Colossians 1:15

I'll never forget that day.

A friend and I had taken our kids to a children's museum. We were standing near the elevator debating which exhibit to visit next when I realized I didn't see Will, my three-year-old. We began to search, working our way up to the enormous lobby. Frantically scanning the crowds, I spotted Will slipping out the front doors. I dashed to him, scooped him up, and burst into tears. He was perfectly calm. I most definitely as not.

Take a moment to read Luke 2:41–52. Most parents have a story like mine. They instantly connect to Joseph's dismay, to Mary's fear. Do you ever wonder what they made of Jesus' response? His calmness in the face of their worry?

Jesus did not share Mary and Joseph's fear; His connection to His Heavenly Father was secure. He knew where He belonged.

What about you? Do you get swept up in the anxieties that surround you? Even as a child, Jesus shows us what God is like: a haven where we can grow and mature and learn, no matter how old we are.

Mary herself seems to make the shift from anxiety (v. 48) to wonder (v. 51). She learned more about her Father by watching her Son.

May we do the same.

—Lise Caldwell

Children's Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The Jewish teachers were religious experts who instructed pupils in the temple courts. The teachers in Luke 2 were likely rabbis, which means “my teacher” or “my master” in Hebrew. Rabbis would have taught apprentices, who sat at their feet, using a question-and-answer format.

WHAT?

Every year Jewish families made the trip to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. When Jesus’ family left to go home, Jesus stayed behind in His Father’s house, listening to the teachers and asking questions. The 12-year-old Jesus amazed the rabbis at the temple with His wisdom and understanding.

WHERE?

Jerusalem was about 40 miles from Jesus’ home in Nazareth. It typically took about three days to get from one city to the other. The temple in Jerusalem included buildings and courtyards used for both sacrifice and instruction. Jewish teachers may have taught here or in other areas of the temple.

WHEN?

At this point in God’s big story, King Herod had died, and his son Archelaus reigned over Jerusalem. Caesar Augustus was likely nearing the end of his reign as Roman emperor. Passover happened in late March or early April.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY

This account bridges Jesus’ infancy and adulthood. It depicts Jesus growing strong and wise, living in step with the Father as He prepared for His kingdom work. It shows that Jesus understood His special relationship with God the Father, a relationship God would confirm years later at Jesus’ baptism.

Small Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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Pre-Service Connection (15-20 min)

RESOURCES: [Coloring Page](#), whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils
Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group. *Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.*

As kids arrive..

Invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question: on the designated board:

“Which animal reminds you most of yourself: a dog, a cat, or a mouse? Why?” ” Set out sheets of paper and colored pencils.

While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

Pose the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

- **When you look at the adults who care for you, you see a bit of yourself too. What are three ways you’re like your parents or other adults who care for you?**
- **Let’s list all the words we can think of that describe God.** Pause for kids to call out answers.
Now let’s list all the words we can think of that describe Jesus. Pause again for kids to call out answers. **Were there any words we used to describe Jesus and God?**

****NEW!! Large Group leaders will now lead an opening game or activity 10 minutes before service begins. It is very important that you are with your groups and ready to participate with them!**

Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Help kids use the table of contents in their Bibles to find Luke chapter 2. As kids find the passage, explain that the book of Luke was written so readers (like them!) could know about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The book introduces us to the most important person we'll ever meet!

Read Luke 2:41–52 aloud and 13–14. aloud. Invite kids to silently act out what Mary and Joseph do in this passage as you read. If time allows, have kids join you in reading it aloud (or simply follow along) a second time. Then discuss the following:

- **How old was Jesus when today's part of God's big story took place?**
- **Where did Jesus and His family travel to in this story? Why did they go there?**
- **Jesus wasn't with Mary and Joseph when they left for home. Where did they find Him?**
- **Jesus was at the temple talking with the Jewish teachers! Why do you think the Jewish teachers were amazed at His answers?**
- **Jesus told Mary and Joseph that He had to be in His Father's house. What do His words tell us about who Jesus is?**
- **What's your favorite thing about Jesus?** (It's OK for kids to have lots of favorites!)

"Jesus is amazing! He is loving, kind, wise, and powerful. And getting to know Jesus better is how we get to know God better! Let's spend time talking with God in prayer, thanking Him for how wonderful He is!"

Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Invite kids to circle up, and lead them in sharing their praises and requests. Then go around the circle, giving kids who would like to a chance to pray for what's been shared. Open and close the prayer time yourself.

Make It Inclusive!

Kids with processing challenges can struggle to answer open-ended questions. Consider rewording questions to a yes/no format, giving kids two answers to choose from, or allowing them to illustrate their responses. For example, rather than asking how old Jesus was in today's story, ask whether Jesus was 12 years old or 30 years old.

Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–10 min

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Help kids use the table of contents in their Bibles to find Luke chapter 2. As kids find the passage, explain that the book of Luke was written so readers (like them!) could know about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The book introduces us to the most important person we'll ever meet!

Turn to Page 3 of this guide and help kids understand the context of this passage.

Invite two volunteers to read two sections aloud from Luke 2:41–52. Then discuss the following:

- Where did 12-year-old Jesus and His family travel to in this part of God's big story? Why did they go there?
- What do you imagine Jesus was like as a kid and preteen?
- What did Mary and Joseph realize as they traveled home from Jerusalem?
- When Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the temple, what was He doing?
- Why do you think the Jewish teachers were amazed at Jesus' answers?
- What did Jesus say to Mary and Joseph when they found Him? What do His words tell us about who Jesus is?
- What amazes you most about Jesus (in this story, anywhere in the Bible, or in your life)?

Jesus is amazing! He is compassionate, kind, wise, and powerful. His love for us will never end or fail! And getting to know Jesus better is how we get to know God better! Let's spend time talking with God in prayer, bringing our requests to Him and praising Him for how wonderful He is!

Prayer Time: Older Kids

Invite kids to share their praises and requests; then encourage them to pray aloud for one another. Open and close the prayer time yourself.

Leader Tip: Some kids are very self-conscious and fear what others think of them. (We've all been there!) So rather than expect all kids to pray aloud, invite them to do so. Some will take you up on the invitation, and others won't be ready yet. That's OK! Let every kid know you are glad they are part of the group!

WORD OF WONDER

The Son is the exact likeness of God, who can't be seen.

The Son is first, and he is over all creation.

—Colossians 1:15 (NirV)

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

"The Word of Wonder for the Who Is Jesus? series is Colossians 1:15. In it we discover that Jesus shows us what God is like and that Jesus reigns over all of creation—everything we see, hear, touch, and taste. Let's read the Word of Wonder together!"

Have kids open their Bibles to Colossians 1:15 and then encourage kids to each use one hand to create a "telescope" by touching their thumbs to their middle fingers and curling their fingers into a tube. They'll then read after placing this telescope up to one eye while closing the other eye. Explain that today you're focusing on Jesus, so they're zeroing in on Him through their telescopes.

Gather kids to talk about these questions:

- What word or short phrase stands out to you most in this verse? Why that word or phrase?
- What's something about Jesus that shows us what God is like?

Word of Wonder Activity

SUPPLIES: whiteboard, dry-erase marker, paper (1 sheet per kid), pens or markers (1 per kid)

Ahead of time, write the name Jesus in large letters on a small whiteboard.

Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. Write Jesus on kids' papers ahead of time. (This also works to save time regardless of kids' ages.)

Give each kid a sheet of paper and have her write Jesus in the center of it. Kids can look at the whiteboard if they need help knowing how to spell it. Invite kids to stand and face the screen, where the Word of Wonder Slide is displayed. Explain that they'll join you in reading the verse aloud while using their papers in this way:

NirV:

The Son (kids hold their papers so Jesus is facing them) **is the exact likeness of God** (kids hold their papers so the blank side is facing them), **who can't be seen. The Son is first, and** (kids hold their papers over their heads and wave them in praise to Jesus) **he is over all creation. Colossians 1:15**

Repeat the verse and movements several times, gradually increasing the speed at which you read and do motions. End this activity by asking the kids to do 15 seconds of enthusiastic paper waving as they cheer for Jesus.

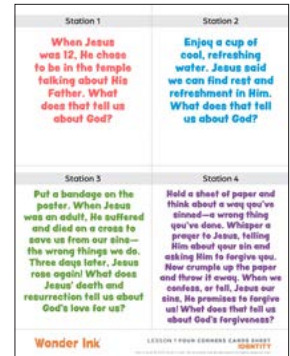
PAUSE for Large Group time, then continue...

Responding in Worship: Four Corners Response Stations

SUPPLIES: cardstock (1 sheet), scissors (prep only), Bible, small disposable cups (1 per kid), cool water, self-adhesive bandages (1 per kid), bowl, posterboard (1 sheet), paper (1 sheet per kid), trash can, small tables (4, optional), sheets or blankets (optional)

RESOURCES: [Four Corners Cards Sheet](#), [Who Is Jesus? Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, print one copy of the Four Corners Cards Sheet onto cardstock and cut out the cards. Set up four response stations (see below for instructions), one in each corner or area of the room. They can be set up at small tables or on the floor—whatever works for your space. If your group is very large, set up multiples of each station. Consider covering the stations with sheets or blankets so kids don't see them until the worship response time.



Station 1: An open Bible and the Station 1 Card that says: When Jesus was 12, He chose to be in the temple talking about His Father. What does that tell us about God?

Station 2: Small disposable cups filled with water (one per kid) with the Station 2 Card that says: Enjoy a cup of cool, refreshing water. Jesus said we can find rest and refreshment in Him. What does that tell us about God?

Station 3: A bowl of self-adhesive bandages and a sheet of posterboard with the Station 3 Card that says: Put a bandage on the poster. When Jesus was an adult, He suffered and died on a cross to save us from our sins—the wrong things we do. Three days later, Jesus rose again! What does Jesus' death and resurrection tell us about God's love for us?

Station 4: Sheets of blank paper (one per kid), a trash can, and the Station 4 Card that says: Hold a sheet of paper and think about a way you've sinned—a wrong thing you've done. Whisper a prayer to Jesus, telling Him about your sin and asking Him to forgive you. Now crumple up the paper and throw it away. When we confess, or tell, our sins to Jesus, He promises to forgive us! What does that tell us about God's forgiveness?

Leader Tip: For Older Kids. Emphasize that the truths presented at each station are based on Scripture by setting a Bible at each station and opening it to these corresponding verses. If possible, highlight the verses for kids to see and read: Station 1: Luke 2:49; Station 2: Matthew 11:28; Station 3: Romans 5:6–8; Station 4: 1 John 1:9.

Play music from the [Who Is Jesus? Elementary Spotify playlist](#) softly in the background as you show kids each of the four response stations, reading the words on the cards and briefly modeling what kids will do at each station. Then invite kids to visit the stations in any order they choose. Encourage them to take their time, lingering at each corner. (Have an adult or youth leader at each station who's available to read the cards to younger kids and those who struggle with reading.)

Leader Tip: Kids who are new to church may need help understanding the meaning of Stations 3 and 4. If possible, have a leader at each station engaging with kids to help them understand Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and His power and kindness to forgive.