



**PRE-K
LARGE GROUP**

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.

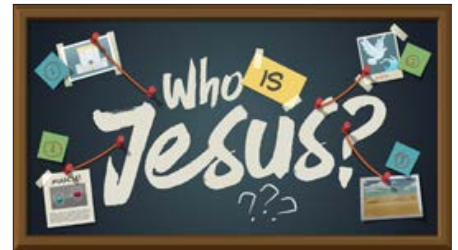
WORD OF WONDER: Jesus is the image of God, who is invisible. —from Colossians 1:15

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Never Better, What a friend
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing



[Who is Jesus Preschool Spotify playlist](#)



LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Shows Us What God Is Like

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2

WORD OF WONDER: From 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 was 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.



LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Shows Us What God Is Like

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2

WORD OF WONDER: From Colossians 1:15

Welcome

Slide: Series Welcome Loop

As kids arrive...

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

Video: Countdown

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

Introduce the kids to Tac, the curious cat.

Leader: Well, hello, Tac the curious cat! We are so glad you are here.

Friends, can you help me say hi to Tac? (Wait for the kids to wave or say hello.)

Tac the Cat: Hello, friends. (Tac sounds out of breath and flops over.)

Leader: Oh no! Tac, are you alright? Do you need help?

Tac the Cat: I am just soooooo tired.

Leader: (Help Tac sit upright.) Tac, why are you so tired today?

Tac the Cat: I am so tired from all the walking I did!

Leader: Walking can definitely make you tired. Where did you walk to?

Tac the Cat: I walked here.

Leader: Oh, wow. Well, where did you walk from?

Tac the Cat: I walked from here.

Leader: Hmmmmm, so you started here, and you ended here, but where did you go in the middle?

Tac the Cat: I went in circles! And circles, and more circles! (Tac flops down again.)

Leader: Tac, why did you walk in circles?

Tac the Cat: Because I was wondering how long I could walk without stopping. But I didn't want to get lost, so I just walked in circles.

Leader: So did you figure out how long you can walk?

Tac the Cat: No, I got too dizzy, and I lost count. Do you know how many circles you can walk without stopping?

Leader: I've never tried, but I do know a really good story from the Bible about a time when Jesus walked a really long way. We'll hear all about it in our story today!

Tac the Cat: Jesus walked a long way too?! I wonder if Jesus got tired. Do you think Jesus was afraid of getting lost, like I was? Do you think Jesus just walked in circles?

Leader: Those are really good questions. I don't think He walked in circles. I don't want to spoil the story, but Jesus probably walked for three days, and get this, Jesus *did* get lost. Not exactly lost. Jesus knew exactly where He was. It was His family who thought He was lost.

Tac the Cat: Three days of walking! (Tac flops over again.) I need to go take a nap just thinking about walking that long! I hope Jesus' family wasn't too worried. I would not like being lost from my family.

Leader: Feeling lost can be scary for sure, but Jesus was exactly where He needed to be. Tac, thank you for always being so curious. You should go take a nap while we get ready to hear more about Jesus. Friends, I think Tac is already falling asleep. Can you help me say good-bye to him, but quietly so we don't disturb his nap? (Allow the kids to whisper good-bye to Tac.)

"Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think: Have you traveled to a different town? Did your family walk there, or did you take a car, or a bus, or a plane, or maybe a boat? Allow the kids to respond. If you could go visit any place or any person, where or who would it be? Allow the kids to respond. We all see and hear things that make us curious. Did you ever stop to think about how Jesus helps us know what God is like? We'll find out more about what this means.

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS SHOWS US WHAT GOD IS LIKE**. Today we'll discover how Jesus shows us what God is like!"

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

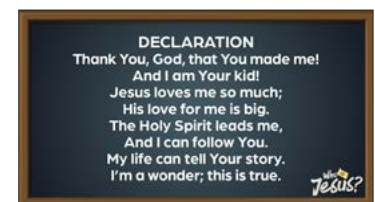
Encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.



Jesus loves me so much; (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words. Here is an example: **God, thank You that we all got here safely today and that we get to come together and worship You. As we listen, play, and ask questions, help us learn more about who Jesus is. And help us see how Jesus shows us more about You and Your love. Thank You for Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll learn about how Jesus shows us what God is like. Let's sing about who God is

WORSHIP SONGS: Never Better, What a friend

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them that today's story comes from the book of Luke in the Bible. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found.

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible and what do I see? (Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)

God's big story, waiting for me! (Point to yourself.)

Let's start by reading part of God's big story from the Bible.

VIDEO: GOD'S BIG STORY

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: Bible, marker (prep only), construction paper (2 sheets), painter's tape

Ahead of time, use a marker to write a big A on one sheet of construction paper and then write a big B on the second sheet. Use the painter's tape to create a square on the floor of your room that is large enough for all the kids to sit inside. Tape the letter A in the middle of this box. Then on the other side of the room (as far away as possible, given the space of your room), tape a similar box on the floor and mark it with the B.

Invite the kids to join you by sitting inside Box A on the floor.

"When Jesus was born, He started to show people what God is like. Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God promised to send the forever King. Jesus is that King! Jesus' birth showed that God keeps His promises!

Mary and Joseph were Jesus' parents here on earth. They loved God and obeyed Him. Every year, Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. This was a time to remember how God protected His people and saved them from Egypt. Lots of people traveled many days to get to Jerusalem for the feast. When Jesus was 12 years old, He traveled to Jerusalem with His family.

Let's pretend like we are going with Jesus and His family on this trip. We will start here (point to Box A) **and then go all the way over there.** Point to Box B. **Do you think it will take us three days to get there, like it did for Jesus and his family? Why, or why not?** Allow the kids to answer.

Ask the children to line up behind you and encourage them to follow you on the journey. Act like you are starting to go straight to Box B, but then make some diverting loops and zigzags to extend the journey. As you go, encourage the kids to get into the pretend play by asking if anyone is tired, or if anyone has a map to help you see the way. Finally, end by sitting down with the group inside Box B.

Leader Tip: Movement during a lesson can get kids excited, and that's the point! Help them harness that excitement into good, continued listening by giving them clear directions like "Stand up," "Now walk," "Follow me," "Stay in line," "Sit down, legs crossed," etc.

Whew! We finally made it. Jesus and His family made it too. They went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. I think we should have a little wiggle break to celebrate!

Invite the children to celebrate by wiggle dancing in their seats for a few seconds.

After the feast, Jesus' parents left to go home. And guess what? That means we have to go back over there too!

Again, invite the kids to line up behind you and get ready for the return journey. Walk halfway toward Box A and then pause.

Jesus' parents thought He was somewhere in the group they were traveling with. They thought He might be with a friend or family member. But after a day of traveling, they realized Jesus wasn't with the group. Yikes! Where could He be? So Mary and Joseph traveled back to Jerusalem. That means we are going back too! Ask the kids to turn around and lead them back to Box B.

We made it back! Hopefully, Mary and Joseph can find Jesus quickly and we can all head back home."

Jesus' parents searched everywhere and found Him after looking for three days! Jesus was at the temple. The temple was the place where people put God first. Jesus was sitting in the courtyard with some of the Jewish teachers who taught students there. "He was listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at how much he understood. They also were amazed at his answers" (Luke 2:46–47). Jesus' parents were amazed too! But they were worried. "Son, why have you treated us like this?" His mother asked. "Your father and I have been worried about you. We have been looking for you everywhere" (Luke 2:48).

"Why were you looking for me?" Jesus asked His parents. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49). **Wow! That was a great thing to say. Even at 12, Jesus understood that He had a special relationship with God. He needed to be near God, His Father, doing what God wanted Him to do.**

After Jesus' parents found Him at the temple, Jesus went back home with them. OK, that means we are going home too! This time I think we need to take a shortcut.

Invite the kids to line up behind you and to walk quickly in a straight path to Box A.

The Bible tells us that "[Jesus'] mother kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart" (Luke 2:51). Jesus grew wiser and stronger, making God happy. He was getting ready for His giant part in God's story. Many people were going to be amazed by Jesus. He was going to show people how much God loves them. Jesus shows us what God is like."

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

"Our Wonder Truth today is JESUS SHOWS US WHAT GOD IS LIKE. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

When Jesus was 12 years old, He already understood His special relationship with God the Father. Years later, when Jesus was about 30, God would confirm that special relationship at Jesus' baptism. Jesus is God's Son, and He shows us what God is like!"

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God that Jesus shows us how big God's love is!

Let's pray and thank God for who Jesus is!

God, thank You so much for Jesus. Thank You that we can listen and ask questions and get to know more and more about who Jesus is. And thank You that Jesus shows us how much You love us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May you walk with Jesus today and always. And may God fill your heart with love for Him, for others, and for yourself as you choose to know, love, and follow His ways.