



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.

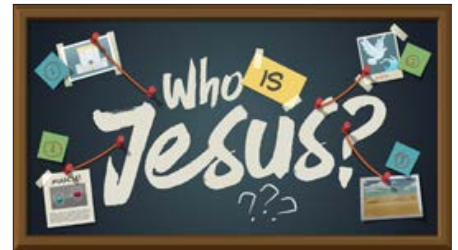
WORD OF WONDER: Jesus is the image of God, who is invisible. —from Colossians 1:15

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Play Stations:
 - Looks Like Fun
 - School Play
 - Jesus at the Temple Coloring Sheet
- Word of Wonder: From Colossians 1:15
- God's Big Story/Snack
- Circle Time: Seek and Find
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Praying and Walking
- Craft: Who Is Jesus? Puppet
- Game: Mirror Me



[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.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

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

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: shatterproof mirrors (3–4), assortment of small toys, blank notebooks (1–2), calculators, rulers, notebooks, chalkboard, chalk, coloring utensils

RESOURCES: [Jesus at the Temple Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

"Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas of what we'll be learning about today?"

Play Station: Looks Like Fun

Set-up: Place the shatterproof mirrors on a table or flat play area. Then put the assortment of toys on top of the mirrors.

Play: Invite the children to freely play with the toys and mirrors. Encourage them to move the toys around on top of the mirrors and see what they notice when looking at the toys in the mirrors.

Play Station: School Play

Set-up: Arrange an area to mimic a traditional classroom with rows of seats looking toward a teacher. Set out calculators, rulers, notebooks, a chalkboard and chalk, and coloring utensils.

Play: Invite the children to play school by taking a seat in the pretend classroom area that you set up. Show them where the notebooks and coloring utensils are for their schoolwork. Encourage them to take turns pretending to be the teacher.

Play Station: Jesus at the Temple Coloring Sheet

Set-up: Print one copy per kid of the Coloring Sheet. Set out the Coloring Sheets and coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw their family.

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible

"Our Word of Wonder from the book of Colossians says that Jesus is the image of God, who is invisible. Do you know what *invisible* means?"

Allow the kids to answer. **That's right. Invisible means not seen. It's so amazing that Jesus shows us what God is like! Let's have some fun learning our Word of Wonder together. I am going to say a few words, and then you can say them back to me."**

Say the Word of Wonder, phrase by phrase, and ask the kids to say it back to you.

- **Jesus is** (echo)
- **the image of God,** (echo)
- **who is invisible.** (echo)
- **From Colossians 1:15** (echo)

After doing this a few times, add in the motions below.

WORD OF WONDER

Jesus is the image of God, who is invisible.

—from Colossians 1:15

Now, I'm going to show you some motions that go with the words, and you can mimic them as we say the words to the verse together.

- **JESUS IS**—Open arms out to sides, one at a time.
- **THE IMAGE OF GOD,**—Point up.
- **WHO IS INVISIBLE.**—Cover eyes.
- **FROM COLOSSIANS 1:15**—Hold your hands together in front, palms together, as if opening a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **What are some words that tell us what Jesus is like?**
- **What do those words show us about God?**

God's Big Story / Snack

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."

Read pages 236–239 in the My First Hands On Bible.

Circle Time: Seek and Find

SUPPLIES: Bible, scissors (prep only)

RESOURCES: [Seek and Find Questions Sheet](#)

Ahead of time, print the Seek and Find Questions Sheet. Cut the six strips of questions apart. Hide the strips around the room before beginning the activity.

"In the part of God's big story that we read today, Mary and Joseph were looking everywhere to find Jesus. Well, they were looking everywhere except the place that Jesus said they should have known He would be. Jesus was in the temple, listening and answering questions! Now we have a chance to listen and answer some questions too, but first we have to find the questions!"



Invite one kid or a pair of kids to stand up and look around the room to find one of the hidden questions. Once they have located a strip with a question, ask them to sit down. Then send out another child or pair to find another strip. Continue until all six questions have been found. Collect the strips of paper and ask the questions in numerical order.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Why did Jesus and His family travel to the temple in Jerusalem?** (to celebrate the Passover Feast)
- **What problem happened when Mary and Joseph were on their way home?** (They couldn't find Jesus.)
- **Where did Mary and Joseph find Jesus, and what was He doing?** (the temple, listening and asking questions)
- **Have you ever lost something that was really special to you? How did you feel? Did you ever find it?**
- **Jesus told Mary and Joseph that He had to be in His Father's house. Who is Jesus' Father?** (God)
- **What is something you learned about Jesus in this story?**

Jesus understood that He had a special relationship with God. He needed to be near God, His heavenly Father, doing what His Father wanted Him to do. One way that we can come near to God and learn about what God wants us to do is by praying to Him. Let's talk to God now in prayer!"

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and to thank God that Jesus shows us who God is!

Head to Large Group!

Return and finish the rest of this guide before parents arrive.

Responding in Worship: Praying and Walking

SUPPLIES: small paper cups (1 per kid), pitcher of water (enough for every kid to have a small amount), flashlight

Ahead of time pour a cup of water for each child. Place the cups on a table that the kids can reach. For this activity you will use the Box A that you taped on the floor for God's Big Story.

"I had a lot of fun on our walking journey earlier. Now we are going to walk around our room and take some time to worship God and thank Him for who Jesus is.

Station 1: Invite the kids to walk with you to the area where you set up the water. Pass out the water. **Enjoy a cup of cool, refreshing water—because Jesus said we can find rest and refreshment in Him** (from Matthew 11:28). **Refreshment is the feeling we get from a good cool drink when we are hot, tired, and thirsty! In your heart and mind, tell God thank You for who Jesus is.** Pause for a moment to allow the children to think and pray.

Station 2: Invite the kids to walk with you to an open area of the room. Hold the flashlight. **This flashlight is good for helping us see where to walk in the dark. But Jesus is the Light of the World who can help us see where to walk for our whole lives. In your heart and mind, tell God thank You for who Jesus is** (John 8:12). Pause for a moment to allow the kids to think and pray.

Station 3: Invite the kids to walk with you to Box A. **Let's pretend like this box on the floor is a pen that holds sheep inside. A good shepherd always makes sure his sheep are protected and safe. And Jesus is the Good Shepherd who knows us and loves us and always cares for us—His sheep** (John 10:14). **In your heart and mind, tell God thank You for who Jesus is."** Pause for a moment to allow the children to think and pray.

Leader Tip: It's OK if children don't grasp the full meaning of what it is for Jesus to be things like the Light of the World or the Good Shepherd. The beauty of these images is that even in their simplest forms, they communicate truth about who Jesus is. Jesus is good like a cool glass of water. Jesus is helpful like a light in the dark. Jesus is caring like a person who watches over animals.

Craft: Who Is Jesus? Puppet

SUPPLIES: coloring utensils, kid-safe scissors (1 per kid), craft sticks (1 per kid), glue or tape

RESOURCES: [Jesus Puppet Printable \(1 per kid\)](#)

Ahead of time, print a Jesus Puppet Printable for each kid. If possible, print the puppets two-sided (front and back). If not, kids can simply glue or tape the two pictures back-to-back. Set out coloring utensils, kid-safe scissors, craft sticks, and glue or tape.

Mary and Joseph must have been so worried when they couldn't find Jesus. But Jesus was exactly where He needed to be, in His Father's house. Jesus shows us what God is like! You will cut out your Jesus puppet from the printable and color the letters that spell J-E-S-U-S on one side. Then you will color the letters that spell G-O-D on the other picture. Point to each word as you talk about it. **Glue the pictures onto the craft stick. Then you can flip the picture back and forth and see one side that says Jesus and the other side that says God. This reminds us that Jesus shows us what God is like.** Encourage the kids to turn their puppets to the side that says *Jesus*. Even if they can't read yet, point to the letters that spell *Jesus*. Encourage the kids to share some things we know about Jesus from the Bible. Then invite the kids to turn their puppets to the side that says *God*. Point to the letters that spell *God*. Ask the kids to share some things we know about God.

What does Jesus show us? Allow the kids to respond. **Jesus shows us what God is like. What does Jesus show us about God?"** Allow the kids to respond.



Game: Mirror Me

"Jesus shows us what God is like. So when we look at Jesus and learn about Jesus, we are learning about God! Let's play a game where we look at each other and try to copy what the other person is doing."

Divide the group into pairs. If you have an odd number of kids, invite one child to be your partner and have her help you demonstrate the game to the group. Ask each pair to face each other with a few feet of space between them. Explain that they will take turns being the leader. Whoever is the leader of the pair should stay standing still but move his arms and hands in a variety of positions. As the leaders move, the person who is not the leader should do his best to mirror the leader's movements. Ask the leader to start by moving slowly to give the partner a chance to follow along. But as the partners get more comfortable, encourage the leaders to move more quickly to make the mirroring more difficult. After a minute or so, ask the pairs to switch roles. To extend the game, have all the kids switch partners. Play as many rounds as time allows.