

# MAIN LESSON, ACTIVITY & DISCUSSION

Week 37 | Jesus Grows and Obeys God | Ages 6-10

## LESSON OVERVIEW

Week: 37

Date: Sunday, September 13, 2026

Lesson Title: Jesus Grows and Obeys God

Primary Scripture: Luke 2:41-52

Bible Timeline: Jesus' childhood

Big Idea: Jesus always obeyed God, and He came to save us when we do not.

## MEMORY VERSE

"Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them."

Luke 2:51

## MAIN LESSON NARRATIVE - READ ALOUD

Have you ever wondered what Jesus was like when He was a child?

We know quite a bit about Jesus as a grown man. We know He taught crowds of people about God. We know He healed sick people, fed hungry people, calmed a storm, and even raised people from the dead.

We know Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and we know He rose from the grave.

But what about when Jesus was growing up?

Did He have chores?

What did He eat for breakfast?

What games did children play near His home?

What was an ordinary day like for Him?

There are many things we simply do not know, because the Bible does not tell us. When God does not tell us something in His Word, we do not need to make up an answer.

But God did choose to tell us about one very important time when Jesus was twelve years old.

Before we go there, there is something wonderful we need to remember.

Jesus really was a child.

He did not simply appear to be human. Jesus is God the Son, and He truly became human and lived among us.

The Bible says:

"And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him." Luke 2:40

Think about that for a moment.

Jesus grew.

He had once been a baby whom Mary held in her arms. Then He became a small child. He continued growing until, in the passage we are reading today, He was twelve years old.

Jesus knows what growing up is like because He really did it.

And when Jesus was twelve, something happened that God wanted us to know.

Every year, Mary and Joseph traveled to Jerusalem for a special celebration called Passover.

Passover helped God's people remember something He had done hundreds of years earlier. God's people had once been slaves in Egypt, and God rescued them. On the night of the first Passover, God told each Israelite family to sacrifice a lamb and put its blood on the doorframe of their home. God protected them from

judgment and then brought them out of slavery.

So every year, God's people remembered.

God rescues His people.

Mary and Joseph made that journey too, and Jesus went with them.

The Bible tells us:

"Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom." Luke 2:41-42

Try to picture that journey.

There were no cars, buses, or airplanes. Families could travel together with relatives, friends, neighbors, and other people making the same journey.

Eventually they arrived in Jerusalem.

They celebrated Passover.

Then it was time to go home.

Mary and Joseph started traveling back toward Nazareth with the group.

There was just one problem.

Jesus was not with them.

Now, before we decide Mary and Joseph were careless parents, we should hear what the Bible actually says.

Luke tells us:

"Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day." Luke 2:44

They thought Jesus was somewhere in the traveling group.

Maybe you have gone somewhere with a large group before. You might be walking beside one person for a while and then spend time beside somebody else.

Mary and Joseph apparently believed Jesus was somewhere among their relatives and friends.

But when they looked for Him, they could not find Him.

Imagine being Mary or Joseph at that moment.

Actually, we do not have to guess how they felt. Later Mary tells Jesus that they had been anxiously searching for Him.

So they turned around.

They went all the way back to Jerusalem and began looking for Jesus.

Where would you look?

Among the travelers?

Near the places where they had stayed?

Along the roads?

We do not know everywhere Mary and Joseph searched because Scripture does not tell us.

But Luke tells us where they finally found Him.

"After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions." Luke 2:46

There He was.

Jesus was sitting among teachers who knew God's Word.

And I love one little detail Luke gives us.

Jesus was listening.

Sometimes we think being wise means having something clever to say all the time.

Jesus listened.

He also asked questions.

Then He answered questions, and something remarkable began happening.

"Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers." Luke 2:47

These teachers were amazed by this twelve year old boy's understanding.

Remember who was sitting in front of them.

This was not simply a very smart child.

This was Jesus.

God the Son had truly become human.

That brings us to something Christians call the Trinity. That word simply helps us talk about something the Bible teaches about God.

There is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Father is God.

Jesus the Son is God.

The Holy Spirit is God.

There are not three gods. There is one God.

We do not have to compare God to an egg, water, or anything else to understand Him. Those pictures can actually confuse us. We can simply believe what God has told us about Himself.

And what Jesus says next helps us understand who He is.

When Mary saw Him, she asked why He had done this. She told Him that she and Joseph had been anxiously searching for Him.

Jesus answered:

"Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" Luke 2:49

Did you notice something?

Jesus said, "my Father's house."

He was talking about God.

Joseph cared for Jesus as His earthly father, but Jesus knew that God was His Father in a way that was different from anyone else.

Jesus is the Son of God.

He did not suddenly become God's Son when He was twelve. Before Jesus was even born, the angel had told Mary that He would be called the Son of God.

Now, at twelve years old, we hear Jesus speaking about His Father.

Mary and Joseph did not fully understand what Jesus meant.

And I am glad Luke tells us that.

There will be times when you do not understand everything about God either.

There are things about God that I have wondered about too. Asking a question does not mean you do not trust God. Sometimes questions are part of learning.

We can ask, open our Bibles, listen carefully, and learn.

And sometimes the answer will be, "I do not know because the Bible does not tell us."

That is a good answer when it is true.

Now, I want you to notice what Jesus did next.

Jesus had just reminded Mary and Joseph that God was His Father.

He knew who He was.

So what did Jesus do?

Did He tell Mary and Joseph, "You cannot tell Me what to do because I am the Son of God"?

No.

Listen to our memory verse.

"Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them." Luke 2:51

Let's say the important part together:

"He was obedient to them."

Again:

"He was obedient to them."

Jesus went home with Mary and Joseph.

And He obeyed them.

To obey means that when someone who has proper authority over us tells us to do something right, we listen and do what we are supposed to do.

You probably know that obeying is not always easy.

Maybe Mom tells you to put away a tablet when you want five more minutes.

Maybe Dad asks you to clean your room when you would rather play.

Maybe your teacher tells the class to stop talking, but you have one more funny thing you really want to whisper to your friend.

We know what it feels like to want our own way.

And sometimes we choose our own way even when we know it is wrong.

The Bible has a word for that.

It is sin.

Sin is more than making a mistake, like getting the wrong answer on a math problem. Sin is thinking, saying, or doing what goes against God and His good ways.

The Bible says:

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

"All" includes me.

It includes your teachers.

It includes your parents.

It includes you.

Every one of us has sinned.

But there is one Person who never did.

Jesus.

The Bible tells us that Jesus "has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet he did not sin" in Hebrews 4:15.

Think about what that means.

Jesus knows what temptation feels like.

He knows what it is like to live in this world.

He knows what it is like to grow up.

But Jesus never sinned.

Not once.

So when Luke tells us that twelve year old Jesus returned to Nazareth and obeyed Mary and Joseph, we are seeing something much bigger than a lesson about being a well behaved child.

We are beginning to see the perfect life of our Savior.

Jesus obeyed where we have disobeyed.

Jesus was faithful where we have failed.

And that matters because Jesus did not come merely to show us how good people behave.

Jesus came to save sinners.

Remember Passover at the beginning of our account?

God's people remembered how the blood of a lamb had been connected with their rescue from judgment in Egypt.

Years after this trip to Jerusalem, Jesus would return to Jerusalem around Passover again.

But that time Jesus would not be a twelve year old sitting among teachers.

He would be a grown man.

And He would be moving toward the cross.

Jesus had lived the sinless life none of us could live.

He had obeyed the Father perfectly.

Then He willingly gave His life for our sins.

The punishment our sin deserved fell upon Him.

Jesus died.

But death did not win.

Jesus rose from the grave.

He is alive.

That is why the answer to our sin is not simply, "Try harder to be like Jesus."

We should want to obey God. We should learn from Jesus' perfect example.

But we need much more than an example.

Imagine that you were sinking in deep water and somebody stood safely on shore shouting, "Here is how you swim!"

Instructions might be useful, but at that moment you need someone to rescue you.

Our sin is like that in one important way.

We cannot save ourselves by becoming good enough.

We need a Savior.

And God gave us one.

Jesus.

God is holy and good, which means there is nothing evil or wrong in Him.

We have sinned against Him.

We cannot erase our own sin or make ourselves good enough to deserve eternal life.

Jesus is God the Son.

He became truly human while remaining truly God.

He lived without sin.

He died for our sins.

He rose again.

And when we turn from our sin and trust Jesus, God forgives us and gives us new life.

That is the good news of Jesus.

And something else begins happening when we trust Him.

Jesus does not only forgive us and then leave us alone.

God the Holy Spirit works in those who belong to Jesus and helps us grow.

That does not mean Christians suddenly become perfect.

Ask any Christian adult in this room and they will tell you that we still need God's help every day.

But Jesus changes us.

When we want to disobey, we can ask Him for help.

When we do sin, we can tell Him the truth instead of hiding.

When we have hurt somebody, Jesus can help us admit it and ask forgiveness.

When obeying is hard, we can remember that we do not obey so Jesus will finally love us.

We learn to obey because He already loved us enough to come and rescue us.

Let's say our memory verse again:

"Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them." Luke 2:51

Now there is one more thing I want us to understand about obedience, because this matters very much.

Obedying parents and other adults does not mean that a child should help someone do something wrong.

If someone wants you to hide something dangerous, hurt somebody, let someone touch you in a way that makes you feel unsafe, or keep a secret about someone hurting you, you are allowed to tell a trusted adult who can help you.

Following Jesus never means hiding abuse or helping somebody sin.

God cares about you.

Now maybe someone will ask you, "How do you even know this happened? How do you know somebody did not just make up things about Jesus later?"

That is a fair question.

We begin with God's Word.

Luke tells us near the beginning of his Gospel that he carefully investigated what had happened so that his reader could know the certainty of what he had been taught.

Luke writes about real places, real customs, and real people.

Jerusalem was real.

Nazareth was real.

The temple was real.

Passover was a real Jewish celebration.

History helps us understand that Luke is describing a real world, not a fairy tale.

But we should also be honest.

Nobody today has a video recording of twelve year old Jesus in the temple.

Archaeology cannot dig up a conversation.

We believe this account because God has given it to us in His Word, and what we learn from history fits the world Luke describes.

There will always be questions we cannot answer.

God is not frightened by our questions.

So when someone asks you something about the Bible that you do not know, you do not have to make something up.

You can say, "I don't know. Let's see what the Bible actually says."

That is a strong answer because it is an honest one.

Now picture Jesus one last time.

The twelve year old Son of God leaves Jerusalem.

He travels back toward Nazareth with Mary and Joseph.

Luke tells us:

"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Luke 2:52

Jesus kept growing.

Years passed.

The child became a man.

Then one day Jesus would begin teaching people openly about the kingdom of God.

He would heal.

He would forgive.

He would call sinners to follow Him.

He would walk toward Jerusalem again.

He would go to the cross.

And He would rise from the dead.

So when you have a hard time obeying this week, I hope you remember more than, "Jesus obeyed, so I should obey."

Remember something better.

Jesus obeyed perfectly because He is the sinless Son of God.

Jesus died for us because we have not obeyed perfectly.

Jesus rose again because sin and death could not defeat Him.

And Jesus is still changing the people who trust Him.

Maybe you have disobeyed this week.

Maybe you lied because you were afraid of getting into trouble.

Maybe you did something you knew was wrong.

You do not have to hide from Jesus.

You can tell Him the truth.

You can ask Him to forgive you.

And if you have never trusted Jesus as your Savior, you can come to Him. Salvation is not a prize for children who behave better than everyone else. It is God's gift to sinners who trust His Son.

Jesus knows what it is like to grow up.

Jesus knows what temptation is like.

Yet Jesus never sinned.

And because He died and rose again, He can save us.

Our big idea today says it simply:

Jesus always obeyed God, and He came to save us when we do not.

And our memory verse helps us remember the twelve year old Jesus who was already living the perfectly obedient life that would lead Him toward the cross:

"Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them." Luke 2:51

Jesus is not only our example.

Jesus is our Savior.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS WITH SUGGESTED ANSWERS

1. How old was Jesus in today's passage?

He was twelve years old. Luke 2:42 tells us His age.

2. Why did Jesus and His family travel to Jerusalem?

They went for Passover, when God's people remembered how He rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt.

3. Where did Mary and Joseph finally find Jesus?

They found Him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening and asking questions.

4. What amazed the people listening to Jesus?

They were amazed by His understanding and His answers.

5. What did Jesus call God in Luke 2:49?

Jesus called God "my Father." This helps us see that Jesus knew His unique identity as the Son of God.

6. What did Jesus do when He returned home with Mary and Joseph?

He obeyed them. Luke 2:51 says He "was obedient to them."

7. Did Jesus ever sin?

No. Hebrews 4:15 says Jesus was tempted as we are, yet He did not sin.

8. Why isn't "try harder to obey" enough to save us?

Because we have already sinned, and we cannot save ourselves. We need Jesus to forgive and rescue us.

9. What did Jesus do to save us?

Jesus lived without sin, died for our sins, and rose again. Those who turn from sin and trust Him are forgiven and receive new life.

10. What can you do when you have disobeyed?

We can tell God the truth, ask His forgiveness, trust what Jesus has done for us, and ask the Holy Spirit to help us obey.

Deeper Question: If Jesus is God, how could He grow?

Jesus is truly God and truly human. God the Son really became human, so He truly experienced human growth while never ceasing to be God.

Deeper Question: Why doesn't the Bible tell us more about Jesus' childhood?

We do not know why God chose not to give us more details. We can trust that He gave us what we need, and we should not invent what Scripture does not tell us.

## HANDS ON ACTIVITY: WHAT DOES GOD'S WORD SAY?

Purpose: Help children practice reading Scripture carefully instead of guessing or inventing answers.

Supplies: Bibles, three sheets of paper, marker.

Before class, write one sentence on each sheet: THE BIBLE TELLS US, WE CAN LEARN FROM HISTORY, and WE DO NOT KNOW. Place the three sheets where children can see them.

Tell the children that you will read several statements. Their job is to decide which group each statement belongs in. They may point, move toward the correct sign if space allows, or answer aloud.

"Jesus was twelve years old." The Bible tells us. Luke 2:42.

"Jesus was found in the temple courts." The Bible tells us. Luke 2:46.

"Jerusalem and the temple were real places." The Bible tells us, and history also confirms the setting.

"We know exactly what Jesus asked every teacher." We do not know.

"Jesus returned to Nazareth and obeyed Mary and Joseph." The Bible tells us. Luke 2:51.

"Jesus never sinned." The Bible tells us. Hebrews 4:15.

"We know exactly what Jesus did every day when He was ten years old." We do not know.

After several rounds, bring everyone back together and say: "Sometimes people think having faith means pretending we know every answer. It doesn't. We can trust God's Word enough to say exactly what it says, learn honestly from history, and admit when we do not know something. We never need to make things up to make the Bible stronger. God's Word is trustworthy."

"Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them."

Luke 2:51

## TEACHER CLOSING

Children, Jesus knows what it is like to grow up. He knows what it is like to live in a family, to learn, and to be under authority. Yet there is something wonderfully different about Jesus. He never sinned.

You and I have. That is why Jesus came. He did not come merely to stand far away and show us how much better He is than we are. Jesus came near. He lived the life we could not live, died for our sins, and rose again so sinners like us could be forgiven.

So when you do something wrong, you do not need to hide from Jesus. Come to Him. Tell Him the truth. Trust Him. And remember that when you belong to Jesus, the Holy Spirit is working in you and helping you grow.

We will not become perfect overnight, and following Jesus does not mean life will always be easy. But Jesus will remain faithful.

The twelve year old Jesus we met in Luke today kept growing. He grew into a man. He went to the cross. He rose from the grave. And He is alive today.

That is why our hope is not in how perfectly we behave. Our hope is Jesus.

**Takeaway Truth: Jesus always obeyed God, and He came to save us when we do not.**

Prayer: Father, thank You for sending Jesus. Thank You that Jesus understands what it is like to grow up and that He never sinned. We know that we have sinned and cannot save ourselves. Thank You that Jesus died for our sins and rose again. Please forgive us and help us trust Jesus. Holy Spirit, help us grow, tell the truth, obey what is right, and become more like Jesus. Thank You that Jesus is alive and that we can always trust Him. Amen.