

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
FEBRUARY 08 2025

growing up

Scripture Story: Luke 2:39-52.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 7-9.
Key Text: Luke 2:52.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Jesus grew up in Nazareth during a period of about 30 years that the Bible summarizes in a handful of verses. Except for Luke including the single incident of Jesus' visit to the Temple at age 12, the Gospel writers possibly didn't know a great deal about Jesus' childhood and youth and were not prompted by the Holy Spirit to record it.

The little we do learn creates a picture of a boy who was obedient to His parents, but above all had a strong desire to honor God in everything He did. Jesus grew physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Luke 2:52 may suggest that Jesus was not a prodigy who developed in one area of life at the expense of all others. Rather, He was a well-rounded person, liked and respected by those around Him, respectful of His parents but not afraid to tell them when He needed to get on with the work of His heavenly Father.

Joseph was most likely a carpenter, and Jesus became a carpenter as He grew up. This was His trade until He began His public ministry of proclaiming the gospel at the age of 30. The people of His hometown saw Him as just that, a local carpenter, son of a carpenter, nothing special.

It may be difficult to grasp, but as a child and a teenager Jesus never committed sin. He was selfless, pure, caring, and honest. The traditions of the Jewish rabbis decreed that a young man must begin to observe all the commandments and ceremonial obligations of their religion at the age of 12, but Jesus didn't wait until then. By the age of 12 Jesus was so familiar with the law of God, in both theory and practice, that He could teach the teachers of His time. The childhood and youth of Jesus show us that we can gain wisdom through the study of the Holy Scriptures and the guidance of the Holy Spirit at any age.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Know that Jesus faced many of the challenges and trials of youth but remained sinless. *(Know)*
- Feel drawn to Jesus as to the truest friend who understands each young person best. *(Feel)*
- Ask God for the grace to be like Jesus as they mature. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Son, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 4: "God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. . . . (Isa. 53:4-6; Dan. 9:25-27; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor.

15:3, 4; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17-19; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 2:9-18; 8:1, 2)."

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Tally the responses to see how many people chose each of them. Discuss their responses.

Ask people to share why they chose the answers they did.

Say: "We often like to picture Christianity as a friendship with Jesus, and in fact He told His disciples that He would not call them servants, but friends. What would need to change—in you, or in your image of Jesus—before you could feel comfortable calling Him a friend?"

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Jesus' parents left Jerusalem after the Passover and began the journey home. They were with crowds of people going the same direction and did not miss Jesus at first. After two days they realized He was not anywhere in the crowd headed for home. They returned to Jerusalem and found Jesus in the Temple. Jesus' response to His parents was that He needed to be attending to His Father's business.

However Jesus showed perfect obedience not only to His heavenly Father but also to His earthly parents. Ellen White records: "For eighteen years after He had recognized that He was the Son of God, He acknowledged the tie that bound Him to the home at Nazareth, and performed the duties of a son, a brother, a friend, and a citizen" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 82).

Debriefing

Ask: How can we apply the lessons from the example Jesus set in His young life? What are some of the blessings and rewards that come from obeying God and following the guidance of our parents, who want what's best for us?

How have you benefited from being obedient to God's law and to your parents?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Every young person goes through a period of distancing themselves from their parents and establishing their independence. This is one of the normal developmental tasks of adolescence. According to the Bible, Jesus wasn't rebellious or difficult. To a certain extent, it's normal for parents to worry about their children's independence. But Jesus had the ability to grow into the young adult He was destined to be without having to create conflict with His parents.

Mary and Joseph were always aware that Jesus was a special child, different from any other human being in some ways. They raised Him to be respectful and to obey them.

Jesus had a normal human family upbringing, with the usual tensions and sibling conflicts. He grew up with older brothers and sisters who must have seemed less than ideal compared to their Brother. Jesus did not draw attention to Himself, and always treated His siblings with kindness and fairness.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- Discuss the *Out of the Story* questions from the student lesson.
- Go around the class (or divide into small groups if you have a large class) and ask each student to share about a time when they got lost or separated from their family when they were younger. Ask how they think their experience compares with Jesus' experience of being left behind at the Temple at age 12. Did their parents react as Mary and Joseph did?
- Talk to the students about Jesus never committing a sin as a child. Ask for reactions to the idea that it is possible for human beings to obey God at a very early age. Students may express doubts. Be prepared to talk about how God works in a person's life to help them let go of sin.

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

Questions That Facilitate Higher-Level Thinking

Use questions frequently during Sabbath School. They are effective both for activating the learner's prior knowledge on the topic of the lesson and for eliciting further thought and application of the main instructional elements found in the Bible story. Robert Marzano, Debra Pickering, and Jane Pollock recommend that:

1. Questions should focus on what is important as opposed to what is unusual.
2. Higher-level questions produce deeper learning than lower-level questions.
3. "Waiting" briefly before accepting responses from students has the effect of increasing the depth of students' answers.
4. Questions are effective learning tools even when asked before a learning experience (*Classroom Instruction That Works* (2001), pp. 113, 114).

Questions that merely ask for a retrieval of information, such as "What is _____?" or "When did _____ happen?" are activating lower level thinking skills. On the other hand, questions such as, "How is _____ related to _____?" or "How could _____ be improved?" are eliciting higher-level thinking skills.

Aim at engaging your learners in asking and answering important questions that facilitate deep understanding of the spiritual truths under study.

- Ask: "What can we learn from this week's Bible passage that can relate to the challenges young people face today as they're growing up and becoming a little more independent from their parents? How can we use Jesus as our example for how to live as a teenager?" On a white/chalkboard at the front of the room, write suggestions from the class.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

Discuss the implications of the following passages to our lives: "In our association with one another, we should take heed lest we forget Jesus, and pass along unmindful that He is not with us.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Desire of Ages. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

When we become absorbed in worldly things so that we have no thought for Him in whom our hope of eternal life is centered, we separate ourselves from Jesus and from the heavenly angels. These holy beings cannot remain where the Saviour's presence is not desired, and His absence is not marked. This is why discouragement so often exists among the professed followers of Christ. . . .

"As we associate together, we may be a blessing to one another. If we are Christ's, our sweetest thoughts will be of Him. We shall love to talk of Him; and as we speak to one another of His love, our hearts will be softened by divine influences. Beholding the beauty of His character, we shall be 'changed into the same image from glory to glory'" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 83).

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Pass out cards on which you have preprinted this week's key text, with the expression "I want to grow _____" below it. Say: "The Bible passage we've been studying this week tells us that Jesus grew into a well-rounded person, with His development appropriate to His age—physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. In what area do you feel you most need to grow? In a few words, write on this card how you would like to grow at this point in your life. As we pray, ask God to help you become more like Jesus."

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Jesus faced the normal growing-up challenges of childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. Even though His time and culture were very different from ours, there's still a lot we can learn from Him. We too can increase in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and humanity, if we take Jesus as our example. We can learn to listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and learn to obey Him at all times. And like Jesus, we are responsible to keep that close relationship with our parents, who love and care for us. Jesus is our example that we can grow harmoniously physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially to be in favor with God and humanity.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*),* chapters 7-9.

*A special adaptation, *Humble Hero*, has been created by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Luke 2:39-52.
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growing up



Photo by Luis Guerra, Jr.

keytext

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

(Luke 2:52)

flashlight

"Jesus did not ignore His relation to His earthly parents. From Jerusalem He returned home with them, and aided them in their life of toil. He hid in His own heart the mystery of His mission, waiting submissively for the appointed time for Him to enter upon His work. For eighteen years after He had recognized that He was the Son of God, He acknowledged the tie that bound Him to the home at Nazareth, and performed the duties of a son, a brother, a friend, and a citizen" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 82).

what do you think?

If Jesus were a teenager in my school or neighborhood, I think I'd probably

___ want to spend time with Him, because He'd be really friendly.
___ admire Him and learn from Him.
___ think that I have to change and be more like Him by God's grace.
___ want to be in His presence constantly.

did you know?

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke each dedicate a little less than two chapters telling the story of Jesus' birth. Each of the Gospels gives several chapters to Jesus' death and resurrection, with most of the pages in between telling the stories of Jesus' ministry—the stories He told, the sermons He preached, the people He healed. Only Luke spends any time at all on Jesus' childhood and youth. From about age 2 to age 30, we learn about the young Jesus only from 13 verses—most of those being about His trip to the Temple at age 12.

Except for that one story, we know almost nothing about Jesus as a child, as a teenager, and as a young man. We can make guesses based on the descriptions given in Luke 2:40, 52: He "became strong" and was "filled with wisdom"; He grew "in favor with God and men." In other words, He was everything He was supposed to be, appropriate for His age. At 6 He probably didn't have the same kind of understanding of His heavenly mission and message that He did at 26. He had to grow, learn, and discover who He was, just as we do.

INTO THE STORY

"So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

"His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, 'Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.'

"And He said to them, 'Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?' But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

"Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

(Luke 2:39-52)



OUT OF THE STORY

How might Mary and Joseph have taught Jesus when He was a child? Do you think they raised Him differently from how they raised their other children?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What is the message of this story to you? What can you learn from Jesus, whose desire was to spend time learning more about God in His Father's House? Explain your answer.

_____
_____
_____
_____

How would you have responded if you were in the place of Mary or Joseph when Jesus said, "Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?"

_____
_____
_____
_____

What are some lessons you can draw for yourself from Jesus' eagerness to learn more about God from the priests in the Temple? How can you follow Jesus' example as a young person?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you" **(Exodus 20:12).**

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" **(Deuteronomy 6:6, 7).**

"My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; for they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck" **(Proverbs 1:8, 9).**

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" **(Proverbs 22:6).**

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" **(Ephesians 6:1).**

further insight

"By one day's neglect they [Joseph and Mary] lost the Saviour; but it cost them three days of anxious search to find Him. So with us; by idle talk, evilspeaking, or neglect of prayer, we may in one day lose the Saviour's presence, and it may take many days of sorrowful search to find Him, and regain the peace that we have lost."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 83

Sabbath

Read Luke 2:41-49.

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. . . . He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God" (The Son, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 4). The story of Jesus' visit to the Temple at age 12 (Luke 2:41-49) teaches significant lessons both to young and old about the importance of honoring God and seeking His will for our lives.

Jesus' example shows that it's possible as a teen to go through that search for independence without rebelling against parents and other authority figures. The story in Luke 2 tells us that Jesus went back home and "was obedient" to His parents during His teen and young adult years, even as He was growing up into the person God had planned for Him to be.

What can you learn from this story that you can apply at this time in your life?

_____

_____

_____

Sunday

Read Philippians 2:5-11.

Why do you think the Bible tells us so little about Jesus' early years?

For each of the following phrases from Luke 2, write an example of something you think Jesus as a child or teen *might* have done that would fit with that description:

He became strong _____
He was filled with wisdom _____
The grace of God was upon Him _____
He was subject to His parents _____
He increased in stature _____
He increased in favor with God _____
He increased in favor with man _____

Monday

Read Hebrews 4:15 and Hebrews 8:1, 2.

Do you think it was easy or difficult for Jesus to resist temptations? What helped Him resist temptations? What encouragement do you find, knowing that Jesus is our high priest in the heavenly sanctuary?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Tuesday

Read Luke 2:52.

Read the *Flashlight* section of the lesson, which talks about the time between Jesus' visit to the Temple at 12 and the time He began His ministry at age 30. Why do you think Jesus waited for so long before He started preaching and teaching, if He already knew what God wanted Him to do? What valuable lessons do you think Jesus learned during those years in Nazareth?

Wednesday

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-19.

All the verses in the *Punch Lines* section contain biblical advice to parents or to children. From that list of Bible texts (or other Bible verses you know of), is there an applicable lesson for your family context?

_____

_____

_____

What are ways you can relate to your parents respectfully and obediently based on the Bible's advice?

_____

_____

_____

Thursday

Read Matthew 6:33.

Jesus spent 18 years, between ages 12 and 30, learning what God wanted Him to do—and only about three years doing it. Action is important, but so is waiting for God's timing and learning the lessons He wants us to learn. Think of Moses, who spent 40 years in the wilderness preparing to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

Maybe this is *your* time of preparation. God is getting you ready for the work He wants you to do in the world. What's one practical thing you can do today to help discover God's will for your life?

_____

_____

_____

Friday

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-19.

As you pray today, ask God to make you more like Jesus as a young person—learning about Him and growing in a way that's appropriate to your age and in keeping with His will.

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 7-9.

**Humble Hero* is a special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, created by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companionbooks#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.