Growing Up in Nazareth



MEMORY VERSE

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

Word of the Week—Mature:

To mature is to grow up to become responsible and fully developed. People grow to be physically mature, as well as mature in their thinking, feelings, and how they speak and act. Some people mature more quickly than others. We can also say some children are mature for their age.

This week's lesson is based on Luke 2:41-52; *The Desire of Ages,* pp. 68-92; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 5, pp. 706-712. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story,* vol. 7, pp. 63-90.

SUNDAY

Fit for a King

A gentle breeze swept over the grassy hills surrounding Nazareth. Sheep bleated softly under a shady grove of trees. Birds chirped happily in the branches above. Tucked away from any main roads and surrounded by hills, Nazareth was a quiet, peaceful place for Jesus and His family to call home. As Jesus grew, God kept Him close to family and nature.

Much like the place of His birth, Jesus' home and His village were humble places. Archaeologists have found that just a cluster of homes made up the small town of Nazareth at this time. Each home was basic: a few small rooms around an inner courtyard, with a small storage pit dug beneath. Many years later, when Philip told his friend Nathanael that he had found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, what did Nathanael say about the place? **Read John 1:46**. Yes, it could!

Jesus roamed with Mary and Joseph in the hills near their home. His mind was like a sponge, soaking up everything around Him. The birds, the wildflowers, cloud patterns, and soaring trees all taught Him about God the Father. Mary loved to encourage His bright mind and help Him to learn all sorts of new things. We can be sure Mary and Joseph prayed for Him too.

Under God's loving care, Jesus grew taller, stronger, wiser, friendlier, and closer to God. The Bible says in Luke 2:52: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

As a young child, Jesus learned God's ways from nature and His family. People really liked Him, for He was kind, patient, unselfish, wise, and mature for His age. What a lovely example He is for us.



Parent Faith Talk: You may like to personalize the prayer of Colossians 1:9, 10 for your child.

Do: Go for a quiet walk with a parent or caregiver. Look carefully for things in nature that Jesus may have noticed and appreciated. Talk about and praise God for them.

Pray: Thank God for nature, and the adults in your life who are helping you learn God's ways.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *What do you think you could have learned from Jesus if you could have played with Him?*
- *Why do you think God chose this place for the King of kings?*





☐ MONDAY

Growing and Learning

Before Mary and Joseph knew it, their small Boy began growing bigger, taller, and more mature. He turned 5! Jesus' fifth birthday was probably very different from yours, but it was very special too. When He was young, Jesus started to worship in the synagogue (church) on Sabbath. Jesus learned from the songs, prayers, and Bible scroll readings in the synagogue. But most of all, He loved to worship His Father-God there.

Jesus didn't go to school. His mother taught Him to read and study the Scriptures in their humble home. The words came from His mother's lips and in the written Bible scrolls, but they were really God's words. God was His teacher.

What a good student Jesus was! He learned so well from God and His mom that when He grew up, people were amazed at His knowledge. What did they say? **Read John 7:14, 15.**

When Jesus taught the people when He was older, He wasn't just sharing His knowledge of the Bible scrolls. He had become wise as He matured through childhood, so He could teach them how to use the knowledge for good in their lives.

Jesus invites us to let Him be our teacher too. What kind of teacher is Jesus? **Read Matthew 11:29, 30.**

Jesus was a gentle but hardworking student as He grew up and matured. He remembers what learning in our world was like, so He is the perfect teacher. Why not trust Him to teach you to be more like Him?

As Jesus grew and matured, He loved to worship God on the Sabbath, learn new things from His parents and the Bible scrolls, and wisely share what He learned with others. We can ask God to help us follow His example.

Mission Challenge: In Sabbath School last week, you may have decided on a plan to give gifts to a group of people who serve others in your community. Pray for these people and decide on a Bible promise or message to share with them.

Parent Faith Talk: Affirm your child's spiritual growth by sharing with them the ways you see Jesus working in their lives. What beautiful character qualities are they letting Jesus, their teacher, grow in them?

Pray: Ask God to help you be a happy and hardworking learner.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Read* **2 Peter 3:18**, *your memory verse. How much would you like to do this kind of growing?*
- *What do you think Jesus would like to teach you?*

TUESDAY

Passover Adventure

Dishes needed washing, beds needed making, and the floor in Father Joseph's carpenter shop needed sweeping. Jesus saw what needed doing, and He did it. Mary and Joseph smiled as they watched their Son mature into a willing and happy worker.

These beautiful character qualities made Jesus a joy to be around at home and in the streets of Nazareth. Always thinking of others, Jesus was likely quick to help someone, share, and spread His love for God through words and songs. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). This little Boy was such a big blessing.

Those happy childhood years sped by, and Jesus was soon in His twelfth year. This brought great excitement! Why? *Read Luke 2:41, 42.*

Jesus had looked forward to this day for years. His eyes danced as He began the journey with all the other noisy Hebrew travelers. They clogged the dusty roads as they sang and chatted their way to the Passover celebrations in Jerusalem.

After several days of travel Jesus saw the temple. It sat high on the city skyline, the white stone walls gleaming in the sunshine. This was the building He had heard so much about! When He arrived at the temple gates, He no doubt reverently followed the instructions of Psalm 100:4: "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name."

Jesus was eager to learn all He could on this trip, and the temple was a good place to start.

Our loving God lived in Jesus' young heart. Whether He was sweeping floors, helping the neighbors, on a long journey, or entering the temple courts, Jesus was cheerful and enjoyed praising God. When we focus on inviting Jesus into our hearts and getting to know Him better, we will want to become more like young Jesus. He can help us to be more willing, loving, faithful, and cheerful.

Do: Study the picture of the temple. How is it different from your church? How is it the same? Read **John 4:24**. What is more important to God than how a church or temple looks?

Pray: Sing "Into My Heart" as a prayer to Jesus.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *How could you follow Jesus' example and be a "joy to be around" in your home and neighborhood? Ask God to help you.*
- *Imagine the Boy Jesus is right beside you as you do your chores. Will you do them any differently than usual?*



WEDNESDAY

Teaching the Teachers



The bells on the bottom of the high priest's blue robe jingled softly as he walked toward the holy place. Jesus watched the priests in the courtyard performing their duties and saw the bleeding Passover lamb on the altar. The more Jesus watched, the more clearly He saw that these things were symbols of what would happen to Him. He had come to this earth to be the lamb and die one day. Such big thoughts made Him quiet.

God's Son, the Creator of the twinkling stars and our wonderful world, is all-powerful, and knows all. While it's hard to wrap our minds around this, He has also always existed, living with God the Father in heaven. But in a beautiful act of unselfishness, God the Son left it all behind. Now here He was as a human boy named Jesus, sitting in the temple, watching, thinking, and learning things about Himself and His future work on earth.

In a side room at the temple, the rabbis (religious teachers) taught their students. Jesus settled at their feet and listened carefully. He asked deep questions about God's Word. Then the rabbis turned to *Him* with questions. They were "astonished at His understanding and answers" (Luke 2:47), for He understood God's promises about the Messiah better than they did! Their hearts were touched.

Later, when Jesus was a grown man, He tried to teach the Jewish leaders again. Sadly, many didn't want to listen to the truths Jesus shared. What did Jesus say would happen to those who want to learn about God's goodness? **Read Matthew 5:6.**

Jesus still loves to teach you and fill you up with God's goodness. He says, "As newborn babies want milk, you should want the pure and simple teaching. By it you can mature in your salvation. For you have already examined and seen how good the Lord is" (1 Peter 2:2, 3, ICB).

Do: As a family, plan to physically and spiritually "feed" someone in need this week. You might like to help make soup or nourishing food for a homeless shelter and include some encouraging Bible verse cards or tracts.

Do: Write a note of thanks to someone who has taught you about Jesus.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Jesus feeds us through His Word, and through those who teach us His ways. Who teaches you? What do you want to learn from Jesus?*
- *How hungry are you for food from the Bible? What can you do to "eat" more often from the Bible?*

Pray: Place your hands on the Bible and thank God for feeding you from His Word.

THURSDAY

Lost and Found

The Passover celebrations were over. Crowds of travelers hit the dusty roads and headed toward home. Old friends chatted together excitedly. Distant family members walked arm-in-arm, eager to catch up on news, while children ran and played together along the way. The crowd of God's people was like a big family. But Jesus wasn't with them. He had lingered in His Father-God's house, eager to keep talking with the rabbis and learning from the Scriptures.

While setting up camp that evening, Mary and Joseph realized Jesus was missing. They called and searched, but He was nowhere to be found, and no one had seen Him. Fear gripped their hearts! They worried, *Did someone have evil plans for Him, as Herod had?* They hurried back to Jerusalem to search for Him. Finally, three days after they had last seen Him, Mary and Joseph heard Jesus' sweet voice as they entered the temple porches.

Mary ran toward him. What did she say? **Read Luke 2:48.**

Jesus respectfully replied, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). As Jesus said this He pointed upward to try to help them understand. Jesus was gently telling His mom and dad that He understood He was God's Son too, and that He knew what He had come to the world to do.

Mary and Joseph looked puzzled. They didn't understand. But Jesus did. And He would never lose sight of why God had sent Him.

Then Jesus returned to Nazareth with the parents God had chosen for Him, and "obeyed them" (Luke 2:51, ICB), for He loved them very much. Which of God's commands did Jesus follow? **Read Exodus 20:12.** What a lovely example Jesus is for us.

Do: Make a heart out of found nature items twisted together: vines/soft twigs; leaves; wildflowers. Alternatively, use craft items or clay. Give to your parent or caregiver to show that you honor them.

Pray: Ask God to help you follow Jesus' mature example.



Think . . . Then talk about it

- *In how many different ways is Jesus a mature example to you in this part of the story? Reread* ***Luke 2:41-50*** *and see if you can find at least three.*
- *In what real-life situations could you follow His example?*

As you follow Jesus' mature example, you can honor your parents by obeying them and by taking responsibility for the things you do. You can also speak respectfully to them as you share things they may not know.



☐ **FRIDAY**

The Carpenter's Son

Saw, saw, saw. Jesus' hands pushed and pulled the saw as He happily crafted furniture alongside Joseph in the little carpenter's shop in Nazareth. As He worked, Jesus was the perfect example of Colossians 3:23: "In all the work you are doing, work the best you can. Work as if you were working for the Lord, not for men" (ICB).

Jesus *always* served the Lord happily, not just when He was hammering and sawing. We know that Jesus is love (1 John 4:8). That means He noticed when others were hungry and shared His food. If others were lonely, Jesus would have shared His time. When others were spoken to harshly, Jesus would have shared kind words. His quiet, unselfish ways drew some people to Him. But His constant kindness and goodness irritated others.

Often people who are up to mischief don't like it when others don't want to join in. It makes their bad choices stand out. Jesus would have had to have put up with being teased, laughed at, or avoided, because of His good choices. We can be sure He replied only with kind words.

The other boys could see that Jesus studied the Scriptures and obeyed what He read. Jesus always made the Bible His go-to for all answers and help from God. Read Psalm 119:1-3, a scripture He shared as a grown-up.

Jesus knew that during this part of His mission on earth, He was to be God's example, even when it was hard. What a treasure His example is. Colossians 2:3: "And in him [Jesus] all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are safely kept" (ICB).

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Read* **1 Timothy 4:12**. *How was Jesus our example in each of the things listed?*

Friday Night

Share and Praise

- On a large sheet of paper, write this lesson's Big Idea, "Jesus is my example as I grow up."
- Invite family members to write on it ways that Jesus is their example.
- Take turns miming things that come to mind from this week's story. Guess each other's mimes.
- Listen to or sing the hymn "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 290).

Family Journal

- Remembering what Jesus was like as a child will help me when I . . .
- My favorite discovery in this lesson has been . . .

Pray

Look at what your family has written on the page for "Jesus is my example when I grow up." Invite each person to praise God for Jesus' example, and to ask God for help to follow it.

For You, Parents

As you nurture your child's growth toward spiritual, physical, social, and emotional maturity, remember that God is lovingly nurturing your spiritual growth too. You too "are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

☐ SABBATH

Kids' Guided Bible Study

Do this together with an adult:

1. ***Pray*** *for God to help you to understand what you read.*
2. ***Read*** *the following Bible passage out loud.*
3. ***Underline*** *the ideas that stand out to you.*
4. ***Write down****, or* ***draw****, what these ideas tell you about God or yourself.*
5. ***Think:*** *Whom could you share these ideas with today?*
6. ***Pray*** *to Jesus something you would like to share with Him about what you've read.*

Psalm 139, ICB

1 Lord, you have examined me.
You know all about me.
2 You know when I sit down and when I get up.
You know my thoughts before I think them.
3 You know where I go and where I lie down.
You know well everything I do.
4 Lord, even before I say a word,
you already know what I am going to say.
5 You are all around me—in front and in back.
You have put your hand on me.
6 Your knowledge is amazing to me.
It is more than I can understand. . . .

13 You made my whole being.
You formed me in my mother's body.
14 I praise you because you made me in
an amazing and wonderful way.
What you have done is wonderful.
I know this very well.
15 You saw my bones being formed
as I took shape in my mother's body.
When I was put together there,
16 you saw my body as it was formed.
All the days planned for me
were written in your book
before I was one day old.
17 God, your thoughts are precious to me.
They are so many!
18 If I could count them,
they would be more than all the grains of sand.
When I wake up,
I am still with you.

