

Lesson Five

The Early Years of Jesus



Growing as a Teacher

Scripture

Luke 2:39–52

Bible Truth

Jesus grew, as any young child grows (yet without sin), and God was with him in a special way.

Lesson Aim

To continue to grow in the special favor and knowledge of our Lord and Savior.

Like each of us, Jesus also was a child. What an amazing thought! The eternal Son of God became a baby and then went through the natural process of growing up. True, he *was* conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and he *did* live a sinless life, but as the Westminster Shorter Catechism aptly states, Jesus had “a true body, and a reasonable soul.”

As Jesus moved through childhood, he grew physically and spiritually, pleasing both his heavenly Father and his earthly parents (Luke 2:52). And while no child you teach will grow perfectly as Jesus did, each one of them can be called to imitate his example of godly trust, obedience and consistent growth. We must show them their need as sinners for a Savior, trusting the Holy Spirit to convict and quicken them. They can turn to their Savior for the help they need as they change and mature.

What a privilege you have to show the children before you the biblical portrait of Jesus! Pray that they will know—through your words and actions—that he cares about them and each part of their unfolding lives, and that he died to provide salvation for his people.

Bible Background

We can assume that many childhood experiences of Jesus were like those of most Jewish children of that culture and day. He grew up in the town of Nazareth in the region of Galilee. He was brought up by his mother, Mary, and her husband, Joseph, from whom he likely learned the trade of carpentry. Like other families in their town, it is probable that Jesus and his family went to the synagogue at Nazareth each Sabbath, where he would have heard readings from the Old Testament.

What a privilege you have to show the children before you the biblical portrait of Jesus!

Yet, in our one brief biblical glimpse into his childhood, we can see that even as an adolescent, Jesus showed his unique purpose and calling. At that time, he went with his parents to Jerusalem to celebrate the annual Passover, and his unusual zeal and wisdom in spiritual matters set him apart from his peers, astounding all who observed him (Luke 2:46–52). Jesus’ early years revealed both his humanity and his deity.

Memory Verse

Review:
MALACHI 3:1a
1 JOHN 4:14b
JOHN 3:16

Lesson Five at a Glance

Step	Minutes	Children's Activities	Supplies (complete list, p. 11)
1 Welcome	5–10	Play <i>Go and Grow</i> to prepare for the Bible story.	<input type="checkbox"/> Oversized clothing: 2 adult overcoats 2 hats 2 pairs of gloves
2 Bible Time	15–20	Hear about Jesus in the temple when he was 12 years of age.	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 5a Mary & Joseph*
3 Memory Verse	5–10	Review John 3:16, Malachi 3:1a and 1 John 4:14b.	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 4b John 3:16 cube* <input type="checkbox"/> TA 1c Memory Work*
4 Activities	10–15	Play <i>Jerusalem Journey</i> to review the Bible story. <i>Optional: Do At Home 5</i> activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 5b Jerusalem Journey game** (also SA 5) <input type="checkbox"/> A coin and game piece (small plastic toy or animal) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Optional: At Home 5</i> **
5 Final Focus	5	Thank God that he cares for us as we grow; tell him how we will follow the example of Jesus this week.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>At Home 5</i> ** <input type="checkbox"/> SA 5 Jerusalem Journey game**

Total time: 40–60 minutes

* Younger Elementary Teaching Aids Pack
 ** Younger Elementary Student Activities Pack



Enrichment

Have the children make a scrapbook of memories and mementos. Staple together several pieces of construction paper to form a booklet. Make a couple of pockets to hold special trinkets. Tell the children to collect items at home, such as birthday cards, tickets from places they have visited (like the zoo or science museum), photographs, a lock of hair and so on. Glue them onto the pages or put them in the pockets of the scrapbook.



Practical Preparation

Check the Supplies list and gather the materials you need to teach the lesson. For the Welcome segment, you will need clothing from the supply list to play *Go and Grow*, a relay race to prepare the children for the Bible Time story.

Go over the memory work so that you can lead the children in reviewing the three verses learned so far this quarter. Practice telling the Bible story so that you are able to easily share all that happened when Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover.

During the Activities step, the students will play *Jerusalem Journey* to review this week's story. Have TA 5b (found in the Student Activities Pack), a coin and game piece handy to play the game. You may choose to divide the class into two groups: Have one group play *Jerusalem Journey* while the other group works on activities in *At Home 5*. After a while, rotate the groups so that everyone has a chance to both play the game and do *At Home* activities. If you do the activities in class, remember to have pencils, crayons or markers available. Each child will receive a *Jerusalem Journey* game (SA 5) to take home at the end of class.



Welcome

5–10 minutes

Before the children arrive, prepare for the *Go and Grow* game. Set out two piles of clothing at one end of the classroom: two adult overcoats, two hats and two pairs of gloves. Divide the children into two equal teams. At the signal to begin, the first member of each team races to the other end of the room, puts on every article of clothing in the pile, races back to the team and takes off the borrowed clothing. The second member of each team then puts on the discarded clothing, races back to where the clothes were piled up before, takes off the clothing there and dashes back to the team. The third team member then races to the clothes pile so that the whole dressing-up process begins again. The relay game continues in this way until one team wins or every child has had a chance to play.

At the end of the game, talk about the way the clothing fit. The articles of clothing should have been too big for most of the children. After this discussion, ask the following questions to further help the children understand that they are growing and changing.

- **What can you do this year that you could not do last year?** (*accept any reasonable answer—read a book, kick a soccer ball, lift a baby brother, fold laundry, play the piano better and so on*)
- **How different do you look from a year ago?** (*taller, bigger feet and hands, longer hair and so on*)
- **What do you know this year that you didn't know when you were a year younger?** (*more school skills, right from wrong, more verses from the Bible and so on*)

Complete this step by pointing out that God has made us so that we grow in many ways. When Jesus came, he was first a baby—just as you were some years ago. Then he learned how to crawl and walk as a little toddler. He had birthdays every year, and he grew and changed, just as you are growing and changing. But Jesus was different from us because he never sinned or disobeyed like we do. Even though he was tempted like we are, he never sinned. That's why he could die for our sins and be our Savior. Today we are going to learn how Jesus grew like us, and also how God expects us to grow to be like him!



Bible Time

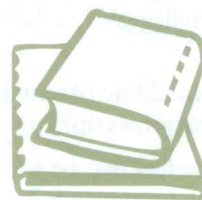
15–20 minutes

Open your Bible to Luke 2:39–52. Tell the children that the Bible story is found in this passage. If children have their Bibles, help them

Early Arrivals



Children who arrive early may enjoy looking at and reading illustrated storybooks and handbooks about the land and people of Palestine in the time of Jesus. An ideal place to start is *Mary Batchelor's Opening Up the Bible*, from Lion Publishing.





Something Extra!

Ask a 12-year-old boy to visit the class. Help the students interview him about life as an adolescent. Questions to ask might include the following:

- What does he like best about being 12?
- What fun things does he like to do?
- What are his main chores and responsibilities?
- Does he have any hobbies?
- Will he have any special and new privileges when he turns 13?
- What would he like to do when he grows up?
- Does he feel that he is ready to become a full-fledged member of the adult community?



Bar Mitzvah

At 13, a Jewish boy became a “son of the law” in a special ceremony called the *bar mitzvah*. After this, he entered home, community and synagogue life as an adult. When Jesus was 12, he was anticipating becoming a full member of the religious community a year later.

locate the book of Luke, chapter 2.

Every year Mary and Joseph left Nazareth and traveled all the way to the city of Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. This was a weeklong festival for all Jewish families to celebrate the time God saved Israel out of Egypt.

The year that Jesus was 12, he went to the feast with Mary and Joseph. Jesus knew that next year he would be expected to take his place in the congregation as an adult. He would join in the meetings for prayer and he would hear God’s Word read and explained. He must have been thrilled to make the long journey to the beautiful temple of the Lord.

At the Passover festival, every family killed and roasted a lamb, and prepared some bitter vegetables and flat, dry bread. The bitter vegetables helped God’s people remember the hardship of being slaves in Egypt. The lamb reminded them of the dreadful night that death came to the families of Egypt but “passed over” Jewish homes marked with the blood of sacrifice. The flat, dry bread made them think of how they hurried out of Egypt without enough time to let their bread dough rise.

When the feast was over, the travelers gathered up their belongings and started the long trek home. After some time, Mary and Joseph discovered that Jesus was not with them. They could not find him among their relatives, neighbors or friends. Where was he? They searched everywhere, but Jesus was nowhere to be found. *Show the children TA 5a.*

Anxious about their missing son, Mary and Joseph returned to Jerusalem to look for him. They went everywhere, asking for the boy. But no one knew where he was. Finally, after three long, weary days of searching, they found Jesus. He was sitting in the temple courtyards among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions. Everyone was amazed at how wise and smart he was. Even though Jesus was a child like you are, this shows he understood he was in the temple on God his Father’s business. As God’s Son, Jesus was wiser than the priests and could answer their tough questions. Mary and Joseph were astounded to find him there. “Son, why did you do this to us?” Mary wanted to know. “Your father and I were frantically looking for you everywhere!”

“Why were you searching for me?” Jesus asked. “Did you not know I had to be in my Father’s house?”

Mary and Joseph did not understand what their son meant. Jesus was talking about obeying God and revealing who he really was: God. Then Jesus obediently got up and went with his parents back to Nazareth. Mary kept thinking about all that had happened. After this, Jesus continued to grow well. He was obedient to his parents and he grew in height, in wisdom, and in favor with God and men.

Emphasize to the class that Jesus not only continued to grow in his knowledge of reading, writing and studying God’s Word, but he matured in other ways as well. He was kind and thoughtful to others, he grew taller and stronger, and those who knew him liked him. God the

Father approved of his Son; Jesus loved and obeyed his heavenly Father.

Say Jesus was once a child—like you! He knows what it's like to run around and play. He had to learn how to read and write and work with numbers. He also had to get along with brothers, sisters and friends. He knew what it was like to obey his parents.

Because Jesus was a child like you, he understands you and he understands your feelings—both your good feelings and your bad feelings. But because he was God's Son, he never disobeyed or did wrong things, as a child or as an adult. He died on the cross for the sin and disobedience of all who trust in him. Jesus wants you to admit the wrong things you have done and trust him as your Savior. He can help you in all that you go through as you grow because he is God's Son, the promised Savior-King.

Read 2 Peter 3:18a from the Bible: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Conclude by saying God wants you to grow to be like his Son, Jesus. That is God's plan for his children!



Memory Verse

5–10 minutes

As you did in this segment of Lesson 4, use the memory verse cube (TA 4b) to review John 3:16. Remind the children that the child Jesus grew up to become a man. The Son of God was the Savior of the world.

Refer to the memory verse poster to review 1 John 4:14b and Malachi 3:1a. You may ask volunteers to lead this part of the review.

If you have time, finish this step by singing one or both songs introduced in this quarter's first unit of study, "The Coming of the Promised Savior." The songs "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" and "Gifts in My Heart" are found on the *Younger Elementary Vol. 2 CD*.



Activities

10–15 minutes

Tell the children that they are going to play a game to review today's Bible story. Put the coin, game piece and TA 5b Jerusalem Journey game on the table. Show the children how to play the game. Each child will take a turn spinning the coin and moving the game piece (a small plastic toy or animal may be used) one or two spaces on the "game board." If it lands on heads, go two spaces; tails, one space. In this way, each child will have a chance to recall some aspect of the Bible story,



Teaching Tip

Placing markers at each passage as you read it during your lesson preparation will help Bible Time flow more smoothly, especially when the lesson contains several Scripture references.

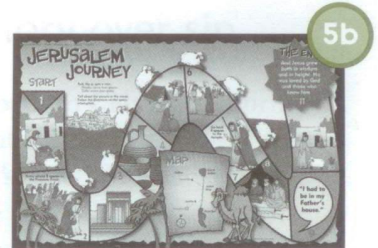
Optional Memory Work

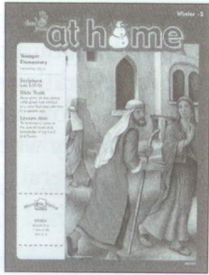
Students may memorize
2 Peter 3:18a or Hebrews 4:15.



5 "Go, Tell It on the Mountain"
Songbook, p. 15

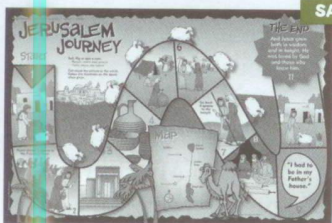
6 "Gifts in My Heart"
Songbook, p. 16





Items to Send Home

- *At Home 5*
- SA 5 Jerusalem Journey game



and the story will be reviewed in sequence.

If you wish, divide the class into two groups. Have one group play *Jerusalem Journey* while the other group works on activities inside *At Home 5*. After a bit of time, switch the groups around so that each child has a chance to play the game and work on an *At Home 5* activity. If they work on their papers, be sure to give whatever help is needed for children to do the part you feel is most appropriate based on their abilities. (*Growing in Grace Answers: 1. Pray, 2. Sunday, 3. commandments, 4. you, 5. Bible, 6. Memorize*) Remind them to ask a parent to read the *Growing Up!* story with them at home.

At the end of this step, put the game, coin and game piece in a safe place. You may want to use them again later this quarter to review the story of Jesus and his boyhood visit to the temple of the Lord. Students will receive their own games at the end of the lesson.



Final Focus

5 minutes

Gather the children around you in a circle and have a time of conversational prayer. Tell the children that you would like them to thank their heavenly Father for caring about every part of their lives as they grow. Ask them to tell him one thing they will do this week to show they are growing in the way that Jesus wants them to grow: obey God, memorize his Word, pray to the Father and so on. Encourage the children to feel at ease as they share their minds and hearts in front of you and their classmates.

As you dismiss the children, hand out a SA 5 Jerusalem Journey game to each one to play at home. Also make sure that each student has an *At Home 5* paper. Remind them to share their papers with their families.

