

Small Group Guide

The Boy in the Temple | Luke 2



BACKGROUND FOR GROUP LEADERS

This sermon covers the closing of Jesus' early years as recorded in Luke 2, with particular focus on the account of 12-year-old Jesus remaining in the temple among the teachers. The Message draws out themes of Jesus' dual nature (Hypostatic Union: Divine and Human), the human tendency to let awe fade into routine, and the call to pursue knowing God with genuine passion and intentionality.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Luke writes as a Gentile outsider gathering eyewitness accounts, which gives his gospel a perspective that is accessible to those who did not grow up in Jewish tradition or culture.
- Jesus at 12 years old was on the verge of Jewish adulthood and was already astonishing Israel's greatest theological minds in the temple.

- The mystery of Jesus' two natures, fully divine and fully human, is one the church has wrestled with for 2,000 years and cannot be fully resolved this side of heaven.
- Mary and Joseph's anxious search for Jesus serves as a spiritual picture of what it looks like when Jesus is absent from the center of a person's life.
- The scholars who were astonished by Jesus at 12 years old largely forgot about it and moved on, a pattern the message identifies as a deeply human tendency and a serious warning.
- The first recorded words of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark are a call to repent and believe in the gospel.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening

1. Think of a moment in your life when you were genuinely awe-struck, whether by something in nature, a close call, a answered prayer, or an encounter with God. How long did that sense of awe actually stay with you before everyday life crowded it out?

Digging Into the Text

2. The pastor points out that Luke is a Gentile outsider who gathered eyewitness accounts rather than witnessing events himself. How does knowing that about Luke change the way you read his gospel? In what ways can you relate to Luke's position as an outsider learning about Jesus through others?
3. Read Luke 2:41-50. Why do you think Joseph and Mary did not immediately know where to find Jesus? What does it tell us about Jesus that his instinct was to be in the temple, about his Father's business?
4. The message describes the anxiety of Joseph and Mary when Jesus was missing and says, "The times of life that we should be worried and anxious and seeking is when Jesus is not with us." Do you agree with that? What does it look like practically when Jesus is or is not at the center of your life?
5. The church has debated for 2,000 years where the line falls between Jesus' human nature and his divine nature. Does sitting with that mystery make your faith feel uncertain, or does it deepen your sense of wonder? Why?
6. The scholars who encountered 12-year-old Jesus were astonished, and then 18 years passed and they moved on. The pastor says, "Just like humanity would, they

forget about it." Why do you think it is so easy for human beings to let profound spiritual moments fade? What conditions in your life tend to accelerate that fading?

Going Deeper

7. The message reflects on Jesus spending 18 years as a craftsman before his public ministry and says, "Of course the one who created everything, when he puts on flesh, decides he's still going to create." What does Jesus' willingness to live a humble, ordinary life for 18 years say to you about how God views ordinary, everyday work and faithfulness?
8. Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12 not to let anyone look down on him because of his youth. The pastor connects this to Jesus at 12 years old outpacing the scholars and suggests that age is not what limits us from knowing God deeply. What do you think actually does limit most people from growing in their knowledge of and passion for God?
9. The message points out, "What you value most is what you will spend your time on and consuming." How does your actual weekly schedule reflect what you value? Is there a gap between what you say you value and where your time actually goes?

Personal Reflection

10. The message closes with this warning: "I don't hope you make that mistake of being confronted with it, realizing who Jesus is, what he did, and what it means for you, and that you let it fall and fade into the background." Has the gospel become background noise in your life at any point? What pulled you back, or what might need to pull you back now?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

This week, choose at least one of the following:

- Set aside 15 minutes each day to read a portion of the Gospel of Luke from the beginning. As you read, ask yourself what Luke, as an outsider gathering accounts, is emphasizing and why it matters.
- Identify one spiritual high point or moment of awe from your past that you have let fade into the background. Write it down, reflect on what God was doing in that moment, and bring it back to the front of your mind with intentionality.

- Take the pastor's challenge seriously: you have more access to theological knowledge and serious Christian writing than any generation before you. Identify one book, sermon series, or resource from a trusted theologian or pastor and commit to working through it with your group or on your own.
 - Have an honest conversation with a trusted friend or group member about whether Jesus is genuinely at the center of your life right now or whether he has drifted into the background of your routine.
 - Memorize the first recorded words of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark: repent and believe in the gospel. Sit with what those words demand from you personally.
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CLOSING PRAYER PROMPT

Close your group time by praying together, using the pastor's closing prayer as a guide. Ask God specifically to keep his word from becoming background noise in your lives, to make knowing him your first priority, and to give your group a genuine passion for the gospel that does not fade when the meeting ends.

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on the Life and Nature of Jesus Christ



Day 1: The Mystery of the Incarnation Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

Devotional: The God who created all things chose to enter his own creation. He did not arrive as a conquering king but as an infant, subject to growth, development, and time itself. This is the staggering reality of the incarnation. Jesus did not abandon his divine nature, but he willingly subjected himself to human limitation out of love for the people he made. When you feel overlooked or small, remember that the eternal God chose smallness on your behalf. The craftsman of the universe put on flesh so that you could be repaired and restored. Let that truth silence every doubt about your worth.

Day 2: The Danger of Letting Awe Fade Reading: Judges 2:10-19

Devotional: The book of Judges is a recurring portrait of a people who witness God's power, receive his deliverance, and then quietly return to ordinary life as though nothing happened. The pattern is painfully familiar because it is ours as well. A mountaintop moment, a near miss, a miracle, an answered prayer, and within weeks it has become a memory rather than a motivation. The scholars who heard a twelve-year-old Jesus astonish

them eventually went home and forgot. Do not let the gospel become background noise. What God has done for you in Christ is not a moment to file away. It is the central fact of your existence.

Day 3: Growing in Wisdom and Favor Reading: Proverbs 2:1-11

Devotional: Luke tells us that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. Even the Son of God, in his human nature, grew. That growth did not happen by accident. It happened through dedication, passion, and a love for the Father's mission. You have access to more theological knowledge, more written wisdom, and more recorded insight into the character of God than any generation before you. The question is not whether the resources exist. The question is what you value enough to pursue. What you spend your time consuming reveals what you truly treasure. Pursue wisdom the way Jesus did, relentlessly and humbly.

Day 4: When Jesus Is Not With You Reading: Psalm 63:1-8

Devotional: When Joseph and Mary realized Jesus was not with them, they sought him anxiously. That anxiety was not weakness. It was the right response. The most disorienting condition a person can experience is moving through life without the presence of God. Many people do it without realizing it, filling the absence with noise, routine, and distraction. But the soul that has known him recognizes the emptiness when he seems distant. If you find yourself anxious and searching, let that be the signal it was always meant to be. Turn back toward him. Seek him in his word, in prayer, in community. He is not lost. You simply need to return.

Day 5: Repent and Believe Reading: Mark 1:14-15

Devotional: The first recorded words of Jesus in the earliest written gospel are a direct and urgent call: repent and believe in the gospel. Not a suggestion, not an invitation to consider at your leisure, but a declaration that the kingdom of God is at hand and a response is required. The craftsman came to repair what sin had broken. He lived without failure, died carrying the full weight of human debt, and rose to offer reconciliation with the Father. All that is asked of you is faith. Do not let familiarity with the story dull the sharpness of its demand. Believe it fully. Let it change everything.