

Luke 2:41-52

Learning and growing

The 12-year-old Jesus and his parents visit Jerusalem for the Passover festival. On the return journey to Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph realise that Jesus is missing. After a frantic three-day search they find him in the Temple, sitting at the feet of the teachers, asking questions and astounding all with his understanding.



Bible notes



This is the only account in the Gospels of an incident from the childhood of Jesus. His family are as close as they are devout. Like Samuel's, they make their annual Passover pilgrimage to the Temple shrine, travelling with relatives and friends in what is perhaps the nearest they get to an annual holiday. Mary and Joseph notice that Jesus is missing from their party on the way home from Jerusalem. They are astonished to find him in the Temple, and the teachers are also amazed by Jesus' questions and answers (vv.47-48). Curious and quick to learn, he is now at home in his heavenly Father's house. We shouldn't see Jesus here as a stropky almost-teenager, making a bid for independence and freedom. That would be to place him in our world. Jewish boys of his age would be moving from the security of home, family and village into the uncertainties of the public world. His mother wouldn't have been much older when she travelled south from Nazareth in Galilee to stay with Zechariah and Elizabeth in Judea. There is every reason to believe that Joseph and Mary have been good enough parents to bring Jesus to this moment, and that they continue to nurture his growth and maturity (v.52). But they too have a lot to learn. Though he returns obediently to their household, life there will never be the same. Jesus is starting to prepare for all that his heavenly Father's house symbolises. Twenty years on from this incident, his conversations with the Temple authorities will take a more sinister turn, as curiosity turns into the kind of questioning that eventually brings about his execution.

First impressions

- What is it like to be 12 years old?
- How would you like to learn and grow in the next year?
- What can we learn from people of different generations?



LISTEN



Listen to 'Grow as we go' by Ben Platt and Sara Bareilles and think about the people who help you grow. How can you help your friends and family grow in their faith this year?



When family members get together, ask older relatives for stories of their childhood. What was important then that is still important now? What did people a generation ago think was wonderfully new that is just taken for granted now?

REFLECT

What do you think Jesus discussed with the leaders in the Temple? What questions would you like to ask about God?

Pray

Lord Jesus,
you are bigger than our imagination,
more complex than our assumptions.
Your grace is deeper than we can fathom.
We can never tire of getting to know you.
Amen.



Write

Take some time as an individual or family to talk or reflect on the different ways that you grew and learnt more about and from God last year. In what areas would you like to learn and grow this year? Write down how you hope to grow and put this somewhere you will see it regularly.