



LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Shows Us What God Is Like

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2

WORD OF WONDER: From Colossians 1:15

I'll never forget that day.

A friend and I had taken our kids to a children's museum. We were standing near the elevator debating which exhibit to visit next when I realized I didn't see Will, my three-year-old. We began to search, working our way up to the enormous lobby. Frantically scanning the crowds, I spotted Will slipping out the front doors. I dashed to him, scooped him up, and burst into tears. He was perfectly calm. I most definitely was not.

Take a moment to read Luke 2:41–52. Most parents have a story like mine. They instantly connect to Joseph's dismay, to Mary's fear. Do you ever wonder what they made of Jesus' response? His calmness in the face of their worry?

Jesus did not share Mary and Joseph's fear; His connection to His Heavenly Father was secure. He knew where He belonged.

What about you? Do you get swept up in the anxieties that surround you? Even as a child, Jesus shows us what God is like: a haven where we can grow and mature and learn, no matter how old we are.

Mary herself seems to make the shift from anxiety (v. 48) to wonder (v. 51). She learned more about her Father by watching her Son.

May we do the same.

—Lise Caldwell

Children's Ministry

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Wonder Ink

LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The Jewish teachers were religious experts who instructed pupils in the temple courts. The teachers in Luke 2 were likely *rabbis*, which means “my teacher” or “my master” in Hebrew. Rabbis would have taught apprentices, who sat at their feet, using a question-and-answer format.

WHAT?

Every year Jewish families made the trip to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. When Jesus’ family left to go home, Jesus stayed behind in His Father’s house, listening to the teachers and asking questions. The 12-year-old Jesus amazed the rabbis at the temple with His wisdom and understanding.

WHERE?

Jerusalem was about 40 miles from Jesus’ home in Nazareth. It typically took about three days to get from one city to the other. The temple in Jerusalem included buildings and courtyards used for both sacrifice and instruction. Jewish teachers may have taught here or in other areas of the temple.

WHEN?

At this point in God’s big story, King Herod had died, and his son Archelaus reigned over Jerusalem. Caesar Augustus was likely nearing the end of his reign as Roman emperor. Passover happened in late March or early April.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY

This account bridges Jesus’ infancy and adulthood. It depicts Jesus growing strong and wise, living in step with the Father as He prepared for His kingdom work. It shows that Jesus understood His special relationship with God the Father, a relationship God would confirm years later at Jesus’ baptism.

LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Curiosity Activity: A Picture of Love

SUPPLIES: deep bowl or pitcher (bowl should be at least 6" deep and 7" in diameter), sandwich-size resealable baggie, sheet of white printer paper, black permanent marker, markers (3 colors, prep only)

You should have three distinct stripes of color when you're finished coloring the heart. Next, place the paper inside the resealable baggie and shut it but do not completely seal the baggie. Leave a small gap open at the top for air to escape from the baggie. Finally, use the black permanent marker to trace the shape of the heart on the outside of the baggie. Before starting the activity, fill the mixing bowl or pitcher with water. You will need at least 6" of water in the bowl.

Have the kids sit in a circle around you. Set the bowl of water in front of you. Hold up the baggie with the paper inside for the kids to see.

We have a very curious experiment to do together today! What picture do you see inside this bag? Point to the heart. Allow kids to answer. **That's right; it's a heart! Hearts remind us of love, and love reminds us of Jesus. Now I have another question. What colors do you see in this heart?** Allow kids to answer. **In our experiment today, we're going to see what happens when we put our colorful heart into the bowl of water. Let's give it a try!**

Gather the kids so they can see inside the top of the bowl or pitcher. Gently lower the baggie down into the water as you keep it straight. Don't lower it so far that water enters through the small opening you left in the top. When looking straight down into the water, the colors on the heart will seem to disappear, and you will see only the outline of the heart. Invite the kids, one or two at a time, to come stand or sit next to you to observe the change for themselves.

Wow! I wonder why that happens. Outside of the water, the heart has color, but the water lets us see the shape and makes the color disappear! That's amazing! Jesus' love helps us see what is invisible: He helps us see what God is like! Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS SHOWS US WHAT GOD IS LIKE. God is love (point to the heart), and we see that love in Jesus, because Jesus shows us what God is like!**





Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You that we all got here safely today and that we get to come together and worship You. As we listen, play, and ask questions, help us learn more about who Jesus is. And help us see how Jesus shows us more about You and Your love. Thank You for Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? The Bible

Ask: Why is the Bible special? Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.

Tell the Bible Story

The Beginner's Bible, pages 296-302

Jesus Is Lost

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

The Son is the exact likeness of God, who can't be seen.

— Colossians 1:15

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- What are some words that tell us what Jesus is like?
- What do those words show us about God?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why did Jesus and His family travel to the temple in Jerusalem? (to celebrate the Passover Feast)
- What problem happened when Mary and Joseph were on their way home? (They couldn't find Jesus.)
- Where did Mary and Joseph find Jesus, and what was He doing? (the temple, listening and asking questions)
- Have you ever lost something that was really special to you? How did you feel? Did you ever find it?
- Jesus told Mary and Joseph that He had to be in His Father's house. Who is Jesus' Father? (God)
- What is something you learned about Jesus in this story?



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LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Game: See the Unseen

SUPPLIES: drawstring bag; various small plastic figurines, toys, and common classroom supplies such as crayons (1 item per kid)

Ahead of time, fill the bag halfway with a variety of small items and toys. Ideally, there would be one item for each child, but if you have a large group, you can do multiple rounds with the same items. Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

Can you see what is inside this bag? Allow kids to answer. **Of course not! Let's play a game where you have to guess what one thing inside this bag is by just feeling it. You can't use your eyes, so no peeking! You have to try and guess by using only your sense of touch.**

Ask one kid to start. Help him place his hand in the bag and make sure he can't see inside it. Lightly draw the opening closed around his hand, and then encourage him to try and decipher what one item inside the bag is, just by feeling it. After a few seconds, ask him to make a guess and then have him pull the item out of the bag to see if he was correct.

Kind of like the toys in this bag, God can't be seen! The Bible tells us this. But that's not the end of the story, because Jesus shows us who God is!



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Responding in Worship: Praying and Walking

SUPPLIES: small paper cups (1 per kid), water (enough for every kid to have a small amount), flashlight, painter's tape

Ahead of time pour a cup of water for each child. Place the cups on a table that the kids can reach. Use the painter's tape to make a square on the floor that all the kids can stand in.

We are going to walk around our room and take some time to worship God and thank Him for who Jesus is.

Station 1: Invite the kids to walk with you to the area where you set up the water. Pass out the water. **Enjoy a cup of cool, refreshing water—because Jesus said we can find rest and refreshment in Him** (from Matthew 11:28). **Refreshment is the feeling we get from a good cool drink when we are hot, tired, and thirsty! In your heart and mind, tell God thank You for who Jesus is.** Pause for a moment to allow the children to think and pray.

Station 2: Invite the kids to walk with you to an open area of the room. Hold the flashlight. **This flashlight is good for helping us see where to walk in the dark. But Jesus is the Light of the World who can help us see where to walk for our whole lives. In your heart and mind, tell God thank You for who Jesus is** (John 8:12). Pause for a moment to allow the kids to think and pray.

Station 3: Invite the kids to walk with you to Box A. **Let's pretend like this box on the floor is a pen that holds sheep inside. A good shepherd always makes sure his sheep are protected and safe. And Jesus is the Good Shepherd who knows us and loves us and always cares for us—His sheep** (John 10:14). **In your heart and mind, tell God thank You for who Jesus is.** Pause for a moment to allow the children to think and pray.

Leader Tip: It's OK if children don't grasp the full meaning of what it is for Jesus to be things like the Light of the World or the Good Shepherd. The beauty of these images is that even in their simplest forms, they communicate truth about who Jesus is. Jesus is good like a cool glass of water. Jesus is helpful like a light in the dark. Jesus is caring like a person who watches over animals.