

UNIT 19 | SESSION 4

JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

LUKE 2



KEY PASSAGE: John 3:16

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who came to earth to save us.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus obeyed God, His heavenly Father, His entire life and followed His plan. It was God the Father's plan that Jesus would die on a cross for our sins and rise again so that those who believe in Him could have eternal life.

STORY POINT: Jesus came to earth to do His Father's will.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Jesus' visit to the temple as a boy reveals His obedience to His Father and Christ's desire to fulfill His plan for our salvation. Jesus continued to obey God's will all the days of His life, even to the point of death on a cross. We read of Jesus' oneness with His Father and the lengths Christ would endure to secure a right relationship with God for all who would trust in Him for salvation. Through Jesus' perfect obedience, Christians can abide with our Father, here on earth and forever as we dwell with Him in heaven and the new earth.

In Luke 2, the onlookers were amazed that Jesus, a 12-year-old boy, was sitting among the teachers, listening intently, asking and answering questions, and truly understanding the things of God. Jesus knew His Father and made Himself at home in His house, finding it necessary to be involved in the things of God and among His people. This desire to obey His Father and to do His will wasn't just something Jesus proclaimed in His youth; it was how He lived out each moment of His life.

Jesus' gift of salvation isn't earned through our obedience; rather, it is received by faith. When we repent and place our trust in His finished work on the cross—His righteousness in exchange for our sinfulness—we are saved from our sins and the punishment we deserve. Only Jesus could live a perfect life in full obedience to the Father, yet when we believe in Him, His Holy Spirit transforms us and helps us obey and abide in His strength.

Help the kids you teach see that Jesus came to earth to do His Father's will, which meant following God's plan perfectly from a young age to the point of death—even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). Guide boys and girls to see that even today, they can decide to follow God and that He will be faithful to lead them all the days of their lives.



Scan the QR code to listen to The Gospel Project for Kids Weekly Leader Training Podcast.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Temple Discoveries" activity page



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Jesus at the Temple" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ dry erase boards and markers, 1 per kid (optional)

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 19, Session 4" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Annie Armstrong Portrait" printable
- ☐ art supplies

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ disposable plastic cups
- ☐ "Eternal Life (John 3:16)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ marshmallows
- ☐ toothpicks

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ masking tape

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring page



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “Have you ever lost something special before? What was it? Did you find it later?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Temple Discoveries” on the activity page.

| **SAY** “By paying close attention, everyone was able to find the differences between the two pictures! In today’s story, we’ll learn how Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the temple among the religious leaders.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: SEEK AND FIND



Explain that the kids are going to play hide and seek, but in reverse. Select one volunteer to begin. Instruct the rest of the group to close their eyes and count to 30. As the kids are counting, help the other kid find a hiding spot within the room. When the kids finish counting, send them to begin looking for the missing classmate. Once the classmate is found, play again as time allows. Consider letting whoever finds the missing kid each time be the next person to hide.

| **SAY** “Everyone did an awesome job finding your friends! Today we will see that Mary and Joseph went looking for Jesus when they couldn’t find Him. But He wasn’t lost! **JESUS CAME TO EARTH TO DO HIS FATHER’S WILL.**”

☐ OPTION 2: WHEN I GROW UP ...



Tell the kids to stand up and form a circle. Choose one volunteer to begin. Explain that she must say When I grow up, I want to be... The kid will then say what they want to be and act it out. Instruct the rest of the class to repeat the phrase When I grow up I want to be... and mimic the action of their classmate. Go around the circle clockwise, allowing each kid a turn. Each time, the kids must repeat the new action as well as the phrase and actions of every kid that has already taken a turn.

| **SAY** “It’s so fun to hear what amazing goals everyone has! Even as a boy, Jesus already knew what He was supposed to grow up to do. In today’s story, we will learn that **JESUS CAME TO EARTH TO DO HIS FATHER’S WILL.**”





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Welcome, kids! I’m so glad you’re here. My name is [your name], and I’m excited to read another story with you today in the book of Luke. Remember that Luke is one of the Gospels. The Gospels tell us about Jesus’ life on earth. If you brought your Bible with you today, please take it out now. [Distribute Bibles to any kid who needs one.] Last week we read about the wise men who visited Jesus and brought Him gifts. They came to worship Him as the Messiah! Today, we will learn that Jesus visited the temple. Let’s pray together before we open God’s Word. ‘Thank You, God, for sending Your Son Jesus, who obeyed You perfectly. Help us to learn from Jesus’ example today. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Together we have memorized a big picture question. Sin separates each one of us from God. Because He loves us, God sent His Son, Jesus, to earth to save us from our sins. Today, we will learn that Jesus perfectly obeyed His Father. God wants to have a loving relationship with each one of us, and because of Jesus’ obedience, that’s possible!

Let’s review our big picture question: **Who is Jesus?** [Allow responses.] Together we have learned that **Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who came to earth to save us.** ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “God fulfilled His promise to the prophets by sending His Son, Jesus. When the time came for Jesus to be dedicated in the temple, Simeon and Anna worshiped Jesus as the Messiah and praised God for keeping His promise. After seeing the star, the wise men understood that Jesus, the King of the Jews, had been born. They came to worship Jesus and brought gifts to honor Him. Today, we will talk about Jesus’ visit to the temple and how He came to do His Father’s will. ”



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 2. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus at the Temple.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

“As the years went by, Joseph and Mary watched as Jesus grew from a baby, to a toddler, to a child. **Jesus became strong and was filled with wisdom.** God’s grace was on Him.

When Jesus was twelve years old, His family traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival as they did every year. **After the festival was over,** Jesus’ parents began the journey home, along with a group of people, but **Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary, however,** didn’t know Jesus stayed behind. They **assumed He was traveling with the group.** After the group had traveled for an entire day, **Joseph and Mary began looking for Jesus,** asking their relatives and friends if they had seen Him anywhere.

When Joseph and Mary did not find Jesus, they turned around and traveled back to Jerusalem. They looked for Jesus for three more days, and **they finally found Him sitting among the teachers in the temple.** He was **listening** to the teachers **and asking them questions.** **Everyone who heard Jesus talking with the teachers was amazed at His understanding and His answers.**

When Jesus’ parents saw Him, they were also astonished. Mary said, “Jesus, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been worried! We’ve been searching for you.”

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

Jesus returned with Joseph and Mary to Nazareth and obeyed them. His mother, Mary, kept pondering all these amazing things in her heart. **Jesus continued to grow taller and wiser. God was pleased with Him, and so was everyone who knew Him.**

Christ Connection: Jesus obeyed God, His heavenly Father, His entire life and followed His plan. It was God the Father’s plan that Jesus would die on a cross for our sins and rise again so that those who believe in Him could have eternal life. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Define it: Explain that the Passover Festival was an event to remember how God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Tell kids that because Jesus was a Jew, He celebrated Passover with His family.

Write it: Jesus listened and asked questions in the temple. Invite the kids to write down their questions about the story on a dry erase board as you read.

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “Jesus traveled with His parents for the Passover Festival in Jerusalem. On the journey home, Mary and Joseph became worried when they couldn’t find Jesus! Where did Jesus’ parents find Him? [Allow responses.] Jerusalem is where



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

the temple was located, which means that the religious leaders and teachers studied and worshiped there. The temple is not a place you would expect a boy to go, but Jesus was no ordinary boy! He was God's Son and He wanted to be in His Father's house. How did the people respond when they heard Jesus talking to the teachers? **[Allow responses.]** Jesus' wisdom and understanding amazed the people.

What did Mary say when she found Jesus among the teachers? **[Allow responses.]** Just like our parents would feel if we had gotten lost, Mary and Joseph had been worried. But Jesus explained to His parents that He wasn't lost. He was in His Father's house because He had been sent to do His Father's will. Jesus had been in perfect obedience to His heavenly Father. Mary and Joseph were reminded that Jesus' purpose on earth was much bigger than their plans. God was working through Jesus to save us from our sins.

Jesus obeyed God, His heavenly Father, His entire life and followed God's plan. It was God the Father's plan that Jesus would die on a cross for our sins and rise again so that those who believe in Him could have eternal life. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ We are unable to perfectly obey God and follow His law. But through Jesus' perfect obedience, He has fulfilled the law. Jesus obeyed God all the way to death on the cross. God offers us salvation from our sins when we trust Jesus as Lord. To learn more about what it means to trust your life to Jesus, you can talk to your parents or a leader at church. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 19, Session 4” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Did Jesus sin when He ran away or got lost from Mary and Joseph?
2. Jesus set an example for us about how to be obedient to God. How can you show obedience to God?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Show the “Annie Armstrong Portrait” printable.

SAY “Annie Armstrong united women to help people in need. She also told people about Jesus and supported missionaries on the mission field. Annie saw firsthand the needs of people living in Baltimore. Her mission work started with African Americans, immigrants, the sick, and poor people living in her area. In 1880, she heard a speaker talk about the needs of Native Americans in Oklahoma. Annie and other women began to gather gifts of money and clothing to help with those needs. This shaped her ideas of encouraging women to organize groups to educate people and provide for their needs.

Annie worked tirelessly encouraging Christians to work together to meet the needs of people. Her mission work included people of many cultures, races, and ages. Even after Annie resigned from her leadership positions in 1906 with the WMU, she continued her missions lifestyle. She was very active in church activities involving the needs of her city.”

Explain that Annie helped people by providing for their needs and showing kindness. Distribute the art supplies. Tell kids to make kindness cards that you will take to nursing homes or a community support center to help brighten someone’s day.

Pray for missionaries serving throughout North America and the world. Thank God for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® for Home Missions and how it supports missionaries in the United States and Canada.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud John 3:16 together.

SAY “God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus, to live in perfect obedience to Him. Our key passage reminds us that because of Jesus’ death, we are offered life with God forever.”

Divide the kids into two teams. Write each word of the key passage under the rim of several disposable plastic cups, so the words can be seen when the cups are stacked. Provide each team with a set of these cups. Set a timer and encourage the kids to work together as a team to put the key passage together by stacking the cups inside of each other in the correct order.

Lead kids to sing “Eternal Life (John 3:16).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “God, thank You for Your Son, Jesus, who perfectly followed the rules that we could not. Help us to understand that You offer forgiveness from our sins when we trust Jesus as Lord. Amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Israel Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Luke 2. Explain that the Gospel of Luke shares stories from Jesus' early life as a child and is one of the Synoptic Gospels—meaning that some of the stories in Luke also appear in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

Consider pointing out the location of Jerusalem [H5] on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 2:49-52 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ God’s way is best. He gives us commands to follow and rules to obey for our good and His glory. However, every one of us has sinned and broken the rules by disobeying our parents, teachers, or treating our siblings or friends badly. But Jesus came to obey God’s rules perfectly. He obeyed His Father’s commands and never sinned. When we trust in Jesus as Lord, He forgives us of our sins. Though we will still mess up, God sends the Holy Spirit to help us live in obedience to His Word! ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ If Jesus never sinned, why did He not follow His parents? ”

Scripture reminds us that Jesus never sinned (1 John 3:5). Explain to the kids that Jesus obeyed both His parents and God. He reminded Mary and Joseph that He was perfectly obeying and fulfilling His Father’s will. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Hebrews 5:8-9.)

SAY “ If Jesus is God’s Son, why was He asking questions? Shouldn’t He know the answers? ”

Share with the kids that Jesus was not asking questions because He didn’t know the answers. Jesus does know all the answers! Explain that Jesus’ wisdom and knowledge here would later show the teachers and people that He came to fulfill the law. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matthew 5:17.)

SAY “ How can each of us obey God in our lives every day? ”

Remind kids that on our own, we cannot obey God because we sin. But when we trust our lives to Jesus, He sends the Holy Spirit as our Helper. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can obey God’s Word and be more like Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 14:26.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: STICKY TOWERS



Create a tower using marshmallows and toothpicks. Have the kids sit down at the table. Divide them into two teams. Provide each team with almost enough marshmallows and toothpicks to create the same tower you did, except withhold one or two marshmallows or toothpicks. Explain that you want them to create a tower exactly like the one you created. Once each team realizes they cannot finish the tower, step in and provide them with the toothpicks or marshmallows they are missing. Allow each team to use the missing items to finish their tower.

SAY “ Without the missing pieces, it was impossible for you to finish the tower! We are unable to follow God’s commands because we sin. But **JESUS CAME TO EARTH TO PERFECTLY OBEY HIS FATHER’S WILL.** Through His sacrifice, we are offered forgiveness from sin. ”

☐ OPTION 2: IN, OUT, SPIN, JUMP!



Before the activity, use masking tape to create a large square on the floor. Have the kids line up around the edge of the square. Explain that you are going to give the kids four different commands to follow: In, Out, Spin, and Jump. In! means to jump in the square, Out! means to jump out. Spin! and Jump! are done wherever he or she is standing. Start off by giving the commands slowly, then progressively get faster, changing up the order of the commands at random. If any kid does the wrong command, he or she must sit down.

SAY “ Sometimes it can be hard to follow instructions! We have all sinned and disobeyed God’s commands. But **JESUS CAME TO PERFECTLY OBEY HIS FATHER’S WILL,** all the way to death on the cross. When we trust Jesus, He forgives our sin. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.