

Sunday 19th March 2023

The Fourth Sunday of Lent



About today's Gospel reading: Luke 2: 41-52



We don't have many Bible stories about Jesus as a child – in fact, this is the only story we have about Jesus's childhood, apart from when he was a baby.

On Mothering Sunday, we hear a story about Jesus and his earthly mother and father, as well as about his growing realisation of just who he was and his relationship with his heavenly father. At only 12 years old, Jesus stayed behind in the Temple, rather than returning home after the Passover Festival with his parents and their group of travellers.

🤔 What do you think we can learn about Jesus from this story?

Jesus, and his parents, relatives and friends, had been to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival, as the Law required. When Mary and Joseph eventually found Jesus, what was he doing?

He was listening to the Jewish teachers and asking them questions. How did the people who heard Jesus react?

They were amazed at the answers given by a 12-year-old. Why do you think this was?

Jesus was fully human and fully God. When he became human, he grew and learned as we do, but Jesus was also God's Son and had a wisdom that was beyond his years – and beyond that of the teachers in the Temple.

What was Jesus's mother's reaction when she and Joseph found him in the Temple?

Mary was relieved but, like any mother who thinks she has lost her child, and been desperately worried, then finds the child has deliberately strayed, she was also a bit cross! What did Jesus say to her?

He said, "Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?"

This was hard for Mary and Joseph to understand. Most of the time, they were just an ordinary family, with a son who obeyed them. On this occasion, Jesus put his heavenly father's business first. Then, however, we are told that he returned with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth, and continued to grow up, obedient to his earthly parents, whilst increasing in wisdom and in favour with God and with the people around him.

It might seem that Mary and Joseph "lost" their son, but Jesus was exactly where he knew he should be! This story teaches us that Jesus knew he was God's Son, although he was growing up as a human as well. This might be hard to understand—it was for Joseph and Mary, too! We learn about the importance of following God and also obeying earthly parents – both God and mums and dads can be cherished! This is an important lesson on Mothering Sunday!



About Mothering Sunday:

If we think of Mothering Sunday as simply "Mothers' Day" we miss a great deal of the meaning of this special day. Its origins lie in the fact that the fourth Sunday in Lent was seen as a day for a bit of a break from Lenten fasting! "Refreshment Sunday", as it is still sometimes called, gave people a chance to rest from the disciplines of Lent and to spend time with their families. As the years went by, for young people who had left home to enter domestic service this Sunday became a chance for a day off to visit their family home and to worship with their families in their "mother church" – the church in which they had grown up.

Often, employers would send girls home with a cake for their mothers (the origin of simnel cake) and the girls would gather a posy of wild flowers on their way. So we can see how this developed into the modern idea of "Mothers' Day" with cards, gifts and flowers for mums!

What we shouldn't lose sight of, in the commercialism that surrounds 21st century Mothers' Day, is the fact that we celebrate not only the love and care given by human mothers, and all those who have any kind of mothering role, but that we also remember the mothering role of the Church.

Mothering is not only about the care of biological mothers for their children, but is also about the way in which we can all "mother" one another, whether mothers (or even female!) or not. This is the role model provided by Jesus and by his Church.

A challenge to us all this Mothering Sunday could be to determine to help build communities in which everybody counts; communities which show compassionate love and care for one another, and in which everyone is nurtured and helped to be the best they can be; communities in which each and every member is listened to and treated with respect and kindness. Wouldn't that truly be kingdom-building!

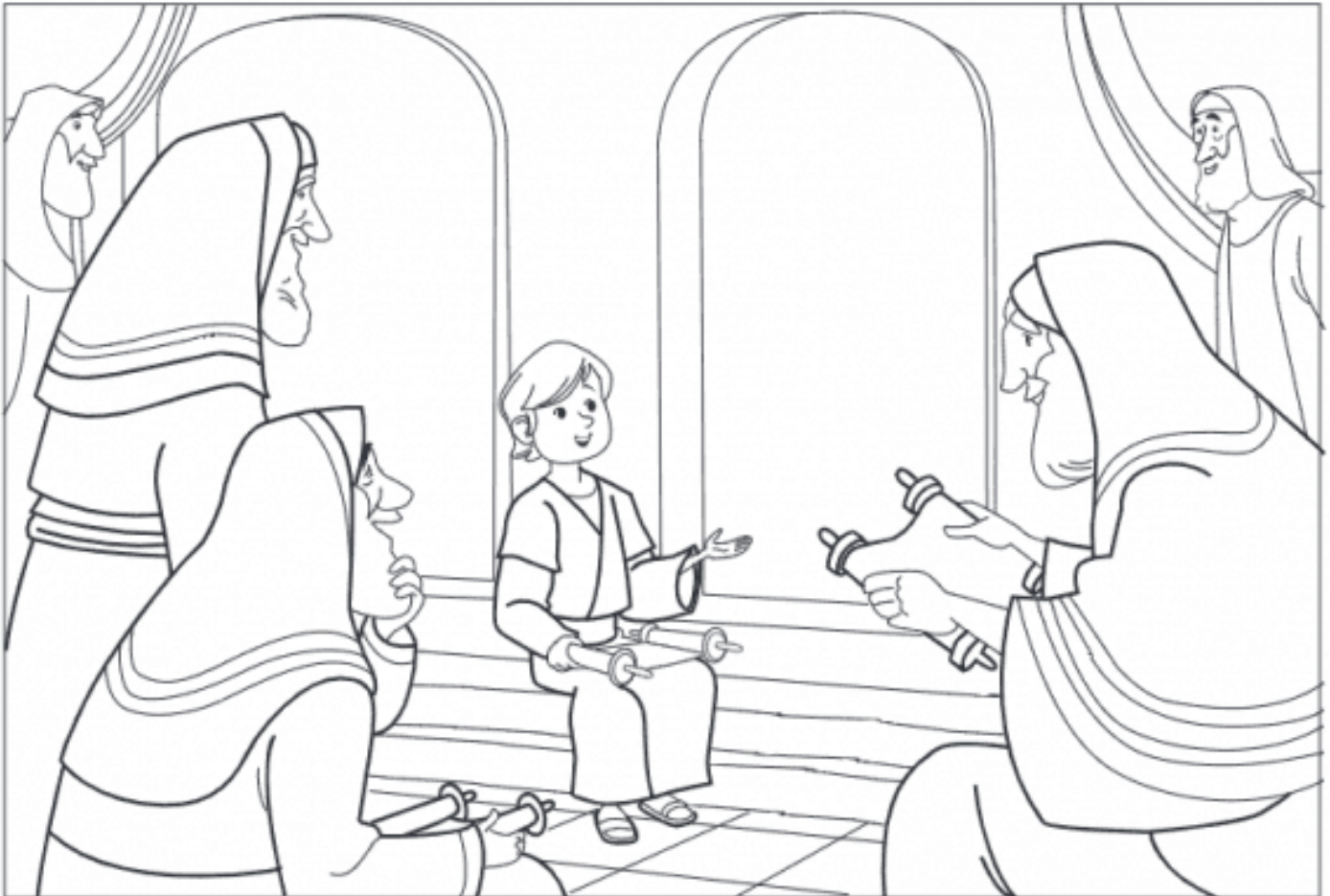




This week's prayer:

God our Father,
your Son Jesus Christ lived in a family in Nazareth:
Grant that in our families on earth
we may so learn to love and to live together
that we may rejoice as one family in your heavenly home;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Where was Jesus Coloring Page



The Boy Jesus in the Temple

Complete the paragraph by filling in the blanks with the correct words from the word bank at the bottom of the story.

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

When Jesus was _____ years old, he went with his _____ to Jerusalem for the _____ of the _____. After the Feast was over, they were returning home when his parents realized that _____ was not with them. They returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After searching for _____ days, they found him in the _____ sitting with the _____.

When she saw him, Jesus' mother said, "Son, why have you treated us this way? Your father and I have been searching for you."

"Why were you searching for me?" Jesus asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my _____ _____?"

Paraphrased from Luke 2:41-49

Father's	house	parents	teachers	three
Feast	Jesus	Passover	temple	twelve

