

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover.

*What things do you do every year?*

*Are there special places you always love to return to? Why?*

*Are there special stories you tell every year?*

And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival.

*When we hear someone is “twelve years old” what assumptions do we make?*

*What were you like at twelve years old?*

When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends.

*Have you ever been left behind or separated from your family?*

*Have you ever left someone else behind who you were supposed to be caring for?*

When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him.

*How do you imagine Mary and Joseph must have felt as they searched for Jesus?*

*Have you ever spent time looking for Jesus and had trouble finding him?*

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

*What stands out to you about these verses? Three days? Jesus listened? Jesus had questions? Jesus, at age twelve, had amazing answers?*

*When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.”*

*Have you ever asked Jesus, why?*

He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”

*These are Jesus' first spoken words in the gospel. What stands out to you about them?*

*Have you noticed that Jesus' answer to a question is two questions?*

*Translators struggle with this Greek phrase and translate it differently as "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" Which speaks to you more? Why? How does this translation change the passage for you?*

But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

*I love that this family does not understand one another, yet they travel together and treasure one another. Are there things you don't understand about your family? Your church family? What helps us to continue traveling together and treasure one another?*

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

*This is your reminder that Jesus is God incarnate, Emmanuel, God with us. There is nothing you go through that Jesus does not go through with you: from growing pains to family miscommunication, to finding your purpose and mission in the world.*

Merry Christmas!