

# JESUS GROWS UP

When Jesus was 12, His family went to Jerusalem for the Passover. His parents couldn't find Him when they were going home. Where was He, and why?

by Shelby Faith

## QUIZ TIME

How many days would it take to walk from Nazareth to Jerusalem?

## QUIZ TIME

Where did Joseph and Mary find Jesus?

After the birth of Jesus, an angel appeared to His stepfather Joseph in a dream. The angel told him to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt because Herod wanted to kill Jesus. Herod had heard about Jesus' birth when the wise men came looking for Him. They wanted to find the child who was born "King of the Jews" and worship Him (Matthew 2:1-3).

After Herod died, an angel appeared to Joseph in another dream. This time the angel told him to return to the land of Israel. Joseph brought his family back to a city called Nazareth, about a four- or five-day walk from Jerusalem. There Joseph and Mary raised their family (Matthew 2:23).

Jesus grew in spiritual strength and wisdom, and God was with Him (Luke 2:40).

## PASSOVER IN JERUSALEM

Every year His parents and family went to Jerusalem to keep the festival of Passover. Now, when Jesus was 12 years old, it was time to go once again to Jerusalem for this feast. The family packed up and made the journey. It was a long, tiring trip, taking perhaps a few days. People traveled slowly with their families and animals.

After the festival was over, they were returning to their home. Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but His parents didn't know that. After they had traveled about a day's journey, they realized that they had not seen Him. Many other families were on the roads, too, traveling back to their homes. His parents thought He was with some of their relatives or friends who were traveling with them.

But after looking everywhere for Him, they still couldn't find Him. They hurried back to Jerusalem to try to find Him. They were very concerned!

After three days, they finally found Him in the temple.

## THE ADULTS WERE AMAZED!

There Jesus was, sitting with the teachers and scholars of the temple. He was listening to them and asking them questions.

"And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers" (Luke 2:47). They were amazed that this young boy was so wise and knew so much. They had never heard one so young ask such good questions and answer their questions so well.

When His parents saw Him, they were relieved but still upset. His mother said to

Him, “Son, why have You done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for You. We were very worried about You.”

And Jesus said to them, “Why did you look for Me? Didn’t you know that I must be doing My Father’s business?” (Even at this early age, Jesus knew He needed to do God the Father’s work.)

His parents didn’t understand what He was saying to them, but they were happy and relieved to find Him. Mary, His mother, did wonder about all this, but she kept her thoughts to herself.

Jesus always respected and honored His parents and was obedient to them. So He went back home with them to Nazareth.

## GROWING IN WISDOM AND FAVOR

As Jesus grew older, He was blessed by God with even more wisdom. He grew in favor with God and people (Luke 2:52).

Joseph was a carpenter. As the oldest son of the family, Jesus probably learned all about Joseph’s business and worked with him, helping to support the growing family. Joseph and Mary had at least four other sons and two daughters (Matthew 13:55-56).

When we next read about Jesus, He was about 30 years old. He began doing His Heavenly Father’s business full time. He started preaching about God and His Kingdom all around the countryside. He also chose His disciples.

As He preached, great crowds began following Him. He healed the sick, raised up the dead and did other great miracles, which caused many to believe that He was the Son of God. His disciples also believed, and He taught them many things, preparing them for what was coming.

About 3½ years later, Jesus was crucified and died for all mankind. He sacrificed His life for us, and by His death, He paid the penalty for our sins. After three days and three nights in the tomb, God raised Him back to life. He now reigns with God in heaven.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Here are some questions to think about or talk about as a family:

1. Jesus’ family left Jerusalem after the festival was over, but Jesus wasn’t with them. Why did He stay behind?
2. Do you think His parents were very concerned when they found out He was not with them?
3. Where did they find Him, and what was He doing?
4. What did He mean when He told His parents He was taking care of His Father’s business? Which father was He talking about?
5. Was Jesus different from most other children His age? How was He different?

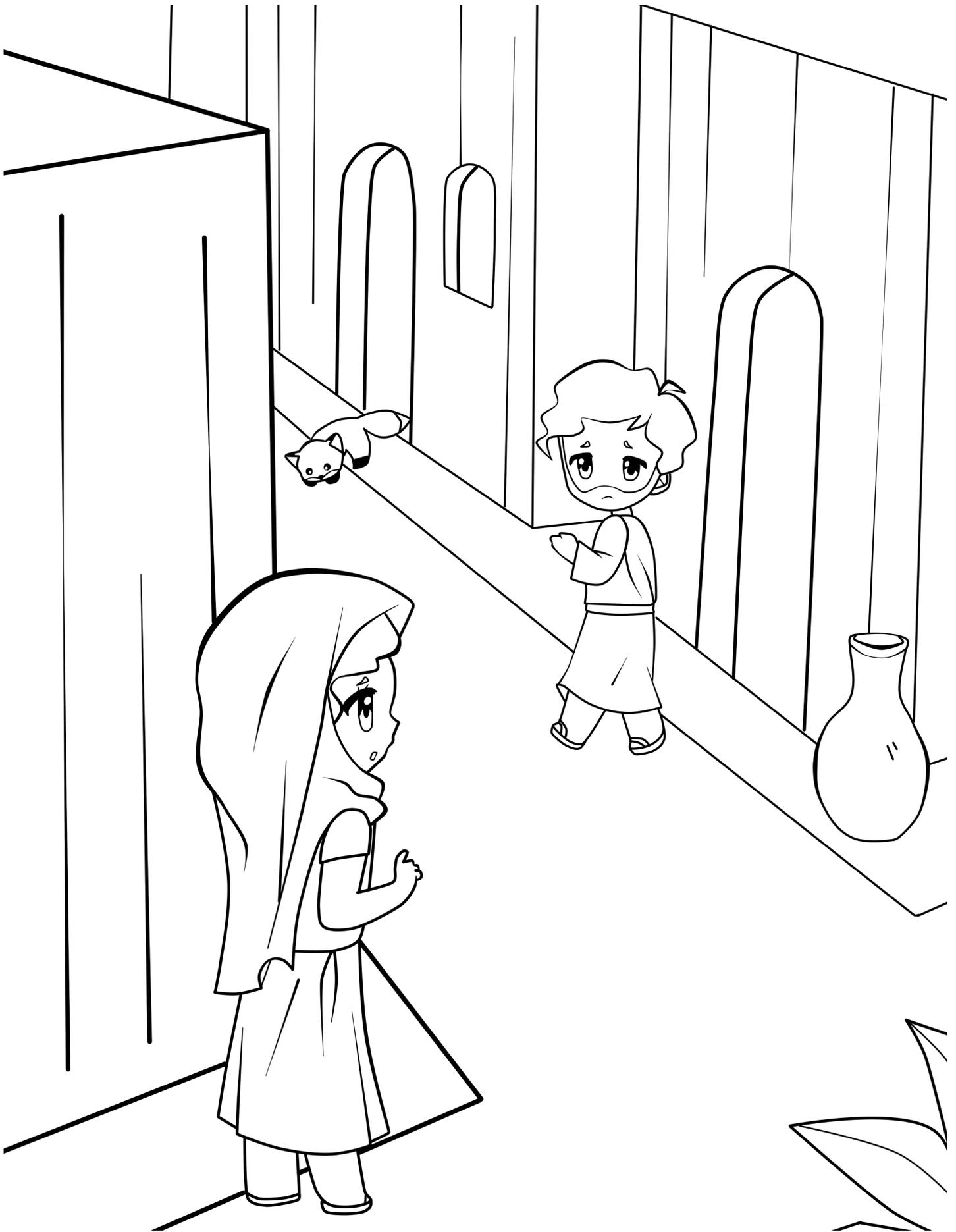
Read more about this part of Jesus’ life in our article [“Jesus’ Childhood.”](#)

### QUIZ TIME

What kind of work did Joseph do?

### QUIZ TIME

What kind of things did Jesus do during His ministry?



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Neither religion nor science has satisfactorily addressed these issues, so people today are of divided opinions, confused or, worst of all, don't care anymore. The ancient words of the prophet Isaiah ring so true today: "Truth is fallen in the street." Why? Is it because God was right when He warned that humans are inclined to reject Him and usually choose not to know Him?

We are here for people who are searching for answers, who are ready to prove all things or who are hungry for more than what they've been taught most of their lives about God, the Bible, the meaning of life and how to live. We want to help you truly understand the good news of the gospel and fulfill Jesus Christ's admonition to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

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