

BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

11. THE BOY JESUS

Bible Base: Luke 2: 41-52

Key Christian Belief: As one of us, Jesus is able to understand us.

Aim: To encourage children to grow in friendship with God as Jesus did.

You will need:

- The accompanying PowerPoint presentation.
- The accompanying pictures printed on A4 card and laminated.

Introduction

Show pictures of some celebrities, as they were when they were children and ask the children to guess who they are. (Some samples are included in the PowerPoint but these may need to be updated from time to time.)

Like the celebrities in the photographs, we are growing all the time. We don't look like we did when we were babies any more. People who have not seen us for some time notice that we have grown since the last time they saw us. Shoes and clothes that once fitted us no longer do.

However, there is more to growing up than just growing taller. When people tell us to 'grow up' they are not telling us to grow taller; they are telling us to stop behaving like babies and to start behaving the way we should at our age! As we grow we are meant to learn to do more for ourselves. We are meant to learn to behave more sensibly.

It is interesting to know that Jesus grew as we do. He was once the age that you are now and He understands what that is like. We know about Jesus being born as a baby; we know about Him as a man - but we don't know much about Him as a boy. However, there is one verse in the Bible that tells us about how Jesus grew and because Jesus grew in a way that pleased God - this verse tells us how God wants us to grow too.

Luke 2: 52

Jesus grew in size. He needed the right food, exercise and rest in order to grow taller and stronger just as we do. He grew in wisdom. He had to listen to His teachers and work hard in order to learn new things just as we do. He grew in friendship with others. He had to learn to obey His parents and be a good friend to others just as we do.

But Jesus also grew in friendship with God. For Jesus, this was another important part of growing up. The story we are going to hear will help us to think about what this means and how we can grow in friendship with God, as Jesus did.

Story

As you tell the following story, each time you come to a word that is underlined, hold up the picture associated with it. Before you begin, show each picture to the children and invite them to join in with a suitable action each time you hold it up during the story.

Mary and Joseph lived with Jesus in a little village called Nazareth. Once a year they traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. Just as we look forward to our birthdays and to Christmas, once a year they looked forward to Passover and when the time came to go to Jerusalem they were very excited.

Jerusalem was seventy miles away. They had to walk for three whole days in order to get there. At the end of the long journey they were tired.

They had a great time in Jerusalem. They spent a whole week there - visiting friends, shopping in the market and playing in the park. They visited the temple to worship God. They had a special meal together to remember how God had set the Jewish people free long ago when they were slaves in Egypt. But now the week was over and it was time to go home. Mary and Joseph were sad to leave their friends.

They joined a group of travelers on their way to Nazareth and began the long journey home. At the end of the first day they went to look for Jesus among his friends and relations but he was nowhere to be found. Mary and Joseph were worried.

As soon as it was light the next day they began walking back to Jerusalem. When they got there they looked for Jesus in the park, at the market, at the houses of the people they had visited - but he was not there. Then they remembered that when they had last seen him he had been in the temple. They hurried to the temple and when they went in they were amazed by what they saw.

There was Jesus - listening to the teachers, asking them questions and answering theirs. And everyone who heard was amazed at the answers he gave.

‘Why have you treated us like this?’ Mary asked. ‘Your father and I have been searching everywhere for you.’

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

Mary was puzzled by his answer - but Jesus was talking about his heavenly Father - God. He wanted to be where he could learn more about Him.

Even though his parents didn’t always understand him, he went home with them and obeyed them because He knew that this was what God wanted him to do.

Exploring Christian Belief

I wonder where your favourite place to be is - where you would turn up if you were lost. Perhaps it would be the sweet shop, the amusements or the playground. Jesus’ favourite place to be was in ‘His Father’s house’ where He could get to know God better and learn to live in friendship with Him. This was the most important part of growing up for Jesus.

Because of what Jesus has done for us, we can belong to God’s family and get to know Him as our heavenly Father too. Like Jesus, there are places we can go to learn more about God. We can listen carefully to those who teach us from the Bible and perhaps even read it for ourselves. We can ask questions when we don’t understand. We can talk to God each day and when we know what God wants us to do we can be careful to do it!

God wants us to grow up in every way as Jesus did. But most of all he wants us to grow in friendship with Him. And this is the most exciting part of growing up - because the more you get to know Him the more you discover how amazing His love is and how great it is to be part of His family!

PRAYER

Ask children to reflect on how much they have changed since this time last year. Then ask them to think about ways in which they would like to change in the year ahead.

Ask God help each child to grow in every way as Jesus did during the year ahead.