

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Second Sunday After Christmas**  
**Gospel Lesson for Adults**

**Scripture: Luke 2:41-52**

The Gospels appointed for these two Sundays after Christmas offer a fitting conclusion to Advent's mystery of "both/and" time. The first Sunday is from John's Gospel a mystery-laced view of the divinity of Jesus, "The Word became flesh and lived among us." The second Sunday is a very human story of the little boy Jesus. Just as Jesus was both human and divine, we also balance two worlds: the world in which we do our day to day tasks -- a world mostly unaware of its true potential -- and our life in Christ: "from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace." (John 1:16)

**A notation for this week's Gospel**

A day back from the annual trip to Jerusalem for Passover, Joseph and Mary check with their extended family. Suddenly they realize that their young son, Jesus, is not with any of them. They race back to Jerusalem, frantically searching for the 12 year-old. Three days and unimaginable stress later they find him sitting in the Temple learning from the teachers. He is un-phased by their universal parental response of relief mixed with fury. "Didn't you know I would be in my Father's house?" asked Jesus. Yes, Mary had much to hold in her heart.

**Theme: Boy in the Temple**

**Before Class:** You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the scripture passage found at the end of this lesson.

**Beginning:** Invite individual members of the group to share highlights of their Christmas, especially anything new they discovered about their understanding of the Incarnation, God among us as an infant. Then, tell them that the reading we have for the Second Sunday after Christmas offers us insights into the very humanness of Jesus.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, for the gift of Jesus. Help us to be always ready for the new insights you send us. Amen.

**The Scripture:** Invite one person to read the part of Mary, one to read the line of the 12 year-old Jesus, and one to be the narrator.

**Reflection Questions:**

- Has anyone had a comparable experience of having been separated from a child? If so, can that person help us get in touch with the mixed messages of waves of gratitude that the child is safe combined with noise of the rage that you had to go through this.
- Consider how this passage (the only mention of Jesus in the years between his birth and his appearance for his baptism when he was probably about 30) brings out the humanness of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. (A little boy apparently oblivious to the terror of his parents, a

curious little boy with many questions, the panic of his parents looking for him and their obvious relief – and anger – when they found him.)

- What do you make of Jesus' response to his parents? (Typical pre-teen response? Odd that he would assume they would know where he would be? Could he have been obedient to something they had taught him: if you are ever separated from us, stay where you are and we will come find you?)
- Invite the group to find other things, earlier in the Gospel of Luke that Mary had to "treasure in her heart." (Luke 1: 38; Luke 1: 44-45, Luke 2: 19; Luke 2: 34-35.)

**Getting Closure:** Invite the group to explore the concept of "both/and" and how it seems to be so prevalent in things that pertain to God. Jesus: both man and divine. Those we love: our greatest joy and our greatest ache. Our faith: abidingly deep and containing questions we are unable to answer.

You may choose to consider this: "The quest for certainty has produced a fascination with reducing everything to its basic components; everything must have an answer. Only the poets are unafraid of ambiguity." (Edwin H. Friedman in "Friedman's fables." P.104-105.)

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for the gift of your son. Help us to continue to unwrap this gift and claim it for ourselves so Jesus may continue to teach us. Amen.

## **Luke 2:41-52**

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. 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 travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for 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. 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.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' 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.

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

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