Lesson 6

THE BOY JESUS


Key Verse: After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Luke 2:46

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7b; Luke 2:39-52 (NRSV)

Ecclesiastes 3:1
11 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:…

7b …a time to keep silence, and a time to speak:…

Luke 2:39-52
39 When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.
40 The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.
41 Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover.
42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival.
43 When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.
44 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.
45 When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him.
46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.
47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.
48 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.”
49 He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”
50 But they did not understand what he said to them.
51 Then he went down with them
and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.  

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

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**VOCABULARY**

- **Season** – Appointed/set apart period of time.
- **Favor** – Grace, kindness, pleasure.
- **Amazed** – Filled with wonder.
- **Astonished** – Very surprised.
- **Anxiety** – Feelings of worry.
- **Treasured** – To regard somebody or something as valuable.
- **Divine** – Related or connected to God.

**INTRODUCTION**

Pastor Washington of Saint John AME Church met with all the youth after the Sunday worship service. He said, “Last week we asked everyone to think about being involved in the Young People’s Division (YPD). We have not had a local YPD since the last YPD President, Morgan Stone, left for college two years ago. No one wanted the responsibility of coordinating the ministry. But it is important to have a YPD so The Missionary Society is going to reestablish the program.” Pastor Washington handed the microphone to Sister Cobb.

“Good afternoon. Just in case you don’t know me, I am the president of The Missionary Society. The YPD is supervised by The Women’s Missionary Society. We have to reorganize the YPD by first electing officers. We need a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and chaplain. I handed out papers with the positions listed. If you are interested in a position, write your
name on the line next to the title. When you are finished, please give the paper back to me. We plan on having elections next week.” After Sister Cobb collected all the papers, she reviewed each one, then took one paper and showed it to the pastor.

“Carmen Barnes,” she called out, “can I speak with you for a moment?” Carmen slowly walked to the front of the church. Pastor Washington and Sister Cobb motioned for her to come over to the side so no one could hear their conversation.

“We noticed you submitted your name to be the President of the YPD. We have some concerns about your ability to hold such an important position. In the past, your parents could not even get you to attend Church School or Youth Bible Study.” Pastor Washington waited for a response from Carmen, who paused before speaking.

“I understand your hesitation in accepting me as a candidate for YPD president. But I have changed since that time. I try to attend Youth Bible Study at least once a month. And I am striving to get to church early enough for Church School on Sunday. My school grades have improved; and, I am making better choices in school. I think I deserve a chance to lead the YPD.”

“Sister Cobb and I both feel like this may not be the best time for you to hold the position. Maybe next year you can try again.” Carmen ran out and slammed the side exit door as she left the church.

What does Carmen’s reaction to the leadership’s decision demonstrate? How can Carmen prepare herself for future leadership positions in the church? In today’s lesson, we discover as a young boy, Jesus listened and learned from the teachers in the temple. Jesus’ questions proved his wisdom and understanding.
BIBLE STORY

Christians attend church on a regular basis. The church is a place where we worship God, fellowship with other believers, study God’s Word, partake of Holy Communion, celebrate special occasions, baptize, conduct funerals, etc. The church is one of the focal points in the life of believers. In the same way, the temple was a central place in the religious life of the Jewish people during Jesus’ lifetime.

As we learn in the Gospel of Luke, Mary, and Joseph were devout Jewish believers who observed all the laws of Moses (Luke 2:39-40). This means three times a year they traveled from their home in Nazareth to Jerusalem to observe Passover (Exodus 12:6ff), Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-21), and Tabernacles (Exodus 23:14-16b). By the age of 12, Jesus was familiar with the temple.

Our scripture takes us to the Passover celebration in Jerusalem. Jesus accompanied his parents to the celebration which was immediately followed by the seven-day festival of unleavened bread (Luke 2:41-42). After the celebration ended, Mary and Joseph started the journey back to Nazareth. They had no idea that Jesus was still in Jerusalem because it was such a large group of people traveling together. It was very easy to get separated from family. After traveling for a day, Mary and Joseph realized Jesus was not with their group of family and friends (vs. 2:44-45). They had to return to Jerusalem to search for Jesus. One can only imagine the panic they felt.

Only after three days of searching did Jesus’ parents find him. Jesus was sitting in the Temple amongst the great rabbis listening and asking probing questions. They all seemed really amazed at Jesus’ level of understanding and wisdom (vs. 2:46 – 47). Jesus was maturing spiritually. However, Mary and Joseph only saw their disobedient son who had caused them much heartache and anxiety (v. 2:48). Jesus’ response in verse
49 reflects an enlightenment of being the Son of God. Despite Jesus’ identity and position, he submitted to the authority of his earthly parents for another 18 years, and continued maturing. Mary and Joseph did not understand all that was going on in Jesus’ life. However at the proper time, all would be revealed (Eccles. 3:1).

**LIFE APPLICATION**

Ecclesiastes 3:1 and 7b states, “For everything there is season, and a time for every matter under heaven;” “...a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.” When is silence beneficial and proper? We have to learn how to be quiet and listen attentively to those who are sharing wisdom with us. We often lack the discipline of listening without interruptions. Wisdom is exercised through good, strong questions. Questions rather than answers were the preferred teaching tools during Jesus’ time. Do you recall a time when you asked questions at home, school, or church but were ignored? How did you feel? Did you ever get your questions answered? How do you respond to wise advice?

You may have questions about the Bible, Christianity, or the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Write down three questions you have about any of them. Divide into two groups and share your questions. Someone in the group may have the wisdom to answer your questions. Write the unanswered questions on
the index cards provided and your teacher will try to respond to them.

1. ____________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________

**SUMMARY**

For a twelve-year-old boy, Jesus was wise. He listened and asked questions in the temple. Jesus demonstrated wisdom by submitting to the authority of his parents and traveling back home from Jerusalem. We each may be called by God to do special work, but we still have to wait until the proper time to fulfill God’s plans. In the meantime, attend school, engage in church activities that promote spiritual growth, and volunteer in your community.

**CLOSING DEVOTIONS**

Prayer: All-knowing God, thank you for this day. We have so many questions that only you can help us answer. Please give us answers and understanding so we can grow in wisdom. Amen.

Closing Hymn: “Give of Your Best to the Master” (#551 - *AME Church Hymnal*)