



# Jesus' Childhood

## Lesson Overview

### 1. Critical Thinking

Compare the Christmas stories in Matthew and Luke.

### 2. Watch a Video

Watch Luke 2:21-51 at [bit.ly/GCEDShepherds](http://bit.ly/GCEDShepherds) from **24min 22sec to 35min 08sec** (10min 46sec).

### 3. Discuss

## New Church Concept

### Jesus' States

Like all people, the Lord first passed through a sensory state. For people are first sensory; then natural, rational, spiritual; and lastly, if the third degree is opened...becomes celestial, like an angel of the third heaven.... When He was in the world the Lord entered into...the Word in its internal sense, even to the highest. For when the Lord was in the world, He was the Word, because He was the Divine truth, and that was the case more interiorly by degrees, as He grew up, even to the highest, which is purely Divine, entirely above the perceptions of the angels. During His life in the world the Lord successively advanced to union with the very Divine that was in Him from conception. See *Apocalypse Explained* 918.11,12

FaithBuilder 3 | Lesson 13 | Christmas

## The First Days of Jesus Life

Matthew and Luke tell us different parts of the story of Jesus' birth and infancy.

### Events in Jesus' Infancy

Matthew	Luke
1.20 Angel appears to Joseph	1.26 Angel appears to Mary
2.1 Wise men visit	1.39 Mary visits Elizabeth
2.13 Flight to Egypt	2.1 Census: Jesus born on Bethlehem
2.19 Angel appears to Joseph	2.8 Angels appear to shepherds
2.20 Jesus goes to Nazareth	2.16 Shepherds visit Jesus

1. Since different events are recorded in each gospel Bible scholars have sometimes tried to weave the events into a single story. Why might this be a good approach?
2. Why might seeing the story of Jesus from different perspectives be useful?
3. Look at the summaries from Matthew and Luke (above). Which parts of the story emerge when the Lord's birth is told from Mary's perspective? What details emerge when we learn about it from Joseph's perspective? Is this important?

## Watch a Video

The Christmas details of Jesus' life are very familiar. So in thinking about His childhood we will take a look at incidents that are lesser-known.

Watch Luke 2:21-51 from *The Gospel of Luke Film Visual Bible in HD Rare Version* online at [bit.ly/GCEDShepherds](http://bit.ly/GCEDShepherds). (Enter bitly link in the browser bar at the top of your screen.) The video covers the entire gospel. **Start at 24min 22sec and watch to 35min 08sec; 10min 46sec.** The actors in the story speak in a Hebrew dialect. The narrator reads from the gospel in English so it is easy to follow along.

These stories teach incidents that happened, but we also learn that Jesus grew up in a family (Luke 2:12; Matthew 12:47-50). Jesus' brother James became a leader in the early Christian church in Jerusalem. (See Acts 1:13-14; 12:17; 15:13).

**Discuss**

Choose questions to discuss the story.

1. What was Jesus' purpose in coming into the world?
2. How was Jesus different from other children? Why is this difference key to who He was and what He came to do?
3. Jesus' life is a model for our life. In what ways is our life-purpose different from Jesus'? In what ways is it similar?
4. It is normal for young children to have temper tantrums. Tantrums signal that children are becoming self-aware, discovering boundaries, learning how to live in order, and how to treat others. Do you picture Jesus having tantrums when he was little? Why or why not? (See sidebar on right.)
5. The Word gives few facts about Jesus' infancy. We know he went to Jerusalem when he was twelve. Aside from this we know nothing about what he was like—who his friends were, how he lived, where he went. Would knowing more help us know Him better?
6. People are born without a set purpose in life. We develop our own purpose gradually as we learn and choose a pathway for ourselves. Unlike us, Jesus was born with an identity and purpose. He had to *discover His identity and become true to it*. He had a will for good. His soul and inner self were divine, from God Himself. How would having an identity and discovering your purpose be different than choosing your own path?
7. Would people who met Jesus as a child have known He was special?
8. Imagine you were Jesus' brother. How would it feel to have a brother who was so wise and perfect? A brother who was more concerned with discussing spiritual issues than playing with you?
9. One of the ways we learn is by making mistakes. Did Jesus make mistakes?
10. Did Jesus' parents know He was special? (See Luke 2:19.)
11. How did adults respond to Jesus as a child? Would children have responded in similar ways?
12. The video maker shows Simeon and Anna having brief and private exchanges with Jesus. Is this how you picture these events? How might you design these scenes if you were the movie director?

#### Timeline of Events in Jesus Christ's Childhood in the New Testament

- Birth + Shepherds Visit | Bethlehem
- Circumcision and Naming | Bethlehem (8 days)
- Presentation in the Temple | Jerusalem (40+ days)
- Visit from Magi | Bethlehem (40 days to 2 years)
- Flight | Egypt (escape from Herod, who ruled 6-4 BC; replaced by his son in 4 BC)
- Return to Nazareth (2-4 years)
- Visit to temple | Jerusalem (12 years)
- Return to Nazareth (12 years)

Since God came down and He is order, He had to be conceived, be carried in the womb, be born, be brought up and learn knowledges, and by their means be brought into intelligence and wisdom. Therefore in **His Human He was a child like any other child, a boy like any other boy, and so on, the only difference being that He achieved that progress more quickly, fully and perfectly than others.** It is evident that He advanced thus in accordance with order:

The boy Jesus grew and was strengthened in spirit; and He advanced in wisdom, years and favor with God and men, Luke 2:40, 52. It is plain that He did this more quickly, fully and perfectly than others from the description of Him, as for instance that, when He was a boy of twelve, He sat and taught in the Temple in the midst of the teachers, and all who heard Him were astonished at His intelligence and His answers (Luke 2:46-47 and later Luke 4:16-22, 32). This was done because Divine order prescribes that a person should prepare himself to receive God; and as he prepares himself, so God enters into him as into His dwelling and home. That preparation is accomplished by acquiring knowledge about God and the spiritual matters. It is a law of order that in so far as a person approaches and comes near to God, so far does God approach and come near to him, and link Himself to the person in his midst. See *True Christian Religion* 89