



# Bible Study

LUKE 2.41-52



Canadian Lutheran  
World Relief

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## CLWR BIBLE STUDIES

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CLWR's Bible Studies have been designed to help congregations delve deeper into the challenges leading to injustices around the world, to explore related Bible stories, and to discuss how these connect and how God calls us to act together.

These studies are meant to be adapted for your congregation's needs and are free to use. Each study includes discussion questions for children to adults, as well as suggestions to connect this discussion to action.

As CLWR continues to grow our resource collection, we would love to hear suggestions and insight from you. Please feel free to contact Heidi Van Schaik, our Church Relations Manager, at [heidi@clwr.org](mailto:heidi@clwr.org) with ideas and feedback.

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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- This study will explore the story of Luke 2.41-52, the role education played in Jesus' life, the challenges faced by many to attain education today and how we can support learning locally, nationally, and globally.
- The gospel of Luke was typically shared orally until it was written down, likely between 80-90 CE.
- The author was writing primarily to gentiles—those who were on the “outside.”
- In Luke, the disruption of Jesus is who he includes.
- Luke shares that, through Jesus, God was doing something completely new, turning the norms of society on their head.
- In this story, Luke is wanting to establish Jesus as a true Israelite.

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## CULTURAL CONTEXT

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- In the background, Rome is always present.
- Rome would destroy the temple and Jerusalem in 70 CE.
- The people are looking for a Messiah that will come and overthrow the powerful and abusive government.
- The Law of Moses requires Jews to make the pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.



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## SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

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- This passage is unique to Luke—it's not found in the other gospels.
- Jesus is 12 years old.
- This would be the year that his father would spend teaching him the duties and regulations of being an adult.
- At the age of 13, Jewish boys enter into the full responsibility of adulthood.
- Every year, Jesus' family, along with other Jews, make the journey to Jerusalem to the temple to celebrate Passover (a 7-day festival).
- Following the celebration, the entire group of people leave for home.
- It is not unusual for children to spend time with cousins and friends, rather than travelling with their parents.
- It is not unusual for the caravan to take care of each other's children as they travel.
- It would not have been unusual for parents and children to be separated for most, if not all, of the journey and to not need to worry, the group takes responsibility for feeding and caring for all children.

## 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 favour.

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## STUDY

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Read Luke 2.41-52

*Why are Jesus and his family travelling?*

*What is the Passover?*

- See Exodus 23.15 and Deuteronomy 16.1-8

*What is the reaction of Jesus' parents when they find him?*

- Luke 2.48
- Reprimand would be normal reaction

*What is Jesus' response?*

- Luke 2.49

*What is Jesus doing in the temple?*

- At first, he appears to be learning—asking questions v.46

*What are the teachers' reactions to Jesus in the temple?*

- Amazement v.47

*Why might the teachers in the temple be “amazed” by Jesus' understanding and answers?*

- Jesus is just a child, how is he so smart?
- Oftentimes, it is the adults who are the ones teaching, not learning.
- Jesus is demonstrating unusual understanding and offering the adults something to learn in return.

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## STUDY (CONTINUED)

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*Has there ever been a time in your life when you learned something in an unusual way or from an unexpected source?*

*What is something you have learned from a child? Would someone like to share a time when a child taught them something that they continue to use?*

Up to this point, Jesus' mission has been revealed through others—Mary, Elizabeth, Zachariah. But now, in the temple, he begins to claim his mission for himself.

*Why might Jesus have left the temple and gone back to Nazareth with his parents?*

- Exodus 20.12, Deuteronomy 5.16

Read Luke 2.52 again.

While Jesus amazed the teachers in the temple, and confounded his parents at this young age, Luke tells us that he “increased in wisdom and in years, and in the divine and human favour” in the coming years.

*Why do you think this piece of information is important?*

- Luke 1.80, 1 Samuel 2.26

*Why is it important to keep learning and growing in wisdom and faith throughout your entire life?*

*What are some ways you can continue to grow once you are no longer a child, or no longer in a formal school setting?*

## Did you know that education is a luxury for many and is completely unattainable for so many more?

Many factors can impede access to learning, as well as access to safe, productive learning environments.

- Over 600 million children and adolescents worldwide are unable to attain minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics, even though two thirds of them are in school.<sup>1</sup>
- Poverty remains one of the most obstinate barriers... a lack of trained teachers, inadequate education materials and poor infrastructure make learning difficult for many students... Others come to class too hungry, ill, or exhausted from work or household tasks.<sup>2</sup>
- Close to half of all refugee children—48 per cent—remain out of school.
- At pre-primary level, the average gross enrolment rate for the academic year 2020 to 2021 for reporting countries was 42 per cent.
- For primary level, the corresponding rate for reporting countries was 68 per cent. For secondary level, it was 37 per cent, illustrating that significant structural barriers remain for refugee learners to access post-primary education. At tertiary level, enrolment rates for the same period were at 6 per cent.
- This increase, of 3 percentage points since 2019, represents a transformational change for thousands of young people and their communities.<sup>3</sup>
- Many in the West Bank face chronic poverty and unemployment.<sup>4</sup>
- Displaced women in Myanmar, are unemployed and not self-reliant.<sup>5</sup>
- In Uganda, many single mothers are displaced and don't have a stable source of income.<sup>6</sup>

1. <https://www.unicef.org/education>, July 10, 2023

2. <https://www.unicef.org/education>, July 10, 2023

3. <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/education>, July 10, 2023

4. <https://www.clwr.org/product/1B23ADF/technical-scholarship>, July 10, 2023

5. <https://www.clwr.org/product/3CB8233/skills-training>, July 10, 2023

6. <https://www.clwr.org/product/799F4B5/women-in-business>, July 10, 2023



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## WONDERINGS

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Consider your local community—who might be challenged to attain education in your community?

Consider Canada—who might be challenged to attain education in this country?

Consider the world—what factors might pose a challenge to someone, particularly women and children, in attaining education?

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## ACTION BRAINSTORM

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How can you/your parish support learning locally?

How can you/your parish support learning nationally?

How can you/your parish support learning globally?

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## ACTION SUGGESTIONS

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Read and learn more. One suggestion is *I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World* by Malala Yousafzai. This is a good read for all ages.<sup>1</sup>

Here are a few websites that offer more information on the need for education supports:

- [www.unicef.org/education](http://www.unicef.org/education)
- [www.cfsontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Indigenous-Education\\_Factsheets\\_2021\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cfsontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Indigenous-Education_Factsheets_2021_EN.pdf)
- [www.clwr.org/what/education](http://www.clwr.org/what/education)

Have a blessing of the bags (backpacks, lunch bags, work bags) service. All ages need to be encouraged to learn and grow every day, include the adults!<sup>2</sup>

Host a “supply drive” to provide a local school with supplies i.e., tissue, glue, crayons, pencils, etc.<sup>3</sup>

Host an event to support college students away from home for the first time.<sup>4</sup>

Host a fundraiser to support CLWR initiatives to engage in learning opportunities where they are needed.<sup>5</sup>

1. <https://www.christianbook.com/apps/easyfind?Ntk=author&Ntt=Malala%20Yousafzai>

2. This can be as big or small as your community would like. Have everyone bring in their “bags” for learning, including backpacks, lunch bags, pencil cases, briefcases, computer bags, etc. and place them at the altar for the duration of worship. Bless everyone for another season of learning and growing, in faith, and in knowledge. Blessing of the backpack liturgies are widely available on the internet. Here is one resource: <https://www.illustratedministry.com/2021/blessing-of-the-backpacks-back-to-school-worship-liturgy/>

3. Many communities have “Labour Day Classic” sporting events, connect your supply drive with one of these, by having folks “vote” on the winner with their donations, placing them on either side of the altar and blessing the gifts with the offering.

4. Gather cleaning supplies for your local college/university dorm students as a welcome gift. This works well if you can partner with other congregations to increase the number of items. If you are a small community, do the same to support local students heading off to school.

5. You can designate all monetary funds collected at the “supply drive” (above) to support one of the CLWR initiatives for education or suggest that people choose which to support on their own. Highlight the following initiatives from the Gifts from the Heart catalogue: Learning Kit, Women in Business, Skills Training, Technical Scholarship.

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## FOR CHILDREN

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Ask children how they feel about going back to school.

Be prepared—some will be anxious or nervous, and not want to go for various reasons (school isn't always a safe place!).

Talk to them about why learning is important, aside from helping to get a “good job.”

Talk about what kinds of things we can learn that aren't necessarily in textbooks—manners, social skills, how to care for others, etc.

Talk about how even Jesus had to go to school to learn, and how his parents and community taught him things.

Talk about how Jesus was then able to teach others—even as a child he taught adults things.

Talk about how it is important for children to remember that they teach older people things all the time, even when it doesn't feel like it.

Talk about how it's important to always be learning new things, even as an adult.

Empower children to continue to learn and grow, AND to continue to be teachers of others, no matter the age.

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PRAYER

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God of all,

We know that you sent us Jesus as a teacher for us.

Help us to be good students. To learn and grow in faith and in wisdom that comes from only you.

Help us to also be good teachers. To teach others about your love, your grace, and your mercy so that we may always do your will, and further your kingdom here on earth.

We pray this in the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.