

# 12 The Boy Jesus Goes to the Temple

## Look it Up

**Simeon's prophecy:**

Luke 1, 2

**Jesus in the Temple:**

Luke 2

**Learning the Law:**

Deuteronomy 6

## Simeon's prophecy

The Angel Gabriel told Mary she must call her baby 'Jesus', and the naming ceremony took place a week after he was born. Later, Mary and Joseph took their infant son to the Temple to dedicate him to God, as the Law required. While they were there, an old man named Simeon asked to hold the child. 'Now I am ready to die in peace,' he said. 'I have seen the one who will bring God's salvation to the people.'

After this event, Luke says that Mary and Joseph went back to Nazareth.

## ✝ Nunc dimittis

Simeon's declaration that he is now ready to die in peace begins in Latin with the words *Nunc dimittis*. His words are often said or sung in churches at evening services and at funerals.

Luke's Gospel is the only one that says anything about Jesus growing up.

Every year, Luke tells us, Jesus' parents travelled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover festival at the Temple. When Jesus was twelve, he was allowed to go with them, travelling, as usual, with a party of family and friends.

Once the festival was over, the group set off to return home. Mary and Joseph were confident that Jesus was enjoying himself with friends of his own, and they walked a whole day before they began wondering exactly where he was. They began asking around the group, but no one had seen Jesus.

Frantic with worry, Mary and Joseph hurried back to Jerusalem. They hunted high and low for him. On the third day, they found him in

Mary and Joseph come looking for Jesus.



the Temple, sitting with the Jewish teachers. He was listening to what they had to say about their faith and asking questions. Everything Jesus said was wise and showed great understanding.

Mary rushed to

The teachers of the Law and the priests liked to meet in the Temple courtyard to discuss God's laws. They were surprised at Jesus' understanding.



scold Jesus for leaving them and making them worry so much. Jesus was surprised. 'Why did you have to look for me?' he asked. 'Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?' Then he returned home and was an obedient son as before.



Jesus would probably have learned to write words from the Law on wax tablets similar to this.

## Learning the Law

In the time of Jesus, boys would have learned the Law at the synagogue school. The Hebrew writing on the wax tablet above is a famous quote from the Jewish scriptures called the Shema, from the Hebrew word with which it begins:

*Hear, O Israel,  
the Lord is our God,  
the Lord alone.*

Here is a clearer version of the schoolboy handwriting used:



Hebrew letters are written from right to left. Children learned to write by hanging them from a line – the opposite of writing them on top of a line as happens with English.

# 15 In Capernaum

## Look it Up

**A healing in Capernaum:**

*Matthew 8, Mark 1, Luke 4*

**Jesus calling his disciples:**

*Matthew 4, Mark 1, Luke 5*

**John's story of the fishermen:**

*John 1*



These remains of a house from around the time of Jesus have been unearthed in Capernaum. They are known as the house of St Peter. Sadly, there is no real evidence that it definitely belonged to Peter.

## A healing in Capernaum

One day, when Jesus first went to stay with his friend Simon, Simon's mother-in-law was sick with a fever. Jesus went to her bedside. By a miracle he made her well, and she was able to take care of her guest.

By that evening, the news had spread. Crowds gathered, bringing sick people with them, and Jesus healed them all.

After Jesus was rejected at Nazareth, he went a few miles away to the lakeside fishing town called Capernaum. He was welcomed into the home of a young fisherman, Simon.

He began to get noticed because he could heal people of all kinds of illnesses with just a touch. Crowds soon gathered as he travelled to nearby places, preaching in the synagogues.

Jesus also began to gather a group of followers – disciples.

*As Jesus walked along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw two fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew, catching fish with a net. Jesus said to them, 'Come with me, and I will teach you to catch people.' At once they left their nets and went with him.*



*He went a little farther on and saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat getting their nets ready. As soon as Jesus saw them, he called them; they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and went with Jesus.*

**Mark 1:16–20**

## John's story of the fishermen

John tells the story of Jesus calling the fishermen in a different way from Mark. In his Gospel, John the Baptist sees Jesus and tells two of his own disciples that Jesus is God's chosen one. They follow Jesus and spend an afternoon listening to him. One of them is Andrew, and he then goes to fetch his brother Simon, telling him that he has found the Christ, the Messiah. When Jesus sees Simon, he gives him a nickname – Peter, the word meaning 'rock'. Soon after, Jesus calls Philip, who clearly believes that Jesus is sent by God. Philip in turn calls Nathanael to join them.



Some of Jesus' closest friends were fishermen. The work was hard but it made a decent living. They took a great risk in giving up their jobs to follow Jesus.

This reconstruction of a fishing net from the time of Jesus shows a row of floats along the top edge and a row of weights along the bottom edge. These would have helped the net to hang vertically in the water between two fishing boats, rather like a submerged fence. As the boats moved it through the water, fish would have been caught in it.