

October 2015

Dear Church Partners,

In this packet are six free lessons for your use! My hope is that you will find this resource helpful for you as you interpret the “Change for Children” campaign to the young people of your church. While written primarily for a Children’s Sermon format, these object lessons could be used in a Sunday school setting, youth group, or even as sermon illustrations!

In my nineteen years in children and youth ministry, the object lessons I have used for children’s sermon times have been a very effective way of communicating the truth of God’s Word. Many of the adults in the congregation would tell me they preferred my children’s sermons to my “regular” sermons! Jesus taught in object lessons and word pictures, too, so it should be no surprise to us that this method is highly effective—surely Jesus knew what he was doing and set an example for us to follow!

These lessons have been carefully crafted around the stories of the Advent season, how the story impacts our hearts and lives, and the ways in which your church can connect to the ministry of Intermountain. I hope this resource blesses you, saves you time in preparation, and makes your workload a little lighter. It is my hope that our relationship will truly be a partnership of mutual benefit. As Intermountain’s chaplain, I want to be a resource to you and an encouragement in your work with children and families.

Perhaps you have already visited our website: www.intermountainministry.org ? It has regular posts about what we’ve been up to in ministry with the children in residence as well as hosting an ever expanding library of resources **free** for your use! There will be lessons like the ones contained in this packet, as well as game ideas, youth ministry talks, sermons and sermon outlines, bulletin and newsletter “filler,” and worship resources like sample calls to worship and pastoral prayers. I endeavor to update the content regularly, so I’d encourage you to check back at least twice a month. Any feedback or requests for specific types of resources or content are also welcome any time.

So, enjoy these lessons for now, and let me know what you think. I’d love to hear from you and build a stronger relationship between my chaplain’s ministry at Intermountain and the good work you are doing in your church and community.

Blessings,

Chris Haughee

Chris Haughee, Chaplain

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Week 1: “The Branch”

Objects needed: A seedling, branch, or picture of stump/seedling/nursery log

Theme/Main Idea: Even when things seem hopeless, God gives us hope. When nothing is left of the tree but the stump, there is still life there... just waiting for the right season to spring up again.

Presentation:

“How are you this morning, children? Can I be honest with you about how I am feeling? I am a little sad... disappointed.



[what would be best here is for you to share a personal story about a time you felt let down... what I include here is for illustrative purposes]

I was really hoping that I had made a friend the other day at church. We made plans to meet for lunch, but when the day came, she said she had too much going on at work and had to cancel. I had my hopes up, and they just fizzled. So, I am feeling pretty low. Anyone else here ever feel that way?

Well, I guess I better get on with the lesson. You want to see what I have for the object lesson today? [let kids respond] Yes? Okay... here we go, I am so excited!

[pull out a seedling/stick or picture of a stump]

Isn't it beautiful? [kids will likely give you puzzled looks] What? You don't agree?

I think it is beautiful because I just read about what this means in the Bible... In Jeremiah, chapter 33, God promised a branch—or a little seedling—that would grow up and save everyone! Isn't that amazing? I really like trees, and that must mean this will be an amazing tree!

Hmmm... you guys don't look convinced. Do you suppose this is one of those places in the Bible where it's like a word picture—and maybe God wasn't really talking about a branch, a seedling, or a stump? I think that might be right, especially since this passage comes up on our first day of Advent.

Do you know about Advent? Advent means “the arrival of an important person or event.” It’s the start of the church year, and throughout the season of Advent we recognize the coming of Jesus as a baby. We celebrate that particular miracle on what day that is coming up? Do you know? [let kids respond] That’s right! Christmas! So, Advent is the time leading up to Christmas.

Well, with that in mind, let’s take another look at this promise of a branch that was going to come and save everyone. Do you know what God was actually talking about? Or, maybe I should say... Do you know WHO God was talking about? [kids guess] That’s right... Jesus!

Jesus was the branch Jeremiah wrote about. That’s kinda weird, isn’t it? It gets a little less weird if you understand why God promised that branch in the first place.

Back then, the people of Israel were pretty discouraged. They had messed up big time, and they were suffering the consequences of some pretty bad choices. They had turned their backs on God and decided to do things their own way. It didn’t work out very well for them. So, like a big beautiful tree getting cut down, all of their amazingness of being God’s people was taken away. They had to leave the places they were living and go live somewhere else. They were sad. They had gone from feeling like a big, important and beautiful tree to a lowly little stump. And, as they felt lowly like that stump, without any hope, that’s when God told them that out of that stump they had become a new tree would sprout! At first it would be so small, it would just be like a little branch coming out of the side of the stump!

Wow... incredible! When they felt their worst and felt like maybe God would just throw up his hands and be done with them, God gave them a promise. God told them that they would have a future leader, a great great great (you keep going on and on for a little while...) grandson of King David, who would help make them the type of people who are ‘right with God,’ close to him, and part of God’s family! That’s a wonderful promise to look forward to.

So, here we are in Advent, just starting out. Let’s remember how God kept his promise to send the branch—the seedling from the stump of Israel—known as Jesus, and that he still keeps all his promises today. In our own small way, we can help extend the hope that God gives us by supporting the work Intermountain does with kids and families. We’re handing out change cans today, and we’re hoping you fill them up between now and Christmas. You’ll hear a little more about Intermountain as we move through the Advent season. But, for now...

Let's pray:

God, thank you for your presence in each of our lives. Help us remember the promises that have come true and those that will come true in the future. Give us patience to wait for all the good things you promise to those that love you and place their trust in you. Help us hold out for the best, YOUR best God—for us, and for our church and our community. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Key Text: Jeremiah 33:14-16, New International Reader's Version (NIRV)

¹⁴“The days are coming,” announces the LORD. “At that time I will fulfill my good promise to my people. I made it to the people of Israel and Judah.

¹⁵“Here is what I will do in those days and at that time.

I will make a godly Branch grow from David's royal line.

He will do what is fair and right in the land.

¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved.

Jerusalem will live in safety.

And it will be called

The LORD Who Makes Us Right With Himself.”

Week 2: “Preparing the way”

Objects needed: A piece of red fabric that could be “rolled out” like a red carpet.

Theme/Main Idea: When someone important is coming, we prepare. At certain special events, we “roll out the red carpet,” either figuratively or literally. How are we preparing for Jesus this season?



Presentation:

“I have a question for you this morning... have you got your thanking caps on? Are you ready? Here it is... Raise your hand if you can tell me something special that you might do if an important person was coming to visit us?”

[children respond]

Great answers! Fantastic ideas. I have something in my [bag, box... whatever you are “hiding” the object lesson in!] that I thought of as a special way to greet someone important that might come to visit us. Want to see?

[take piece of red cloth out and lay it out in front of the children.]

This is my red carpet! Do you like it? What do we do with a red carpet for special important visitors? Does anyone know?

[children respond]

That’s right, we put it out for them to walk on as they enter. It’s a super special thing that doesn’t happen very much except maybe for celebrities and politicians these days. It’s an idea that is thousands of years old, starting even before Jesus was born. Do you know why the color is red? Well, in ancient Greece they believed red was the color of the gods! One of their playwrights included a reference to rolling out a red carpet for one of their important leaders because he was supposed to be like a god! Crazy, right?

We roll out red carpets for Presidents, Popes, and world leaders. We put out red carpets for actors and musicians. But... none of these people are gods, are they? Are they?

[children respond emphatically... “NO!”]

There was only one human being in all of history that really deserved to get the “red carpet treatment.” Do you know who that was? That’s right... Jesus!

In the Bible story today, we hear about John, Jesus’ cousin and the wild prophet of the Judean wilderness. He called out to the people, quoting words from another prophet of old, Isaiah, saying, “Prepare the way for the Lord!” He asked the people to change their hearts and get ready for Jesus.

No. He didn’t tell them to roll out a red carpet, but John did ask the people to do something even more important. He told them to get their hearts ready to receive Jesus. He wanted them to make sure that when Jesus started preaching, teaching and healing people that they would recognize that he was God’s only son, sent to save them from their sin.

Have you thought about preparing your heart for Jesus? Maybe you can picture rolling out a red carpet in your heart and mind, saying, ‘Jesus, you are the most important thing in my life. It’s not about the lights and the glitter and the glow. It’s not about the presents and the bows. It’s about you, and how much you love me. I want to return that love by making you first in my life.’

You know, if each one of us here did that, I think our Advent season would be incredible!

One more thing before we close in prayer. How are your change cans coming along? Are they starting to fill up? I hope so. Giving to others is a great way to turn our focus from ourselves and place it on loving God and loving our neighbors—even if those neighbors are kids from Intermountain that we’ll never personally meet! Thanks for thinking about and praying for those kiddos, too. It makes a big difference. Okay, now...

Let’s pray:

God, thank you. Thank you for being the One we were waiting for. Lots of important people get special treatment in our lives... we roll out the red carpet or maybe just give them a lot of our time and attention. But, of all the people we could focus our love and devotion towards, no one is more worthy than you! Help us open our hearts and minds to all you have for us this Advent season. Bless our efforts to extend the love you have shown us to others. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Key Text: Luke 3:1-6, New International Reader's Version (NIRV)

Tiberius Caesar had been ruling for 15 years. Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea. Herod was the ruler of Galilee. His brother Philip was the ruler of Iturea and Traconitis. Lysanias was ruler of Abilene. ² Annas and Caiaphas were high priests. At that time God's word came to John, son of Zechariah, in the desert. ³ He went into all the countryside around the Jordan River. There he preached that people should be baptized and turn away from their sins. Then God would forgive them. ⁴ Here is what is written in the book of Isaiah the prophet. It says,

"A messenger is calling out in the desert,

'Prepare the way for the Lord.

Make straight paths for him.

⁵Every valley will be filled in.

Every mountain and hill will be made level.

The crooked roads will become straight.

The rough ways will become smooth.

⁶And all people will see God's salvation.' " ([Isaiah 40:3-5](#))

Week 3: “Where’s the fruit?”

Objects needed: A piece of fruit, or several different fruits.

Theme/Main Idea: What we do to help others shows that on the inside something has changed. Just as a good tree bears good fruit, we want people to see the “fruit” from our lives and see that it’s because God has changed our hearts!



Presentation:

“Good morning! How are you this morning? Are you filling up your change cans at home or in your Sunday school class? I sure hope so! It makes a big difference in the lives of the children at Intermountain. And, it’s a sign that you understand what Advent is really all about... but I’ll get back to that in a bit.

First, I bet you want to see what the object lesson is this week? Yes? Okay... let me get it out for you.

[take out fruit that you brought with you]

You know what this is? No... it’s not my breakfast or my snack for after the service! It’s fruit. Yep. Just fruit. Our Bible story today talks about fruit, so I thought I’d bring some in.

In the story, John the Baptist warned the people that Jesus was going to come soon to teach them and show them what God was all about. John told them to live lives that showed others that they had really turned away from sin to follow God. Then he said something kinda funny... He said, trees that don’t produce good fruit, like this [hold up an apple, pear, or orange], are going to get cut down! Apparently, fruit is pretty important.

But, do you think John was really worried about fruit trees? [kids respond, “No...”]

I think this is one of those word pictures, again, that we see all over the Bible. The people John was talking to seemed to understand that, because they asked him, ‘What should we do, then?’ They didn’t ask him about how to take better care of their apple and orange trees! They knew that John was talking about their actions and how they treated other people.

In response, John told them to do some really practical things, like take care of people who don't have enough clothes or food, and to be honest with their money.

As we are getting ready to celebrate Jesus' birthday this Advent season, we can take some of John's advice. Just as the people back then were told to take care of one another and to use their money in ways that pleased God, those things can be signs of 'good fruit' in our lives too!

It's part of the reason that we take special offering from time to time at church, like the Change for Children cans we gave out a few weeks ago. It's not because giving money or doing nice things for others earns us God's approval; it's that doing these things changes our attitude towards others. Our hearts rearrange from just thinking about what we will GET during the Advent season to what we can GIVE to others.

And, as we build in ourselves the characteristics of gratitude and generosity, we prepare ourselves to truly celebrate the One we recognize this Advent and Christmas season—Jesus!

Let's pray:

God, thank you for meeting our needs so abundantly. We hope that when you look at our lives you see lots of good 'fruit.'—gratitude, generosity, kindness, and love. Help us show others by our actions that our hearts have changed for the better. We don't want to give into the selfishness that sometimes comes with the Holiday season, but instead live as examples of your love and grace. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Key Text: Luke 3:7-18 (NIRV)

John spoke to the crowds coming to be baptized by him. He said, "You are like a nest of poisonous snakes! Who warned you to escape the coming of God's anger? ⁸Live in a way that shows you have turned away from your sins. And don't start saying to yourselves, 'Abraham is our father.' I tell you, God can raise up children for Abraham even from these stones. ⁹The ax is already lying at the roots of the trees. All the trees that don't produce good fruit will be cut down. They will be thrown into the fire."

¹⁰"Then what should we do?" the crowd asked.

¹¹ John answered, “Anyone who has extra clothes should share with the one who has none. And anyone who has extra food should do the same.”

¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

¹³ “Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” John told them.

¹⁴ Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”

John replied, “Don’t force people to give you money. Don’t bring false charges against people. Be happy with your pay.”

¹⁵ The people were waiting. They were expecting something. They were all wondering in their hearts if John might be the Messiah. ¹⁶ John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I am will come. I’m not good enough to untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His pitchfork is in his hand to toss the straw away from his threshing floor. He will gather the wheat into his barn. But he will burn up the husks with fire that can’t be put out.” ¹⁸ John said many other things to warn the people. He also announced the good news to them.

Week 4: “Jumping for Joy!”

Objects needed: A jump rope.

Theme/Main Idea: God keeps his promises, and that should cause us to jump for joy!

Presentation:

“Have you ever been so happy that it was hard to hold it in? Yes? What are some of the reasons you have had to be happy?”

[let children share]

Wow! Those are great reasons to be excited and happy. Now, I am wondering if anyone here can tell me, without using a word, that they are happy? Can someone here act out being happy for us without shouting or making any noise?

[as time permits, let a few children ‘act out’ their expressions of happiness]

Amazing, you guys! I could tell that each of you were happy and you didn’t have to say a thing. But, I suppose I should get on with the object lesson... what do you think? Would you like to see what I brought today? Yes... okay. Here is it!

[take out the jump rope]

I suppose you all know what this is? Right. It’s a jump rope. Do you know why I have a jump rope? It has something to do with our lesson from Luke, chapter 1 today. It’s the story of Mary, just pregnant with Jesus, visiting her relative, Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist. When Mary calls out to greet Elizabeth, the baby inside her jumps for joy! Even still inside Elizabeth, waiting to be born, John recognizes how important it is that Mary is going to be the mother of Jesus.

Incredible, isn’t it? Elizabeth certainly thought it was. She made sure to tell Mary that the baby in her jumped for joy. There was a lot of joy and anticipation coming before that first Christmas morning. I hope that we can hold on to some of that excitement, too, and even let our bodies express it. Maybe thinking about how amazing it is that Jesus was born to show us God’s love makes you jump for joy, too? I sure hope so.



We are so close to Christmas! Part of the joy of celebrating comes not only from the gifts we think we are going to receive, but also from the gifts we give and are excited to see others get! I am excited to know that we are almost done with our Change for Children effort. Please remember to bring your Change cans back next Sunday, or if you'll be gone, maybe you can bring them to our special Christmas Eve service?

I am jumping for joy to know what a blessing our gifts will be to the children and families that Intermountain serves.

Let's pray:

"God, thank you for the best Christmas present we could have ever received: the joy that comes from knowing Jesus. Help us express that joy with our bodies, with our faces, and with our generosity towards others. Bless our last little effort to fill our Change Cans and help the children and families of Intermountain. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Key Text: **Luke 1:39-45** (NIrV)

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in Judea's hill country. ⁴⁰There she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, **the baby inside her jumped**. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²In a loud voice she called out, "God has blessed you more than other women. And blessed is the child you will have! ⁴³But why is God so kind to me? Why has the mother of my Lord come to me? ⁴⁴**As soon as I heard the sound of your voice, the baby inside me jumped for joy.** ⁴⁵You are a woman God has blessed. You have believed that the Lord would keep his promises to you!"

Christmas Eve/Christmas Day: “Angels point the way!”

Objects needed: An angel ornament, or picture of an angel

Theme/Main Idea: Just as the angels announced the good news of Jesus birth to the shepherds, we can tell others about why we really celebrate Christmas. There are plenty of people out there that don’t really know, and we can point them to Jesus!



Presentation:

“Who here likes to tell other people good news? I know I do. It’s fun to share a message with someone when you know it’s going to encourage them, make them happy, or give them a reason to celebrate. So, if you like to share good news, and I like to share good news, I am guessing that almost everyone does. And, on that first Christmas Eve, there was some very good news to tell. But, before I get ahead of myself, maybe you would like to see what I brought for the object lesson today?”

[take out angel ornament]

Yes! It’s an angel. The angels on that first Christmas Eve got to share some very good news. Do you remember what it was? The angel told the shepherds,

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.”

This news did bring great joy to all the people! They had been waiting for a LONG time for the Messiah, God’s chosen messenger, to come. I am not sure they understood fully that not only would the Messiah be a messenger for God, but that he would be God himself—the Lord!

That’s the best and greatest news of all: that God came to us as a baby. Jesus came to live with us and to experience everything it means to be a human being. And, just as the shepherds were told to go and see and **THEN** to go and tell, we are asked to do the same.

It's good that we have come together tonight to celebrate Jesus' birth. The shepherds, too, went to the stable and found the baby Jesus. But—and this is important—the shepherds didn't stay at the stable. They left there and told anyone that would listen about what they had seen and heard. And, the Bible says, all were amazed to hear the story. I think if we trust God enough to share the story, too, we might find that there are more people out there willing to listen and be amazed as well.

I see some have brought their Change for Children cans back tonight. Thank you. I'll make sure they all get rounded up and on to Intermountain for the children and families to be blessed by your generosity. We'll wrap up our collection next Sunday, as we talk about the one story in the Bible we have of Jesus as a boy.

Thank you so much for being great listeners, for filling up your change cans, and for coming along with me on this journey through Advent. I hope you have a blessed Christmas.

Let's pray:

God, thank you for giving us Jesus. You have entrusted to us the very best news in all the world—You love us so much You sent your Son to be with us! Christmas is not just about presents and lights, it's about the joy that comes from knowing that we are loved by You. That is great news, and we hope that we can share this news with others so that all can share in our joy! In Jesus' name, Amen."

Key Text: Luke 2:1-20, (NirV)

In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. ² It was the first time a list was made of the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ Everyone went to their own town to be listed.

⁴ So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. ⁵ He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby. ⁶ While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. ⁷ She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. That's because there was no guest room where they could stay.

⁸ There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were taking care of their sheep. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said,

¹⁴ “May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!
And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!”

¹⁵ The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem. Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. ¹⁸ All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over. ²⁰ The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

**Supplemental lesson for the First
Sunday after Christmas): Collection day
for Change for Children!**

Objects needed: a few loose pennies or coins, and a jar FULL of pennies or coins

Theme/Main Idea: By itself, a penny isn't worth very much. But lots of pennies together can buy much more! Small gifts can seem insignificant alone, but together many small gifts can be used by God to make a huge difference.



Presentation:

"I see you have brought your jars back with you today! That's great! I can hear the satisfying sound of clinking coins being moved around in your jars. To help us focus during this time, however, why don't we pass all those jars to me...? [Take a moment to collect the jars from the children, thanking each of them]

Wow! Look at all this... fantastic! And, this leads us right into what I wanted to share with you today.

[hold up a penny]

What is this? Right! It's a penny. What can you buy with a penny these days? Anything? No, not really... not anymore. When I was a child, you could still buy candy for a penny in the store... now, well, it costs at least a quarter, right? That's 25 pennies! Boy, how things have changed.

Did you know that the government is talking about not making pennies anymore? It seems it costs more to make them than they are actually worth! In fact, our neighbors to the north in Canada have stopped making pennies, and now every purchase gets rounded up (or down?) to the nearest nickel. The penny doesn't get much respect.

A penny isn't worth much. We know that. And, sometimes we might feel like what we are doing for God isn't worth much either. No one seems to notice it, or nothing seems to change. Sometimes we might think... 'Why bother?!'

I wonder if that's what happened after the excitement of the first Christmas settled down. Jesus was born. His family fled to Egypt. They returned years later and went to live in Nazareth. Then, until Jesus is 12, we don't hear anything about him. And, after that, two decades pass until he starts his ministry of preaching, teaching, healing and telling others of God's love. As all that time passed between that first Christmas day and his baptism by John in the wilderness, I wonder what some of those shepherds thought. I wonder what the wise men thought. Maybe they were tempted to believe that it didn't really happen. Maybe it wasn't a big deal, after all? Maybe a little baby wasn't going to change everything...

But the amazing thing is this... that baby did change the world. As little and as helpless as baby Jesus was, he was God's gift to us: The promise that everything was going to change.

You know what else is amazing? Let's see... though a penny by itself isn't worth much... let's take a look at what we have here... [hold up your jar of pennies, as well as some of the jars the children have brought in] We've got lots of pennies and other coins here! Lots of little coins making one big collection! Wow! You guys are amazing... great job!

All together, we are making a difference. That's why it's important to remember that our efforts are not isolated. We are doing what we do for Jesus' sake alongside many others that also love Jesus. Our Change for Children jars will join those from many other churches and many other families. Added up, it will make a big difference. God can take lowly little pennies and make them the most important part of what He is doing in the lives of children at Intermountain.

Thank you. Today makes my heart very happy, and I can see it makes you happy, too. Let's pray and thank God for this opportunity we have been given to take all our gifts and prayers and add them to the amazing work that He is doing at Intermountain...

"God, take our small gifts and multiply them many times. You are in the business, God, of taking what we would count as nothing much at all—throw away junk, even—and using it to build your coming Kingdom. Bless our change can offering, Jesus, not for our sake, but for yours, and for the sake of the families and children at Intermountain. As we have been blessed, we seek to be a blessing. As you have encouraged our hearts, we pray that our efforts and our gifts would encourage others. In Jesus name, Amen."

Key Text: Luke 2:41-52 (NIrV)

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. ⁴² When Jesus was 12 years old, they went up to the feast as usual. ⁴³ After the feast was over, his parents left to go back home. The boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But they were not aware of it. ⁴⁴ They thought he was somewhere in their group. So they traveled on for a day. Then they began to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ They did not find him. So they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courtyard. He was sitting with the teachers. He was listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at how much he understood. They also were amazed at his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were amazed. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been worried about you. We have been looking for you everywhere."

⁴⁹ "Why were you looking for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"
⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he meant by that.

⁵¹ Then he went back to Nazareth with them, and he obeyed them. But his mother kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. ⁵² Jesus became wiser and stronger. He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people.