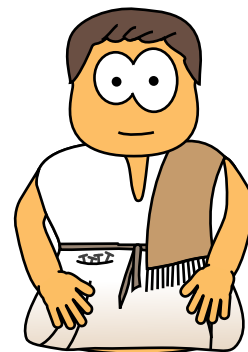


Bible Heroes

Young Jesus

Teachers Story notes



Essential Teachers notes:

I love the story of young Jesus in the temple. A boy on the cusp of manhood astounding the scholars of the faith. Rather than take the traditional parent perspective to this story I've written it from the eyes of one of the temple priests. There are 2 reasons for this, firstly this story is sometimes taught as the one thing Jesus did wrong, scripture disputes this and yet from a child viewpoint it's an easy lesson to learn. Secondly the story is an echo of a time yet to come and so the focus should be on the message of Jesus here, the significance of him being lost for 3 days can be drawn out with older groups.

Main Passage : Luke 2

Inside the temple the priests were moving the bronze water basins and filling the large open space with the rumble of the wheels on the flagstones. A few days ago they could barely move for people in the temple, the city bursting with life as every able Jew flooded Jerusalem's streets. It was quieter now, just a few crowds sat in the shade at the edge of the huge courtyard. As they water basin passed nearby to one gathering the priest moved closer to find out what was happening. He recognised some of the faces that gathered there, scholars and rabbi's sat on the ground in the shade of the pillars listening intently, waiting patiently for their turn to question. Discussions inside the holy walls of God's house like this were not uncommon, often a rabbi would stand or sit on a step and expound the truth to his disciples, others would gather to hear the shared wisdom of the old master.

This group was different though. The place of the rabbi was filled not by an older man in the fine clothes of an accomplished teacher, but by a youth, a boy only just old enough to be counted a man. The priest pushing the water basin, looked at the faces of those surrounding him with astonishment. Many of these men were important teachers, men who would not listen to other arguments, men who would not even listen to each other. Yet here the great sat beside the last of the Passover visitors, the holy and the ordinary mingling freely. He must not linger but once his duties were fulfilled he hurried back over, noticing the crowd had gained a few new faces.

While the youngster was the centre of attention it was clear now that he was also the one asking questions, first to one Rabbi and then another. They were not simple questions, nor those you may expect of a disciple questioning his teacher, but questions that darted around scripture and drew together threads of ideas deep within humanity. When asked the youngster spoke with a look of certainty on his face and his knowledge revealed a wisdom deeper than his years. The call to prayer came and the crowd shuffled to kneel and give devotion to their maker before settling again their faces turned back towards the boy.

The day passed and dusk drew the shadows across the courtyard but still they sat. Weary and stiff from such long discussions and yet reluctant to leave. Finally the crowd moved away, the boy yawning. A kind face moved in and offered him a hot meal nearby. That night the priest could not sleep for what he had heard, he woke before his household and rushed back to the temple in hopes of seeing the youngster once more. After circling the courtyard twice and beginning to give up hope the priest saw a man who looked like the one who had offered the youth food. As he rushed over he saw the young boy was sitting down behind him.

"I hope your parents find you soon, I wish I could stay but I cannot" the man said to the child, "Thank you for your kindness, bless you" came the reply and the man turned and walked away. Before the priest could move closer a small crowd rushed up and the conversations continued as if there had been no break for sleep. People came and went, faces changed but for 3 days the boy sat and talked with whomever would join him.

As the shadows were lengthening on the third day a young couple appeared at the doorway, their eyes searching with panic. The mothers eyes flickered with recognition as they landed on the crowd and the youngster paused mid sentence to meet her gaze. "My parents have come" he said simply and standing up, walked through those seated towards the couple.

In the silence that followed everyone heard the voice of the mother rise up, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." recognising the crowd was still listening the youngster spoke clearly in response; "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

And they were gone. The crowd drifted apart. Try as the priest might all he could find out is that the youngster's name was Jesus, a popular and common name at the time. But the words that he had heard lived inside him like no other teaching had, and the way Jesus had called the temple 'his fathers house' made him look, eagerly, every year following, for the face in the Passover crowds.

Today's hero is Young Jesus, he shows us the gift of YOUTH.