

# Swedenborgian Sunday School Notes for the Revised Common Lectionary

## Luke 2:40–52 • The Boy Jesus at the Temple

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Luke 2:40–52 . . . . . The boy Jesus at the temple  
1 Samuel 2:18–20, 26 . . . . Samuel at the temple

### Overview

This passage from Luke is the only picture the Bible gives us of the Lord’s childhood. In it, we see Jesus looking to his heavenly Father, but still obeying his earthly parents. The story gives us an excellent opportunity to discuss with the children issues of respecting and obeying our parents, and how that relates to respecting and obeying the Lord.

### Key Points

- The Lord is our true and highest Parent.
- Respecting and listening to our parents helps us to respect and listen to the Lord.
- If we long to understand things in order to live well, the Lord will give us the answers we seek.

### Example for Teaching Children

Have any of you ever gotten lost, and your parents had to come find you? (*Let them tell any stories.*) How do you think your parents may have felt when they were looking for you? If you were really lost, they were probably very worried! They love you, and they want to know that you are okay.

Today’s Bible reading is about a time when Jesus was twelve years old. He and his family had taken a trip to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast. But when his family’s group left for home, Jesus stayed behind. His parents didn’t realize he was missing until they had already been traveling for a whole day.

They were worried, especially since it took them three days to find him. But Jesus didn’t think he was lost. He was at the temple, learning from the teachers there—and teaching them some things, too!

When his parents scolded him for giving them such a scare, he said something they didn’t understand: “Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you know I had to be about my Father’s business?”

Let’s see if we can figure out what he was talking about. First, who do you think he meant when he talked about his Father? Was it Joseph? (*Pause*) Jesus knew that his real father was God! And by sitting at the temple, learning from the teachers and challenging them, he was “doing his father’s business.” He was learning how to teach people about God.

Is God *our* Father, too? (*Pause*) How can we “do our Father’s business”? (*Discuss. Be sure to mention learning about God, learning the Bible, learning what is right and wrong, living a good and kind life.*) If we love God as our divine Parent, we will want to learn what God can teach us. And God will help us learn everything we need to know to live a good life.

Should we listen to our parents here on earth, too? Why? (*Discuss*) Those are good reasons to listen to our parents! They love us, and their job is to guide us and teach us so that we will grow up to be good and happy people. Jesus set a good example by going home and obeying his parents.

There’s another reason to respect our parents. When we get used to respecting and listening to our parents, as we grow older and become adults, it will be much easier for us to honor and obey the Lord. And that is the best way for us to be happy forever!

### Basic Correspondences

searching = longing to learn the truth  
the temple = spiritual truth in us  
father = the Lord

### Thoughts from Swedenborg

Since “twelve” means all things, and is spoken of true ideas that come from good, which make the church, when the Lord was twelve years old he left his father and mother and stayed in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions (Luke 2:42–46). This refers to the initiation and introduction of his human side into everything that has to do with heaven and the church. This is why he said, when he was found: “Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49). *Apocalypse Explained* #430.16

*People* think of “father and mother” as their father and mother on earth, and all who serve as parent figures; they understand honoring father and mother to mean respecting and obeying them. But *spiritual angels* think of the Lord as their father and the church as their mother, and they understand honoring them to mean loving them. And *heavenly angels* think of the Lord’s divine love as their father, and the Lord’s divine wisdom as their mother, and they understand honoring them to mean doing good things from the Lord. *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* #67