



MINISTER
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*First Sunday after Christmas
December 31, 2006*

Luke 2:41-52

Whose Child is This?

Intro: Our new testament lesson provides the only glimpse of Jesus as a boy. We have just celebrated the birth of Jesus, now we fast forward twelve years and see him as a young man. Our reading is from Luke 2: 41-52.

One of the favorite stories my parents like to retell around Christmas involves a trip to see the huge Christmas tree at the State capital many years ago. Picture Mom, Dad, five kids, all packing into a station wagon (no mini-vans back then) and heading downtown. Things all seem fine at first, but then imagine this moment turning anxious, as a four-year old little boy becomes separated from his parents and begins to wail frantically at the top of

Jesus understood at least some of his “dual parentage” at this point. When Mary and Joseph found him in the temple he says to his parents why are you worried about me, did you not know I would be in my fathers house? Jesus was asking questions of the scribes and discussing many things with them. How many twelve year olds would you expect to find in church by themselves? And what did he mean in my father’s house?

Joseph and Mary did not fully understand all this. They were just struggling to be good parents. They are seen here having to deal with the consequences of being the ones chosen to parent the Christ, they were the first ones living with the joy and the problem of the incarnation. Here is the son of God right in front of them, learning and growing from them. They took him home and he was obedient to them. He was their child, but he came for all, and always he belonged to God.

It is only after the resurrection that we can what it means that God came and dwelled among us, that Jesus was flesh and blood and human in every way. It is only then that we value that Jesus knew all the difficulties we know of growing up, and growing into our own faith. A faith that others may not understand, or appreciate. But a faith that calls us to be in community with others, asking our questions and seeking answers that we must claim as our own. Jesus did that, he

grew and then knew what he was called to do, how he was to live .

This passage is not so much a “lost and found” story. It is one that we all need to hear because it tells of the struggle and development of faith. It means learning from others and learning from God. We see in this story how Jesus was growing in wisdom, he was sitting and listening to the teachers in the temple, and asking them questions. He wasn’t a ready made God at his birth. He was born, he needed to be cared for and raised in a specific time and place, human parents. He was very much influenced by the times in which he lived. He had to grow up.

And so do we. We too are growing in wisdom and favor. We have learned much from our parents, and teachers, but we too have someone waiting with outstretched arms waiting to claim us as beloved children. In a moment we will baptize children who are just starting to learn about God and claim their place in God’s family of grace. It is a time for us to remember that we are also children of God. In this New Year, may we each experience and embrace that truth in new and wonderful ways. Amen.