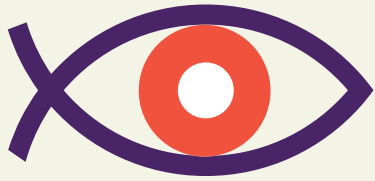


**SEEING
THROUGH
THE EYES OF
JESUS**

**YOUTH
CURRICULUM
SESSION 1**

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SEEING THROUGH THE EYES OF JESUS

Calling us back to
the central focus of
our Christian faith:
The Risen and
Living Jesus!

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SESSION 1

SCRIPTURE:

Luke 2:41-52
Matthew 14:22-33

MAIN POINT:

Seeing through the eyes of Jesus requires us to be aware of where Jesus is in our midst and working in our lives.



INTRODUCTION:

Today, we're going to dive into a story that may be familiar. It is the story of Jesus remaining in the temple while his family journeys away from Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph, Jesus' parents, notice he is missing and search frantically for him among their travel party before finally retracing their steps to find him in the temple. Before we begin to dive into our Scripture, let's orient ourselves by considering both sides of the issue:

- Have you ever been so focused on what you were doing that you missed the message that a loved one or your group was leaving? What was it like to feel "left behind"? What kept your attention so that you weren't with the others?

- Have you ever lost something important that you assumed you knew where it was? How did it feel to realize the item had gone missing? How did you act in response?

Whether picturing yourself as Jesus, busy doing something important and remaining behind, or as Mary and Joseph, forgetting something precious and tirelessly searching for it, there's something to learn for all of us. Let's see what Scripture might say to us today.



SCRIPTURE INTERPRETATION:

Luke 2:41-52; Matthew 14:22-33

This passage covers the incredible story of Jesus remaining in the temple while his family traveled from Jerusalem back to Nazareth following Passover. In modern times, we might overlook the amount of time for which he was missing. This wasn't just a step away from one's parents in the grocery store. Rather, Jesus is missing for almost a week, absent from his family who may have assumed he was somewhere among the traveling throng. These two facts highlight perhaps what is most convicting about this passage: Jesus is missing AND they (his parents) are unaware. That's where we come in.

Now, separated from the human Christ by thousands of years, we can devote ourselves to study, prayer, worship and service, and yet still forget to look for the risen Christ in and

around us. We focus on what we are doing, forgetting the fact that Jesus remains among us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Further, like Mary and Joseph, when we find ourselves in a moment in which we need Jesus, our response often is to assume that we were abandoned. In that posture, we forget our duty to actively seek a relationship with Jesus.

In our current world, there are so many things that call for the attention of students: school, sports, extracurricular clubs, bustling schedules, and the ever-present influence of social media and the pressures to appear perfect for one's peers. This study, *Seeing Through the Eyes of Jesus*, begins with a call to recalibrate, to remember the importance of focusing on Jesus and acting in accordance with God's will alongside a risen Savior. Doing so requires cultivating or rejuvenating a relationship with Jesus and working to remain focused on Christ's influence in our daily lives.



ACTIVITY:

Have everyone who is willing to participate remove one shoe and place it in a pile slightly removed from the group. Mix up the pile without the participants watching. Then, instruct the youth to find his or her shoe as quickly as possible, put it on and return to their seat. Have a prize on hand to give to the "winner" for added incentive.

Debriefing questions:

- What was it like to try to move while missing one of your shoes? Could you still function even though it was gone?
- How might it feel to go a whole day at school with only one shoe?
- How did it feel to finally find your shoe and to put it on again?



DISCUSSION:

There are many things that might draw our attention away from Jesus. These may be good, important things that just happen to absorb our thoughts: school, sports, clubs or other activities that use our gifts or help us grow. Such activities may help us grow or stay healthy mentally, physically and emotionally. We can be so caught up, however, that we forget to pay attention to our spiritual health—our relationship with God and trying to live the way we believe God calls us to live.

- What are some of the things that keep you busy?
- What are some busy times of your semester that are either really exciting or super anxiety-producing?
 - How do those moments make you feel?
 - Does anything seem missing?

Sometimes, we can be so caught up in our list of to-dos or our routine of activities that our faith can become just another item to check off. Going to church, attending youth events, or even remembering quiet time to seek God can become just one more thing. In those moments, we may go through the motions of being present—we may even pay close attention and learn something we hope to apply to our daily lives—but we can also forget that our faith is based on

a relationship with God through Jesus. Following Jesus isn't just about making sure we've done certain things; rather it focuses on trying to understand how Jesus interacted with others, how he shared the love of God, and then our trying to do those things each day.

- Has coming to church or attending youth events ever felt like a chore?
- What was going on in your life that might have caused you to think it was just another thing to get done?
- We hope to feel renewed by spending time with God.
 - How did you feel when attendance or participation felt like one more “to-do”?
 - Did you feel closer to God during that experience?

Over the coming weeks, we're going to unpack this idea more, to try and better understand how we might sometimes be doing what is right and yet still forget about or feel separate from God. When we're done, the hope is that you will renew your commitment to following Jesus more closely—not as a checklist, but as a way of living each day.



SMALL GROUP REFLECTION:

Have the youth break into groups of roughly three or four. Instruct them that the goal is for them to be in a group with which they feel comfortable sharing and one that's small enough that each person will have a chance to respond to the questions. Provide the following questions and allow each group to work at their own pace. After a reasonable amount of time, or when most groups seem to be done, draw the group back together for shared discussion around the same questions.

Small Group Questions:

- Describe a time when you misplaced something you needed. What was the item? How did you react?
 - Did you find the item? If so or if not, how did you feel?
- Did you miss out on something else while searching for your missing item?
 - If so, how did it feel to not be able to participate fully in something because you needed to find that item?



PRAYER:

Dear God, there are lots of things that call for our attention. Whether good or bad, it can be hard to focus on how you're trying to lead us. Sometimes, we can even go through the motions and forget that we're supposed to be living our lives alongside the example you gave us through Jesus. Remind us of the importance of focusing on our relationship with Jesus and help us to reorient each day, as best we can, to following your guidance in our lives. AMEN.

ACTION STEPS:

Challenge the youth to take a moment each day to think about how Jesus is with them. Invite them to keep notes or to journal their thoughts. Then, provide an opportunity for sharing these moments in your next meeting.