

**Conversations on
 Luke 2:41–52**

Discuss this passage in light of the commentary below.

Idea! Watch the scene in *Home Alone* (1990; PG) where the family is frantically trying to get out the door and then finally realizes Kevin’s missing. Discuss: How is this similar to Jesus getting left behind? How might Mary’s reaction have compared to Kevin’s mother’s reaction?

WHAT is important to know?

The Jesus who appears in this narrative thus recalls the roots of Christianity in the history of Israel. The story shows Jesus to be fully human in his maturation in wisdom and in stature, anticipating his total dedication to the mission with which his Father has entrusted him. This temple story also portrays the resulting necessities under which Jesus fulfills that mission, from this early announcement of the necessity of being in his Father’s house to the subsequent necessities of his ministry: preaching the kingdom of God (4:43), casting out demons and performing cures (13:32–33), and finally suffering many things, being killed, and being raised from the dead (9:22; 17:25; 22:37; 24:7, 26). *(Paul J. Achtemeier)*

- ✧ What is the significance of Jesus’ parents not understanding him (v. 50)?
- ✧ How does this story recall “the roots of Christianity in the history of Israel”?
- ✧ How is it possible for Jesus’ family to be unaware that he wasn’t with them on the journey home?

WHERE is God in these words?

That the incarnation took this shape in the life of the holy family gives hope for families of all kinds and conditions on this day. The model of living that the holy family offers is not, as is sometimes depicted in romantic paintings and portraits, that of a family perfectly ordered and without division or differences. Rather, it is of a family that lives into messy moments with the confidence that God in Christ Jesus has entered and redeems them from within. *(William J. Danaher Jr)*

- ✧ What is the consequence of Jesus’ claim that he was in his “Father’s house” (v. 49)?
- ✧ How can this Scripture story offer hope to contemporary families?
- ✧ In what ways is Christ present in the messy moments of families?

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

Yet no congregant is truly like Jesus, and his uniqueness seems the seminal aspect of this story. Just as Luke’s birth narrative revealed Jesus’ special position, this story provides a transitional marker emphasizing his growing self-knowledge of his need to be in his “Father’s house” (v. 49). Later, when visiting Jerusalem at the end of his life, Luke reports that Jesus returns to the temple to drive out those who were selling things, saying, “My house shall be a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers” (Luke 19:46). His Father’s house is his house too and demands his attention. Where is our attention? *(Stephen Bauman)*

- ✧ What are the transitional markers in your life that point to experiences of growth in self-knowledge?
- ✧ As Stephen Bauman asks, where is your attention?

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

On this Sunday after Christmas preachers might find parallels in the local church, where those who are not our kin sometimes see things in us that our kin cannot. What young person will not welcome the good news that parents do not know everything? Parents may also profit from the reminder that there are other adults in the community of faith to look after their children when those children seem lost to their own families. Finally, there may be Simeons or Annas sitting there just waiting for permission to say what they see when they look at the children of this congregation. *(Barbara Brown Taylor)*

- ✧ What do you see when you look at the children of your congregation? When can you convey this information to the rest of the congregation?
- ✧ How can you be a faithful supporter of young people who “seem lost to their own families”?
- ✧ How can your congregation listen and respond to what people outside of your congregation say about your congregation?

Amazing God, thank you for your presence among us today as we explore your holy Word. Challenge us to put our faith into action in the week ahead. Amen.