

# **RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN**

## **GOLDEN TEXT**

“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man”.  
(Luke 2:52)

## **USEFUL PRACTICE**

God's will is for parents to raise their children according to divine principles, so that they can grow up in a healthy and balanced way.

## **SCRIPTURE READING**

### **Luke 2:40, 42-52**

40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom.

43 After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.

44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends.

45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.

48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

## **LESSON OBJECTIVES**

- I) To reveal** how normal Jesus' family was;
- II) To approach** the phases of Jesus' life as the Gospels show them;
- III) To explain** the threefold development of the Lord Jesus.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Lord Jesus was born into a normal family. He had Joseph as his father and Mary as his mother. God spoke to Joseph in a dream concerning Mary's virginal conception through the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, he became the adoptive father of Jesus. The child conceived in Mary's womb was indeed "the Word [who] became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). In this lesson, we will study the development of Jesus in the family of Joseph and Mary, his parents. Our purpose is to draw lessons from the house of our Lord that will help us with today's family challenges.

### **I – A NORMAL FAMILY**

**1. General data about the family.** Joseph and Mary were descended from the royal family of David (Luke 2:4, 5), from the root of Jesse (Isa. 11:1). Their marriage took place after the angel of the Lord revealed to Joseph that his bride was pregnant and the child in her womb was begotten of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18-25). Later, Joseph only had sexual relations with

Mary after the birth of Jesus. We can infer this from the account of the Evangelist Matthew: “When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.” (Matt. 1:24, 25).

**2. The children of Joseph and Mary, after Jesus.** Jesus was the firstborn son of Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:7). The Bible records that his parents had other children later on: James, Joseph, Judas, Simon and at least more than one sister (Mark 6:3). His brothers did not accept him as the Messiah and, therefore, rejected him (John 7:1-5). Only after his resurrection did his brothers accept and welcome him. James, perhaps the most unbelieving of them, became a follower of Christ and, even though he was not one of the apostles, he became the main leader of the church in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 15:7).

## **II – THE WAY JESUS WAS BROUGHT UP**

**1. Jesus, the special son.** Even though Jesus was special, Joseph and Mary never treated the other children with contempt. They knew there was something special about the life of the firstborn, for it had been revealed to them that he would be the Savior, the Son of God (Luke 1:35). In this sense, Joseph and Mary knew how to manage this difference, without diminishing the other brothers. We will get to know better the way in which our Lord developed, according to his humanity, by analyzing the phases of his life: childhood, adolescence, and youth.

**2. The childhood of Jesus.** After being born in Bethlehem of Judea (Luke 2:4, 7; Mic. 5:1, 2), our Lord was placed in a trough for animal food; it was not a royal palace object, for his parents had no alternative. After eight days, Joseph and Mary took the boy for circumcision and named him Jesus (2:21). All the treatment that Jesus received was similar to that of other boys born in Israel. Our Lord had a childhood like any boy in Judea. He grew and developed under the care of his parents. As for food, protection, mental and physical health, and especially spiritual life, He needed the care of His parents. Our Lord had to leave his land temporarily, having to go to Egypt to escape King Herod (Matt. 2:13, 14), until he later returned to the land of Israel together with his parents (Matt. 2:20, 21).

**3. The adolescence of Jesus.** In the Gospel of Luke, the biblical text declares that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52). In the Bible, the information we have about Jesus' adolescence was his experience at the age of 12, in Jerusalem, with the teachers of the Law (Luke 2:46). At this age, the Jewish boy was introduced to religious life and became a “son of the law” (*Bar Mitzvah*). The trip of

Jesus to Jerusalem with his family took place because of the observance of religious duties, such as participating in the three most important festivals in Israel: Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles (Ex. 23:14-17; 34:23; Deut. 16:16). The whole celebration lasted seven days and then everyone would return to their cities. Our Lord's parents did not imagine that Jesus would be left behind. After three days, they found him in the Temple courts talking and arguing with the teachers of the Law. These, in turn, were amazed at the wisdom of that teenager.

**4. The youth of Jesus.** From the age of 12 to the age of 30, Jesus' adolescence and youth are virtually unknown. The only piece of information that history gives us is what is revealed in the Gospels. After the experience with the teachers of the Law in Jerusalem, the Bible only reports that Jesus reappeared when he was already 30 years old, when he was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. All that is known about these hidden years of Jesus' life is that He learned the trade of carpentry from Joseph and practiced it until he was 30, since Joseph had already died (Mark 6:3). It is possible that Jesus was responsible for supporting the family during those years, and when the age that the Father established to start his ministry arrived, He left everything behind and gathered the disciples, who became the apostles, who would make his Gospel known. .

### **III – THE THREEFOLD DEVELOPMENT OF JESUS**

The Gospel of Luke 2:51, 52 says this: “Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

**1. Jesus grew in wisdom.** Jesus got an upbringing that any Jewish boy would receive. He learned to read and write, lived a simple life, as his family was poor. Our Lord grew in wisdom, that is, his relationship with the Father, his principles of life and willingness to solve problems were worthy of a wise person. This is certainly why Luke coined the word “wisdom” before “stature” (Luke 2:52).

**2. Jesus grew in stature.** The word "stature" refers to the physical growth of the boy Jesus, because the text is in the context of our Lord's physical growth. Jesus lived in Nazareth until he was 30 years old; he was the average height of any Jew. His body was normal and healthy. No wonder, Jesus was successful in the work of carpentry (Mark 6:1-3).

**3. Jesus grew in favor with God and man.** Favor with God the Father had to do with Jesus' awareness of his nature and mission (John 1:1, 14). This awareness can be seen in the episode in which his parents found him

in the Temple courts arguing with the teachers of the Law. He kindly replied to his parents, "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49). Favor with man, on the other hand, had to do with his charismatic personality, in the sense of attracting people to listen to his message. Our Lord's charisma was revealed when he opened his mouth to speak of the Kingdom of God. Looking at the development of Jesus in his family, we can learn that Christian parenting is about emotional, social, and especially spiritual development."

**4. Important lessons.** Looking at the development of Jesus in his family, we can learn that raising Christian children has to do with emotional, social and, above all, spiritual development. Parents need to be aware that it is their responsibility to provide the right environment for their children to develop in a healthy and general way. Another outstanding factor is the wisdom of Jesus' parents in not showing favoritism to their children. For example, Mary's simplicity in "treasuring all these things in her heart" reveals a discreet, not rash, and balanced personality (Luke 2:51). Balance and common sense cannot be lacking in the upbringing of our children.

## **CONCLUSION**

The family of Jesus is an example of good family formation. With regard to parents, we learn to be balanced, thoughtful and not to show favoritism to our children. With regard to children, our Lord was obedient and caring for his parents in all things. May our family be an environment conducive to the spiritual, emotional and social development of our children!