

DECEMBER 26, 2021
FIRST SUNDAY
AFTER CHRISTMAS



Jesus grew in divine and human approval.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Luke 2:41-52	The boy Jesus at the temple
Monday	1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26	Samuel at Shiloh
Tuesday	Colossians 3:12-17	The new life in Christ
Wednesday	Galatians 1:10-24	How Paul became an apostle
Thursday	Exodus 24:1-8	The people agree to obey God
Friday	1 Corinthians 4:1-5	Ministry of the apostles
Saturday	Psalms 148	Let all things praise the Lord
Sunday	John 1:1-18	The Word became flesh

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor. Luke 2:52 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, we give you thanks for your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us to grow in wisdom and in the knowledge of your grace. Amen.

Mealttime Prayer:

Praise the Lord! We thank you for all your goodness and mercy, including the gift of this food. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May you grow in grace to know the joy and peace of God's love for you in Christ Jesus, born in Bethlehem.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

Jesus, What a Wonderful Child



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Think or talk about a time you received a compliment for something you did well.
- Think or talk about a time when you felt the divine presence of God in your life.

DEVOTIONS

Read: Luke 2:41-52.

Growth is a part of life. That growth can be physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. What was it like for Jesus to grow up both human and divine? Amazingly, in the four New Testament Gospels, only this childhood story from Jesus' life exists. It says quite a bit: Jesus lived in a community of care with parents and other adults; he grew up as a Jew, going with his family to Jerusalem for the Passover; he experienced tensions with his parents as he explored his faith with elders in the temple; Jesus was obedient to his parents; his mother observed Jesus' development with awe; and, Jesus grew and gained wisdom and the approval of God and humans alike. God's unfathomable entry into our world brings divine acceptance of us through a baby, then a child, and finally an adult who brings God's saving work for all.

Discuss: What questions do you have about what it was like for Jesus to be fully human yet fully divine?

Pray: **Awesome God, for what we understand and what we cannot understand about all that you have done for us in love, we give you thanks through Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme this week, in what ways can you reflect the love of Jesus to others?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Christmas is a season of twelve days. St. Francis of Assisi is credited with making the first nativity scene on Christmas Eve in the year 1223. He is also known for his love of animals and birds and felt they should be remembered during Christmas because they were present at the birth of Jesus. Consider decorating a tree or bush outside with popcorn or pinecones rolled in peanut butter and bird seed. Enjoy watching God's creatures around you.

Pray: **Dear Lord, we praise you for all creation. We praise you for mountains and hills, for fruit trees and cedars, for wild animals and cattle, for creeping things, and flying birds. Amen.** (Psalm 148)



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