

Commandment 4: Jesus in the Temple

“Honor your father and your mother”

Exodus 20:12; Luke 2:42-52

Goal:

This lesson teaches the fourth commandment through the story of Jesus, at age twelve, staying in the temple in Jerusalem talking with the elders—doing His Father’s business. When Mary and Joseph found Him, Jesus went home with them and was subject to them.

Process:

Choose activities for the 4 parts of the lesson from the chart below. For multi-aged groups, teach the lesson to the entire group and select activities that suit your students. Online Extras provide additional activity choices.

Lesson Overview

Lesson Parts	Activities	Materials Given	Supplies Needed
1. Introduction (2-3 minutes)	All Ages <i>The Fourth Commandment</i>	introduction p. 2	
2. Readings & Questions (5-7 minutes)	All Ages select readings for your group	readings pp. 2-3 questions p. 4 talk-about picture p. 5	Bible for ages 11-14
3. Activities choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes) Note: Activity ages are approximate. Choose activities that will work for your group.	Ages 3-6 <i>Mary and Joseph Look for Jesus</i> puppet project	directions p. 6 <i>Jesus, Mary & Joseph</i> <i>Figures</i> p. 7	Scissors; tape; markers or crayons; puppet handles, e.g. popsicle sticks, pencils cardboard strips, plastic spoons, etc.
	Ages 7-10 <i>Jesus in the Temple</i> diorama	directions p. 8 <i>Temple Scene</i> p. 9 <i>Roadway Scene</i> p. 10 <i>Mary & Joseph</i> p. 11	scissors, tape, markers or crayons
	Ages 11-14 <i>Honoring Father and Mother</i> discussion activity	directions p. 12 <i>Honoring Parents on Different Levels</i> p. 13	pens or pencils
	Ages 3-10 picture to color	<i>Jesus in the Temple</i> p. 14	crayons or markers
4. Closing & Recitation (2-3 minutes)	All Ages Wrap-up	<i>Recitation Slips</i> p. 15	scissors or paper cutter
Online Extras	All Ages additional activities	online links p. 15	various

Introduction: The Fourth Commandment

The first part of the fourth commandment was written partially on the first tablet of stone, and it was completed on the second tablet of the Ten Commandments. It connects the laws about loving the Lord, on the first table, with the laws about loving the neighbor, on the second table. The commandment tells us to

4. Honor your father and your mother. Exodus 20:12

Do you know what the word “honor” means? (to respect and love)

The Lord gives us mothers and fathers to care for us, and it is good to honor them for their care. However, the mother and father we are to honor are more than just our parents. We sometimes say the country where we are born is our “motherland” or “fatherland”. Like our parents, our country feeds and protects us. It does many things for us that we cannot do for ourselves. And the Lord is the Father of all people. We call Him our “heavenly Father”. Each time we say the Lord’s Prayer we start with the words “Our Father”. Did you know that we also have a “heavenly Mother”? It is our Church, where we learn the wonderful ideas the Lord teaches in His Word.

- In what ways might you honor your earthly mother and father? Why is this important?
- In what ways might you honor your “heavenly” Father and Mother? How can honoring your heavenly Father and Mother bring happiness?

Our story today is about a time when Jesus honored His Heavenly Father *and* His earthly mother, Mary, and also Joseph, who cared for Him like a father on earth.

Reading Ages 3-6: Jesus in the Temple

This is a short retelling of the story for young children. To tell the story in your own words using a picture, see the talk-about picture on p. 5.

When the Lord lived on earth people went to Jerusalem each year for a special celebration called the feast of the Passover. They walked a long way to the feast with their friends and relatives.

When Jesus was twelve years old, Mary and Joseph took Him to Jerusalem for the feast. After eight days it was time to go home. Mary and Joseph started walking, but they did not see Jesus. There were so many people traveling together that they thought He was with friends or relatives. They walked for a whole day. At night Mary and Joseph looked for Jesus but could not find Him! They looked and looked, and they became worried. So, they hurried back to Jerusalem to look for Him there.

They searched for three days. Finally, they found Jesus in the temple. He was sitting with the grown-up teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Do you know how Jesus knew so much? He was the Lord God! Mary and Joseph were glad to see Jesus, but they asked, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have been looking for You.”

Jesus answered, “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” Mary and Joseph did not know what He meant, but we can know. The Lord is so amazing that He could be Jesus down on earth and the Father in heaven, at the same time. So Jesus was doing what the Father in heaven wanted—learning from the Word.

Then, Jesus went back home with Mary and Joseph, and did as they told Him. He lived there until He grew up and started to teach all people about God and heaven.

Reading Ages 7-10: Jesus in the Temple

New Church Concept

Teacher Background

The commandments were declared not only for those in the world but also for those in heaven. For in heaven the Lord is in place of 'father' and His kingdom in place of 'mother'. Since 'father and mother' means the Lord and His kingdom this commandment surpasses in holiness those that come after it. See *Arcana Coelestia* 8899.2

"Honoring one's father and mother means venerating and loving God and the church. In this sense father means God, who is the Father of all, and mother means the church. Children and angels in the heavens know of no other father or mother, since the Lord causes them to be born anew there by means of the church.... The reason why mother in the spiritual sense means the church, is that just as a mother on earth feeds her children with natural food, so does the church with spiritual food." *True Christian Religion* 306

A retelling of the story for children.

When Jesus was twelve years old His family walked from their home in Nazareth to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. This feast had been commanded by the Lord so that the children of Israel would remember the miraculous way that He had saved them from slavery in Egypt. Each family sacrificed a lamb and celebrated with a special meal. The feast lasted for eight days.

When the feast ended, Mary and Joseph started walking home with their family and friends. Because so many people were traveling together, they did not know Jesus was not with them. They walked for a whole day. When they were getting ready to settle down for the night, they looked for Jesus but could not find Him anywhere. They began to worry about where He was, about what might have happened to Him. So they turned back to Jerusalem to look for Him there.

For three days they searched. Finally, they caught sight of Him in the temple. He was sitting in the middle of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

Like other children, Jesus needed to learn. But He learned more quickly and understood things better than other children. Everyone who heard Him was impressed by how well He understood the Word and answered questions. When Mary and Joseph saw Him, they were amazed. His mother said, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have been looking for You."

Jesus said, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Mary and Joseph did not understand what He said. They did not know that Jesus had important work to do. He needed to learn and understand everything about the Word! You see, Jesus and the Father were the same person. When Jesus talked about His Father, He was talking about the inner Goodness inside Himself. He needed to learn from the Word so He could teach and heal people when He grew up.

After Mary and Joseph came to the temple, Jesus returned to Nazareth with them and obeyed them or was "subject" to them. He honored His mother, Mary, and Joseph, who acted as His earthly father. Jesus' mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and people.

Reading Ages 11-14: Jesus in the Temple

Read Luke 2:42-52 or use the retelling above.

Questions Ages 3-6

1. Why did Mary and Joseph take Jesus to Jerusalem? (To celebrate the feast of the Passover.)
2. Why were Mary and Joseph worried on their way home? (They could not find Jesus.)
3. Where did Mary and Joseph find Jesus? (In the temple in Jerusalem.)
4. What did Jesus do when Mary and Joseph asked Him to come home with them? (He obeyed them.)
5. How can we act like Jesus did? (We can obey or honor our parents.)

Questions Ages 7-10

1. How often did Mary and Joseph go to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the Passover? (Once a year.)
2. What special food did people eat during Passover? (Lamb)
3. How long was the feast of Passover? (Eight days)
4. Why did Mary and Joseph leave Jerusalem without Jesus? (There were many people traveling together; they thought He was with family and friends.)
5. When did Mary and Joseph discover Jesus was missing? (At the end of a day of traveling.)
6. How did Mary and Joseph react when they found Jesus in the temple? (They asked why He had stayed.)
7. Why had Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem? (He needed to learn from the Word so He could carry out His heavenly Father's business.)
8. How did Jesus respond to Mary and Joseph? (He returned to Nazareth and was subject to—obedient to—them.)

Questions Ages 11-14

1. Why did the children of Israel celebrate the feast of the Passover? (The Lord commanded them to remember the angel of the Lord “passing over” their homes and their miraculous escape from Egypt.) They celebrated the Passover in Jerusalem because families sacrificed a “Paschal Lamb” for the feast. The temple was the only place dedicated for sacrifice and worship.
2. Why did Jesus stay behind in Jerusalem? (To learn from the Word. Jesus came on earth to fight evil. He needed to learn true ideas from the Word to do that, just as we do.)
3. After Mary and Joseph found Him, Jesus returned and was “subject” to them. Why did He do this? (He was honoring those who acted as His natural parents.) In what ways is honoring parents a spiritual as well as a natural act? (We are to love and obey our earthly parents, but we are also to love the Lord, our heavenly Father, and the church, our heavenly mother.)
4. “Honor your father and your mother” is the first part of the fourth commandment. The rest of it is, “*that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.*” What “land” does the Lord give us if we obey this command? (Our “promised land” is heaven.) The Lord brings us heavenly peace and joy when we love and honor Him. Honoring the Lord prepares us to love our neighbor as ourselves. The rules for doing this are on the second table of the Ten Commandments.)



Harold Copping

Ages 3-6: Mary and Joseph Look for Jesus

Materials Needed

Jesus, Mary and Joseph Figures; tape; crayons or markers; stick to hold puppet, e.g. popsicle stick, strip of cardboard, plastic spoon

Prepare in Advance

Print a copy of the *Jesus, Mary and Joseph Figures* for each child. For a young group, cut puppets apart on the dashed line. Gather other materials.

Mary and Joseph looked for Jesus in Jerusalem for three days. Children will make a “Mary and Joseph” puppet and a “Jesus” puppet to act out the story of them finding Jesus in the temple.

1. Give each child a copy of *Jesus, Mary and Joseph Figures* and crayons or markers. Ask children to color the figures.
2. Using scissors, cut the rectangles around the figures out on the solid black lines to create two separate pictures. Fold each picture along the dotted black line.
3. Tape handles inside each puppet figure. Tape edges as needed.
4. Act out the story of Mary and Joseph finding Jesus in the temple. One person, perhaps the teacher, hides “Jesus” in the “temple” while everyone else covers their eyes. You could hide Jesus near the Word, or someplace where He is tricky to find.
5. Take “Mary and Joseph” on a journey to find Jesus in the temple in Jerusalem.
6. Finish the enactment by bringing Jesus back to “Nazareth” where He obeys “Mary and Joseph” until He grows up.

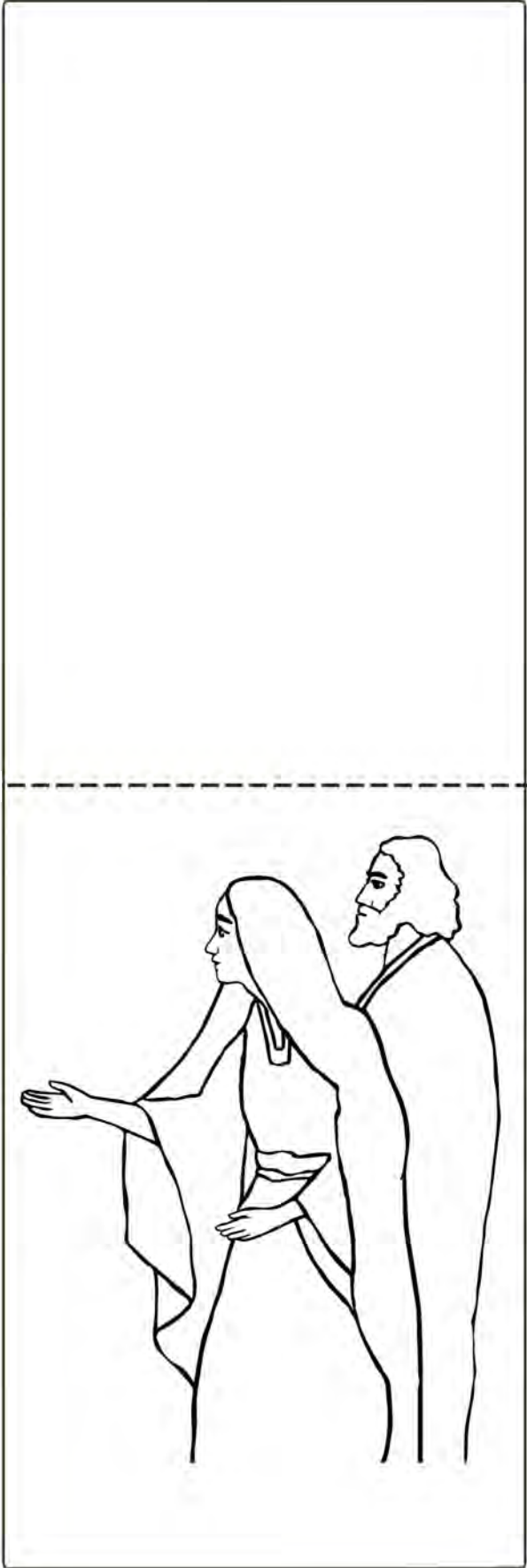
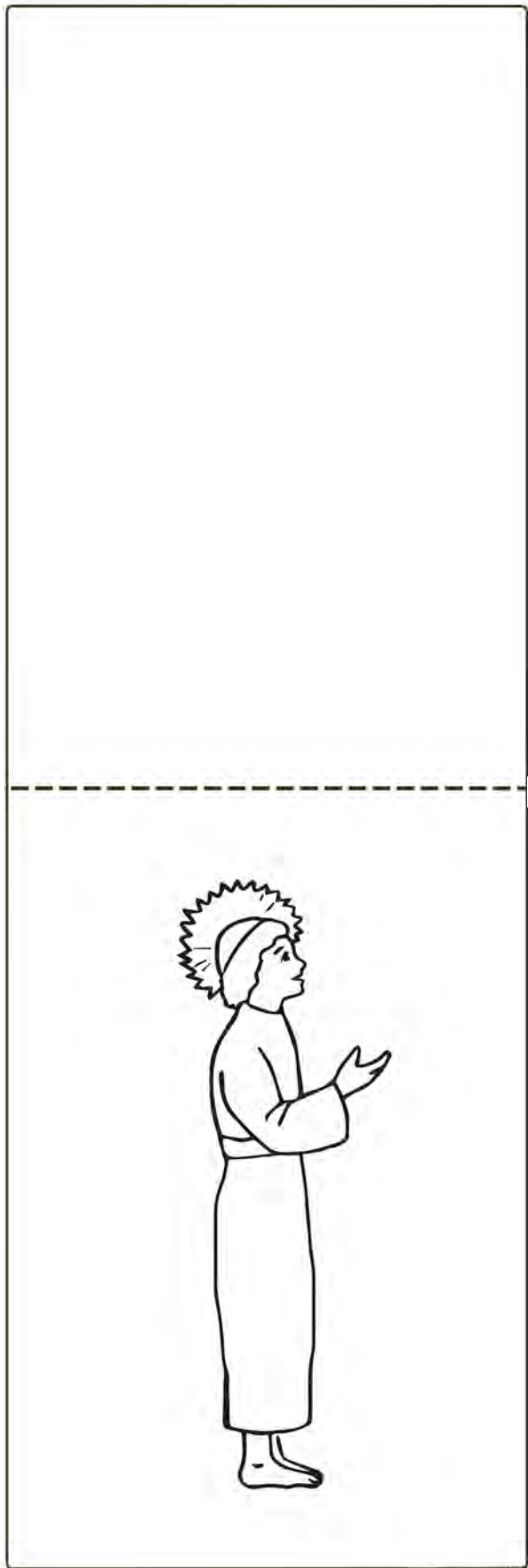


New Church Concept Teacher Background

Since it was God who descended, and since He is Order itself, it was necessary, if He was to become actually human, that He should be conceived, carried in the womb, born, educated, acquire knowledge gradually, and thereby be introduced into intelligence and wisdom. In respect to His Human He was, for this reason, an infant like other infants, a boy like other boys, and so on; with the sole difference that this development was accomplished in Him more quickly, more fully, and more perfectly than in others. See *True Christian Religion* 89

New Church Concept Teacher Background

A Divine-heavenly sphere of love continually goes forth from the Lord toward all these who are obedient to Him, who devote themselves to Him, and who wish to be instructed by Him. From this heavenly sphere, a natural sphere arises, which is one of love towards infants and children. This sphere affects people, birds, beasts and inanimate things. But so that the Lord might operate upon these, even as He operates upon spiritual things, He created a sun to be in the natural world like a father, the earth being like a mother. For the sun is like a common father and the earth like a common mother from the marriage of which all vegetation is produced. From the influx of that heavenly sphere into the natural world, come the marvelous developments of vegetation from seed to fruit, and again to new seed. It is from this also that many kinds of plants turn, as it were, their faces to the sun during the day, and turn them away when the sun sets. It is from this also that there are flowers that open at the rising of the sun and close at his setting. It is from this also that the song-birds sing sweetly at the early dawn, and likewise after they have been fed by their mother earth. Thus all these parts of creation honor their father and mother. They all bear testimony that in the natural world the Lord provides, through the sun and the earth, all necessities both for animate and inanimate things. See *True Christian Religion* 308



Ages 7-10: Jesus in the Temple Diorama

Materials Needed for Each Student

Temple Scene, *Roadway Scene*, 1 *Mary and Joseph* figure (there are 4 per page), scissors, crayons or markers, tape

Prepare in Advance

Print copies of the *Temple Scene*, *Roadway Scene* and *Mary and Joseph* pages. Cut apart the 4 *Mary and Joseph* figures. Collect other supplies.

New Church Concept Teacher Background

"That the Divine is in the Lord's Human as the soul is in the body the Word teaches and testifies in Matthew and in Luke.... This makes clear that the Divine was in the Lord from conception, and that the Divine was His life from the Father, which life is the soul." *Apocalypse Explained* 1104:5

"The one God, who is invisible, came into the world, and took on a human form, not only so that He might redeem humankind, but also so that He might become visible, and thereby conjunction with people might become possible...." *True Christian Religion* 786:2

For three days, Mary and Joseph frantically searched for Jesus before finding Him in the temple. Students will create a diorama to depict the events, moving figures of Mary and Joseph along the road as they look for Jesus, and then discover Him talking with the elders in the temple.

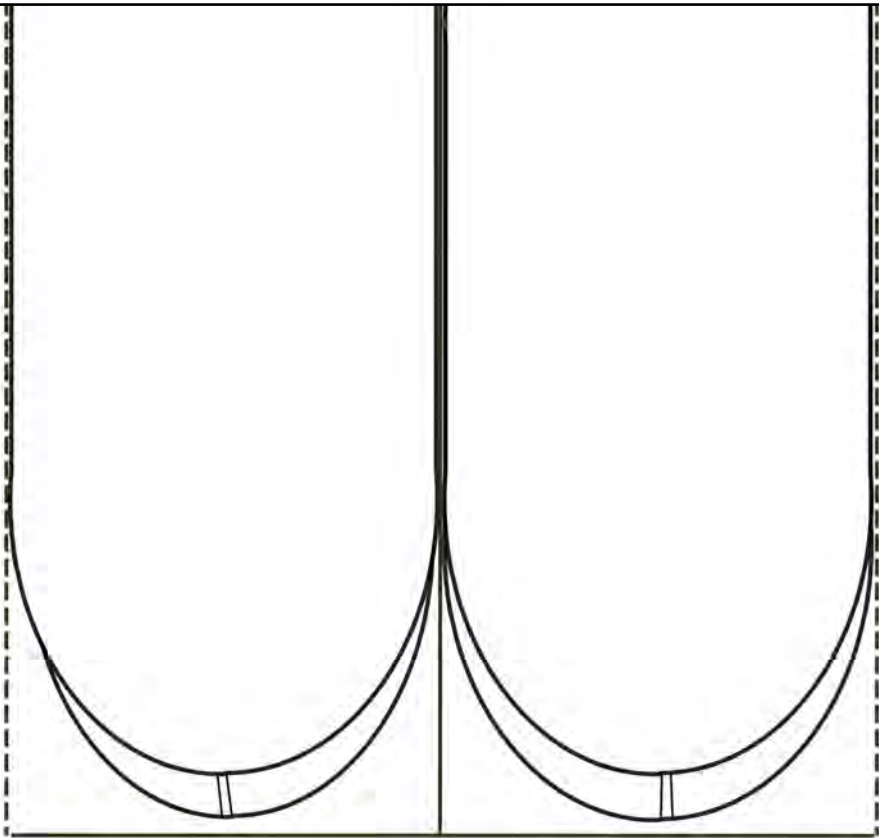


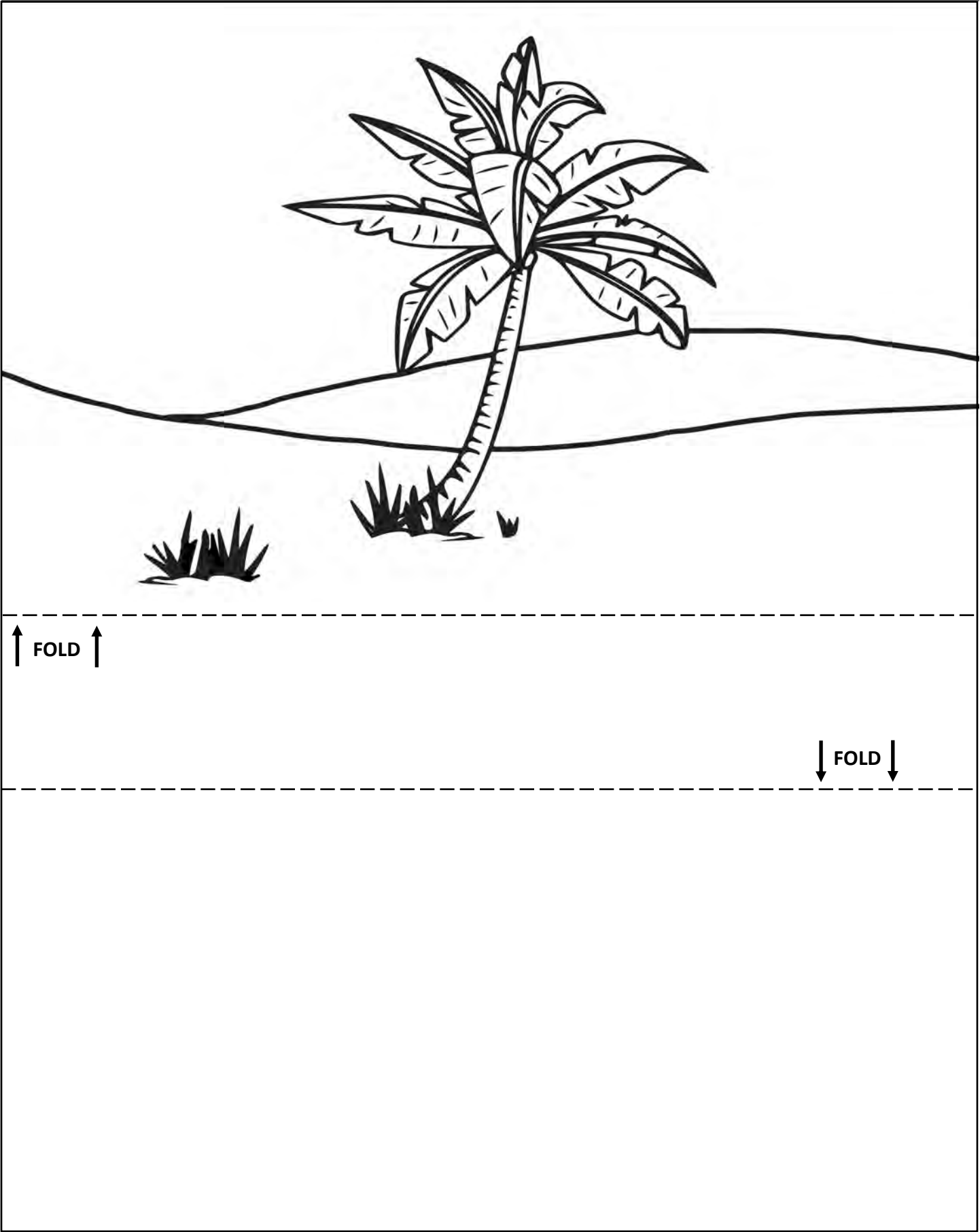
1. Provide each child with a *Temple Scene*, *Roadway Scene* and a *Mary and Joseph*. Hand out markers or crayons. Color the doors of the temple, Jesus speaking with the elders, Mary and Joseph, and the tree.
2. Using scissors, Cut out the rectangles on each page along the solid lines. Then, separate the doors of the temple by cutting a T-shape along the straight black lines. Start at the bottom of the doors and cut up and out, towards each side.
3. Fold temple page in half along the dashed line so the pictures face each other. Open the two sides of the T-shape you cut, folding on the dotted lines, to reveal Jesus in the temple.
4. Tape the palm tree picture to the back of the temple so the tops line up. Tape only along the top.
5. Fold the page with the palm up along the central dotted line. Then fold the page back along the lower dotted line to make a stand. That part of the page should slide under the temple page to form a base. (See pictures above.)
6. Fold Mary and Joseph on the two dotted lines to make a triangle. Tape the bottom of the triangle together so it will stand. Students are now ready to set up their dioramas.

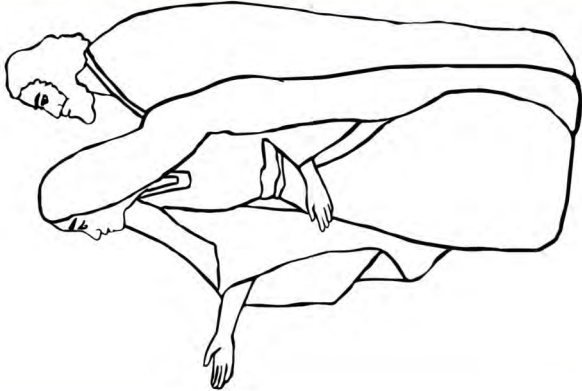
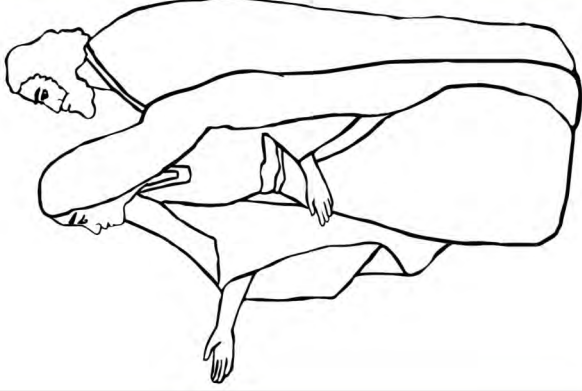
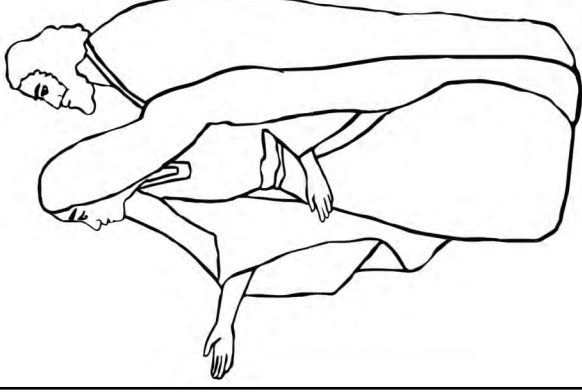
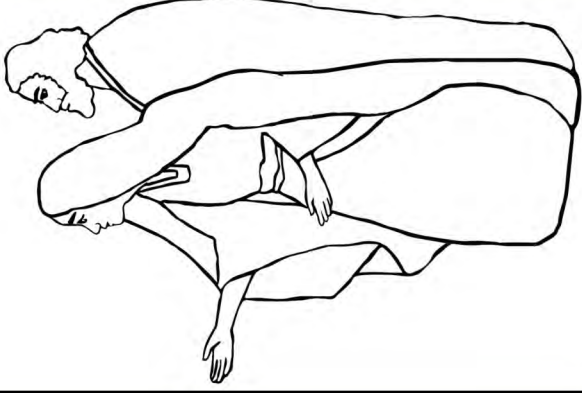


New Church Concept Teacher Background

Among the ancients, journeys meant advancement on an inner level. This is where the Lord's advances into knowledge begin. Like any other person, the Lord learned by instruction. Luke demonstrates this: 'The child grew and became strong in spirit.' (Luke 1:80) Also, 'And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and in favor with God and men.' (Luke 2:52) See *Arcana Coelestia* 1457





Ages 11-14: Honoring Father and Mother

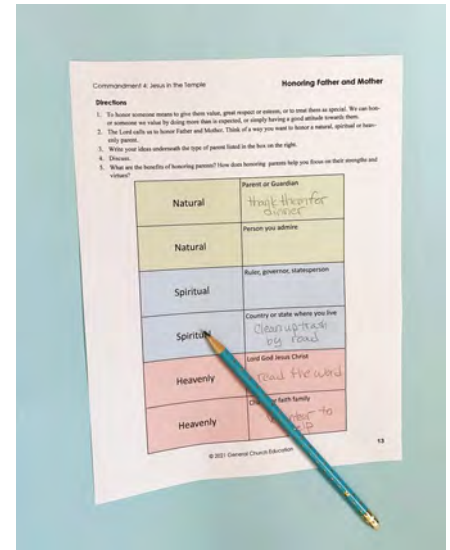
Materials Needed

Honoring Parents on Different Levels, pens or pencils.

Prepare in Advance

Print a copy of *Honoring Parents on Different Levels* for each student.

When the Lord was born He was unlike any other child. His Father was God Himself! He needed to know His Father so He could fulfill His mission: the salvation of the human race. Like us, He studied the Word to learn about His heavenly Father. At age twelve, He went to the temple to learn more. But when Mary, His earthly mother, and Joseph, His earthly guardian, found Him, He returned home and was subject to them. Like the Lord, we have natural parents and a Heavenly Father. We also have “fathers” and “mothers” on other levels as well. This activity explores the idea that we should honor our natural, spiritual and heavenly, or celestial, parents.



New Church Concept

Teacher Background

“People interpret father and mother [in the fourth commandment] to mean their father and mother on earth, as well as those who stand in place of their father and mother. and they interpret the commandment to honor them as meaning to hold them in honor and obey them. Spiritual angels, on the other hand, interpret their father to mean the Lord, and their mother to mean the church, and that to honor them means to love them. Celestial angels, however, interpret their father to mean the Lord's Divine love, and their mother to mean His Divine wisdom, and that to honor them means to do good from Him.” *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* 67

1. What does it mean to be *subject* to your parents? (It means to trust and obey them.)
2. In what ways might Jesus have been *subject to* Mary and Joseph? Why was this important? In what ways was their care important?
3. In what ways are you *subject to* your parents or guardians? In what important ways do parents and guardians care for children in their care?
4. The fourth commandment says we are to *honor* our parents. What does *honoring* someone mean? (to give them great value, great respect or esteem, or to treat as special)
5. Parents and guardians are responsible for a child's earthly welfare. The Writings say we have spiritual parents who also protect our welfare. These are our country and its leaders. In what ways does our country protect us, as parents do? What about its leaders? How might you honor them?
6. Finally, we have heavenly, or celestial, parents—the Lord and the church—who guard our welfare. The Writings say that the church is not really an organization. Rather the church is people who care about and receive the Lord in their hearts. They are our *faith family*. In what ways do the Lord and our faith family protect us? How might we honor them?
7. Hand out the page *Honoring Parents on Different Levels*. Read the directions, and ask students to complete the activity.
8. Invite students to discuss their ideas if they wish to share them.
9. How does honoring parents, our country and the Lord help us? (Hint: It helps you to focus on their strengths and virtues and appreciate the things they do for us!)

Directions

1. To honor someone means to give them value, great respect or esteem, or to treat them as special. We can honor someone we value by doing more than is expected, or simply by having a good attitude towards them.
2. The Lord calls us to honor our Father and Mother. But we have parents on three different levels.
3. Think of a way you want to honor a natural parent, a spiritual parent, and a heavenly parent. Write your ideas underneath the type of parent listed in the boxes below.

Natural	Parent or Guardian
Natural	Person you admire
Spiritual	Ruler, governor, statesperson
Spiritual	Country or state where you live
Heavenly	Lord God Jesus Christ
Heavenly	Church or faith family



Closing & Recitation

The fourth commandment, “Honor your father and your mother” means we should respect and love our parents. At times we may feel that is hard to do, especially if we do not want to do what they are asking us. We can stop and remember that when we obey our parents we are learning to obey the Lord so He can bring us the happiness of heaven.

Today we add the fourth commandment to those we have already learned. “Honor your father and your mother.” Let’s say it together now. Take home a recitation slip and practice the first four commandments each day.

1. You shall have no other gods before My face. 2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. 3. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. 4. Honor your father and your mother. Exodus 20:3-12	1. You shall have no other gods before My face. 2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. 3. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. 4. Honor your father and your mother. Exodus 20:3-12
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Online Extras

Looking for something “extra”? Try these online ideas!

Ages 3-6 *Song: Love Thy Father and Thy Mother* <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-the-fourth-commandment/>

Ages 7-10 *Where Was Jesus?* Spot the differences <https://sundayschoolzone.com/activity/where-was-jesus-spot-the-differences/>

Ages 11-14 *Boy Jesus at the Temple* word search https://wordmint.com/public_puzzles/162128