



Key Bible passage: Luke 2:41-52

Aim: to explore the value of being thoughtful

1 Ask: Have you ever met a truly thoughtful person? What are they like? Collect the answers on a flipchart.

So perhaps being thoughtful might mean someone who is full of thoughts - who thinks a great deal. Or it might mean someone who is considerate of other people.

Perhaps sometimes people are so full of thoughts that they don't consider other people's feelings. Maybe we're thinking so hard about something really important, and we forget to do something which grown-ups think is important. It might surprise you to learn that Jesus was like that. He was so full of thoughts about things which were really important that he didn't always do what people thought he should. But Jesus' thoughtfulness made other people thoughtful too. Imagine for a minute that I'm Mary, Jesus' mum.

2 (Flap round the room in a panic, asking children:) Where is he? Where is he? Have you seen Jesus anywhere? Have *you* seen Jesus anywhere? Honestly! He's usually such a good boy. In fact he's ALWAYS such a good boy, I never thought to check he was with us when we left Jerusalem. I thought he was with one of his cousins or his auntie or his grandma or the neighbours! I suppose it was thoughtless of me, but he's always so good! Joseph, have *you* seen Jesus? Oh no, nobody's seen him all day! We'll have to go back to Jerusalem and look for him.

(Sit down dejectedly)

We've been looking for Jesus for three days now. We've looked everywhere. We've asked everyone. No-one's seen him at all. I'm so worried I can't sleep. Perhaps he's been kidnapped. Perhaps he's been murdered. Perhaps he's been taken into slavery, or the Romans have got him or' There is one place we haven't looked. The Temple. But what on earth would Jesus be doing in the Temple for three days? Joseph, come on, it's our last chance of finding him.

All I can see is a big group of priests and teachers, clustered round looking all excited. They're in the middle of a hot discussion. But there's no sign of Jesus' Hang on. I can hear his voice. It seems to be coming from that crowd of priests. I tiptoe over and 'I can see Jesus! He's alive and well and more excited than I've ever seen him, and all the priests look really excited too. 'Good answer, boy!' shouts one. 'This boy is amazing!' calls out another. 'I've never heard anything like it!' splutters another. I'm so relieved he's ok, I'm nearly spluttering myself. I say, 'Jesus! Why have you been so thoughtless? Your father and I were very worried about you! We've been searching everywhere for you!'

Jesus just looks puzzled, as if he's been in a dream world and he's just woken up. 'Why were you worried, Mum?' he asks, with his gentle smile. 'Didn't you know I'd be in my Father's house?'

I didn't know what he was talking about. I took him home. Jesus never stayed away from home



without telling me again, but he never seemed sorry for staying in the Temple that time. In fact, he seemed glad he'd done it! And it made me think' It made me think very hard.

3 Jesus made a lot of people think hard in this story: who?
Why didn't Jesus leave the Temple when they expected him to?
What is there in this story that makes you think?
Do you ever make other people think hard?

Luke writes: *'Jesus went home with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them. But his mother kept in her mind all that had happened. Jesus became wiser and grew physically. People liked him and he pleased God.'*

4 This prayer is all about thinking and thoughtfulness. So let's put our hands on our head while we pray to remind us to think, and now on our hearts to remind us to be thoughtful of others.

I'll say: God, be in my head and my heart. Can you reply: 'In my thinking and my thoughtfulness' and put your hands on your head and your heart in turn.

Prayer

God, be in my head and my heart.

In my thinking and my thoughtfulness

Dear God, please help us to be like Mary and to make time to think about all the things we learn about you.

God, be in my head and my heart.

In my thinking and my thoughtfulness

Please help us to be like the priests and to be excited about the thoughts you give us.

God, be in my head and my heart.

In my thinking and my thoughtfulness

Please help us to be like you, growing wiser and bigger as we get older.

God, be in my head and my heart.

In my thinking and my thoughtfulness

Amen