

Learning Cycles

**WHEN JESUS
WAS A CHILD**

Written by Tracy E. Herzer



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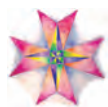
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About LearningCycles

What is LearningCycles?

LearningCycles is an innovative approach to faith formation. It takes seriously the spiritual development of children while providing creative and exciting activities that engage children in a whole new level of learning and retention. The rotation-style model means that children work on the same story or concept for several weeks, using different learning approaches in each workshop room they visit.

Ideas for possible workshops:

Art
Storytelling
Music
Group Activities
Cooking

Science Experiments
Games
Drama or Puppets
Movies
Geography or Map Excursions

Easy to Adapt

You can use the activities in this resource for shorter learning center events, normal classroom use, intergenerational gatherings, and more. Adapt what you find here to best suit your faith formation situation.



Recruiting LearningCycles Leaders

LearningCycles make it VERY easy to increase your number of volunteers, by dividing jobs into manageable parts. Here are some ways that parishioners of ALL ages can be involved:

CYCLE LEADERS sign up as part of a team of 2 or 3 adults who will teach one 4-6 week cycle. Teachers remain in the same workshop room each week of the cycle and teach the same lesson plan to different classes each week. Workshop rooms may use skills in areas as music, dance, cooking, quilting, gardening or painting, but you don't have to have a special skill in order to help. Teachers can sign up to help read stories, turn on computers, make popcorn, hand out art supplies, etc.

SHEPHERDS commit for the entire school year, but they never have to prepare or teach a lesson! Shepherds work in teams and travel with their class through each of the different workshops. Shepherds are the essential relationship part of this program, learning the children's names, providing continuity of leadership and being a friendly, safe presence in the classroom each week.

CYCLE COORDINATORS are needed for each different cycle. These people manage the details of a cycle, contacting all the volunteer teachers for that cycle, distributing the lesson plans, making sure supplies are purchased, etc.

Some churches have also used:

DECORATING TEAM A resourceful group of people is needed to create and plan new and evolving learning spaces. These folks might be interior designers, or they may be people who are just addicted to home improvement shows or have a knack for decorating inexpensively! Churches who share space or don't have the budget for large-scale renovations will need a group of creative thinkers to come up with props or posters that can be used on Sunday, but safely stored away during the week.

RESOURCE TEAM This "big picture" group can be comprised of all your cycle coordinators, as well as interested parents. Together the group handles trouble-shooting, long-range plans and communication to the entire church. For churches that already have a catechist or formation team, that committee can provide the functions of a Resource Team.



General Class Structure

- 1. OPENING ACTIVITY** (10-15 minutes, as children arrive)
Welcome students and make sure everyone has a nametag. Opening activities give early arrivers something to start on immediately and provide a warm, busy room for children to enter. The activity could be simply drawing or decorating your nametag. It could also be coloring sheets or simple games. Check the “Filler Activities” of your lesson plan for ideas or ask your Cycle Coordinator.
- 2. INTRODUCTIONS** (approximately 10 minutes)
 - a. Introduce yourself:** Tell students about you – your family, how long you have been at this church, what kind of work you do, what your hobbies are, why you signed up to help teach, etc.
 - b. Introduce the cycle story or theme:** Ask children what they’ve been studying or have done in other rooms on other weeks. Talk about the basic theme or season (see the Overview p. 6 for some ideas). Read the story to children.
 - c. Introduce your activity:** Tell the children which part of the story your room is focusing on, and perhaps ask them to re-tell you that part of the story in their own words.
- 3. WORKSHOP ACTIVITY AND REFLECTION** (approximately 25-30 minutes)
See attached lesson plans for specific instructions about the main activity. Supplies should be in your classroom, but if you need help, ask your cycle coordinator. If you run low on supplies, please tell your coordinator so they can plan accordingly.

If children finish early, you can use any of the “Filler Activities” provided in each lesson plan. In addition, you may use activity sheets (see “Suggested Resources for this Cycle”) as “quiet work” for the early finishers while they wait for everyone to complete the task.

Try to plan your time so that children finish the activity and still have a few minutes to process the class by journaling or drawing. Encourage them to take their work seriously, and try to foster a semi-quiet atmosphere that allows children to think about what they have heard, seen and experienced. Ask questions like “What did you learn today?” or “How did you feel while doing this activity?” Connect your activity back to the story. Studies show us that quiet reflection time is what helps move items from short-term memory into long-term memory so this piece is VERY important!

- 4. CLEAN UP** (approximately 5 minutes)
Have children help clean up and make sure everyone has their papers, jackets, etc. If parents come to the classroom to pick up their children, this is a good time to praise children in front of their parents. This is also a good time to discuss any concerns or questions quietly with parents. Tell the children goodbye. Thank them for coming.



Theological Overview of this Cycle

We have very little information about Jesus as a child. The gospels of Matthew, Mark and John are completely void of any reference to Jesus as a child and we have only 13 verses in Luke. These verses tell us just one story of the boy Jesus and they give us only the vaguest hints of what his childhood and adolescence might have been like.

We actually have only ONE verse (“*Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.*” Luke 2:52) to cover the 18 years between age 12 when Jesus is at the temple during Passover and age 30 when he approaches John the Baptist for his baptism and begins his ministry.

Some of you might be familiar with the *Journey to Adulthood (J2A)* youth spiritual formation program in your churches. Much of the philosophy in this resource for 6th & 7th Graders is based on that one verse from Luke. In fact, the entire program is structured to cover four areas in which we grow:

SELF	“increased in wisdom”	Jesus became more aware of who he was
SEXUALITY	“in years”	Jesus grew physically & emotionally to maturation
SPIRITUALITY	“in divine favor”	Jesus grew in his relationship with God
SOCIETY	“in human favor”	Jesus developed new human relationships

Although certainly not essential, if your church does use the *Journey to Adulthood* program, you may wish to recruit some of your students to come read the cycle story or to share their interaction with this story.

Regardless of how you approach it, this cycle offers many openings for imaginative conversations about what Jesus might have been like as a child. Make sure you have Bibles on hand to show students just how little information we actually have. At the same time, encourage children to use their imagination about what Jesus might have been like. Ask them about kids they know (or are!) and see what things they think might be similar or different from Jesus when he was a child.

One caveat – it is quite possible you may have children and/or adults ask you if Jesus was a perfect child or if he ever made mistakes. My opinion is that part of growing up is learning how to handle mistakes, but you will find lots of faithful Christians who would give you different answers to that question. I encourage you to spend some time really thinking and praying about this unit. Furthermore, I hope you will talk to your clergy person and your teachers. Together, brainstorm ideas about how to answer such questions and have a game plan so that no one feels stuck out on a theological limb when they are in front of their class.

This growing up stuff is hard work and sometimes it comes with hard questions... but you can do this... and the God of all Creation holds you as you do it.

Good luck & God’s Peace to you –
Tracey E. Herzer

PS – Give teachers a copy of “*The Moses Chronicle*” LearningCycle for more information about Passover.



Letter to the Parents for this Cycle

(We suggest you mail this letter to all parents with a copy of the cycle story, plus the Theological Overview)

***** NOTE: Because the art project for this unit is a simple carpentry project, you may want to ask parents to attend that class with their child. The more adults available, the better! *****

Dear Parents –

Our children grow up so fast – sometimes it seems as if we can see them changing right before our very eyes. Every day, they are learning new things, thinking new thoughts, creating new relationships and finding new ways to make their path in the world. They grow in so many different ways – intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially.

Luke 2:52 tells us that Jesus grew in all these ways too – *“Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.”* He grew in wisdom – that’s intellectually or emotionally. He grew in years – the physical development. He grew in divine favor – his relationship with God; and in human favor – his relationship with other people. These are the same things we want for our children today.

This unit will focus on Jesus as a child. In some ways, this will be a difficult theme to undertake because we have such little scriptural information about Jesus’ childhood and adolescence, but we believe it is an important story to cover.

There are so many adults who like to tell hypothetical stories of an angelic boy Jesus who seems to do nothing more than sit quietly on a bench in Joseph’s carpentry workshop and meditate. I don’t know about you, but I don’t actually know any children like that and while I certainly can’t claim to understand how Jesus could be “fully human and fully divine”, I don’t see how any fully-human child could resist the urge to wiggle and move and sometimes be too loud or too active. All children get into a certain degree of mischief and if the stories of the adult Jesus are any indication, my guess is that the boy Jesus was more than capable of keeping Mary and Joseph’s home life “interesting”, to say the least. ☺

It is our hope during this unit to spend some time examining the only story we have of Jesus as an adolescent – the story where a 12-year-old Jesus goes to the temple in Jerusalem during the festival of Passover and Mary and Joseph have to go look for him when he is inadvertently left behind after the festival is over. Along with examining this story, we hope to pull in some of the historical facts, as well as some of the conjecture about Jesus’ life. We will do some carpentry work and learn about the Jewish festival of Passover. We will also talk about the ways in which we grow and all the areas where we learn, develop and change.

It is our hope that this unit will be “temple time” for your children – a chance for them to interact with faithful adults in the house of God, sharing stories and ideas and finding ways to grow their own unique relationship with God. We are excited about teaching this unit and can’t wait to see what WE might learn from the children! ☺

See you at the temple –
Tracey E. Herzer



Story: Jesus as a Child

To be read each week of the cycle

The Bible doesn't tell us much about Jesus when he was a child. Some things we have to just guess about, but he probably did a lot of the same things that you have done. He learned how to walk and how to put on his clothes. He helped his family at home. He made friends. He learned how to read and write. He played outside. He went to the temple, just like you go to church. Maybe he took care of his family's animals or maybe he helped his father, Joseph, in his carpenter shop. He laughed. He cried. He loved.

We don't know all the details of his growing up, but in whatever ways it happened, we do know that the little baby born in a Bethlehem manger grew up to become the young man who approached John the Baptist in the Jordan River and asked John to baptize him before he began his ministry here on earth as a healer and a teacher.

Of all the stories we have of Jesus in the Bible, there is only one short story that deals with Jesus as a child, and here it is...

Every year, Jesus went with his family from Nazareth to Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish festival of Passover. The year that Jesus was twelve years old, the family went as usual to Jerusalem. They went to all the celebrations and services and when it was time to go home, they left with a group of travelers who were all going back home to Nazareth.

After a long day of walking, they set up camp for the night and when they did, Mary and Joseph realized that Jesus was nowhere to be found. All day they probably thought he was with some of his friends, but when they asked everyone, they realized he was not in the group and they walked back to Jerusalem to look for him.

For three long days they combed the streets for their son. They must have looked in every marketplace, every dark alley, EVERYWHERE they could think of. They finally went to the temple – maybe to offer a prayer for the safety of their son. When they go to the temple, imagine their surprise when they discover their son, Jesus, talking and listening to the elders!

When Mary and Joseph asked Jesus about this, he only replied, "Did you not know I must be in my Father's house?" They did not really understand what he meant, but they were glad he was safe. Then Mary, Joseph and Jesus all went home to Nazareth. Jesus loved his parents and was obedient to them. Mary and Joseph loved their son and they cherished all their memories of him as a boy.

Jesus grew up in many different ways. Scripture tells us that "*Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.*"

Story re-told by Tracey E. Herzer
(Luke 2:40-52)



Suggested Resources for this Cycle

VIDEOS

Saddleback Kids YouTube channel has a short video (3 minutes) called "Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2)" that depicts early moments in Jesus' childhood such as Jesus' birth, the presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and Jesus getting "lost" on the way home to Nazareth but Mary and Joseph finding him teaching in the Temple. This video can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ho_3gvIWzbw

They also have a helpful video entitled, "Jesus Growing Up," which shows Jesus as a Jewish child (with a cousin named John!) who practiced the Jewish customs and holidays. There are also images of him helping Joseph in carpentry and growing in relationship with God. See this video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irTmdgAOPfA>

You could also use the **Jesus, the Son of God** video from NEST Family Video. The video runs about 30 minutes and covers from Jesus' childhood through his temptations in the desert and the start of his ministry. The movie is available in DVD and VHS formats and comes with a free 64-page booklet filled with lots of coloring sheets, puzzles, word games and teaching tips related to the video. It can be found at https://www.nestlearning.com/jesus-the-son-of-god-video-on-interactive-dvd_p42846.aspx

BOOKS

For this unit, we really found it helpful to have some pictures of what life might have been like in Jesus' time. We highly recommend **If You'd Been There in Bible Times** by Stephanie Jeffs and illustrated by Jacqui Thomas. This book, published by Abingdon Press, is a resource you will use again and again. It gives information on 27 Bible stories, but each page gives lots of little background details and brightly colored illustrations about clothing, landscape, traditions, history, etc. that really add to your understanding of what was going on. There are also questions on each page to help you focus on what you might have seen, heard, experienced if you'd been in that story. GREAT book!

Another helpful resource was **Daily Life at the Time of Jesus** by Miriam Feinberg Vamoth, also published by Abingdon Press. This book features lots of great photographs of the modern city, next to beautiful drawings of what it might have looked like in Jesus' time.

What Did Jesus DO All Day? Discovering the Teen Jesus has a lot of helpful background information. Purchase it from us at <https://pastoral.center/what-did-jesus-do-all-day>.



Activities Overview for this Cycle

WORKSHOP	SUMMARY OF PLANS	FOCUS
ART	Try a Carpentry project	What things might Jesus have done as a child?
PUBLISHING	Talk about Jewish faith celebrations and the importance of the Temple	Why did Jesus' family go to Jerusalem?
DRAMA	Learn about Jesus' life and create interviews of people who "knew" him	What was everyday life like in Jesus' time?
MOVIE	Watch movie "Jesus, the Son of God"	Learn about Jesus in the Temple
STORY	Hear stories Trace our bodies Talk about how we grow	In what ways did Jesus grow up?
KITCHEN	Building a Temple Replica	What was the Temple like?
MUSIC	Mary, Did you Know? Sweet Little Jesus Boy	What did other people think about Jesus as a child?



Jesus as a Child: Story & Games

Bible Reference for the Cycle:

Luke 2:40-52

Main Verse for the Cycle:

Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor - Luke 2:52

(New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)

Key Concepts and Life Application:

- The Bible gives us very little information about Jesus' childhood – only 13 verses
- Jesus grew in wisdom – he became more aware of who he was and he made decisions
- Jesus grew in years – he got older, taller, smarter, and had more abilities
- Jesus grew in divine favor – God's spirit rested on him and their relationship grew
- Jesus grew in human favor – he learned to be part of a family and to relate to others

Summary of Class Plans:

Students will hear stories and play games that relate to how we grow. They will also create tracings of their bodies and label the ways we grow.

Materials Needed:

For Class activities:

- For younger classes – Some suggestions for stories about Jesus:
 - **When Jesus Was Little** by Sally Wilkins
 - **When Jesus Was a Kid Like Me** by Mark Daniewicz
 - **Jesus in the Temple** (part of “Children in the Bible” series) by Patricia Pingry
 - **Lost in Jerusalem** (part of “Best Bible Stories” series) by Jennifer Rees Larcombe
 - **Jesus Grows Up** by Pilar Paris, Joseph Lozano, and Maria Ruis
 - **Young Jesus in the Temple (An Arch Book)** by Alyce Bergey
- Chalkboard or large piece of paper with the words of the memory verse written out
- Measuring tape
- Copies of “How we Grow” form on page 31 – one per child
- Large roll of butcher paper
- Pencils
- Crayons and/or markers
- Buttons, stickers, etc. for decorating outlines – optional
- Yarn or string for hair – optional

For optional filler activities:

- Paper
- Crayons or Markers



Workshop Lesson Plans:

- **BEFORE CLASS** – for this workshop, you may want to move tables and chairs out of the way and invite children to sit on the floor. That way, you will have space to do the activities.
- **BEFORE CLASS** – If you have time, you may want to go ahead and put up a long piece of butcher paper on a door or wall and mark the inches between 2 feet and 6 feet. This will become the paper where students can measure how tall they are.
- You can refer to “A General Schedule for Class Structure” (included in the Introductory Materials) for ideas on how to introduce yourself and the story, as well as how to plan your class time appropriately.
- Welcome children as they arrive and invite them to have a seat. You may want to have some activity sheets for them to work on as they come in. You can use the “How We Grow” worksheet on page 31 or one of the other suggestions on page 10.
- When it is time to start, gather everyone together and invite them to get in a comfortable position on the floor. Then read the cycle story about Jesus as a child. After the story, ask children some questions, such as:
 - Have you ever thought about Jesus as a kid?
 - In what ways did Jesus grow?
 - What things do you do differently from when you were a baby?
 - What are some things that babies learn? (how to eat, crawl, walk, get dressed, etc)
 - What are some things you look forward to learning?
 - What kinds of things did Jesus have to learn?
- Show the children the memory verse for this cycle that you have written out. Read it together several times and talk about what each word means. Help children understand that the verse means Jesus grew in all kinds of different ways – just like they do:
 - **“Jesus increased in wisdom”** – This means he grew intellectually and emotionally. He learned new things, thought new thoughts, discovered new talents.
 - **“and in years”** – This means Jesus grew physically. He got taller and stronger. His body could do new things and he developed new physical abilities.
 - **“and in divine”** – This is about Jesus’ spiritual growth. He went to the Temple and learned Jewish customs and prayers. He prayed. He had a relationship with God.



- **“and human favor”** – Jesus made new friends and developed new relationships with other people. This part of the verse shows us that he grew socially.
- Ask students *“How have you ‘increased in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favor?’”* Work together as a class to brainstorm how we learn and grow in all the same ways that Jesus did. Here are some things to get you started:
 - **Intellectually** – going to school, learning to read & write, understanding more
 - **Physically** – getting taller, stronger, learning to do new things, play games or sports
 - **Spiritually** – learning about God, learning to pray, going to church
 - **Socially** – making new friends, learning about the world, helping others
- Make sure every student has a copy of the “How We Grow” worksheet. If they have not already completed it, they can work on it after they finish the next project or they can take it home with them to complete.
- Have students work in groups of two or three. Give each person a strip of butcher paper that is as long as they are tall. Children will use this paper to have a friend trace a rough outline of their body. Tell the class these don’t need to be exact replicas, just a general outline. Encourage them to trace in pencil first so that mistakes can be corrected.
- After everyone has a basic body shape, have them label their paper with their name. Then they can outline the shape with marker and use markers or crayons to add in some quick details like eye color, hair color, clothes, etc.
 - **For Younger Classes (K-1st)** – some of the younger children will probably need help tracing their body shape, but they can then color in the form when it is done. After their basic shapes are done, you may want to gather them together to hear some of the stories listed above.
 - **For Older Classes (2nd – 5th)** – These students may not want to hear all the stories listed above, but after hearing or talking about the ways in which Jesus grew, they can now be encouraged to think about all the ways in which they grow. They can label their body shapes with reminders of growth. For example, near the head they could write “I learn new things” or near the hands they could write “I help others”
- When the students have finished their projects, ask for volunteers to share what they’ve drawn on their paper and why. Decide whether you want to send the forms home now with the children or keep them posted on the walls of the room until this unit is over.
- Make sure you leave time for students to write or draw in their journals before leaving. Remember, quiet reflection time is how they move things to long-term memory!



Encourage them to write the memory verse in their journals and reflect on the ways in which they grow.

Filler Activities:

- **For younger students** – you can always fill up remaining time by reading more stories. See suggestions above or pull some suggestions from your own list of favorites.
- **Memory verse games** – have the entire class read the memory verse out loud together several times. The first time have them read it from your chalkboard or poster. Then each time they read it again, cover up one or more words and see if they can still say the whole verse. Do this 3 or 4 times and then see if anyone can say the entire verse without having any words to prompt them.
- **How we Grow Worksheet** – If students haven't finished their worksheet from page 31, they can work on it as a filler activity.



HOW WE GROW

Can you fill in this information?

INTELLECTUAL GROWTH

I go to _____ School.

I like learning about _____.

I think _____ is the hardest subject.

PHYSICAL GROWTH

I am this tall _____

My head is this big around _____

My favorite physical activity is _____

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The name of my church is _____

_____ is my favorite thing about church.

I talk to God about _____.

SOCIAL GROWTH

My community is located in _____ (city, state)

_____ is my best friend.

I help others when I _____.

Jesus as a Child: Kitchen Workshop

Bible Reference for the Cycle:

Luke 2:40-52

Main Verse for the Cycle:

Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor - Luke 2:52

(New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)

Key Concepts and Life Application:

- The Bible gives us very little information about Jesus' childhood – only 13 verses
- Jesus grew in wisdom – he became more aware of who he was and he made decisions
- Jesus grew in years – he got older, taller, smarter, and had more abilities
- Jesus grew in divine favor – God's spirit rested on him and their relationship grew
- Jesus grew in human favor – he learned to be part of a family and to relate to others

Summary of Class Plans:

Children will learn about the layout of Herod's Temple where Jesus went and create a temple replica using graham crackers

Materials Needed:

- Newspaper or disposable tablecloths to protect tables
- Strip of wax paper for each temple creation
- Graham crackers – at least 3 sheets (usually a sheet has 4 mini sections) per child, but you'll probably need extras
- Icing – we used a prepackaged tub of vanilla icing
- Plastic knives
- Sugar wafer cookies (thin rectangle stacks of cookie wafer and icing)
- Colored decorative icing – we used the kind that comes in plastic tubes
- Candy, sprinkles, colored sugar, or any other kind of decoration you want to use 😊
- Paper plates & napkins – one for each child
- Milk or something else to drink
- Pencils and/or pens
- Copies of the picture and/or diagram of Herod's Temple on page 37
- Digital camera or phone to take pictures of temples – optional

Materials Needed for Filler Activity:

- Bibles
- Paper
- Pencils or pens



Workshop Lesson Plans:

- **BEFORE CLASS** – This kitchen workshop actually doesn't require a kitchen. There is no cooking and you could do this project in any classroom with tables and chairs. However, If you are planning to use your church kitchen, make sure you have permission and are familiar with the policies for kitchen use.
- **BEFORE CLASS** – Teacher will need to arrive 15-20 minutes before class begins to get everything set out and ready. Cover the tables with newspaper or disposable tablecloths to keep the mess at a minimum.
- **BEFORE CLASS** – We found a couple of GREAT websites about Herod's Temple with beautiful pictures and an interactive diagram that tells you about the different parts of the temple. If you have time, you may want to look at these websites during your preparation for this class. You may even want to print off some of the pictures to show your group.
http://www.bible-history.com/jewishtemple/JEWISH_TEMPLEHerods_Temple_Illustration.htm
<http://www.ebibleteacher.com/imagehtml/jerumodel.html>
- You can refer to "A General Schedule for Class Structure" (included in the Introductory Materials) for ideas on how to introduce yourself and the story, as well as how to plan your class time appropriately.
- As children arrive, welcome them and have them wash their hands and explain that we have an exciting construction project to do today!
- Read the cycle story about Jesus going to the temple in Jerusalem. After reading the story, ask some of the following questions:
 - What did Jesus and his family go to Jerusalem?
 - Where did Mary and Joseph find Jesus?
 - What was Jesus doing?
 - What kinds of things do you think happened in the temple?
 - How was it like our church?
 - How was it not like our church?
 - Has anyone here ever been to a Jewish Temple?
- If you printed out any pictures from the above website or were able to find any pictures of Herod's Temple in books, show these pictures to your students. Even if you can't find any pictures to show the class, tell them a little about Herod's temple. Say the following in your own words:
 - The temple was the center of Jewish religious life in Jesus' time. It was very important to the Jewish people. Solomon built the first temple and the Jewish people were so happy to have a place where they could gather and worship God. Solomon's temple was destroyed, but many years later, Herod built



another temple and this was the temple in Jerusalem where Jesus would have come on his visit.

- The temple was made up of four courts – the Court of the Gentiles, the Court of Women, the Court of Israel, and the Court of Priests. The Israelites believed the entire temple compound was holy, but as you moved further inside, it became more and more holy. Thus, the Court of Women was more holy than the Court of Gentiles, but not as holy as the Court of Israel.
- Women were not allowed very far into the temple courtyards – they could only go in as far as the Court of Women. So, in the story where Mary and Joseph find Jesus, Mary probably could not have even gone all the way inside. She would have had to wait for Joseph to go inside.
- On one side of the temple courtyard was a long row of columns and a big open-air space. This part of the courtyard was called Solomon's Porch in honor of the first temple that was built. It was a common place for people to gather or meet.
- Only a priest could go inside the Holy Place. This was a very special place and the back wall was covered entirely with gold. The Holy Place was where priests took the people's offerings to God. Inside the Holy Place was a small room called the "Holy of Holies." Only the high priest was EVER allowed in this room and he could only go in there one day a year – on the Jewish Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur.
- Explain to the class that today we are going to make our own version of Herod's temple, using the facts we have just learned.
- Pass out copies of the diagram of Herod's Temple from page 37. Children will work in pairs to create their temple replica. (After they are done creating their replica, both children will share in eating the "temple")
- Explain whatever rules you want to use – such as no snacking on your "temples" until we've finished assembling them. You may also want to give guidelines about the use of icing. Most kids will try to pile it on. We suggest giving each pair a big spoonful of icing and telling them that has to last them for the entire project, so spread it THIN! 😊
- **Here are the steps for making your replica of Herod's Temple:**
 1. Give each pair of students a strip of wax paper and two graham cracker "sheets". (Each sheet is made up of 3 mini-sections of cracker) Ask students to place their graham cracker sheets side by side. Using a very thin layer of icing, they can "glue" these two foundational pieces to their wax paper.
 2. Then students should take a third sheet of graham crackers and carefully break it in half. Half of the sheet can be used for the Court of Priests and can again be attached using a thin layer of icing.



3. Take the remaining half sheet of graham cracker and break it in half again, leaving only one small quarter-piece. This will become your Court of Women.
 4. Next, the pair will need to figure out how to create the Holy Place, the Main Temple, and the Altar. We gave each student one sugar wafer cookie which they then nibbled into shape – they loved that part! ☺ You could also use a piece of candy or another decorative item.
 5. Now that you have the main parts of the temple assembled, it's time to decorate!
 6. We had everyone decide first how to mark the Holy of Holies. This needed to be the most special part – using your favorite color or flavor.
 7. Then we had them decorate Solomon's Porch. We used a layer of icing with sprinkles to represent all the people who gathered there.
 8. We outlined the Court of Women. You could also outline the Court of Priests.
 - We were a little worried how we would explain why women were left outside, but we encourage you to field the children's questions as they come and as you feel comfortable. Depending on the age of the children present, your responses can delve more deeply into this topic, but it will be helpful to make it clear that it was customary within the historical time period to have this separation in worship; however, this is not a part of our tradition today. It would be very unfair to exclude someone from a space of worship because of their sex, gender, or any other or aspect of their identity.
 9. The last step is to put up the walls, using 1½ additional sheets of graham crackers. (You need six quarter-pieces for a three-sided wall. Solomon's Porch was enclosed with large columns, but in this replica, we just left it open.)
- After everyone has assembled their temples, it is time for the destruction (and ingestion) of the temples. Remind them they have to share with their partner. While everyone eats, ask some questions like:
 - What did you learn today?
 - What part of the Temple are you most curious about?
 - If you lived in Jesus' time, where would you have spent the most time?
 - What are some of the different parts we have today in our churches?
 - After everyone has finished their snack, have children help you clean up the room. Have them wipe down their tables and sweep the floor for crumbs!
 - Don't forget to leave about 10 minutes at the end of class if possible for children to write or draw in their journals.



Filler Activities:

- Have children use the concordance in the back of the Bible to see how many times the Temple is referenced in both the Old and New Testaments. If time allows, have different students look up several of the references and see what stories include the Temple.



HEROD'S TEMPLE

Temple walls

