

# Sermon Sparkler for The First Sunday of Christmas

One theme found in many ancient writings is that a person's childhood foreshadows their adulthood. The common phrase is, "we find the man in the boy." And Luke's account of Jesus' tweens is no exception.

Jesus starts off like many biblical boys (most obviously John the Baptist and Samuel), "The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him." He's going to be a religiously significant person, no shock there, but what kind of significance?

Well, he goes to Jerusalem for Passover, just as he will at the end of the Gospel. Then he disappears for three days, just as he will in the tomb. Then, when they do find him it is in dialogue with the teachers in Jerusalem... again, as he will as an adult, just as he will in those last days before his crucifixion.

Then, Jesus speaks for the first time in Luke's Gospel. He declares that he is *Divi Filius*, Son of God. This too Mary ponders... As should we.

- ✎ What does it mean that Jesus makes the same claim for himself that is made for the emperor Octavius? What do we do about competing understandings of God at work in the world, competing representatives of God even?
- ✎ How can these premonitions of death and resurrection, the end of the Gospel, that the lectionary gives us today set up our preaching for the entire year? Are there any illustrations you could use today and then bring back in Lent and Easter?
- ✎ The lectionary also gives us Samuel and his family to play with. How do Jesus, John the Baptist, and Samuel all fit into God's actions in the world?
- ✎ Each of these men are a figure in two worlds Judges to Kings, Greatest born to humans least in the Kingdom of God, Jesus the inflection point and manifestation of the entire Kingdom of God—what massive changes like this are your parishioners seeing today? How can the lives of these folk speak to that?