Focus: Christians should pray, study, and read the Bible to learn God's way.

Scripture: Luke 2:41-52 Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. 43 After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"[a] 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Materials Needed: Glove for each child (can be food serving gloves or any inexpensive type of glove), permanent markers, list of books of the Bible, and tiny paper pictures of Jesus' for younger children.

Story Time: Say to students, "Today I am going to tell you a story from the Bible. Every year Jesus' parents, Mary and Joseph, went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. One year when Jesus was 12, they had again gone to Jerusalem. When the Festival ended, Mary and Joseph left to return home. They traveled with other friends and relatives. At the end of the day, they could not find Jesus. During the day they had assumed Jesus was with some of their relatives or friends, but now they realized he was not with them so they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. They searched for three days. How do you think they were feeling? Have you or your brother or sister ever been lost? How did you feel? How did your parents feel? It is a very scary feeling. After three days, they found Jesus sitting in the temple court talking with the teachers. A temple is like our church. The teachers were very impressed with his understanding and questions. Mary and Joseph asked him why he treated them this way, that they were very scared and anxious. He asked them why they didn't know that he would be in his Father's house. He left with Mary and Joseph. They returned to their home in Nazareth and Jesus obeyed his parents. As Jesus grew up, he became smarter and grew to love God.

What does it mean to be in God's favor? What can we do to be in God's favor? As we talked about yesterday, we can try to live as God wants us to, being kind to others and faithful to God. What are other things we can do? We can think of God every day, pray and talk to God, read the Bible, and study about God. We can also work hard in school to do our best and learn everything we are being taught.

Show the first picture. Children in Nicaragua receive a free education through the sixth grade. They have to pay tuition to go to high school. Do you learn everything you need to know by the sixth grade? *Show the second picture*. Rainbow Network provides scholarships so

children can go to high school. When they become adults, those who went high school will know more and be able to have better jobs, make more money, and become leaders in their villages. They might even be able to go on to college. They can do more for God because they will know more. Let's pray."

Prayer: Dear Lord, we love you and want to feel your presence every day. Help us to think about you and study your word faithfully. Amen.

Story Time Activity: Make a prayer glove. Write the following words on the fingers of a glove: Praise, Thanks, Forgive, Others, Me. Explain to students that when they pray, they can put this glove on and pray about what is on each finger-first praise God. Tell God how wonderful He is and how you love Him. Next give thanks for all the things you have. Third, ask God to forgive you for what you have done wrong. Next pray for others that need God's help. Pray that children in Nicaragua will be able to go to school and learn more. Last, pray that God will help and guide you.

If time allows, play Bible Bee. Divide into two teams and give each child a Bible. Call out a scripture verse and the first child to find it should jump up and read it. Keep score to see which team finds the verse fastest the most times.

For younger children, you can hide many tiny paper pictures of Jesus and have them hunt for them.