



Discussion Guide

Date: 7/6/2025

Sermon Title: Are traditions important?

Scripture: Luke 2:41-52

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of journeying together—both on the road and in faith. As we gather today, help us to listen deeply to your Word, to one another, and to the stirrings within our own hearts. May the example of Jesus remind us how traditions can shape us, challenge us, and guide us toward greater understanding. Speak to us now, Lord. We are listening. -Amen.

Opening Question:

1. What family traditions or customs have significantly influenced your faith journey?

Digging into the Word:

1. Read Luke 2:41-52 as a group or individually, what words or images stand out to you from this passage? The text in verses 41-42 mention Jesus' family going to Jerusalem for Passover "every year. What does this consistency say about their faith practice? Why do you think traditions like the Passover pilgrimage were so important to their identity?
2. In verse 43, Jesus stays behind while his parents assume he is with the group. Was this disobedience or a deeper sign of spiritual maturity? What might this moment tell us about the transition from childhood faith to personal faith?
3. Verses 46–47 show Jesus listening and asking questions in the temple. How do questions play a role in faith formation? How might we create space in our lives and church for this kind of curiosity?
4. In verse 49, Jesus says, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" What do you think Jesus is claiming here? Have you ever experienced a moment when you realized your faith had become your own?
5. Verse 51 notes Jesus "was obedient to them," and he "increased in wisdom." What does this tell us about growth and learning even for Jesus? How do traditions help us grow in wisdom and faith?

Sermon Questions:

6. This story of Jesus early years in the temple; how does the concept of being 'in my Father's house' relate to our own spiritual journeys and sense of belonging?

7. Pastor Clayton talks about being a life-time learner. In what ways can we cultivate curiosity and lifelong learning as part of growing in wisdom, as Jesus did?
8. The sermon emphasizes growing in wisdom, stature, divine favor, and favor with others. Which of these areas do you feel you need to focus on most in your life right now? Why?
9. Pastor Clayton mentions Stephen Covey's concept of "beginning with the end in mind." If you were to envision your own funeral, what would you want people to say about your character and the way you lived your life?
10. The sermon stresses the importance of small, daily steps towards personal growth. What are some practical, everyday actions you can take to grow in wisdom, character, and faith?
11. Discuss the significance of community in your spiritual journey. How has being part of a faith community impacted your growth as a person and as a believer?

Applying it:

12. In what ways do our own church traditions shape our spiritual journey?
13. Are there traditions you've reinterpreted or rediscovered in a meaningful way?
14. What traditions might need to be reimagined to help new generations own their faith?

Further Study:

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral—Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience—is central to how United Methodists interpret and live out their faith. **Scripture** is the primary source of faith, but **tradition** provides the historical and communal context for understanding it. For Jesus in this story, being at the temple during Passover was more than a ritual—it was a **formational practice**, part of a living tradition that he would soon reframe in his own ministry. *Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.*—Jaroslav Pelikan, quoted in **The United Methodist Book of Discipline, 2016**, ¶105 In this passage, we see **Jesus living into a tradition** (Passover pilgrimage) and beginning to **reclaim it with personal agency** (his Father's house). It mirrors how the Methodist tradition views growth: not just obedience, but thoughtful, Spirit-led engagement.

15. How has your faith and what practices like worship, study, confirmation, sacraments, service, etc... have played in your faith development? What were those cherished traditions passed down to you or through you? What may you start passing down to your children or others in faith and growth in Christ?

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for the ways tradition shapes us and the freedom you give us to grow into a faith that is personal and real. May we honor the faith handed down to us while remaining open to the new ways you call us to follow. As we leave this space, may we carry the wisdom of Jesus—seeking your presence, asking good questions, and walking in love. In the name of Christ, we pray. -Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND (or challenges for you this week)

1. Choose one area (wisdom, stature, divine favor, or favor with others) to focus on this week. Identify and commit to one small, daily action that will help you grow in this area.
2. Reach out to someone in your faith community this week to encourage them or to ask how you can pray for them.



3. Choose a book, podcast, or educational resource to engage with that will help you grow in knowledge and understanding of your faith or an area of personal interest.