

# **DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA**



**THE BOY JESUS AWARD**  
**For Cub Scouts (Wolf)**  
**Grades 3 & 4**

## THE BOY JESUS RELIGIOUS AWARD

### Unit One – Jesus and His Family

The Holy Family had its humble beginnings far away from their home, in a strange land. Joseph, as a descendant of the house of David was required by Roman law to return to Bethlehem, the town of his birth and home of his ancestors, to take part in the census ordered by the emperor Caesar Augustus to organize his tax rolls.

Mary and Joseph had to travel 90 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem through the fertile fields of Galilee, south through the green rolling hills of Samaria to the edge of the Judean desert to reach Bethlehem. The fact that they could not find lodging in Bethlehem and that Christ was born in a stable helps us to understand how humble the beginning was.

Soon after Jesus' birth, the Holy Family had to go south to Egypt to escape King Herod's order to destroy all male firstborn babies two years old or younger. This was Herod's way to assure himself that the King of the Jews he had heard about would not live to rule what he considered his kingdom.

Joseph is thought to have taken his family initially west to the Mediterranean to follow the coastal road to the Egyptian border. Any other route would have taken the Holy Family across the barren Judean desert. In Egypt the young Jewish family would have found a friendly land of fertile fields by the Nile River. There Joseph might have found work as a carpenter or laborer if necessary to support his family.

They stayed in Egypt for about four years until they heard the news of Herod's death. They then felt it would be safe to return to southern Galilee and their home in Nazareth. They crossed the Sinai and Negev deserts again on their way home, but must have been careful to avoid going through Judea, which was now ruled by Herod's power-hungry son, Archelaus.

Finally back in Nazareth the Holy Family settled in to the typical daily life of their home.

High in a sheltered basin 1,300 feet above sea level, Nazareth was surrounded by hills that are part of a limestone ridge that formed the southernmost border of Lower Galilee. From the summit above the village, the Nazarenes could see Mount Carmel on the shores of the Mediterranean to the west, Mount Tabor to the east, Mount Hermon's snow-covered tops to the north and the fertile and gentle terrain of the Plain of Esdraelon to the south.

Nazareth was a typical farming village of that time. The center of the village was the marketplace where craftsmen such as carpenters, blacksmiths, mat makers, potters, basket weavers and others displayed and sold their wares. The carpenter was probably a fairly important man as he, together with the village blacksmith, was responsible for making and repairing the villagers' farm implements.

The social life of the typical Galilean was centered around his family. His family was large, very close and extremely hardworking. The husband was the spiritual and legal head of the family. His word was final and undisputed concerning the welfare of his wife and children.

All village Jews were bound by the same system of social, moral and religious codes. Children were taught early on to obey and honor their parents. Parents were strict with their children in keeping with

their people's traditions and laws. Disobedience was not tolerated and was punished severely, even though this was probably very rare.

The Jewish children knew their duties from a very early age. They were instructed carefully and with great detail in the faith of their fathers.

The family home was usually a humble mud brick dwelling with only one or two all-purpose rooms with dirt floors. The doorways were narrow and fairly low, causing a man to bow slightly as he entered. The doors were hung on simple leather hinges and rarely locked. The animals were often allowed in the home at night for safe keeping. For this reason the sleeping area of these rooms was often raised about 18 inches from the floor to allow the family to sleep separate from the animals. Their bedding was nothing more than straw mats using their tunics or cloaks as covering. Furniture and personal possessions were few. A single chest might have been the only storage the family owned.

The kitchen consisted of an oven, pottery, utensils and some stored food. The only light in the house was that from a dim oil lamp. There were no bathrooms. Washing was done in the street where water would seep into the ground and prevent the dirt floor of the home from turning into mud.

The roofs of their homes were flat, made of oven brushwood branches which were laid on rafters and usually covered with a thick layer of clay to fill the spaces between the branches. All this formed a smooth, hardened layer of plaster strong enough to provide a cool gathering place for the family on hot nights. Repairs were easy to make and probably often needed.

The entire family was involved in the maintenance of the home. Joseph was responsible for the actual building, repairing the home, and teaching his Son his craft. Mary would go to the well daily for fresh water, cook, wash and weave cloth for her family and teach Jesus the ways of her faith and traditions of her people. Jesus was responsible for obeying His parents in whatever daily chores He was given. He learned and grew wise throughout the years in preparation for what only He and His parents knew would be His future.

### Activities

1. Make a model or drawing of a typical Galilean dwelling of the time of Jesus' childhood. Place the drawing in your notebook. If you made a model, show it to your counselor.
2. Do the map activity in the back of this booklet. Place the map in your notebook.

### Service

Do a chore for one week at home that you do not normally do. Write what chore you did in your notebook. Thank God for giving you whatever ability you needed to do that chore.

## Unit Two – Jesus and You

As you can tell, your daily life is very different from that of the young Jesus. But we can still see parallels.

Jesus was responsible for learning from his parents and teachers, his faith, traditions of his people, and the craft he would learn. This can be somewhat compared to what you do in the course of your learning years.

The entire family was probably responsible for passing down traditions and customs to a young Jewish boy. In the same way, you are taught by grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. the traditions and faith of your ancestors. It is primarily in the home where these important values are taught.

In the learning of a craft is where we might find the greatest change since the time of Jesus. You now have a formal education and learn from different people outside the family. But you still learn your core values and morals in the home by the example your parents set for you.

There are places in the world where a child still learns a craft from his father much in the same way Jesus learned from Joseph. Farmers, carpenters, tailors, even in hi-tech industry fathers can still pass down to their children the craft they learned from their fathers.

Joseph might have been a very important man in Nazareth. He was a descendant of King David, one of the most beloved of all Jewish heroes. His trade made him an important craftsman to the community and one of the most respected. Carpentry was indispensable to the farmers and to family life back then. Any tools or furniture would be made by the carpenters. Even kitchen utensils were made of wood. Then there was carpentry to be done in the building of homes. Doors, doorways, windows, shutters, etc. were all made in the carpenter's workshop.

As important as Joseph's profession was to the village, just as important was the teaching of his craft to his Son as he had learned from his own father. Joseph probably had Jesus with him every day when he started work from the time Jesus was 6 or 7 years old. Jesus would learn the trade and probably do small tasks, like fetching tools and materials, and maybe running errands and making small deliveries. Formal apprenticeship in his father's trade would begin when he turned 15.

In the same way your family might have some "fun and games" handed down through tradition, Jesus and his family must have had some of the same. The typical and seemingly popular pastimes of this era were very simple. They were hard working people and possibly had very little or no time for "fun and games." Yet there were holidays and the Sabbath when certainly the children and the adults found a few moments to relax and play games. They played ball games and a form of hopscotch and jacks. Archeological finds of that time reveal toys such as wheeled animals, rattles, whistles, hoops, spinning tops and various kinds of board games, even one similar to checkers.

At that same time they were very strict in the observation of the Sabbath, or weekly day of prayer, and holy days.

### Activities

1. Discuss with your father or other adult relative his craft/job and what education or specific training he needed to be able to do it. Tell what you learned in your notebook.
2. Play a game with your family that Jesus might have played. Write a few sentences about the game you played in your notebook.

### Service

Make a game and give it to a younger child or take part in a special game with a large group of younger children such as at a day care center, after school program, etc. Describe what you did in your notebook. Younger children often look up to older boys and girls, so it is important to play nicely, representing Christian charity to the younger children.

### Unit Three – Jesus’ Faith and Your Faith

The Jewish people of the time of Jesus were very devoted to their faith. They observed the laws of their faith, which governed every aspect of their lives. They maintained strict observance of the Sabbath and holy days.

The Sabbath, the day of rest, began at sundown on Friday and ended at sundown on Saturday. On this day no Jew would dare be seen going to the fields to work. Craftsmen stayed away from their shops and women did no housework.

Friday was a busy day for all. They would prepare for the Sabbath by finishing up the week’s work, cleaning, having lamps filled, meals cooked and clothes washed. By evening everyone in the village was called to the synagogue for special prayers with three sharp blasts of a ram’s horn. Later special foods were served during supper and a special blessing was said over the wine. The whole family then returned to the synagogue again on Saturday morning for more prayers and scripture reading. The Sabbath ended at sundown with the sound of the ram’s horn.

Then there were special feasts celebrated at different times of the year. Some of these you might be familiar with are: Rosh Hashanah in September, the beginning of the Jewish new year, Yom Kippur or Day of Atonement, when they would repent their sins; Hanukkah, late November or early December commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem in 164 B.C. after having been desecrated; Passover commemorates the Jews’ freedom from Egyptian captivity and the story of the Exodus. Passover was the reason that the Holy Family traveled to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12 years old. On the journey home, the boy was thought to be missing and after searching for their son, Mary and Joseph found him preaching to the priests and scholars back at the temple in Jerusalem.

Nazarenes had to travel 40 or 50 miles to the temple in Jerusalem. Small towns and villages had synagogues where the people gathered to pray and listen to scripture read.

Mary was responsible for the instruction of her son in the way of her faith, traditions of her people, and their moral code for the first five years of Jesus’ childhood. She was in complete charge of him for these first few formative years as was the custom of all Jewish people.

From the age of 5 to 9, Jesus would have attended an elementary school or “house of the book” where he would spend half a day, six days a week learning the Torah, the first 5 books of the Old Testament as we know it to be a part of our bible.

### Activities

1. With your parent or another adult, read from at least one of the first five books of the Old Testament. These books contain many of the laws that governed Jewish life. Suggestions: Deuteronomy chapters 12, 14-27; Leviticus chapters 11, 15, 17, 19, 21-25. List which book and verses you read in your notebook.
2. Take part in or establish a family tradition during Lent or Advent. Have one of your parents or guardians describe what you did in your notebook.
3. Write a paragraph of at least 150 words describing what you have learned about Jesus’ life as a small boy. Put this in your notebook.

### Service

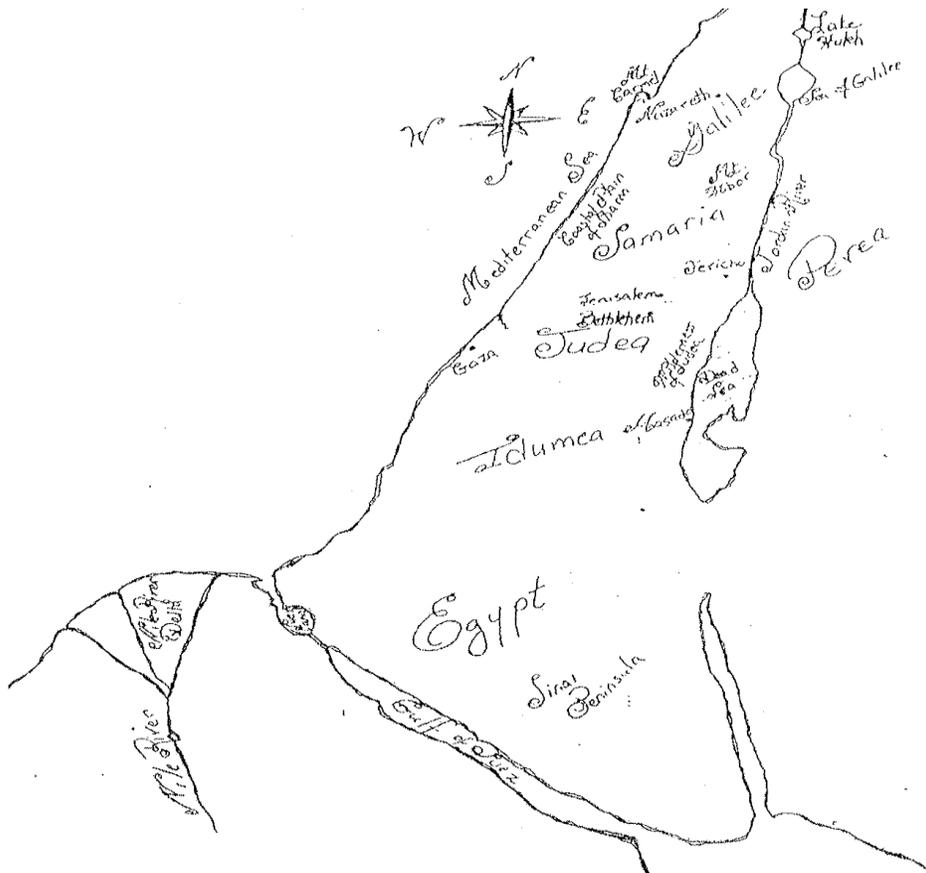
Do a service project for your parish. Suggestions: be an altar server, usher, sing in the choir, do one of the readings at Mass, etc. Describe what you did in your notebook.

The Jewish tradition has always been one of rich cultural, practical and spiritual traditions. They were well taught in the ways of their faith and upheld it and defended it with a passion. All of this would have been part of Jesus’ life in His humanity to be the perfect model for our lives.

## MAP ACTIVITY

Use different colors and draw lines to show the different routes Mary and Joseph may have taken during the following journeys:

1. On the way to be counted as part of Herod's tax census.
2. During their flight to Egypt.
3. On their return home.





*DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA*  
*Youth and Young Adult Outreach*

**APPLICATION – BOY JESUS AWARD**

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Pack No. \_\_\_\_\_ Pack chartered organization \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Council \_\_\_\_\_

**Certification**

I hereby apply for the BOY JESUS Award. On my honor as a Scout and/or as a Catholic, I certify that I have faithfully fulfilled all the requirements for this emblem. I further certify that I have prepared myself as best I can for a review.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scout's signature/date

Attested by \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian/Date \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Emblems Counselor or Pack Leader/Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Pastoral Approval**

I certify that this Scout has appeared before me with the BOY JESUS Activity book. He has met all the conditions of this program. I therefore approve him for the Boy Jesus Award.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor or Parish Administrator (or delegate)/Date

**Please mail this application to: Diocese of Venice in Florida, Office of Youth and Young Adult Outreach, 1000 Pinebrook Road, Venice, FL 34285. Thank you.**

**Diocesan Record:**

Date Application received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date recorded: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_