

When I grow up...

- What do you want to be when you are 18?
 - *(image: boy + question)*
 - (especially those who are around 12 years old...)
 - mention a couple of the "canned" responses from Coventry
 - *(image: boy + responses)*
- Do you have any big plan for your life?
 - *(image: girl + question)*
 - mention a couple of the "canned" responses from Coventry
 - *(image: girl + responses)*
- What about the adults - can they remember back that far, to point of leaving Primary School?
- Finally, what about a boy in Palestine a couple of thousand years ago?
 - *(image: boy on stilts + question)*
 - what hopes, plans, dreams might he have had?
- *Through this service we'll be exploring the expectations and hope we all have in life, whoever we are*

Thanksgiving

- After readings, picking up on the Jeremiah reading:
 - what did God say his people would do in the future?
 - (maybe re-read?)
 - homes, settle, gardens (v.5)
 - marry, kids, family (v.6)
 - pray for Babylon (v.7)
 - more later: back to Palestine (v.10); hope and a future (v.11); answered prayer (v.12)
- God's plan for his people at this time were to **get on with life**
 - get on with the normal, while not losing sight of the long-term future
 - **ask what normal things we will be doing this week**
 - and integrate them, esp what mum's do, into prayers of thanksgiving...

Mum's the Word

- Asked earlier what children's hopes and dreams are - whether kids now, or our hopes when we were younger...
 - but what hopes and dreams do parents have for their children?
- What might Mary have reasonably hoped for her son Jesus?
- There were certain things Mary knew about Jesus by the time he was 12:
 - 1. Mary knew her son had been born for miraculous reasons - he was born before she and Joseph were married; Jesus was God's son, not Joseph's
 - 2. Mary knew that shepherds had been told about Jesus' birth by angels who appeared to them in the sky
 - 3. Mary kept thinking about what the shepherds had said
 - 4. Mary knew Jesus name was to be "Jesus"; it was a name given through the angel, not a name chosen by Joseph or her - and it means "The Lord saves"
 - 5. Mary knew that being the mother of Jesus was going to bring her pain - Simeon had warned her prophetically that her son would have enemies
 - 6. and Mary watched Jesus as he grew up, and saw him as an ordinary but also a wise boy, one whom God blessed

What do you think Mary made of all this stuff?

- did she worry?
- did she hope the worse bits wouldn't come to pass?
- even that the prophet Simeon's words would not be true?
- The story we read of Jesus going up to Jerusalem with his parents marks a key childhood turning point:
 - for Mary in her understanding of who Jesus was and what his future would hold
 - and for Jesus himself, as he aligned himself with who he realised he was, and who his true Father was

Context

- A village holiday/trip to Jerusalem
 - at 12 Jesus' first Passover, recognised now as an adult;
 - compare contemporary Jewish Bar Mitzvah
- Despite Jesus now being an "adult", his mum would still have been worried!
 - after 48 hours looking, she must have been absolutely distraught... "Son, why have you treated us like this?"
- But Jesus reaction is striking!
 - he is calm, composed, settled in who he is and what he is about
 - he's not defensive, or guilty like he's been found out doing something he shouldn't have
 - his actions flow out of his sense of his future purpose, who he is and will ultimately be known as - God's Son
 - he is on the path of fulfilling God's plan for his life
 - (compare with ordinary hopes and dreams for a Palestinian peasant boy from earlier...)

For Parents

- Maybe we are parents:
 - Mary had to come to terms with the fact that God had a plan for her son's life, independent of her
 - no other parent has ever had a child whose destiny was of such significance!
 - but every parent has hopes for their children...
 - examine our hopes - are they for success, even happiness?
 - or are they for things of eternal significance?
 - are our hopes big enough? That our children would know the living God and be used by him to fulfil his purposes in the world?

- do we pray and work for that?

For Children

- Jesus recognised that God had a plan for him
 - do we recognise that God has a plan... **better a purpose** for each one of us (we are all children!)
 - he wants us to become the people he made and intended us to be!
 - are our dreams big enough? Member of God's royal family? Kingdom builder? Rescuer of lives for all eternity? Or do you want to be a doctor, lawyer, vet, teacher...

For Everyone

- Do you wish you were different from who you are now?
 - are you ever resentful for the way your life turned out?
 - **remember you are made by God, loved by God, and he has purpose in your life!**
 - **remember that he who began a good work in you will carry it out** - there is hope for the future, for change and growth, even before we get to heaven!