

Celebrating Our Lord

Presentation

UNIT

3

Lesson
Five



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ...

Dear Lord, thank you for bringing us together to celebrate our love for you and so that we can be a part of our parish family. We want to be with each other and help each other as friends in your name. Amen.

Daily Bread

In keeping with traditions of Old Testament times, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the Temple to be “presented” forty days after his birth. In those days, and in some places still today, a new mother would stay away from the public for 40 days, just to recover from giving birth and also to take special care of the newborn baby.

After the 40 days, there was a tradition where the mother would give gifts to God in thanks and also to offer the first born son of a Jewish family for blessing and for service to God. It was a way to welcome the child and celebrate the mother in the religious community. It is something like when you were baptized as a baby.

When Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus for this ceremony, there were two people at the Temple who knew that Jesus was very special.

One of them was a man named Simeon, a very old and religious man who had prayed to God to keep him alive until he could see the Savior who had been promised to the world in Scripture.

When he saw Mary and her baby, Simeon suddenly sensed God’s presence. Simeon knew he had seen the Savior who would bring the light of God to the world. He told Mary and Joseph this.

At the same time, an old woman named Anna came to them. She was called a prophetess, a person who was very religious and had a special understanding of God’s will for the people. She thanked God for Jesus and began to tell everyone who he was.



CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Cast

Mary, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, Priest, Parishioners 1 and 2 (can be played by one or more person)

Props

Baby doll, two stuffed birds or other small animal

Instruction to actors

Read your parts with the emotion in parentheses at the beginning of your lines.

(The priest, Simeon, Anna, and the parishioners are in the Temple. Mary and Joseph enter. Mary holds the baby. Joseph holds the birds.)

Mary: (happy) I had my baby 40 days ago and now I came to bring gifts of joy and purity. I am here to thank God for my healthy baby and to ask that I be taken back into the community.

(Joseph gives the priest the birds)

Priest: (pleased) Mary, you are welcome back into Temple. You are now pure again.

Joseph: (humbly) We bring our first born son to you. We ask you to bless him and also offer him and his future to the service of God.

Priest: (lovingly) Your son will be a servant of God.

(Simeon and Anna step up and look closely at the baby. Simeon becomes very happy, as if he is meeting his best friend.)

Simeon: (excited) I know who this child is! He will be a light for all people all over the world. Dear God, I am very old and now I can die in peace, because I've seen our Savior. Mary and Joseph, may God bless your baby Jesus.

Joseph: (confused) What are you talking about? How do you know this?

Anna: (wise and happy) I see it too. This child is very, very special.

Simeon: (wise and happy) I have prayed to God for many years to see the savior before I left this earth. I know in my heart that this baby will grow up to be that man.

Parishioner 1: (curious) Let me see, too.

Mary: (amazed) Is this true? How will this be for our family?

Simeon: (lovingly, like a father) Mary, as a man, Jesus will be the reason many people in Israel will rise and fall. People's true feelings and thoughts will come out, sometimes not in a good way. Sadly, in the end, it will hurt you as his mother.

Anna: (excited) (to the parishioners) Simeon tells the truth. Thank God for bringing us our Savior! See the light that shines from this child?

Parishioner 2: (agreeing) Yes, I think she is right. This baby is truly from God.

Joseph: (happy) Mary, this is amazing. Everywhere we go, others see the light in our child.

Mary: (happy) Yes, he will be a voice of God on earth.

Priest: (happy and caring) You and your family are blessed and purified. Go home and raise Jesus in faith. Teach him of God and our traditions. Bring him back to the Temple on all the feast days.

Joseph: (thankful) (*shakes hands with the priest, Simeon, and Anna*) Thank you. I will take my family back to our home in Galilee. We are the humble servants of God.

Mary: (thankful) Thank you, thank you all. We will teach him all we know. Goodbye.

(Mary and Joseph leave with the baby)

Parishioner 1: (curious) (to parishioner 2) Do you think it's true that this baby is our Savior?

Parishioner 2: (curious) I saw the shining face of his mother Mary. There is something different about this child.

Anna: (confident) Of course he is the Savior. He is the son of God made as a human being. Just you watch. He will be the one who changes the world by bringing love and peace to our hearts.

Parishioners 1 and 2: (amazed) Wow!

-The End-

In the Armenian Tradition

The Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord

On February 14 each year, the Armenian Church celebrates *Dyarnuntarach*, which in English means “the bringing forward of the Lord.” This is the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord. This feast is always forty days after Armenian Christmas. It is in honor of the day when Mary and Joseph took Jesus Temple as a baby.

The feast is also about Simeon and Anna. They knew that Jesus was the Savior. Their faith allowed them to see what others could not so easily see. Since they had faith, they were both open to the idea of the Savior being among them. They were both hoping and expecting the love of Christ to come into their world. So when he appeared there as a baby in the arms of his mother, they were able to recognize him.

Also, this story reminds us about how Jesus is a **real person**, fully human. In his presentation at the Temple, we see that he did all of the things that all people of his time did, starting at the beginning of his life.



to the



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Unscramble the letters for each word; then use them to fill in the blanks below.

lgith ygrol seey lepope

“....my _____ have seen your salvation, which you prepared for all _____ to see – a _____ that will reveal salvation to the gentiles and bring _____ to all people...”

This is what Simeon said when Jesus was presented at the Temple. So, even as a baby who could not talk or walk, Jesus had an effect on people that was deep and meaningful.

Mary and Joseph brought Jesus as a baby to the Temple to present him to God. By doing this, they were presenting him to their friends and family of faith and making a promise for the future. This is very similar to the Armenian sacraments of baptism and chrismation. When you were a baby, you were presented to the church family, with the help of a godfather, godmother, and the priest. The people who attended your baptism pledged to uphold you in your Christian faith as you grew up.

Did you know...!?

BIBLE BYTES

Gentile This word is still used today, but you don't hear it very much. In the Bible, this word means any person who is not an Israelite or who is not Jewish. In Biblical times, this could have meant the Romans or travelers from other lands. Today, this word is usually used to specifically mean people who are Christian.

Well Versed

“And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.”

Luke 2:40

Family Focus

Today, the children learned about how Jesus was presented to the Temple by Mary and Joseph. They made the same pledge to a life of faith that you made when you had your child baptized. The children very creatively re-enacted the story as it is told in Luke 2:22-40. They made valentines for you, emphasizing God's love. Enjoy the valentine!

Living Your Faith

1. Tell your child about his or her baptism. Go over photos, if you have them.
2. Read the story of the Presentation in Luke 2: 22-40.
3. Post your child's valentine where everyone can enjoy it.