

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.

Celebrating Our Lord

Presentation

Key Concepts

1. Jesus was recognized as the Savior even as a baby when his parents presented him at the Temple.
2. Mary and Joseph's presentation of Jesus as a baby is a reminder of the importance of a community of tradition and faith.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Learn the story of the Presentation.
2. Re-enact the Bible story.
3. Explore why and how this event is celebrated in the Armenian Church and how Simeon and Anna's faith allowed them to recognize the Savior when they saw him.
4. Make a valentine card for their parents that shares the celebration of the Presentation.

Materials Needed

A life sized baby doll, 2 toy birds (see procedure #4)
Different colors of construction paper (red, pink, and white), valentine doilies or other types of paper for making Valentine cards

Copies of the "Presentation" miniature from the Appendix

Crayons and/or markers

Scissors for each child

Glue

Procedure

1. Welcome the students and say the opening prayer together.
2. Ask the children to sit down and listen to the story as you read aloud or teach from **Daily Bread**. Then ask: "Where do you think we can find this story?" (in the Bible) Where in the Bible? (The Gospels, which are about Jesus' life and, in particular, exclusively in the Gospel of Luke.) Have children turn to Luke 2:22-40 and take turns reading. Conclude by turning to the **Scripture**

Source scramble. (Answers: people, eyes, light, glory) 15 min.

3. Discuss this story with the children by asking them some of the following questions. They might have many different answers and many of them can be right. Allow the children to explore their own ideas. Try to point out or steer them to some of the possible answers listed below:
 - a.) "What do you think this story shows about Mary and Joseph?" Answers: That they were very religious; that they loved God; that they were actively involved in their religious community; that they loved their child and wanted him to be a part of their religious tradition.
 - b.) "How do you think Simeon and Anna knew that Jesus is the one promised to them from the ancient scriptures?" Answers: Because they were wise and had faith; because they had read the Bible, served the Temple (as we might serve our church) and prayed their whole lives to God to see the Savior; because they were very spiritual and close to God, through prayer and faith, they could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit near them.
 - c.) "What kind of ceremony does the Armenian Church have that is similar to that Biblical presentation?" Answer: baptism/chrisation.
 - d.) "Why do you think it might be important for a new mother to bring her baby to her place of worship?" Answers: To share her joy; to show thanks to God for the new addition to her family; to receive God's blessings for the baby. 5 min.

4. Tell the children that the class will do a little skit about the Presentation. Direct their attention to the script in **Celebrate with God**. Ask for volunteers to play the parts of Mary, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, and parishioners. Tell them they do not have to memorize anything. They will read from the text. If your class is large, some children can be the audience. Or, add parts!

Clear a space in the front of the room and direct the children as they read their parts on where to stand that makes sense. Encourage the children to read the lines with enthusiasm and to pretend that they are feeling the emotions described in the script. If you have time, repeat the performance with different volunteers. 20 min.

5. After you have finished the play, ask the children to settle down and sit back in their seats. Ask them why they think this event was so important. Allow all answers, but direct them to the idea that Jesus was recognized by people of faith and wisdom as the Savior. Remind them of the Christmas story about how the wise men from the East came to see the baby and how the angels appeared to the shepherds. Tell them that having faith is one of the main ways to find your way to feel the love of Jesus in your everyday life.

6. Tell the children that in the Armenian Church, we mark this occasion with a special Feast Day called *Dyarnuntarach*. Go around the room and have each child read a sentence or two from **In the Armenian Tradition**. 5 min.

7. Distribute the materials for making Valentine cards. Tell the children that one of the main reasons we come to church each week is to feel God's love through Holy Communion and through our church family. The Feast of the Presentation is a reminder of how Jesus, even as a baby, brought happiness, hope, and love to all who saw him. Tell the children we are going to make a valentine card to our parents, telling them how much we love them.

Write on the board: "Let us love one another, for love comes from God!" *1 John 4:7*

They can cut out and glue the picture onto the front of their card and color it. Below the picture, ask the children to write the above quote. Tell them they can write "I love you [mom and dad or mom or dad]. Happy Valentine's Day." or their own version of that idea on the inside of the card. Allow the children to work on their cards until the end of class.

8. After the children have cleaned up their tables, ask them to say the following prayer: "Dear Jesus, we remember the day your parents lovingly presented you to the Temple. We feel your love today and will share that love with others after we leave church. Amen." Dismiss the class. 15 min.

Key Concepts

1. The Transfiguration was an important affirmation of Jesus as God the Son for the disciples.
2. The Armenian Church remembers this event every summer in the Feast of the Transfiguration.
3. As in other Christian celebrations (Christmas, Easter, etc.), some of the traditions associated with the Armenian celebration are from pre-Christian times.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Participate in an experiment about seeing things in different lighting.
2. Review the Bible story of the Transfiguration and complete a puzzle.
3. Color a picture of the Transfiguration.
4. Read about the pre-Christian traditions from Armenia that are often part of the celebration.

Materials Needed

Copies of the coloring page of the Transfiguration from the Appendix
Flashlight
Crayons
A box large enough to place textbook in (see procedure #2)

Procedure

1. Welcome students and say the opening prayer together.
2. Ask: "I have a question for you. When you wake up early in the morning, let's say, a winter morning when it's not even light out yet, what can you see in your room? Does everything seem colorful and bright?" Children should respond that nothing is clear, colors are indistinct, items on their desk or table might not be distinguishable, etc. Tell the children that they are going to do an experiment.