

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.

Make the room as dark as possible by closing the blinds or curtains on windows and turning off the light in the room. Once the room is somewhat dark, hold up the icon of the Transfiguration from the lesson and ask the children what is in the picture. (The room should be dark enough that they don't see much; if it isn't you might want to further obscure it by putting it into a box.) Allow them to answer out loud. Ask them to describe the picture's colors. Ask them what details they see in the picture.

Turn on the lights *and* now train a flashlight on the picture. Ask them what is in the picture and what details they see. They should see more details, more color, more of everything about the picture. At the very least, colors are brighter. 10 min.

3. Now, tell them that light is one of things that physically helps you see better, but it also is a word that is used when you suddenly understand something better. There are phrases in the English language using the idea of light, such as when someone has a great idea, they might say that a light bulb went on in their head. Read aloud the **Daily Bread** section of the lesson and have students complete the puzzle. (Answer: his *clothes* became *dazzling* white, *whiter* than anyone in the *world* could *bleach* them. And there *appeared* before them *Elijah* and *Moses* who were *talking* with *Jesus*.) 15 min.

4. Ask the children to recall how they saw the picture in the dark and saw the same picture in the light. Was the picture the same picture? Allow them to answer. Then tell them that yes, it was the same picture. The thing that changed was our view of the picture. When we saw the picture with more clarity in the light, we saw something more intense and vivid.

That is what happened with Jesus and the disciples on the mountain. Jesus did not actually change. The disciples just saw in a different way and became more aware of who Jesus was. 5 min.

5. Ask the children if they have ever heard the word "transfigure" before today? If they have, ask if they know what it means. Take any answers, and then ask one of the children to read **Bible Bytes** aloud as a review.

6. Distribute the coloring page to the children with the crayons or markers. Before they begin, hold up the page and review the people depicted (Elijah and Moses, the prophet and the holder of the Law, respectively; his disciples – and closest friends - Peter, James, and John at the bottom) While they are coloring, read **In the Armenian Tradition**. 20 min.

7. After the children finish coloring and clean up, read or teach **Did You Know**.

8. In closing, say the following prayer, "Dear God, thank you bringing us together, for showing us your way, and for giving us ways to celebrate your light in our lives. Amen." Dismiss the class. 10 min.

UNIT
4
 Lesson
 One

We Are a Family of Faith

Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

We Are Part of a Long Story

Key Concepts

1. The church is a family of many generations.
2. All faithful of the church, past and present, are honored and remembered at the Divine Liturgy.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Review important feasts and seasons of the Armenian Church.
2. Explore how our faith is passed down through generations.
3. Review the "Great Litany" of intercessory prayers in the Holy Badarak and participate in a class recitation.
4. Participate in a prayer activity for their own family members.

Materials Needed

Optional: *How Armenia Became the First Christian Nation* (coloring book)

Divine Liturgy books

Lined paper