

THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Unit A4 Luke 2: 22-40

YOU WILL NEED

- Basket, Bible, book stand, candle
- Beige felt underlay
- Brown roadway
- Blocks to make a temple
- 3D figures
 - Baby Jesus
 - Mary
 - Joseph
 - Anna
 - Simeon

PREPARATION - Invite the children to enter the storytelling space, have them seated in a semicircle, ready to listen to the story. Ensure that all materials are prepared in a basket and that a Bible is in close proximity, elevated off the floor on a book stand.

TELLING THE STORY - Story is a key part of our faith tradition. Young children, with their capacity for intuitive learning, are particularly able to find meaning through story.

Hold the Bible in your hands...

This story comes from our Sacred Scripture, the Bible. We find this story in the New Testament, in the Gospel of Luke, so we know that this story is centered on the life and teachings of Jesus and the early Christian community. Because this story is from the Bible we will light the candle as we listen to the story.

Place the Bible back on the stand.

Lay out the cream or green felt. Roll out the road. Build the Temple three-quarters of the way down the road.

Long before Jesus was born, the people of Israel waited and hoped for a Messiah. Some thought the Messiah would be a great king, like King David. Others thought he would be a leader like Moses, or a prophet or perhaps a mighty soldier who would save the people of Israel from the Roman occupation.

From the edge furthest from you, move Mary, Joseph and Jesus up the road towards the Temple in Jerusalem.

Forty days after his birth in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph, in obedience to the Jewish law, brought Jesus up to Jerusalem. Because he was their first born son they took him to the Temple to present him to God. Being poor people, they offered a pair of turtle-doves to God.

Put Simeon in front of you.

This is Simeon. He was an elderly man, a devout and faithful Jew, who trusted in God.

Hold one hand over Simeon's head.

The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah.

Place Simeon in the Temple.

On this day, God's Spirit guided Simeon to the Temple.

Move Joseph, Mary and Jesus into the Temple

When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus into the Temple, Simeon saw the baby. He immediately recognised Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah.

Hold Jesus in front of Simeon.

Simeon took the child into his arms. He joyously praised and thanked God for allowing him to see Jesus, the Messiah, who would save all people, Jews as well as Gentiles.

Turn Mary and Joseph to Simeon and Jesus

Mary and Joseph were amazed. Simeon blessed them. Then speaking solemnly, he told Mary not everyone would accept her beloved son. Many people would oppose Jesus to the point of death. Simeon warned Mary that she would experience great pain and deep sorrow; and that her heart would be pierced with sadness.

Place Jesus with Mary and Joseph

Hold Anna in front of you.

Just at this moment Anna came along. She was an elderly widow who served God night and day, praying and worshipping in the Temple.

Place Anna with the group. Turn Mary and Joseph towards her.

Anna looked at the baby and immediately knew that he was the long-awaited Messiah. Anna was filled with joy. She praised and thanked God for this child who would save all people. Mary and Joseph were amazed.

Move Mary, Jesus and Joseph away from the Temple, back along the road to Nazareth.

When they had finished in the Temple, Mary, Jesus and Joseph returned to the little village of Nazareth in Galilee.

Hold Jesus in your hand.

The baby Jesus grew up in Nazareth with his mother and father. He grew strong and was filled with wisdom.

Place your hand over Jesus.

The grace and blessing of God were upon him at all times.

Place your hand behind Mary and Joseph.

Mary and Joseph continued to live faithful lives, trusting in God, as they raised their son and watched him grow.

WONDERING - Following the story, "I wonder" statements engage children with the story and invite reflection. Wondering together teaches the art of dialogue, of listening to others, accepting and learning from others' ideas and contributions.

Sit back, pause for a moment, look up at students, and then wonder about the story together.

I wonder...

- how Anna and Simeon knew that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah.
- how they felt when they saw the baby Jesus.
- how they felt when they saw that the Messiah was a baby born of poor parents and not a great king or a mighty soldier.
- what Mary and Joseph were thinking when Simeon and Anna spoke about Jesus.
- what Mary and Joseph talked about on the way back to Nazareth.
- how parents today present their children to God.

Carefully pack the story materials back into your basket. Ensure that children are watching so they know how to pack the materials away should they choose to engage with the story during exploring.

EXPLORING - Provide an opportunity for individual/small group exploration in order to respond to the story. This provides students with time to focus on and explore the story or aspects of it, which have significance for them. For this reason, students choose from a variety of material and types of work. This is an opportunity for students to respond to what they have heard in whatever way they choose, it should be seen as an prayerful opportunity for dialogue between the student and God.

PRAYER - Conclude the session with prayer. Children come closer to God through the experience of prayer. Teachers help students to pray by praying with them, providing a variety of prayer experiences. These may include laying of hands over students' works, spontaneous prayer, prayer related to the Scripture, prayers found in KWL, informal or formal prayers, or a hymn.

Carefully pack story materials back into your basket. Ensure that children are watching so they know how to pack the materials away and where to find them.