

JESUS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: LUKE 2:22-38



The STORY

Read the following account of Jesus presented in the temple adapted from Luke 2:22-38.

Forty days after the birth of a baby boy, a Jewish mom would travel to the temple to offer a sacrifice to the Lord according to the Law of Moses. When the time arrived to offer the sacrifice, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple to present Him to the Lord according to the Law. The Law says that every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord.

While they were at the temple, Mary and Joseph met a man named Simeon, who loved the Lord. The Holy Spirit was upon Simeon. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he met the Savior, the Messiah. That day, the Spirit of God led Simeon into the temple courts where Jesus was with his parents. Upon seeing Jesus, Simeon took the baby into his arms and praised God saying:

Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel. (Luke 2:29-32)

Joseph and Mary marveled at what Simeon said about Jesus. Simeon blessed the baby and told Mary that Jesus was appointed by God to lead many but not all would follow Him. Simeon also foretold that Jesus would be pierced by a sword and that His life would reveal the thoughts of the heart of man.

An old woman who had the gift of prophecy was also present in the temple. For many years Anna had lived alone after her husband died and left her a widow. All those years she spent every day in the temple worshipping, fasting, and praying. That very hour she began to give thanks to God for the baby Jesus and spoke of him to everyone who was hoping for the salvation of Israel.

After Mary and Joseph finished at the temple they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. As Jesus grew and became strong He was filled with wisdom and God's favor was upon Him.

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Please note: *The discussion questions in the following sections are written to serve as a guide in teaching our youngest children. Three to six year olds are not going to be able to answer these questions like their older brothers and sisters. Please refer to the God's Story Preschool Curriculum Outline for additional ideas.*

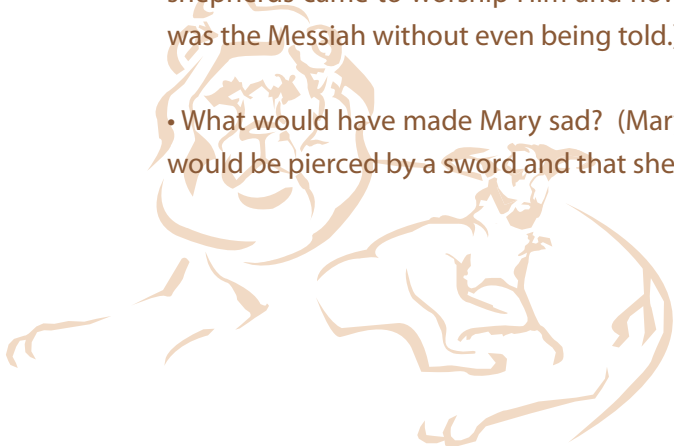
After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion.

- Why did Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the temple? (Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple to offer a sacrifice and to present Him to the Lord.)
- Why would Mary and Joseph want to present Jesus to the Lord? (The Law instructed families to present their first boy baby to the Lord. The firstborn male was to be holy or set apart for God.)
- Why is this story in the Bible? (God wants us to see that Jesus followed the law of God in every detail. This is important because Jesus is the only person who followed all of God's law and did not sin. Here Mary and Joseph follow the commands of God while Jesus is a baby.)

CRAFT QUESTIONS

Coloring sheets have been provided that exemplify today's lesson: Mary and Joseph presenting the baby Jesus at the temple. Engage the children by asking:

- Why did Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple? (Because the Old Testament Law required that they go to the temple to dedicate their son to the Lord.)
- What do you think Mary and Joseph talked about on their way home from the temple? (Mary and Joseph may have talked about how God continued to bring people to worship the baby Savior. First the shepherds came to worship Him and now an old man and old woman at the temple knew that Jesus was the Messiah without even being told.)
- What would have made Mary sad? (Mary may have been saddened by Simeon's prophecy that Jesus would be pierced by a sword and that she would be very sad.)



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SNACK QUESTIONS

While the children are eating the snack, engage the children by asking:

- Simeon was waiting for a long time to see the Messiah. How do you think he felt when he saw Jesus? (Accept any answer.)
- How did Simeon know that Jesus was the Messiah? (The Spirit of God moved upon his heart to make him aware.)
- Simeon said in his prayer, "My eyes have seen your salvation." How would baby Jesus be God's salvation? (Jesus would live a sinless life, then die on the cross in our place to take the punishment for our sins.)

WHERE IS the Gospel?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Simeon prophesies the death of Christ when he tells Mary that she will also be pierced with a sword through her soul. From the time of Jesus' birth throughout his ministry, His life is pointing to his sacrificial death on the cross.

WORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the WORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

