

Bible Passage: MATTHEW 2; LUKE 2

CHRIST CONNECTION: We can trust Jesus to save us from our sins, and we can tell others about Jesus.

Key Passage phrase: Jesus takes away the sin of the world. John 1:29

LEADER DEVOTIONAL

As the narrative of Jesus' early days on earth unfolded, several unique people are introduced who teach us lessons about our own journey. We find the wise men who sought Jesus with persistence, Herod whose power was threatened by this newborn King, and others such as Simeon and Anna—both who demonstrated a remarkable devotion to the Lord.

In Luke 2, Simeon and Anna are described as people who are deeply committed, faithful, and devout followers of God. Simeon is described as one who was old in years—near death—and desperately waiting for the Messiah to come. So, you can imagine the significance of that moment as Simeon saw the Christ child and rejoiced.

Anna, also old in years, had been faithfully worshiping God through fasting and prayer in the temple for 84 years. It is easy to imagine the joy she had upon seeing Jesus in the temple and her eager desire to tell everyone about this glorious child.

Both Simeon and Anna came upon the incredible blessing of seeing, celebrating, and worshiping Jesus because of their faithfulness to the Lord. Both were in the place the Lord wanted them to be, faithful to God over the years, and daily looking for the Lord in everything they did.

Imagine if your daily decisions were influenced by similar factors. You were deeply committed to being in the places God wanted you to be, you were seeking to be faithful over the decades, and in all that you did you were pursuing what the Lord might have for you. What would have to change in your life, in your motivations, and in your decisions to make this true of you? In what ways would you see and experience the blessings of God's good gifts even more?

Faithfulness like that of Simeon and Anna doesn't earn any additional degree of salvation before God. But it can produce more opportunities to see the work of God in your life, even if it's only because you're more attuned. What a blessing that would be for each of us as well.

TERMS TO KNOW

Dedication: the act of setting apart persons or things to God. The act is usually accompanied by an announcement of what is being done or intended and by prayer asking for divine approval and blessing.

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WELCOME

Lead preschoolers to complete “What Does a Baby Need” activity page.

SAY: *Babies need many things to be healthy and happy. In today’s Bible story, we will learn that Mary and Joseph brought Baby Jesus to the temple. Why do you think they brought Jesus to the temple? The temple was the place people went to worship God. Listen closely to today’s story to find out who Jesus met while at the temple.*

BIBLE STORY

Tell the following Bible story using the provided storytelling tips or show the video. Use the bold version of the Bible story for younger preschoolers.

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JESUS WAS DEDICATED

One day, when Jesus was still a baby, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple. The temple was the place where people went to pray and worship God. Many years before, God had given special rules to all the people of Israel. One rule was, “When a woman’s first son is born, his parents must present him to God.” Another rule was that the child’s parents should give an offering to God. Mary and Joseph obeyed God and brought two birds as an offering.

A man named Simeon lived in Jerusalem, and he loved God. He knew that God had promised to send someone special to save people from sin. God had told Simeon that he would not die until he saw the Messiah who would rescue people from their sins. Simeon trusted God.

That day, God told Simeon to go to the temple. Simeon saw Jesus there, and he picked Jesus up in his arms. Simeon was so happy! Simeon knew that Jesus was special. Simeon praised God. He prayed, “God, You kept Your promise, and I have seen the One who will save people from sin.”

Mary and Joseph heard Simeon say those important words. Jesus was going to save people from sin! Simeon talked to Mary and Joseph. He said being Jesus’ mother would be very good, but it would be very hard. Some people would love Jesus, but other people would not like Him at all. Some things would happen that would make Mary very sad.

Another woman, Anna, was in the temple. Anna was very old. She stayed at the temple all the time and worshiped God.

Anna walked toward Simeon, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. When Anna saw Jesus, she thanked God. People had been waiting a long time for God to send the special One who would save people from sin. Anna told other people the good news: Jesus the Savior is here!

Mary and Joseph did everything they were supposed to do at the temple. Then they went back home. Jesus grew up, and He was strong and healthy and wise. God was happy with Jesus.

CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY: *God had promised His people that a Savior was coming. When Simeon and Anna saw Jesus, they knew He was the Savior. Jesus came to save people from sin. We can trust Jesus to save us from our sins; and like Simeon and Anna, we get to tell others the good news.*

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ACTIVITY

FEEL FEATHERS

Provide an assortment of feathers for babies to feel. Feathers can be stuck to contact plastic if needed to keep babies from putting feathers in their mouths. Review the gospel gems as babies explore.

SAY: *Mary and Joseph brought two birds to the temple to give a gift to God. Simeon and Anna saw Jesus and knew He was the special King God promised. They praised God for sending Jesus.*

Check diapers, serve bottles if needed, and release babies to parents according to your church's security guidelines. Give parents today's big picture card. Repeat the Christ connection, gospel gems, and Bible-learning activities for babies who stay a second hour.

CRAFT

Dove Craft

See the example in your bin and help children make the craft. Notice we are recycling our abundance of leftover paper!

SAY: *Mary and Joseph obeyed God's words and brought a gift to the temple. They brought two birds to give to God. When Simeon and Anna saw Jesus, they knew He was the special King God promised. They praised God for sending Jesus, and we can too!*

SNACK

Post an allergy alert. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer. Serve a snack. Show the Bible story picture poster as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

SAY: *What was your favorite part of today's Bible story?*

SAY: *What did you learn about God in today's Bible story?*

SAY: *Why did Mary and Joseph bring Baby Jesus to the temple?*

SAY: *What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.*

CLOSING ACTIVITES

After the room is cleaned up, set out markers or crayons and let kids work on today's **Bible Story Coloring Page** until their parents arrive. You can also choose a book to read to the children as they color or for those who don't want to color. Please make the effort to have the children quietly engaged when parents arrive. When parents arrive to pick up their children, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well today.

BEFORE YOU GO...

Please clean up by doing the following:

- 1) Leave toys set up on tables so they can be sanitized.
- 2) Use surface spray to wipe down tables.
- 3) Sweep up any cracker crumbs or dirt.