

Festivals Session 4: Candlemas, the Presentation of Jesus (February)

Bible passage Luke 2: 22-32, 36-38 (NIV)

²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,

you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,

and the glory of your people Israel.”

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Focus verse Luke 2:32

‘A light for revelation to the Gentiles and for your glory to your people Israel.’

Aim

To celebrate Jesus as light of the world.

Messy team conversations

This passage is about old people, waiting patiently, faithful in prayer and trusting God – and they were rewarded with a sudden moment of recognition and joy. Chat about those ‘flashes of understanding’, and the things that you have been patiently waiting for, perhaps for years.

Activity

You will need clean jam jars, one for each person; LED tea lights; acrylic pens/paint for painting on glass; tissue paper; glue and glue sticks; double sided sticky tape; patterned tape; lace and ribbon.

Decorate the jam jars as you wish, and put an LED tea light in each one.

Celebration

Light your candles and thank God for Jesus, the Light of the World.

If possible, listen to a version of the ‘Nunc Dimittis’, the song of Simeon.

Prayer

God of Anna and Simeon, whose law makes known the gift of life, whose love exposes our hardness of heart; by your Spirit may we receive your faithful word to Gentile and Jew, and know your reconciling presence offered for all the world; through Jesus Christ, the Light and the Glory of God. Amen.

Song suggestions

Christ be our light

Let the flame burn brighter

This little light of mine

Lord, the light of your love is shining

Light of the world you stepped down into darkness

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