

CHRISTMAS ACCORDING TO SIMEON AND ANNA

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

JESUS LOVE SAVE MERCY

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 2:21-40

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children recognize the mercy of God in revealing his love to us through Jesus, our Messiah

MEMORY VERSE

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Something that was characteristic of Joseph and Mary's life was their obedience to the Word of God. Because of this, Jesus was eight days old when they had him circumcised, and when he was 40 days old, they took him to the temple to present him to the Lord. When they went to the temple, they also brought a sacrifice that Mary offered, to be pure after Jesus' birth, just like the law said (Exodus 3:2-12 and Leviticus 12).

When Joseph, Mary and Jesus reached the temple, they met two people, Simeon and Anna.

The first was a righteous and pious man who had waited for the rescue of his people. Simeon had received a promise from God that he would not die until he saw the promised Messiah in person.

In the temple, Simeon held the baby tenderly in his arms, the baby who would save his nation. In Jesus, Simeon could see two promises that had been kept: (1) the coming of the promised Messiah, and (2) the work of the Holy Spirit. He got to see the promised Messiah in person before he died.

And God was faithful to keep his promises, so Simeon lifted up his prayer, now called the Song or Prophecy of Simeon. In Latin, it is called *Nuncdimittis*, which means, "Now you dismiss." Simeon could now leave ... God had kept his promises.

The second person that Jesus' family met was Anna. Even though she was older, her relationship with God let her see that this child, born only 40 days ago, was to be the Savior. As she began to give thanks to God, she talked about Jesus to all of the people who waited for the promise of freedom for their people.

Even though the promise was clear, with respect to the coming of the Messiah, no one knew that on that day in the temple, the baby Jesus was the Savior they were waiting for. But God, with all his mercy, revealed it to Simeon and Anna, his faithful servants.

In this early stage of Jesus' life, we learn important aspects for our own lives. On the one hand, the obedience of Joseph and Mary with respect to God's law for his people, i.e., the dedication of their firstborn and the sacrifice to be pure after childbirth (Exodus 3:2-12 and Leviticus 12).

The loyalty of God became a reality through this experience for Simeon and Anna. We remember that in the earlier lessons, God had revealed to different people, like Isaiah, Micah and Zechariah, that He would send a Messiah to rescue his people.

Simeon, like Anna, knew this promise well; and God in His faithfulness and mercy let them meet the promised Messiah because God always keeps His promises.

When people have a personal and profound encounter with Christ, something happens as a result, their life changes radically, so much so that their spirit does not keep quiet and they want to tell everyone how Jesus has changed their life.

After her encounter with the baby Jesus, Anna told everyone about the promise coming true (Luke 2:38). Simeon, like Anna, would never be the same either ... the Holy Spirit had guided them to meet Jesus.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Start the session by asking the children how they feel about Jesus, the Son of God, being born as a child like them. Tell them the story of Simeon and Anna meeting Jesus in the temple. A great way to tell the story is dress up like Simeon or Anna and have someone help you by dressing up like the other. Remember that they were both old in age. If possible get a doll that can represent the baby Jesus and you can hold him in your arms. You can use him for both roles. Impact the lives of the children!

When you are done with the story, remind the children that Christmas is not just for Christians, that Jesus came to save the whole world (John 3:16-17).

Write your opinion

Challenge the children to think about how they could teach someone the true meaning of Christmas. If you wish, you can make this activity more attractive by having the children explain it to each other and a few taking turns explaining it to you. Assume the role of someone who thinks we celebrate Christmas just to have a party and to give and receive gifts, and have them try to explain to you the true meaning of the holiday. Challenge some of them with questions. That way the real convictions of the children will come to light and this will help them to reinforce their belief with respect to personal evangelism, beliefs in Christmas and others.

Celebrate together

To finish this portion of the session, debate with the children to see if they believe that Christmas should be celebrated throughout the whole year.

TEACH THE LESSON

A long-awaited welcome

It feels like just yesterday they were on their way to Bethlehem. Now the baby Jesus already is 40 days old. Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. They went on their way to the temple. Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 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, Simeon said, "This baby is unlike any other. This baby is very special because he is the promised one." He took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now can dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too. Always remember how special he is."

Anna, the prophetess, was also in the temple that day, she was very old. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day,

fasting and praying.

When she saw Mary, Joseph and Jesus, she approached them and recognized Jesus. "This is the baby that we've been waiting for God to send," she said. "Glory to God! Because he has sent the one, he promised! I must tell everyone that is near!"

Mary and Joseph were astounded by what she said about Jesus. An angel had come to them and said that he would be called the Son of God. When he was born, some shepherds came from afar and spoke of a choir of angels announcing his birth and that this was good news for all people. And now Simeon and Anna had recognized the baby as God's chosen one. Luke indicates that when Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. (Luke 2) But this was not immediately. Matthew indicates that wise men visited them in Bethlehem, possibly a year later, and afterwards the family fled to Egypt until after Herod's (the Great) death. Matthew added that since Archelaus (the worst of Herod the Great's sons) was ruling in Judea, Joseph took his family to Galilee. (Matthew 2)

CONNECT THE LESSON

With the children, thank God for faithfully keeping his promise to send a Savior to rescue us.

Remind them of Simeon and Anna's experiences with the baby Jesus. This would be a great time to invite anyone who wishes to have a personal encounter with Jesus, or to reaffirm in them the calling we all have to tell everyone about Christ. Anna is a great example of acting on the calling that each of us Christians has.

Express your point of view

Christmas is not just for Christians, for Jesus came to save the whole world so that we can all believe in him and accept him as our personal Savior. But there are still many people that do not have even the slightest idea that this is what it is all about. Help the children find the answers to the questions that the non-believers can pose. Then discuss them as a group.

To make this activity more inviting to the children, have some children act out what this would be like. Have them tell what they think/believe about Christmas; how would they answer these questions? What evidence could they give? They can write their questions on a piece of paper.

Child 1: I like to give and receive gifts and also have parties at school. For me, this is the real reason we celebrate in December. Why would I throw Jesus into all of that?

(Without Jesus' existence, we would not celebrate his birth.)

Child 2: Yeah, so maybe Christmas really is Jesus' birthday. So what? (Jesus is not just another person, he's fully God and fully human. Just imagine that the Son of God was just a little, defenseless baby. This shows us that he really does love us. He came to the Earth to show us his great love.)

Child 3: Clearly, Jesus was a great person. But how can we really know that he was God's Son? (Through the story, God gave hope to his people that he would send a Savior. He prepared a path for Jesus when he called John the Baptist. Angels announced his birth to Mary, Joseph and shepherds saying he was the promised one. Jesus' birth fulfilled the prophecies exactly. Then, his ministry and resurrection shows us that he truly is the Son of God. We understand that this is true, when we have a personal relationship with him.)

Make note that even though the birth of Jesus was to bring happiness to everyone, some people do not love him. Sometimes telling the story is not enough. We can pray for those who do not know, and show them the love of God through how we treat them. But God has given enough evidence that Jesus is his Son. Tell them, "Today we are going to find more evidence that God sent his Son to save all the people."

Celebrating together

Help the children figure out how to act on this activity. Invite them to prepare to talk about their testimony next week - about how they talked to others about the real reason for the season.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Write the verse on the board, but take out the first and last word and where they can find the verse; ask volunteers to complete the verse.

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #312 and help the students use this activity to apply the memory verse.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Finish the session with a moment of prayer. Each student can give thanks to God for sending his Son Jesus to save us, and that he has revealed this truth to us in the Bible.

Encourage

Thank the students for their attendance and encourage them not to forget what they learned.

Invite

Announce something about the next session to increase the group's interest and encourage them to invite others.