**Children’s liturgy – The Presentation of the Lord (Year A)**

**Preparation of the worship space**

Colour: white

**Song suggestions:** Christ be our light (883, Laudate)

**Welcome:** Today we hear about Jesus and his family and a special trip they took to Jerusalem. We hear about the special things that happened to Jesus there and all that was said about him.

**Opening prayer:** God of all, you love and care for each one of us. Help us to see how important each person is to you and to treat all people with respect and kindness. Amen.

**First reading (optional):** Malachi 3:1-4

**Psalm:** Psalm 23:7-10 r 8

**Gospel acclamation:** *everyone stands and sings the acclamation together.*

**Gospel:** Luke 2:22-40

The time came for Joseph and Mary to perform the ceremony of purification as the Law of Moses commanded. So they took the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord: “Every firstborn male is to be dedicated to the Lord.” They also went to offer a sacrifice of a pair of doves or two young pigeons, as required by the law of the Lord.

At that time there was a man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a good God-fearing man and was waiting for Israel to be saved. The Holy Spirit was with him and had assured him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s promised Messiah.

Led by the Spirit, Simeon went into the Temple. When the parents brought the child Jesus into the Temple to do for him what the Law required, Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God:

 “Now, Lord, you have kept your promise,

 and you may let your servant go in peace.

 With my own eyes I have seen your salvation,

 which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples:

 A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles

 and bring glory to your people Israel.”

The child’s mother and father were amazed at the things Simeon said about him. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, “This child is chosen by God for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God which many people will speak against and so reveal their secret thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword, will break your own heart.”

There was a very old prophet, a widow named Anna, daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She had been married for only seven years and was now 84 years old. She never left the Temple: day and night she worshipped God, fasting and praying. That very same hour she arrived and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were waiting for God to set Jerusalem free.

When Joseph and Mary had finished doing all that was required by the law of the Lord, they returned to their home town of Nazareth in Galilee. The child grew and became strong; he was full of wisdom, and God’s blessings were upon him.

*(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission, see details below\*)*

**Gospel reflection:** What do you remember from today’s reading?

Jesus’ parents Mary and Joseph took him to the Temple, to present him to God.

There were two other people in the story today too, who see the baby Jesus and recognise how important he is. Can you remember their names?

Simeon is an old man, who has been promised by God that he will see Christ – the Saviour of the world. When he sees the baby Jesus, Simeon knows that the child is the Son of God. Simeon tells everyone how special Jesus is.

Anna is also in the Temple. She has spent her whole life in the Temple serving God. She sees the baby Jesus and begins to praise God.

How do you think Mary and Joseph felt to hear Simeon and Anna talking like this about their son?

Even though he was just a baby, Simeon and Anna could see just how important Jesus was. They did not judge by what Jesus looked like. They were filled with faith and they knew in their hearts how special and important he was.

Have you had a time when you have judged someone because of what they look like? Or when you have been judged for what you look like?

What do you think this reading tells us about that?

Simeon and Anna see that Jesus is important. Even though he was just a baby, and probably looked like all other babies, they could see that he would grow up to be very special.

Our faith tells us that each person, no matter who they are, is made in the image of God. That means that we can see something special in each and every person.

So, how can we be like Simeon and Anna this week, and through our faith open our eyes to see God in each other? How can we treat others to show that we recognise how important and special all people are?

**Intercessions** *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or*

*you can use the suggestions below.*

God, who made us and is in each and every one of us, hear us as we pray:

We pray for the Church throughout the world: that it may be a living example of God’s love for all, welcoming all people and seeing that everyone is important. Lord, in your mercy…

We pray for all families: that they may help and support each other to grow in wisdom. May they teach each other to see what really matters. Lord, in your mercy…

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may be willing to see how special all people are, and to look for God in each other. Lord, in your mercy…

**Closing prayer:** God of life, help us to see how important and special all your children are – no matter who they are, or what they look like. Teach us to treat all members of our global family with love and respect. Amen.

**Activity suggestions**

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying illustration of Jesus meeting Simeon and Anna at the Temple.

Ask two of the children to stand up. And ask the other children to describe what they **look** like – tall/short, eye colour, hair colour etc. Remind them to keep their descriptions of each other kind. Then ask the children who are seated to describe what the two standing **are** like – kind, friendly, funny, loud, etc. Get them to think about what this means – can we really tell what someone is like from what they look like? Are all people with blue eyes generous? Are all people with brown hair friendly?

Or, ask the children to write two descriptions of either themselves or another child in the group – one focuses on their appearance, and one on their qualities. Ask them to read it out and see if the others can guess who they are talking about.

Go to cafod.org.uk/kidzzone to find stories of children around the world and their families. Share these with the children. What similarities and differences are there between these families and theirs?

Ask the children to go home and tell their grown ups all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them to try really hard in the coming week not to judge people by what they look like, but to see how important they really are, and to be kind, loving and respectful to all people.

\*Gospel passage taken from:

Good News Translation® (Today’s English Version, Second Edition)

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