

Lesson Plans that Work
Feast of the Presentation – February 2
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Luke 2:22-40

Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
(*Book of Common Prayer*, page 378)

Accept the light we have received and shine it forth! It is not about shining the light in other's faces, blinding them, but holding the light in open hands.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

On February 2, the church remembers The Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple. It was an ancient Jewish custom that women who had given birth to a male child should come to the temple to be "purified" 40 days after giving birth. It was also the custom to present every firstborn child to God in the temple. Today, we celebrate Mary and Joseph going to the temple and what happened while they were there.

While in the temple, a devout old man, Simeon, took Jesus in his arms and praised God. Simeon proclaimed Jesus "a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory of your people Israel." He blessed Mary and Joseph, telling them the child's destiny. We now know these words of praise to be the canticle *Nunc dimittis*. In medieval times, it was sung as candles were blessed, lit, and carried through the streets in a procession to mark the feast.

Theme: A Light to the Nations

Before: You will need the supplies to help the children make candles.

Candle supplies: white taper candle for each child (and a few extras), alcohol wipes, acrylic paint, paint brushes, wet wipes, paper towels, ribbons, stickers, and other decorating supplies. If you have them, make sure to have painting smocks or old shirts for the children to wear. Clean each candle with an alcohol wipe before the children come so they are ready to go. You may want to make a few examples for the children to see. Make sure you have time for the candles to dry if the children are painting on them. You can also have a hairdryer on hand to help dry them.

If you do not feel that your group can handle the candle project, you could also print off the candle at the end of this lesson and simply allow them to decorate a paper candle.

Beginning: Tell the children that today we hear a story from when Jesus was brought to the temple as a child. We get to hear the important words from a man, Simeon, who was waiting for Jesus to come.

If the children are still enjoying singing their song, here is another set of words.

This little light of mine
I'm gonna let it shine.

I'm gonna let it shine.
And I can use my words each time,
I'm gonna let it shine.

Praying: God of Light and Love, be with us as we hear your words. Help us to see your light and to shine like a light in the world. Amen.

The Story: When Jesus was about one and a half months old, Mary and Joseph took him to the temple, the place in which they worshipped. When they arrived at the temple, Simeon, a man that they had not met before, began singing words of praise. He took Jesus in his arms and spoke words that told everyone about Jesus' greatness. Simeon knew these things because he had been told by the Holy Spirit. Mary and Joseph listened carefully and knew this was an important moment. As Simeon praised God for Jesus, he told everyone that Jesus was the light of the world.

Activity: Candle Creation

Jesus is a light that shines in all of our lives. To remind us of that Jesus is a light to us all, we are going to create candles today to take home.

The candles are easy to decorate – you can paint on them, put stickers on them, and add ribbons to them. Be ready to help them if they need it.

Alternative to Candle Creation

Provide the paper candles, markers, stickers, ribbons, etc. for the children to decorate the paper candle.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share about their candles if they wish. Gather them in a circle and light a candle in the middle. Invite them to sing “This little light of mine” if you have time.

Closing Prayer: God of Light, thank you for reminding us that Jesus shines brightly and that we, too, need to shine into the world to make it a better place. Amen.

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