

## December 17

**Worship Theme:** *We can praise God for Jesus.*

*Children will praise God for sending his only Son for them.*

**Key Verse:** *“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name” (Psalm 100:4).*



### BEFORE:

- Arrive at church and have table/gym setup by 9:15 am.
- Review the lesson & activities. They will also be available online for teachers to review before Sunday.
- At 9:50 am, send basketball/kickball players to auditorium.

### DURING:

#### Youth Helper:

Explain “Show 5 rules” Reflection Bell, and dismissal procedure.  
Count kids and leaders, write on sticky note, put on table.

**Lead Teacher:** Go through LARGE GROUP lesson & main point

**Lesson** Let’s Praise God script

#### Lesson

“Waiting” (Candy)

#### Reflection Bell

#### Youth Helper

Offering  
Key memory verse  
\*\*NEW\*\* Prayer ball (if you have time)

### AFTER:

Clean-up, make any notes in notebook on behavior issues, activity challenges, etc.

# Faithful People Thank God for Jesus

Luke 2:22-40

Joseph and Mary's trip to Jerusalem to have Jesus consecrated was in accordance with the Law as given in Exodus 13:1. The sacrifice offered was a symbolic remembrance, looking back to the Exodus, when the firstborn of Israel were spared as all the Egyptian firstborn were slain. The sacrifice symbolized the "buying back" of the firstborn son, who belonged to God.

Because this ceremony was required for all firstborn sons in Israel, there must have been many babies brought to the Temple every day. God's shepherding of these events is evident, as God brought Simeon to the Temple on this particular day to see this particular child to give his thanks and praise to God for what this child would do.

On this happy day, Simeon foretold several uncomfortable things that Jesus would cause:

- Through their choices about Jesus, some would fall and some would rise.
- People would be challenged as Jesus' life would be a sign, or a warning, against evil lifestyles.
- The condition of people's hearts would be revealed.
- Mary's heart would be pierced with anguish.

Despite the happy event, God wanted it known that Jesus would also cause division and pain among the Jews.

Anna, a prophetess, apparently spent most of her time at the Temple. The Greek text isn't clear about whether she was 84 years old or if she had been a widow for 84 years. In either case, since she was married for only seven years, we know she had been worshipping devoutly at the Temple for a long, long time. She must have seen thousands of babies being brought for consecration during those years. Yet, when Mary and Joseph arrived with Jesus, she knew that this was the baby who would save Israel, and she gave thanks to God for him.

God blessed these two faithful followers, Simeon and Anna, by allowing them to see Jesus in their old age, and they responded in grateful praise.

## **Devotion for Leaders**

Simeon and Anna were very thankful to see Jesus. How thankful are you that God gave us Jesus?

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** Being thankful isn't just something we do for God or others—it's good for us. Thankfulness gives us hope. Thankfulness helps us to remember everything God's done for us in the past, and to believe that God will be there for us—and those we care for and pray for—in the future. Make some time this week to thank God for everything he's done, and just for being God.

## *Why We Worship for Leaders*

Of all the blessings we receive from God's hand, the greatest gift is his Son. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." As we read about Jesus' presentation in the Temple, may we rejoice as Simeon did that our eyes also have seen God's salvation. And may we also give thanks and praise to God for the gift of Jesus as Anna did. Our praise should be a natural response to the God who made us, loves us, redeemed us, and blesses us beyond all measure through the gift of his Son.

# Large Group

When all the children have arrived, welcome them warmly. Point to the newsprint with Psalm 100:4 written on it, and read it.

**“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”** Let’s say this verse together. Repeat the verse as a group.

**This verse talks about going to the Temple to praise God. Today we come to church to praise God. God wants us to come to church with thanksgiving and praise in our hearts. Let’s think about how thanking and praising looks.**

- **How do you feel inside when you thank God and praise him for all the wonderful things he has done?** (I’m excited to thank God; I feel good knowing that God loves me.)

**Many times we feel joy and happiness because of all the good things God gives us! Show me with your faces how happy people look.** Allow a moment for the children to demonstrate happy expressions. **Show me how happy people walk by taking three steps forward with a happy walk.** Allow the children to demonstrate.

**Show me how thankful, praising people say, “Thank you, God.”**

Allow the children to say the words joyfully.

**Now show me how grouchy, whiny people might look as they come to church.** Allow the children to demonstrate. **Now show me how grouchy, whiny people might walk by taking three steps forward with a bad attitude.** Let the children slouch and shuffle. **How would grouchy, whiny people say, “Thank you, God”?** Let children mutter and mumble, “Thank you, God.”

- **How do you think God feels when grouchy, whiny people mutter or mumble a halfhearted thank-you?** (Bad; it makes God sad.)
- **How do you think God feels when people thank him with joy?** (Happy; loved; he’s joyful, too.)

**Pray** ➤

**God, we praise you for the wonderful, marvelous gift of your Son, Jesus. Thank you for loving us so much that you sent your perfect Son to make a way for us to know about you and your love. Thank you that because of Jesus we can talk to you, ask you for help, and know that you hear and answer us. We give you praise because we know that we can live forever with you and because you sent the precious gift of Jesus into our world. Amen.**

## \* *Waiting*

You'll need enough candy to give every child a piece. You'll also need a clock or a watch to time one minute.

Gather the children in a circle.

**Say** **Simeon and Anna had waited years and years and years before they met Mary and Joseph and Jesus in the Temple that day. We're going to do an activity that shows how hard waiting for something good can be and how good it feels when we finally get what we have been waiting for. I've brought a big bag of candy today. Everyone here will get a piece of candy. But you'll have to wait for it.**

### **ALLERGY ALERT**



Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

Put the candy in the center of the circle, and tell the children that they'll sit quietly for one full minute before they can have the candy. Use a clock or your watch to time one full minute. Then call "time," and pass out the candy.

**Ask** • **Why was it hard to wait for the candy?** (It was a long time; I wanted it now.)

• **How is this like how Anna and Simeon felt?** (They had to wait a long time, too; they were happy when they finally saw Jesus.)

**Say** **It's hard to wait for something we really want. But we only waited a minute for the candy. Anna and Simeon waited years—longer than we've been alive—to see God's promise come true in Jesus.**

**Ask** • **How did you feel when you finally got the candy I had promised?** (I was really happy! It was exciting.)

**Say** **Anna and Simeon rejoiced when they saw the promise for which they'd been waiting for so many years. We haven't had to wait for Jesus, but we can rejoice just as Simeon and Anna did because Jesus is God's promise for us, too.**