

## Activities for Juniors.

*Our activity sheet will be shorter today whilst we are still busy celebrating Christmas.*

- **You can learn what happened when the baby Jesus was taken for the first time to the Temple.**

When a baby is born to Jewish parents certain customs are done to bless the baby and the parents. In the story for today, Jesus is taken to the Temple by Mary and Joseph, his parents. There they carry out the rituals that were needed to be done in those days, but they also meet some special people.

The story is from Luke's gospel. When you read the story you will find out which people are very pleased to meet the new baby Jesus.

- **You can read the story as it is told in the gospel book of Luke.**

When the time came for Mary to make offering's at the Temple, as required by the laws of Moses after the birth of a child, his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. In these laws God had said, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he shall be dedicated to the Lord."

At that time Jesus' parents also offered their sacrifice for purification—"either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons" which was also the law.

That day a man named Simeon, who lived in Jerusalem, was in the Temple. Simeon was a good and prayerful man. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and constantly expecting the Messiah to come soon. The Holy Spirit had told him that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah, God's anointed King.

That day the Holy Spirit had encouraged Simeon to go to the Temple. When Mary and Joseph arrived to present the baby Jesus to the Lord in obedience to the law, Simeon was there and took the child in his arms, praising God.

"Lord," said Simeon, "now I can die happy! For I have seen him as you promised me I would. I have seen the Saviour you have given to the world. He is the Light that will shine upon all people, and he will be the glory of your people Israel!"

Joseph and Mary just stood there, astonished at what was being said about Jesus.

Simeon blessed them but then said to Mary, "You will need to be ready for great sadness, for this child shall be rejected by many in Israel, which will be very bad for them. But he

will be the greatest joy of many others. And the deepest thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed.”

Also in the Temple that day was Anna, a prophetess who told people about what was going to happen. She was the daughter of Phanuel, of the Jewish tribe of Asher, and was very old. She had been a widow for many, many years. She never left the Temple but stayed there night and day, worshiping God by praying and often fasting (eating only certain foods). She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she also began thanking God and telling everyone in Jerusalem who had been awaiting the coming of the Saviour that the Messiah had finally arrived.

When Jesus’ parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the Law of God, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. There Jesus grew into a strong, robust lad, and was known for wisdom beyond his years; and God poured out his blessings on him.

- **You can think about the reading.**

Once Jesus was born, his parents had certain customs or rituals to do in the Temple. These were part of the Jewish law and all new parents would do their best to go to the Temple to carry them out. So it would be no surprise to see parents carrying new babies in the Temple to perform the religious customs. However, in the story today we learn about two people who recognise that Jesus is not the same as the other babies that are brought to the Temple. There were two old people who realised that Jesus was a very special baby.

Simeon had been waiting to see the Messiah. The Messiah had been spoken about by prophets many years before and was expected to come and set the Jewish people free. Simeon believed that he would see the Messiah before his life ended. And now it was finally happening, this baby was the one, Simeon was certain of it. Simeon spoke to Mary and Joseph to tell them that he knew that Jesus was going to do great things when he was grown up. He also seemed to realise that Jesus’ life would be difficult as not everyone would be ready to welcome him. Simeon warned Mary that she would need to be prepared for sad and difficult times ahead.

Then Anna also recognised that Jesus was sent by God and was the Messiah that everyone was waiting for. She was certain of it and began to tell people about Jesus.

This story in Luke is important because it tells us that although Jesus was born to an ordinary family, he was surely sent by God and is indeed God’s Son. These holy people recognise just how important Jesus is. They are witnesses and tell other people that at last the time has come and the Messiah is here.

Simeon and Anna confirm that Jesus has been sent by God. Jesus is the one who is the Saviour of all people. If they are certain, then we can be certain too.

- You can do a wordsearch based on the story.

## Simeon Recognizes Jesus

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. Luke 2:25-26 (NVI)

Based on Luke 2:22-40 (NIV)



J O H I S R A E L D D L E F J  
 J M I A A P E H L O E O O M K  
 B R P W L H Z V V I I V V C K  
 K I K R V J P B E C G Z O E C  
 L G Y T A L S I Z A O H H U S  
 U H U E T I H I G R L U T F T  
 A T S M I I S M M E K E R Z Y  
 J E A P O E Q E O E O W D T V  
 E O C L N P C G D B O N H F S  
 S U R E O J Z R V J T N S M Q  
 U S I S P I R I T Z O M Q A N  
 S J F E P A R E N T S S H F T  
 P L I P P R O M I S E D E J P  
 B B C C K Z M A R Y P Y R P U  
 R O E M V M C H I L D P N O H

SPIRIT	RIGHTEOUS	PRAISED	COURTS	TEMPLE
CHILD	DEVOUT	LIGHT	JOSEPH	JESUS
PARENTS	SALVATION	ISRAEL	REVEALED	PIGEONS
SIMEON	PROMISED	DOVES	SACRIFICE	MARY