
“Simeon and Anna Rejoice”

Advent Sunday School Lesson on Luke 2:22-40

[Heroes of the Christmas Story](#) (Celebrated and Lesser-Known)

Sunday School Lesson on Simeon and Anna

There are a lot of great truths to take from the story of Jesus’ birth. There are also a great many clichés and worn-out elements of the Nativity narrative. In this series, we will encounter several characters and look at the story through the lens of various perspectives. Some of these figures are already well-known, but others will be among the unsung heroes, at least for many people. Lessons will highlight who they are and their significance to the life of Christ and to our lives today.

This lesson focuses on Simeon and Anna, who we meet right after the birth of Christ, in the temple. We see comparisons and contrasts between these older faithful temple dwellers and the younger faithful Mary and Joseph couple. Simeon and Anna are easily overlooked with the excitement of Advent and Christmas, but they are a beautiful reminder of patience, trust, and joy in Jesus.

Character focus: Simeon, an old priest who recognized who Jesus was and after waiting his whole life, felt ready to die in peace having seen the Christ child. We also meet Anna, the old widow who lived in the temple and was also granted the blessing of seeing Jesus.

Passage: Luke 2:22-40

Importance in the Nativity: These characters knew that Jesus was the Messiah. They were ecstatic to see prophecies fulfilled, and gave abundant thanks to God for fulfilling His promises.

Significance to us: Simeon and Anna are key figures to remind us that sometimes we have to wait in order to witness God’s plans coming to fulfillment. However, it is always worth that wait, and rich blessings will come to those who trust and have faith in the Lord. We can joyfully hope in Jesus and trust that God’s plans will come to be.

Materials Needed for this lesson: String or pipe cleaners, beads, Styrofoam or paper cups, pom-poms, markers, glue, Bibles, puzzles.



Game and Lesson Introduction

Lesson Opening: Today's lesson focuses on a few key themes: joy and thankfulness (in Christ), patience and waiting (on the Lord), and fulfillment of prophecy. Here are a couple of opening activities that can promote those themes...

- Puzzle it out: the birth of Jesus was sort of like a piece to a great puzzle of promise and prophecy. Have students split into two teams, and give each team a simple jigsaw puzzle. Adjust the level of difficulty to suit audiences. Have the teams race to see who can finish their puzzle first. There's a catch, though: they cannot look at the box to know what the puzzle will look like. Discuss how it can be tricky to know how to put something together without understanding an end result...but sometimes this is how life is! Fortunately, we can trust that God knows.
- Waiting, waiting...show students a wrapped box or special bag of something special. Explain that they will get to experience what is inside, but they have to wait for it, and don't get clues about what it is. Can it be hard to wait for something special that you want? Is it worth the wait?
- Jump for joy! Today's story features two people who were thankful and delighted to see Jesus. We should have joy in our hearts for Him, too! Play a game in the style of "red light/green light": Have students stand on a line with a goal of reaching the other side of the room. They will do so by jumping when you say "joy" or hold up a happy face sign. If you say "sorrow" or "wait" (or hold up a sad sign), they must wait. The first joyful jumper to successfully make it across the room is the winner!

Talk with students about what happens after babies are born...some people have their infants baptized, or dedicated in the church in a special way. Well, the story we get to explore in this lesson has to do with a time that Jesus was taken to church for dedication! We will get to meet the people who saw Him there...



Sunday School Lesson (Luke 2:22-40)

Simeon and Anna Rejoice

The story of the Nativity is only the very beginning of the life of Jesus!! We can learn a lot about Him in the gospels. We know that after He was born, Mary and Joseph took Him to the temple. Explain to kids that this was a special way that they followed what the Bible commanded. Even Jesus, who was God, had to do what the Bible said!

And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." -Luke 2:22-24

There were probably a lot of people in the town and in the temple at the time. But one man in particular came to meet the Holy family that day. In fact, this man had been told that he should go to the temple because the son of God would be there!

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. -Luke 2:25-26

Imagine learning that you would not die until after you got to see Jesus. That was a special promise that Simeon had been given. Discuss with children how hard it might have been for the man to wait. Ask what some things are that they have to wait for, and whether it's challenging to wait for things that are coming. It can be tough! But God told Simeon which would be the special day he had waited for...



And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, ²⁸ he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

*²⁹ “Lord, now you are letting your servant^[e] depart in peace,
according to your word;
³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation
³¹ that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.”*

³³ And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed ³⁵ (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.” -Luke 2:27-35

Simeon recognized that this was an incredibly special baby. He probably dedicated and blessed many newborns, but he knew this one was unique. He also gave Mary and Joseph words of blessing, but provided warning as well. Mary and Joseph might have been a bit concerned about some of these words, but they also “marveled” over the things this man was saying. Discuss the joy Simeon probably felt, finally laying eyes on the Messiah, even though it was just a baby. He had hope and comfort that God would continue to do what He said He would.

And Simeon wasn't the only one to joyfully witness Jesus that day. A lady named Anna was there, also...

And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, ³⁷ and then as a widow until she was eighty-four.^[f] She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. -Luke 2:36-38



Anna was old, and had lived in the temple serving God. Ask kids what they might think of living full-time at the church...wow! Anna was dedicated to God, and she too realized that Jesus was a remarkable and important baby. What was her response to meeting the newborn savior? She gave thanks to God, and told others about Him!

*And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him. -
Luke 2:39-40*

So Jesus life began in the temple, with people of God looking over Him with gladness and realizing God's presence and promises come true. What do we learn from this? Well, we can see that trusting in God and waiting patiently will pay off. We also note that the response these people had was to give thanks and praise and tell others about the king. We who know what Jesus ultimately did should feel more obligated to proclaim that good news! It's the greatest gift we could imagine, and it's free to all who put their hope in Him!



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