



## Simeon and Anna Rejoice

(based on Luke 2:22-40)

When Jesus was still a baby, his parents took him to Jerusalem. In those days, it was the custom to take your first baby to the temple. It was a way of saying thank you to God. Mary and Joseph bundled up Jesus and set off to the city. The temple was a beautiful building in Jerusalem where the people went to meet with God.

An old man called Simeon (SIM-ee-uhn) was in the temple that day. When Simeon was a young man, God had made him a promise. God had promised that one day, Simeon would see God's special child.

Simeon had been waiting a very long time for God's promise to come true. When Mary and Joseph entered the temple with Jesus, the old man stared at them. Could it be true? Was this the baby?

Simeon walked over to Mary and Joseph and gently took baby Jesus into his arms. Suddenly, he knew deep down inside that Jesus was God's special child.

Simeon was so happy that he sang a song of joy to God. "Thank you, God," Simeon sang. "Now I have seen God's promise come true."

There was also a woman called Anna in the temple that day. Anna was a prophet. A prophet is someone who passes on God's messages.

Anna had lived in the temple for many years. Now she was old. She worked day and night in the temple serving God. She heard Simeon singing and came over to see what was happening.

Anna also knew that God had promised to send a special child. She took the baby Jesus into her arms and held him gently.

"This is God's child," she exclaimed. "The one we've been waiting for."

Anna was so happy that she sang a song of joy to God. "Thank you, God," Anna sang. "Now I have seen God's promise come true."

Anna carefully handed Jesus back to his parents. Then she walked around the big temple and told everyone the good news. God's promise had come true. The waiting was over. God's special child had been born at last.

When they were finished at the temple, Mary and Joseph took Jesus home. Jesus grew up strong and healthy. God watched over him.



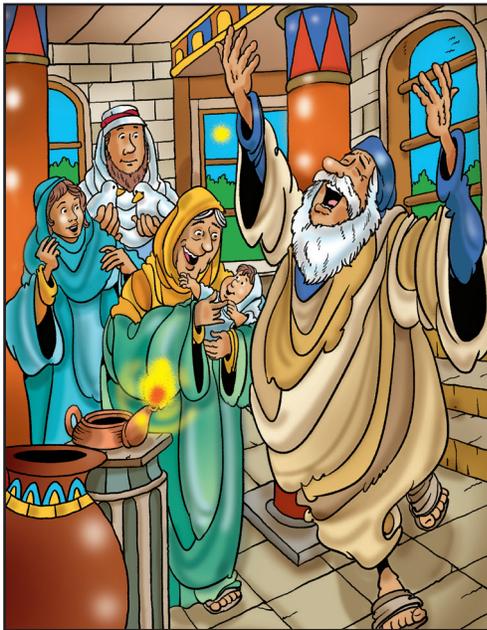
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

### Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- After Jesus was born, his parents took him to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate him. Comment that one of the ways parents and churches celebrate the arrival of a child is to bring that child to church to be baptized. Talk about what happens during a baptism at your church.
- Affirm that you want your children to grow up to know and serve Jesus. Say that you bring your children for baptism and to church school so they can learn about Jesus. Invite each person to share what they like best about being at church.



### Responding to God's Grace

- Who is the good news about Jesus for today? Using scissors, old magazines, a glue stick, a paper plate, a hole punch, and yarn, make a wreath representing people from around the world. Draw a picture of Jesus in the center of the plate. Find pictures of many different people. Cut out and glue the pictures around the outside of the plate. Punch a hole in the plate, attach yarn, and hang the wreath.
- Play a game to imagine what Mary and Joseph might have taken with them on their journey with Jesus. Begin by saying: “I’m going to the temple, and I’m bringing . . . an angel” (something beginning with the letter A). The next person repeats the phrase, the first item mentioned, and adds an item to bring that begins with the letter B, such as a Bible. The next person repeats the line and adds an item that begins with the letter C. Play the game until you run through the alphabet or run out of ideas of items to bring!

### Celebrating in Gratitude

- Reminisce about the birth of your child together. Tell him or her stories of that day and the following weeks. Were there special celebrations? Were notices or cards sent out? Did anyone say something special or memorable?
- Have an “Unbirthday” celebration or dinner to celebrate the birth of your child. Wonder together what you could do to give thanks to God.
- Light a white candle. Pray:

*O God, you are with us in the bright candle flame. You made us and grace us, and know all our names. You're with us in laughter; you're with us in tears. You're with us in stories from long-ago years. Be with us today. Help us, with grace, to walk in your way. Amen.*