

# Presenting Jesus' Jewish Roots

By Julie Filby



According to Jewish law, 40 days after Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph took him to the Temple in Jerusalem to be “presented” to his Father: the Presentation of the Lord. Introduce the concept of this ancient custom, and how it relates to your family’s spirituality today.

## For

Young Family

## Season

Winter (consider doing this activity around Feb. 2, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, which is 40 days after Christmas)

## Needed

Bible or text of Luke 2:22-38 (see text below), baby picture(s) at about 1 month old, optional: map showing distance from Bethlehem to Jerusalem

## Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer to begin:

*O God, through these words help us understand the things you wish to teach us. Open our hearts and mind to your words, and inspire us through these words to bring your love to everyone we meet. Amen.*

2. Introduce the story of the Presentation of the Lord that you will be reading together from the Bible: Mary and Joseph brought Baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. That was Jewish law. While they were there, a holy man named Simeon, inspired by God, recognized Jesus as the Savior. He also told Mary that she would have to suffer, referring to the pain she would feel when Jesus died on the cross.
3. Either a parent or a child(ren) comfortable reading from the Bible, read aloud the story of the Presentation of the Lord, Luke 2:22-38.
4. Discuss the following questions after the reading:
  - Mary and Joseph were obedient to God’s law. What are some of God’s laws? Why are they important?
  - Mary and Joseph traveled from Bethlehem to Jerusalem—the religious center of the world at the time. It was only about a 6-mile trip, an easy trip in today’s standards, but not easy back then [explain why, and optional: show map]. What is something your family has done that was very difficult, but so important that you did it anyway?
  - At the temple Mary placed money in an offering chest, the price of a pair of turtle doves and two young pigeons. How do you support your church, charities, or otherwise help those in need?
  - God told Simeon that Baby Jesus was the Savior. Simeon understood this because he was open to hearing God’s message to him. How can we be open to hearing messages from God? When you pray, do you also listen, so you can hear if God has a message for you?
5. Close by looking through baby pictures when the child(ren) were about 1 month old. This is how old Jesus was when his parents took him to the Temple.



## The Presentation in the Temple

### Luke 2:22-38

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 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." 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. 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. 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, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. 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 (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

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, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. 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.

