

## Children's liturgy – The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (Year B)

### Preparation of the worship space

Colour: white

**Song suggestions:** He's got the whole world in his hands

**Welcome:** Today we hear about Jesus and his family and a special trip they took to Jerusalem. We hear about the special things that happened to him there and all that was said about him.

**Opening prayer:** God of all, you love and care for us all. Help our families to be places of love, respect and support for each other and help us to value all people. Amen.

**First reading (optional):** Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3

**Psalm:** Psalm 104:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9 r. 7, 8

**Gospel acclamation:** *everyone stands and sings the acclamation together.*

**Gospel:** Luke 2:22-40

The time came for Joseph and Mary to perform the ceremony of purification, as the Law of Moses commanded. So they took the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord: "Every first-born male is to be dedicated to the Lord." They also went to offer a sacrifice of a pair of doves or two young pigeons, as required by the law of the Lord.

At that time there was a man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a good, God-fearing man and was waiting for Israel to be saved. The Holy Spirit was with him and had assured him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's promised Messiah. Led by the Spirit, Simeon went into the Temple. When the parents brought the child Jesus into the Temple to do for him what the Law required, Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God:

"Now, Lord, you have kept your promise,  
and you may let your servant go in peace.  
With my own eyes I have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples:  
A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles  
and bring glory to your people Israel."

The child's father and mother were amazed at the things Simeon said about him. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, "This child is chosen by God for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel. He will be a sign from

God which many people will speak against and so reveal their secret thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword, will break your own heart.”

There was a very old prophet, a widow named Anna, daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She had been married for only seven years and was now eighty-four years old. She never left the Temple; day and night she worshipped God, fasting and praying. That very same hour she arrived and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were waiting for God to set Jerusalem free.

When Joseph and Mary had finished doing all that was required by the law of the Lord, they returned to their home town of Nazareth in Galilee. The child grew and became strong; he was full of wisdom, and God's blessings were upon him.

*(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission, see details below\*)*

**Gospel reflection:** What do you remember from today's reading?

Jesus's parents Mary and Joseph took him to the Temple, to present him to God as was their custom.

There were two other people in the story today too, who see the baby Jesus and recognise how important he is. Can you remember their names?

Simeon is an old man, who has been promised by God that he will see Christ – the Saviour of the world. When he sees the baby Jesus, Simeon knows that the child is the Son of God. He tells everyone how special Jesus is.

Anna is also in the Temple. She has spent her whole life in the Temple serving God. She, too, sees the baby Jesus and begins to praise God.

How do you think Mary and Joseph felt to hear Simeon and Anna talking like this about their son?

Even though he was just a baby, Simeon and Anna, filled with faith, could see just how important Jesus was. They did not judge by what Jesus looked like, they knew in their hearts how special and important he was.

Have you ever decided what someone is like as a person, just by looking at them? Or had someone think they know what you are like because of how you look?

What do you think this reading tells us about that?

Simeon and Anna see that Jesus is important. Even though he was just a baby, and probably looked like all other babies, they could see that he would grow up to be very special.

So, how can we be like Simeon and Anna this week, and open our eyes to see Christ in each other, recognising how important all people are?

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For more children's liturgy resources and illustrations see [cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy](http://cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy)

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At the end of the reading we hear that Jesus's parents took him home again and he grew up, becoming very wise, surrounded by the love of his family and of God.

Jesus learned from his parents, just like we learn from the grown ups we live with.

The people that we live with are very special and important to us. They are the people who care for us, play with us, teach us and learn with us.

We are all part of one big global family. We are all brothers and sisters and we are all loved by God, no matter where in the world we are, what we look like, whether we are rich or poor.

Because we are all part of one family, we should all try to love one another, to care for one another, to respect and share with one another.

How do you think we can do that? What will you do this week to show your global family, as well as those you live with, that you care?

How can we make sure our families, and the people that we live with help and support each other so that we can all grow and learn together?

**Intercessions** *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

God, who made us and is in each and every one of us, hear us as we pray:

We pray for the Church throughout the world: that it may be a living example of God's love for all, welcoming all people and seeing that everyone is important and has a contribution to offer. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all families: that they may help and support each other to grow in wisdom and teach each other to see beyond appearances to what really matters. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may be willing to see the importance of all people, and look for Christ in each person, no matter what they look like. Lord, in your mercy...

**Closing prayer:** God of life, help us to see how important and special all your children are. Teach us to treat all members of our global family with love and respect. Amen.

### **Activity suggestions**

Share the activity sheet with the children and encourage them to complete it either during the liturgy or afterwards.

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Invite two of the children to stand up. Encourage the other children to describe what they **look** like – tall/short, eye colour, hair colour etc. Then the children who are seated describe what the two standing **are** like – kind, friendly, funny, loud, etc. Encourage them to think about what this means – can we really tell what someone is like from what they look like? Are all people with blue eyes generous? Are all people with brown hair friendly?

Or, invite the children to write two descriptions of either themselves or another child in the group – one focuses on their appearance, and one on their qualities. When they read it out, can other children in the group guess who they are talking about?

Go to **cafod.org.uk/kidzzone** to find stories of children around the world and their families. Share these with the children. What similarities and differences are there between these families and theirs?

Invite the children to write a prayer for their family, both immediate, extended and global.

Encourage the children to share and discuss all that they have heard and thought about today at home during the week. If they have written a prayer remind them to say it together during the week. Can they try really hard in the coming week not to judge people by what they look like, but to see how important they really are, and to be kind, loving and respectful to their family?

\*Gospel passage taken from:

Good News Translation® (Today's English Version, Second Edition)  
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