The Presentation of Christ in the Temple is celebrated on February 2 and is the closing of the nativity cycle. When Jesus was 40 days old, His mother, the Holy Theotokos, together with Joseph brought Him to the Temple following religious observance. As Orthodox Christians, we have all been churched as babies just as Jesus was. This was an important step in Jesus’ earthly life. He showed us that He came to live amongst us and observed all the commandments of the Judaic Laws. We should follow in His footsteps and glorify God, and that we are never too young to do so.

1. At that time, it was religious observance to bring your baby to the Temple with a sacrifice when he was 40 days old. The rich would also bring a lamb and pigeon or turtle dove as a sacrifice and the poor would bring 2 pigeons or 2 turtle doves. Joseph and the Holy Theotokos brought 2 turtle doves on the day that they presented Jesus to the Temple.

2. At the Temple was a man called Simeon who was a scholar that had prayed to see the Messiah before he died. When Jesus arrived at the Temple, He was greeted by Simeon. The minute Simeon saw Jesus he instantly knew that He was the Messiah. An older lady, called Anna was also at the Temple. She had prayed and fasted because she wanted to see the Messiah also. When she saw Jesus, she knew immediately that He was the Messiah.

Presentation of our Lord in the Temple

Icon

On the icon of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, we see Jesus in Simeon’s arms. He was handed to Simeon by His mother at the Temple. Her right hand is out to show that she is offering Jesus to Simeon, and her left hand is covered by her cloak. Christ is giving a blessing. Simeon’s hands are both covered by his cloak to show respect for Jesus. Joseph is behind Mary and has 2 turtle doves as a sacrifice. Anna the Prophetess is also there holding a scroll that states, “This Child has established heaven and earth”.

Presentation of Christ in the Temple – in the Bible

“And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord… And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon… And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel… And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.”

Luke 2:22-39
Circle the 8 differences between these two drawings of a baby being churched.

ST. SIMEON’S PRAYER

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for my eyes have seen the salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.

- Vesper Service -
Presentation of our Lord in the Temple
{Teacher’s Edition}

Lesson Objective: To have children become familiar with this very important day, and understand that we are like Jesus and follow in His path.

FEAST DAY – FEBRUARY 2

Introduction:
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Bible Reading:
Presentation of Christ in the Temple – in the Bible
“...And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;...And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; ...And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel... And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth...” Luke 2:22-39

Highlights:
1. At that time, it was religious observance to bring your baby to the Temple with a sacrifice when he was 40 days old. The rich would also bring a lamb and pigeon or turtle dove as a sacrifice and the poor would bring 2 pigeons or 2 turtle doves. Joseph and the Holy Theotokos brought 2 turtle doves on the day that they presented Jesus to the Temple.

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Activity:
Have children circle the 8 differences between the two drawings of a baby being churched.

St. Simeon’s Prayer:
Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for my eyes have seen the salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel. - Vesper Service -