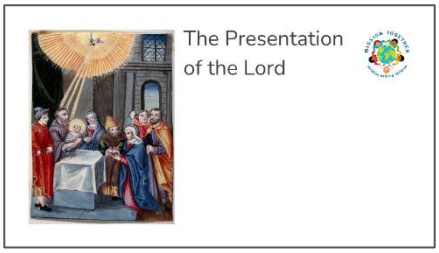
Mission Together

Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas) Assembly

LEADER'S INTRODUCTION

This assembly explains the significance of the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (2 February), also known as Candlemas. The assembly incorporates the day's Gospel reading and focuses on the revelation recognised by Simeon and Anna; that Jesus is the light of the world.

SLIDE ONE



Today we are thinking about a special event that happened 40 days after Jesus was born. This special event is called the Presentation of the Lord.

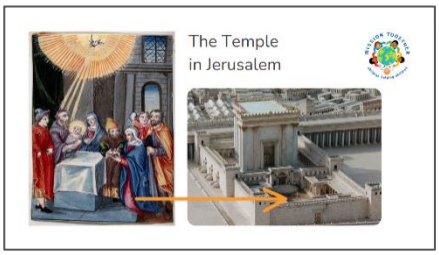
Q. Hands up if you've heard the word *presentation* before.

If we break the word presentation into two, we can see a word everyone here will know; present! We all know that a present is something special that we give or receive. Both the giving and receiving bring us much joy.

But the word *present* can also mean, *to show*. For example, we might present some of our school work to our family at home.

Presentation means to give or to show something important.

SLIDE TWO



When Jesus was born, parents of their first baby boy had to present their new son at a grand building called a temple, in the city of Jerusalem. We can see the Temple of Jerusalem on screen. The Temple was where Jewish people came to pray and worship God.

Once at the Temple of Jerusalem, parents would present their baby son to the Temple priest. In the painting on screen Mary and Joseph have already done this and are now offering the Temple priest two doves. The doves are a thank you gift to God for the birth of their baby, Jesus.

Q. Can anyone find Jesus in the painting?

Jesus is being held by an old, holy man called Simeon. Alongside Simeon is an old, holy woman called Anna. They are both smiling because they have waited a very long time for God to send his Son into the world, and now they can see that Jesus is the one they had been waiting for.

Q. I wonder how Simeon and Anna recognised that Jesus was God's Son? The Temple was huge and there would have been other babies being presented to the temple priests. So how did Simeon and Anna know that Jesus was the Son of God?

Above the heads of Simeon and Anna there's a clue. What can you see there?

A dove surrounded by light.

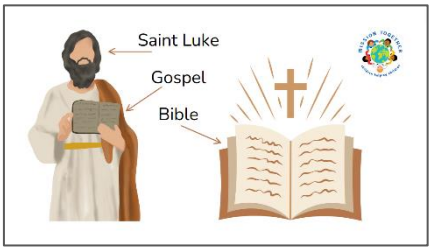
In the Bible, a dove is a sign of God's presence, and a special sign of God's Holy Spirit.

Simeon and Anna prayed each day and were both very close to God. It was God's Holy Spirit that helped them both to realise that the baby with Mary and Joseph was God's promised Son. Jesus was the Saviour who was being sent into the world to show everyone how to live as children of God the Father.

Q. How do you think old Simeon and Anna felt, after waiting so many years, to finally know that Jesus had finally arrived?

Possible responses: *Excited. Overjoyed. Relieved. Happy.*

SLIDE THREE



We know about Simeon and Anna and what happened at the Temple in Jerusalem, because the events were written down in a book called the Gospel of Saint Luke.

The Gospel of Saint Luke tells us all about the life of Jesus and it is found in the Bible. The Bible is God's special book, and contained within it are lots of smaller books, including the Gospel of Saint Luke.

On the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, Christians all over the world will listen to Saint Luke's Gospel and the events that happened during the Presentation. Let's listen to them together now. Looking at the painting again might help you to imagine the events happening before your eyes too.

SLIDE FOUR

A reading from the Gospel of Saint Luke 2:22-32 (GNT)
Abridged and adapted for KS1

Joseph and Mary took baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. They also took two doves to present to the Temple priest, as a thank you gift to God.

At that time there was an elderly man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a good and holy man. The Holy Spirit was close to Simeon and had promised Simeon that he would not die before he had seen Jesus; who God had promised to send, to save the world and all its people.

Led by the Spirit, Simeon went into the Temple. There, Simeon took the child Jesus in his arms and gave thanks to God. Then he said:

'Now, Lord, you have kept your promise, now I may die in peace.
For I have seen your salvation with my own eyes!
You have prepared him before all peoples.
He is the light that reveals your love to the world.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

A reading from the Gospel of Saint Luke 2:22-32 (GNT)
Abridged for KS2

Joseph and Mary took the child to the Temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of 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 an elderly man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a good, holy 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. There, Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God:

'Now, Lord, you have kept your promise, now I may die 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 love to the world
and bring glory to your people Israel.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Gospel reading we have just heard, Simeon says that Jesus is like light that will shine for all people in the world. In the painting we can see this light shining out from the baby Jesus, and shining down from the Holy Spirit.

Q. Why do you think Simeon say that Jesus is like light? It might help if we think of the ways light helps us.

Possible responses: *Light helps us to see in the dark. Light stops us from feeling afraid. Light helps us to see things clearly.*

SLIDE FIVE

As Jesus grew he became a light for all people. He helped people to see how much God the Father loves all his children, whoever they are and wherever they live. And he showed us not to be afraid, especially of each other. This was part of Jesus' mission.

A mission is an important task or job. God gave Jesus a mission to share His love and forgiveness with everyone, everywhere. Jesus fulfilled this mission so well that he became like a candle in the darkness; showing the world a way to find real love and joy.

For these reasons, candles in churches are also signs of Jesus. During the feast of the Presentation, new candles are brought into Catholic churches around the world, to be blessed before Mass begins by the priest.

The photograph on screen was taken in Myanmar, Asia.

That is why the Feast of the Presentation is also known as Candlemas; the day when candles are blessed. These blessed candles then shine as signs of God's love for the world and all its people. We can help to share the light of Jesus too, by sharing his mission to share God's love with the world.

Q. Let's think of some ways we can do that today?

Possible responses: *By being kind to others. By helping our classmates, teachers, family. By praying for others. By taking care of the world. By sharing what we have. By forgiving others and by saying sorry if we make bad choices.*

Let's now spend a few seconds in silence, asking the Holy Spirit to help us share God's light today.