

The Encounter of Our Lord in the Temple

Objective: Students will be able to explain that the Feast of the Encounter recalls how when Simeon and Anna encountered Jesus, they realized that God had kept His promise. The time for the New Covenant had come.

For the Catechist

The students have been learning about the Old Covenant and the New Covenant throughout this year, and this feast day gives them the opportunity to see what happens when the two meet. In the persons of the righteous Simeon and the prophetess Anna, we see revealed a recognition of the beginning of the New Covenant.

According to the Gospel, it had been revealed to Simeon that he would not die before seeing the Messiah. Recognizing the infant Christ as the One he was expecting, the righteous elder exclaimed what we have come to call the Cantic of Simeon, a hymn sung daily at Vespers in Byzantine churches. The words for the hymn are taken from the following Scripture:

"Now, Master, You may let Your servant go
in peace, according to your word,
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a
light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and glory for your people, Israel."
(Lk 2:29-32)

This is the first time this feast day is included in the "Observances" lessons in this *God With Us* series. It has been included in Grade 4 because it reflects one of the main themes throughout these lessons. The theme is that God's promises that have been given to us in the Old Covenant were written about in the Old Testament. These promises come to their fulfillment in the New Covenant written about in the New Testament. God sends His Son Jesus to be our Savior who reestablishes our union with God, and God sends us the Holy Spirit to help us maintain our communion with God. Through this feast, we see the beginning of the revelation that *God's Promise Is Fulfilled*, the title of this Grade 4 book.

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: "We have seen. . ."

Introduction: Discussion of waiting

Read Text Aloud: Have the students volunteer to read the text aloud or have the students read sections silently.

Activity Tracks:

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity (detailed on the pages that follow) to reinforce the lesson.

- *Basic:* The Encounter
- *Group:* The Covenants
- *Craft:* The Light of the World

Closing: Troparion of the Encounter

Icon Packets:

Come Bless the Lord:
The Meeting of Our Lord

Teaching Pics

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

One of the Twelve Great Feasts

"Last of the Christmas cycle, this feast recalls the meeting of Simeon and Anna with the infant Jesus when he was brought to the temple for the rite of purification forty days after His birth. There are two customs associated with this feast which may find a place in the customs of your domestic church.

"The Western custom of blessing candles in honor of Christ, Enlightener of the Gentiles, came into Byzantine practice in Eastern Europe. Both Catholic and Orthodox Slavs perform this rite in recollection of the title given Christ in Simeon's Canticle (which we pray in every vespers service). If this blessing is performed in your church, make the purchase and offering of candles a family practice. You might also choose to create a festive candle centerpiece for your table on this day, using a large number of tapers or a single richly embossed candle to honor Christ our Light. In any case make sure children grasp the connection between the candles and the One they represent.

"Other parishes impart a special blessing for young boys in the same way that girls were blessed on November 21. You can make this a special day for the boys in your household by encouraging their participation in the service and/or by focusing special attention on them, providing a treat or the like" (*DC* 64-65).

Festal Cycle

"Most of the other major feasts of the fixed calendar stem from the feast of Christmas. The Annunciation, March 25, nine months before our Lord's Birth celebrates the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary. From this feast Mary, the Mother of God, receives her greatest title in the Byzantine Church, Theotokos. The Encounter of our Lord recalls an event which took place when the infant Jesus was presented to the Father in the temple, the custom with all first-born male Jews. Since this was to be done forty days after birth, the Encounter is celebrated on February 2nd" (*LW* 31).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

Today we are going to pray "We have seen" [The prayer page is in Lesson 2.]

Introduction

Have you ever gone to the airport to meet an airplane? Perhaps one of your grandparents or another relative was coming to visit. You knew that he or she would get off the plane, but you didn't know when. You stayed by the gate and waited. You looked at each person who came out, but none of them was the right one. Finally, the person you were waiting for came out—you were so happy, the waiting was over. What would you do next? (Go over to them; greet them, tell the other people you are with that you found the person)

Something like that happened with a man named Simeon as told in today's reading. God had shown him that he would not die until he saw the Messiah. He waited and waited. Finally he saw Jesus, and he knew this was the one for whom he was waiting. Let's turn to our lesson and see what happened.

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The Encounter of Our Lord in the Temple



We have learned that the Old Covenant was an agreement between God and His people, the Israelites. God promised to be with them, and they promised to observe His Law and keep the Ten Commandments. One thing described in the Law told parents to present their first child to God. **Read Luke 2:22-24** to see how Joseph and Mary kept this law when Jesus was a baby. Then answer these questions.

1. Who is to be presented to God according to the law of Moses? _____

Every male who is born

2. What must the parents bring to offer as a sacrifice? _____

a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons

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Unit 6: Observances

Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type).

The Encounter of Our Lord in the Temple

The title of this lesson is also the title for a feast day that we celebrate. The word meeting is another way to say encounter. That is the reason we sometimes hear this feast day called the Meeting of our Lord in the Temple. Both names identify the event about which we are going to learn.

... when Jesus was a baby.

Where were Joseph and Mary taking Jesus?

(To be presented to God) Why? (They were part of God's people and they needed to follow the rules given to the people by Moses.) During our baptism, we too are presented to God. We are all children of God.

While they were at the temple, they encountered (met) two people named Simeon and Anna. The Gospel says that Simeon was "righteous and devout" and that Anna "never left the temple, but worshiped day and night with fasting and prayer." Like many of the God-seeking people in the Old Testament, Simeon and Anna were waiting for God to fulfill His promise and send the Messiah. Read about Simeon and what happened when he encountered Jesus. **Read Luke 2:25-32.**

In verse 25 we read that Simeon was "awaiting the consolation of Israel." Verse 26 tells us who that consolation would be. Simeon recognized that the baby Jesus would save God's people. He said a prayer that we still use in our Church today. **Read Luke 2:29-32** to find this prayer.

Why did Simeon say that he was now ready to die (verse 30)?

"for my eyes have seen your salvation."

Simeon realized that the child in his arms was the promised Savior. Simeon also said that Jesus would be a "light to the Gentiles" as well as "glory for our people." This means that Jesus would bring knowledge of God to different nations, not only to the Israelites.

We also read that Anna "gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem" (verse 38). When Simeon and Anna encountered Jesus, they realized that God had kept His promise. The time for the New Covenant had come.



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The time for the New Covenant had come.

What would you have done if you were there? What pictures would you have taken? Why? What promise did God keep by sending His Son Jesus? (His promise to send a Savior) Jesus is the New Covenant.

...Christ is the light of revelation to the whole world.
*What do some churches bless on this feast day? (Candles)
 Why? (Lit candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the
 World.)*

...His word in the New Testament?

*Let's think of some days that we think we don't have time to
 pray. What are some of our excuses? Let's think of some
 ways that we can make time to pray. We have to remember
 this story about Simeon and Anna to remind us that we want
 to be able to recognize Jesus just as they did.*

Words to Remember: [Read the words together, and use
 them to introduce, summarize, and/or review the lesson.]

The icon of the feast shows what happened. The righteous Simeon held the Christ Child in his covered arms. On the left we see the Mother of God, her husband Saint Joseph, and the old prophetess Anna. Joseph is holding two birds needed for the sacrifice.

Our Church celebrates the Feast of the Encounter (Meeting) on February 2. We realize that the Old Covenant is fulfilled. Jesus begins the New Covenant and brings the hope of our union with God to fulfillment. In some Churches candles are blessed on this day to remind us that Christ is the light of revelation to the whole world.

How did Simeon and Anna recognize that this baby, Jesus, was the One for whom they were waiting? Simeon and Anna were both close to God. Because they knew God's Old Testament promises and because they prayed and fasted, they could recognize God's work when they encountered Jesus. Will we recognize God working in our lives if we do not pray and fast and read His word in the New Testament?



Words to Remember:
Encounter: A meeting. When the child Jesus was brought to the Temple, He encountered Simeon and Anna. We remember this meeting on February 2.
Sacrifice: Something given to God. In the Old Testament, people sacrificed animals to God. In our churches, we offer candles and incense, bread and wine. Jesus made the perfect sacrifice when He offered Himself totally for us.

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Activity Tracks

Basic: The Encounter

[This worksheet is in the student text.]

*Just as these words are scrambled, sometimes we make our
 lives scrambled. We are so busy we don't take time to be with
 God. As you try to unscramble the words, think about Anna
 and Simeon and remember that our focus must be on seeing
 Jesus. List the ways we can do that on the bottom of the
 activity page.*

The Encounter

I. Unscramble the words at the beginning of the line. Write a sentence that identifies how the words are part of the story of the Encounter that we read in **Luke 2:22-38**.

1. votetluedar _____ **turtledoves** _____ (verse 24)
They are to be sacrificed.

2. emisen _____ **Simeon** _____ (verse 25)
He was waiting to see Jesus.

3. utpehrpuse _____ **prophetess** _____ (verse 36)
She prayed and fasted daily.

4. glth _____ **light** _____ (verse 32)
Jesus was the light for the world.

5. hmesnai _____ **Messiah** _____ (verse 26)
Simeon was waiting for the Messiah.

II. List three things you do to encounter (meet) our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus in the world today.

I can encounter or meet our Lord, God, and Savior when I

1. **pray** _____

2. **read the Bible** _____

3. **go to church** _____

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Possible answers:

Old Covenant: Agreement between God and the Hebrews
They are His people and He will take care of them.
They promise to follow God's Law and the Ten Commandments.

New Covenant: Agreement between God and all people.
God sends His Son Jesus to teach people how to live.
God sends His Son Jesus to save us from eternal death and grant us eternal life through His death and resurrection.
We promise to live by the New Commandment as Jesus taught us.
By following the New Commandment, we will be rewarded by being with God in heaven.

Group: The Covenants

Materials: White paper, pens or markers

Throughout this year we have been learning about the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Today we are going to review. Let's divide into two groups. One group will make a list of everything we learned about the Old Covenant and the other group will make a list about the New Covenant. Then we will come together and tell each other what we remember. Before we begin, let's write the definition of the word covenant at the top of our paper. What is it? (An agreement) Now start talking and at the same time writing what you learned about that covenant. You may look through your books for help.

[Unit 2 will help the students working on the Old Covenant and Unit 4 will help the students working on the New Covenant. This will be a very challenging and important activity.]

Craft: The Light of the World

Materials: Little metal buckets that can be purchased at a craft store, sand from the craft store, thin candles (if you are able to get them from the church)

[Have sample ready to show children.] *We learned that Jesus is the Light of the World. What do you think that means? Why are candles a good reminder of that? Today we are going to make candle holders. We are going to fill the metal containers with sand that will hold up our candle when we put it into the container. Let's put our candle holders with the candles on our icon table and light them for our closing prayer. We are remembering Jesus is the Light of the World. [Please be careful with this activity, and do not let children handle matches unattended.]*

Closing:

Let's pray "We have seen the true light." [The prayer page is in Lesson 2.]

*Encounter of
Our Lord, God,
and Savior
Jesus Christ*

Sacrifice

Something given to God. In the Old Testament, people sacrificed animals to God. In our churches, we offer candles and incense, bread and wine. Jesus made the perfect sacrifice when He offered Himself totally for us

A meeting. When the child Jesus was brought to the Temple, He encountered Simeon and Anna. We remember this meeting on February 2.

Troparion of the Encounter

Hail, O full of grace, Virgin and Mother of God;
from you has arisen the Sun of Justice, Christ our God,
enlightening those who stand in darkness. You too,
O just elder Simeon, rejoice for you carried in your arms
the Redeemer of our souls, who grants us resurrection.

Melkite
Greek
Catholic
Church

Troparion of the Encounter

Hail, thou full of grace, Virgin Mother of God, for out of
thee arose the Sun of righteousness, Christ our God,
enlightening those in darkness. Rejoice thou also, O just
One, who didst take in thine arms the Redeemer of our
souls, who brought us resurrection

Romanian
Greek
Catholic
Diocese of
Canton

Troparion of the Encounter

Hail, Mother of God, Virgin full of grace. From you has shown forth the Sun of Justice, Christ our God, shining upon those who are in darkness. Rejoice also, you just Elder Simeon, for you received in your arms the Redeemer of our souls, who has given us resurrection.

Ruthenian
Byzantine
Catholic
Metropolitan
Province

Troparion of the Encounter

Rejoice, Virgin Mother of God, full of grace, for the Sun of righteousness, Christ our God, has shined forth from you enlightening those in the darkness. Rejoice too, you righteous elderly man (Simeon), for in your arms you held the Redeemer of our souls, who gives us resurrection.

Ukrainian
Catholic
Diocese of
St. Josaphat

Troparion of the Encounter

Hail, Mother of God, Virgin full of grace. From you has shown forth the Sun of justice, Christ our God, shining upon those who are in darkness. Rejoice also, you just elder, Simeon; for you received in your arms the Redeemer of our souls, who has given us resurrection.

Ukrainian
Catholic
Synod