



LARGE GROUP LESSON

BOTTOM LINE:

The Kingdom of Jesus Christ is for all people, everywhere.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn that they can spread the good news that God wants everyone to know Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE:

Luke 2:21-39. Mary and Joseph Bring Jesus to the Temple.

INTRO

For the past few weeks we've been talking about how Christmas is a celebration of the birth of a new King and his kingdom. That King's name is Jesus, of course. Prophets like Isaiah, who delivered the word of God to others, were talking about Jesus and his kingdom for hundreds of years.

And then came that special night when he was born. He wasn't born in a palace like your typical king. He was born in the tiny town of Bethlehem in a stable where they keep the animals. His first bed was the manger that the animals eat out of. Not too impressive. But when a group of shepherds met Jesus, they knew they were in the presence of the new King, the Savior, the Lord. The shepherds went around telling everyone about Jesus. And everyone who heard about Jesus was amazed.

Though there was one guy who wasn't excited to hear about Jesus' birth. When the Magi, or wise men, told King Herod about the baby king, Herod was furious. Herod was king and he wanted to stay king. He didn't want to see a new king come along that might take away his power. Herod came up with a plan to kill the baby king; but thankfully for us, God had other plans. Jesus and his family were able to escape and Jesus was saved.

Today, we're going to learn about some other people who got to meet the baby Jesus.

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One was an old man named Simeon and the other was an old woman – a prophet – named Anna. They didn't meet Jesus in Bethlehem where he was born. They met Jesus in the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the city where the Temple of the Lord was located. And it was the custom of the time for families to bring their children to the temple to be blessed by God.

Joseph and Mary were people who loved God, and they wanted to follow the custom. But Jesus' visit to the temple was anything but customary. What happened on that day, turned out to be very unusual. Let's read what happened.

READ Luke 2:21-38

MAIN POINT

Simeon was a man who very much wanted to see the Messiah, the King that the prophets of old had talked about. The Holy Spirit of God had spoken to Simeon and told him that he would not die until he had seen this Messiah. Simeon had grown very old waiting. But on this day, the Holy Spirit led him to go into the temple. That's where he met Jesus.

As soon as he saw Jesus, he knew that God had kept his promise. This was the Messiah, the Lord, and the King of the new kingdom. Simeon praised God.

Anna was a prophet. She was eighty-four years old. The Bible says that she never left the temple. She spent all day, every day praying and worshiping God. When she met Jesus, she gave thanks to God.

Just like the shepherds did before, after Anna met Jesus she went around telling everyone who would listen about the new King who would save the people from their enemies but also from their sins.

DRIVE IT HOME:

Many people at that time were waiting for the Messiah, but they were looking for a King who would simply save the people of Israel. But Jesus came to save all people.

Simeon understood that. He called Jesus a "light" to the Gentiles and the "glory" of Israel. Gentile was a word the people of Israel used to mean anyone who wasn't them. Simeon recognized the truth that God loves all people, and he sent a Savior for all people of the world.

Just like Simeon and Anna, the shepherds and the Magi, it's important that we recognize that Jesus is King. He loves us, and His desire is that we would love him back. That we would let him be the leader, the King of our lives.

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When we do that, we might just find ourselves getting pretty excited about it. We might even begin to do what Simeon and Anna did – tell other people about his amazing Jesus that we’ve met. It’s good news that God wants the world to hear.

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God,

Your kingdom is for all people, everywhere. Help us to share the good news of your love and salvation to everyone.

*In Jesus’ name,
Amen*