

Unit 19 • Session 4
Jesus Was Dedicated

Bible Passage:

Luke 2

Story Point:

Simeon and Anna worshiped Jesus as the Messiah.

Key Passage:

John 1:1-2

Big Picture Question:

Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

INTRODUCE THE STORY

(10–15 minutes)

Teach THE STORY

(25–30 minutes)

APPLY THE STORY

(25–30 minutes)

Leader Bible Study

God had chosen Mary and Joseph to be Jesus' earthly parents. Mary and Joseph named their baby Jesus, obeying God in faith that salvation had indeed come into the world. (See Matt. 1:21.) When the time came for Jesus to be dedicated and Mary to be purified, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem.

According to the law given to Moses, after a woman gave birth, she was "unclean" and would observe a period of purification. Then she would bring an offering to the priest. (See Lev. 12:1-6.) Jesus was about five weeks old when Mary and Joseph dedicated Him to the Lord and offered the required sacrifice.

Simeon was also at the temple that day, not by mere coincidence but by the Holy Spirit's leading. (Luke 2:27) Simeon spent His life serving the Lord and looked forward to the day when God would keep His promise to comfort Israel. (See Isa. 57:18.) God promised that Simeon would live long enough to see the Messiah. That day had finally come. Imagine his joy. At last, the Savior was here!

Simeon saw the baby Jesus, took Him in his arms, and praised God. Simeon expressed prophetic praise, trusting by faith that God would keep His promise through this child: "My eyes have seen your salvation" (Luke 2:30). Through Jesus, everyone would be able to see God's plan. Jesus would be a light for all the nations. He would bring honor to Israel.

Anna, a prophetess, also praised too. At well over a hundred years old, Anna began to speak about Jesus to everyone who was looking forward to God's bringing salvation to His people.

Today, we can have faith in Jesus and His finished work on the cross for our salvation. When God opens our eyes to the good news of the gospel, we can live and die in peace, for our eyes have seen His salvation. We can joyfully share this good news with others.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus Was Dedicated

Luke 2

Mary and Joseph's baby—God's own Son—was a few days old when Mary and Joseph named Him Jesus, just like the angel had told them to do. **One day, when Jesus was a few weeks old, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem.**

Mary and Joseph wanted to obey God and His law. The law that God gave Moses said, "When a woman's first son is born, his parents must dedicate him to the Lord." The law also said that the child's parents should give a sacrifice. **At the temple, Mary and Joseph presented Jesus to the Lord and offered two birds as a sacrifice.**

Another man was at the temple. His name was Simeon. Simeon loved God, and He trusted in God's promise to send a Messiah to save people from sin. **God's Spirit was with Simeon, and God had told Simeon that he would not die until he saw the One who would rescue people from their sin.**

That day, God's Spirit had led Simeon to the temple. **Simeon saw Jesus and picked Him up in his arms.** God's Spirit showed Simeon that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Simeon was so happy. He praised God and said, "Lord, you can let me die now. You kept Your promise, and I have seen the One who will save people from sin." **Simeon said that Jesus would save God's people, the Israelites, and Jesus would also save people from other nations.**

Mary and Joseph were amazed at what Simeon said. Simeon blessed Mary and Joseph. He told Mary that being Jesus' mother would be a very good thing, but it would also be very hard. Some people would love Jesus, but others would hate Him. Things were going to happen that would make Mary very sad.

A woman named Anna was at the temple too. Anna's husband had died, and Anna was very old. She stayed at the temple and worshiped God all the time. **Anna came up to Simeon, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph and she began to thank God. Anna talked about Jesus to people who were waiting for God to keep His promise to send a Savior. She told them the good news: the Savior was here!**

Mary and Joseph finished dedicating Jesus and making sacrifices to God. They obeyed God's law. Then they went back home to Nazareth. **Jesus grew up and was strong and healthy. He was wise, and God was happy with Him.**

Christ Connection: Throughout the Old Testament, God promised the arrival of a king who would redeem people. When Jesus arrived, Simeon and Anna knew He was the promised Messiah. Today, we have faith that Jesus is God's Son. We can trust Jesus for our salvation, and like Simeon and Anna, we should share the good news.

Introduce the Story

Session Title: Jesus Was Dedicated

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Big Picture Question: Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to describe a time in the last week or so that they received good news. What was the news? Did they share the news with anyone? Why?

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Seeing for Yourself” on the activity page. Guide kids to read the clues and cross out the words to discover Simeon’s message.

Say • Simeon was a man living in Jerusalem. He went to the temple and looked forward to the day God would bring salvation to the world. In today’s Bible story, Simeon realized God had kept His promise. Let’s find out more.

Session starter (10 minutes)

Option 1: “My eyes have seen ...” game

Invite kids to play a guessing game. Choose one player to lead. The leader should pick something in the room that is visible to everyone. He should say, “My eyes have seen ...” and then he should give a hint. For example, “My eyes have seen something that starts with the letter *P*.” Or “My eyes have seen something green.”

Kids should try to guess what the leader has spotted. When a player guesses correctly, she gets to be the new leader. Make sure every kid has a turn to lead.

Say • In the Bible story we will hear today, a man named Simeon was waiting for something. When he finally saw what he was waiting for, Simeon said, “My eyes have seen Your salvation!” We’ll find out what Simeon saw.

Option 2: Blanket drop game

Choose two volunteers to be blanket holders. Form two teams with the remaining kids. Give the volunteers a large sheet or blanket, and instruct them to hold it between them with one edge touching the ground to form a curtain of sorts. Instruct one team to sit on one side of the blanket and the other team to sit on the other side. Explain that you will choose a kid from each team to stand close to the blanket.

When you say “go,” the volunteers will drop the blanket. The first standing player to recognize and shout the name of the other standing player earns a point for her team. Play additional rounds with other kids.

Say • Great job! You had to be quick to remember a name for the face you saw. Sometimes recognizing even the people you see frequently can be difficult! With the help of the Holy Spirit, Simeon recognized someone he had never seen before.

Transition to teach the story

Teach the Story

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Countdown

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

[Leader enters carrying a camera and a backpack. The backpack contains a family photo album and a Bible.]

Leader • Hi, everyone! It's good to see you. My name is *[your name]*, and I'm a studio photographer. I've been taking a lot of photos of newborn babies lately. But a really fun part of my job is continuing to take photos of people as they grow. Usually families come in for photos once or twice a year plus any time they want to commemorate a special event. I've taken portraits of people in wedding dresses, graduation gowns, soccer jerseys, and business attire. Are there any special events in your life that have stood out as particularly memorable?

[Retrieve a Bible.] I'm excited to share today's Bible story with you. It's about a special event in Jesus' life—His dedication. Let's find out what happened.

Big picture question (1 minute)

Leader • Here's our big picture question: ***Is Jesus God or a human?*** Does anyone remember the answer? *[Allow volunteers to say the answer.]* ***As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.*** The Bible says that Jesus is equal with God. And like us, Jesus experienced hunger, thirst, weariness, sorrow, and pain. As we keep learning about Jesus, keep in mind that ***as the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.***

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

Leader • In the Bible story we are going to hear today, Jesus was still a baby. Let's review what we've learned about Jesus so far. First, we learned about Jesus' family. **Jesus' family line proved He is the Messiah.** Before Jesus came into the world, John was born. God had a plan for John's life. **John was born to prepare the way for Jesus.** Then, at just the right time, Jesus was born. Why was Jesus born? **Jesus was born to be God's promised Savior.**

When Jesus was about five weeks old, His earthly parents—Mary and Joseph—took Him to the temple to be dedicated. That's our Bible story today: "Jesus Was Dedicated."

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 2. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus Was Dedicated."

Leader • Jesus was still a small baby when Mary and Joseph took Him to Jerusalem. You see, God's law in the Old Testament said that every firstborn male was to be dedicated to the Lord. *[Choose a volunteer to read aloud Ex. 13:2, 12.]* Mary and Joseph wanted to obey God's law, so they took Jesus to the temple to be dedicated.

Simeon was already at the temple. How did Simeon know Jesus would be there? Look at Luke 2:26-27. *[Allow kids to read the verses and respond.]* The Holy Spirit led Simeon to the temple. Simeon had been waiting for God to keep His promise to rescue His people from sin. In fact, God had revealed to Simeon that Simeon would see the Messiah in his lifetime. That day had finally come! Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God.

Who else was in the temple that day? Look at Luke 2:36. *[Allow kids to read the verse and respond.]* Anna had spent most of her life in the temple—serving God, fasting, and praying. She was more than 100 years old! **Simeon and Anna worshiped Jesus as the Messiah.** Then Anna told others about Him.

Christ connection

Leader • Throughout the Old Testament, God promised the arrival of a king who would redeem people. When Jesus arrived, Simeon and Anna knew He was the promised Messiah.

Today, we have faith that Jesus is God's Son. God opens our eyes to the gospel. We can trust Jesus for our salvation, and like Simeon and Anna, we can joyfully share the good news with others.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 19, Session 4" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about Simeon and Anna's reaction to seeing Jesus. Guide them to discuss what they think it will be like when Jesus comes back to earth.

Missions moment (3 minutes)

Leader • We have been learning about missionaries in Brazil. In a previous video, we met missionaries Brandi and Amanda. They want people in Brazil to know Jesus personally and to worship Him, like **Simeon and Anna worshiped Jesus as the Messiah.** Let's watch what happened when a young woman, also named Amanda, decided that she needed Jesus.

Play the "Relentless Love (Part 2)" missions video. Then pray for Amanda and other new believers in Brazil.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together John 1:1-2.

Leader • Our key passage talks about God's Son as the Word. We can know more about someone when they share their words with us. They can talk about themselves or write down some things about themselves. We communicate through words.

God communicated Himself to the world through a living Word—Jesus! Through Jesus, we can know God and join His kingdom as adopted sons and daughters. Let's sing.

Lead kids in singing "The Word Was God (John 1:1-2)."

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud Psalm 62:1-2.

Leader • In today's Bible story, **Simeon and Anna worshiped Jesus as the Messiah**. Simeon saw that God had kept His promise to send someone who would save people from sin. Salvation comes from God. We are not saved by doing good works but by trusting in Him alone. Let's sing.

Sing together "Jesus Messiah."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

Leader • God, thank You for always keeping Your promises. The news that Jesus came to save people from sin is such good news. We confess that we do not always keep our promises, but You, Lord, are faithful. Help us trust in Jesus for our salvation. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Apply the Story

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

Before the session, write the words of the key passage on separate index cards. Mix up the cards. Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading John 1:1-2 aloud.

Distribute the prepared key passage cards. Challenge kids to arrange the cards in the correct order. When kids finish, lead them to read the key passage together.

If time allows, mix up the cards and play again. For an added challenge, include word cards that are not part of the key passage and instruct kids to find and remove words that do not belong.

Say • Does anyone want to say our key passage from memory? [*Invite volunteers to recite John 1:1-2.*] Our key passage reminds us that Jesus—God the Son—has always existed. No one created Him. Before He came to earth, God the Son was in heaven. All along, God planned to send a Messiah to rescue sinners. Jesus is the promised Messiah. When they saw Him, **Simeon and Anna worshiped Jesus as the Messiah.**

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Luke 2. Ask kids to name the four Gospels. (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*) Explain that when Mary and Joseph dedicated Jesus, they took Him to the temple in Jerusalem. [*Point out Jerusalem (H4) on the New Testament Israel Map.*] Choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 2:30-32.

Say • The Holy Spirit had led Simeon to the temple. Simeon saw Jesus and praised God because he recognized that God was going to use Jesus in His plan to bring salvation to the world. Anna also thanked God for the baby Jesus. **Simeon and Anna worshiped Jesus as the Messiah.**

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

Why did Mary and Joseph dedicate Jesus? Why do some parents dedicate their children today? *Guide kids to recall that Mary and Joseph wanted to obey God's law by dedicating their Son. Sometimes parents today dedicate their children as a way to recognize that children belong to the Lord. If your church hosts dedication services for families, discuss the details: what dedication means and how everyone in the church commits to helping children know, love, and serve God.*

(Option: Choose a kid to read 1 Kings 8:60-61.)

What does a life lived for God look like? How should the life of someone who trusts in Jesus as Lord and Savior differ from the life of someone who doesn't? *Lead kids to identify that the life of a believer should be marked by the work of the Holy Spirit in that person's life. The Holy Spirit grows us to become more like Christ. A believer recognizes Jesus as King and repents of sin. Differences are not always obvious, but unbelievers lack the Holy Spirit and are unrepentant.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Gal. 5:22-23.)

Why can we have peace even in difficult circumstances? *Encourage kids to discuss three types of peace—peace with God, peace that comes from God, and peace with others. We have a right relationship with God and look forward to a future with Him forever. Through the Spirit, God can give us peace in hard times.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 4:8.)

Activity choice (10 minutes)

Option 1: Travel bag sort

Print and cut apart the "Missionaries Who Travel" printable. Place each missionary description in a piece of luggage that corresponds to the length of travel described: place the description of a volunteer missionary in the smallest

bag, the description of a short-term missionary in the medium bag, and the description of the career missionary in the largest bag. Position the three pieces of luggage in different parts of the room.

Walk around the room as a group, stopping at each bag. Ask a volunteer to open the bag and find the paper. Ask for a second volunteer to read the description.

Say • One day, God may ask you to travel to another place to be a missionary. Maybe you will go for just a few days. Maybe you will spend a summer in another country. Or maybe you will move with your family to a new home where you will tell people about Jesus. No matter what God asks you to do, you can be obedient and help others know and worship Jesus.

Option 2: Popcorn praise

Invite kids to stand in a circle. Explain that kids will work together to tap inflated balloons into the air so they don't fall to the floor. Each time a kid taps a balloon, she should say something to complete this sentence: "God, I praise You because ..."

Begin with one balloon. Gradually introduce additional balloons. Continue as time allows.

Say • When Simeon and Anna saw Jesus, they praised God. **Simeon and Anna worshiped Jesus as the Messiah.** We can praise God and worship Jesus as the Messiah. God has provided salvation through His Son, Jesus, for everyone who trusts in Him.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?

What does the story teach me about myself?

Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?

Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?

How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for giving us His Word—the Bible—so we can learn about and know Jesus, the One who saves people from sin.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Who Did What?" on the activity page. Kids should match each person from the Bible story to the correct description.