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**Candlemas**

Candlemas is known as the Feast of the Presentation of the baby Jesus to God in the Temple at Jerusalem and the ritual purification of Mary, 40 days after the birth of her son Jesus. The Gospel of Luke says that Jesus was met by Simeon and Anna. Simeon held the baby Jesus and called him a Light to the World.

Ritual purification stems back to a Jewish tradition that women were considered unclean after the birth of a child. For 40 days for a boy and 60 days for a girl, women were not allowed to worship in the temple. At the end of this time, women were brought to the Temple or Synagogue to be purified. After the ceremony women could take part in religious services again.

The festival is called Candlemas because this was the day that all the Church’s candles for the year were blessed.

On Candlemas night, many people place lighted candles in their windows at home.

In Luke 2:32 we see the verse “A light for the Gentiles and for your Glory to your people Israel”

**Bible Reading Luke 2:22-32 36-38**

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

**This passage is about old people, waiting patiently, faithful in prayer and trusting God – and they were rewarded with a sudden moment of recognition and joy.**

**Reflection**

Perhaps you could spend some time to chat about those moments when you have had flashes of understanding and about the things you have been patiently waiting for, perhaps for years.

**We listen to Christ Be our light sung by The Frank Brownstead Choir**

**Activity**

You will need: Clean jam jars, one for each person; LED tea lights; acrylic pens or glass paint; tissue paper; glue and glue sticks; double sided sticky tape; patterned tape; lace and ribbon.

**Decorate the jam jars as you wish and put an LED tea light in each one.**

**Celebration**

Read the bible passage again, light your tea lights and thank God for Jesus, the light of the world. If possible, you could listen to a version of the Nunc Dimittis (the song of Simeon).

**Prayers**

Light of the world, thank you that you use us to spread your good news, just as you spoke through Anna and Simeon, and that we are included in your salvation plan. May you reveal more of yourself to us day by day. Amen.

**Perhaps you may like to listen to one or more of the following song/hymn choices?**

* **Christ be our light.**
* **Let the flame burn brighter (We will walk the land)**
* **This little light of mine**
* **Lord, the light of your love is shining. (Shine, Jesus, Shine)**
* **Light of the world, you stepped down into darkness.**

Happy Candlemas.

Amen.

