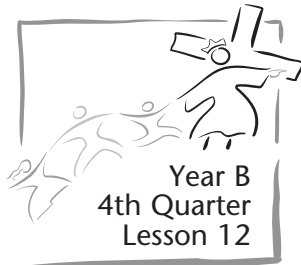


LESSON



Dedicated to God

GRACE

God's grace is His gift to us.

References

Luke 2:21–38; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 50–58.

Memory Verse

“Children are a gift from the Lord” (Psalm 127:3, ICB).

Objectives

The children will:

Know that Jesus was a special gift from God to all the world.

Feel love for God and Jesus.

Respond by thanking God for the gift of His Son.

The Message



God shares His gift with everyone.

Getting Ready to Teach

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Baby Jesus is taken to the temple by His parents to be dedicated to the Lord. He is the firstborn son of Joseph and Mary. They are to make a sacrifice of a pair of doves or two young pigeons in keeping with the law. Simeon holds Jesus and praises God for being able to see the Messiah. Simeon blesses Joseph and Mary and prophesies about Jesus' future. Anna, a prophetess, also sees Jesus and gives thanks to God as she spreads the word of the birth of the Messiah, the

child who has come to save the world from sin.

This is a lesson about grace.

Just as Mary and Joseph loved their precious baby and dedicated Him to serve God and the world, Christian parents do the same. Children are a special blessing from God. Parents, by God's grace, raise their children to love, honor, and serve God. Babies are dedicated to God by their parents. Children can choose to dedicate their lives to God.

TWELVE

| Program Outline | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|---|--|
| LESSON SECTION | MINUTES | ACTIVITIES | MATERIALS NEEDED |
| Welcome | ongoing | Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled | none |
| 1 Readiness Activities | up to 10 | A. <i>Streamers</i> B. <i>Clay Baby</i> C. <i>Children's Collage</i> | colored crepe paper, scissors, paper plates, glue sticks modeling clay old magazines, scissors, heavy paper, glue sticks |
| * Prayer and Praise * | up to 10 | See page 127. *Prayer and Praise* may be used at any time during the program. | |
| 2 Bible Lesson | up to 20 | Experiencing the Story | baby doll, small towel, adult female in Bible-times costume |
| | | Bible Study | Bible |
| | | Memory Verse | Bible |
| 3 Applying the Lesson | up to 15 | <i>Who Is Dedicated?</i> | baby doll, mirror |
| 4 Sharing the Lesson | up to 15 | <i>Bookmark</i> | Bookmark pattern (see p. 150), heavy paper, crayons, scissors |

Teacher Enrichment

"The dedication of the first-born had its origin in the earliest times. God had promised to give the First-born of heaven to save the sinner. This gift was to be acknowledged in every household by the consecration of the first-born son. He was to be devoted to the priesthood, as a representative of Christ among men.

"In the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the dedication of the first-born was again commanded. . . .

"Thus the law for the presentation of the first-born was made particularly significant. While it was a memorial of the Lord's wonderful deliverance of the children of Israel, it prefigured a greater deliverance,

to be wrought out by the only-begotten Son of God. As the blood sprinkled on the doorposts had saved the first-born of Israel, so the blood of Christ has power to save the world" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 51).

"Fathers and mothers should look upon their children as younger members of the Lord's family, committed to them to educate for heaven" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 515).

What are you doing to prepare your precious students for heaven? Do you see them as special gifts from God?

Room Decorations

See Lesson 11. Have a baby doll in the manger.

Teaching the Lesson

Welcome

Welcome children at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. Streamers

You Need:

- crepe paper, various colors
- scissors
- paper plates
- glue sticks

In advance, cut a variety of colored crepe paper into 1" x 3' (3 cm. x 1 m.) streamers. The children can glue three to five streamers on one half of the paper plate circle, leaving the other half free for a handle. Say: **We're going to make a colorful streamer that we can use when we sing.**

Sing a Christmas song the children know well as they sing and wave their streamers.

Debriefing

Allow responses: **Do you like to sing and wave your streamers? Why? Do you think it makes Jesus happy to hear you singing about Him? (yes) Jesus loves to hear His children singing. He likes to see you happy.**

Say: **Our Bible story is about a very happy day when the angels must have sung. Baby Jesus' parents wanted to show that they loved God and would raise their baby to love and serve Him too. They were so happy to have little Jesus, a gift from God to all the world. Today's message is:**



God shares His gift with everyone.

Say that with me.

B. Clay Baby

You Need:

- modeling clay

Give the children some modeling clay, and ask them to shape themselves as a baby.

Debriefing

Allow responses as you ask: **What do your babies look like? What are they doing? Not all these babies look alike. Each one looks different and unique, just as you did when you were a baby. But all babies have something in common. They are all a gift from**

God. Jesus loves all the children in the world, and He gives them to parents as a blessing, or a gift.

Say: **Our Bible story is about the time Baby Jesus' parents wanted to show that they loved God and would raise their baby to love and serve Him too. They were so happy to have little Jesus, a gift from God to the world. Today's message is:**



God shares His gift with everyone.

Say that with me.

C. Children's Collage

You Need:

- old magazines
- scissors
- heavy paper
- glue sticks

Have a stack of old magazines so the children can cut out pictures of children and glue them onto a sheet of paper to make a collage.

Debriefing

Allow responses as you ask: **Do the children in the pictures you found look happy? What are they doing? Are any of them doing the same thing? Do any of them look exactly alike?**

Can you think of anything that all these children have in common? I know one thing. They are all a gift from God. Jesus loves all the children in the world, and He gives them to parents as a blessing, or a gift.

Say: **Our Bible story is about when Baby Jesus' parents wanted to show that they loved God and would raise their baby to love Him too. They were so happy to have their little baby, God's gift, that they would share with the whole world. Today's message is:**



God shares His gift with everyone.

Say that with me.



NOTE: Prayer and Praise appears on page 127.

2

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

You Need:

- baby doll
- small towel
- adult female in Bible-times costume

Wrap the baby doll in the small towel, and have a female storyteller hold it as she tells or reads the story as if she were Mary.

Read or tell the story.

Hello, boys and girls. My name is Mary, and this is my little baby boy. His name is Jesus. Joseph and I named Him that because that is what the angel told us to name Him. He is a special baby. He is God's Son. But He is also my little son, and I just love Him so much. I think He is beautiful and precious.

I want to tell you about what happened the other day. We took our baby to the temple in Jerusalem to be dedicated to God. In our country it is our custom to take the first baby boy in the family to the temple for a special service and to offer a sacrifice. We took with us an offering of two pigeons. You would bring an offering of money today.

While the priest accepted our offering, an older priest named Simeon saw our baby. He came over to us and asked if he could hold Jesus. I was pleased and gladly let him. Simeon held Baby Jesus in his arms. Then he started thanking God for being able to see this special baby, the Saviour of the world. Simeon even blessed Joseph and me.

Joseph and I were surprised by what was happening and what Simeon was saying. We knew Jesus was special, but we didn't quite understand everything yet.

Just then an older woman, a prophetess, named Anna, came to us also. And she asked to see our baby. We let her, of course. She smiled the biggest smile I've

ever seen. Then she, too, began thanking God for being able to see our Jesus. She began telling people who were watching us what a special child Jesus was. She told them that our baby would save everyone.

There was so much going on and so many things to think about that I was a bit confused. But later I thought again and again about the things that Simeon and Anna had said. And I remembered that the angel had told us that Jesus would save people from their sins.

The shepherds and the wise men knew He was special. We know it, too, but Joseph and I love our baby just because He is our baby. He is a gift from God to us. Your parents love you, too, because you are a gift from God to them. Children are very special to God, especially Baby Jesus, God's gift to everyone.

Debriefing

Allow responses as you ask: **Why did Simeon and Anna want to see Jesus? Why did they praise God for Him?** (They knew that Jesus was the Saviour.) **How did Mary feel about all that happened?** (surprised, happy, confused) **How do you think Simeon and Anna felt when they knew they had seen the Saviour of the world?** (happy, joyful, thankful, excited)

Why did Jesus come to this earth? (to save us)

How do you think your parents felt when you were born? Who is God's best gift of all? Do you remember our message? Let's say it together:



God shares His gift with everyone.

Bible Study

You Need:

- Bible

Open your Bible to Luke 2:21–38. Point to the text and say: **This is where today's**

story is found in the Bible. Read the verses aloud, paraphrasing as necessary.

Debriefing

Allow responses as you ask: **Where did Joseph and Mary take Jesus to be dedicated? What offering did they take?** (two young pigeons) **Who praised God for being able to see Baby Jesus?** (Simeon and Anna) **What did they believe about Jesus?** (He would save the world.) **What do you believe?**

Memory Verse

Turn to Psalm 127:3 and say: **This is where we find our memory verse in God's Word, the Bible.** Read the text aloud.

"Children are a gift from the Lord." Teach the memory verse as outlined below.

You Need:

- Bible

- Children** Point to children.
- are a gift** Hands forward as if giving.
- from the Lord.** Point upward.
- Psalm 127:3** Palms together, then open.



3

Applying the Lesson

Who Is Dedicated?

You Need:

- baby doll
- mirror

Hold the baby doll and say: **When you were a baby, most of you were probably dedicated**

to God in a special ceremony at church, as Jesus was. Do you know why your parents did that? (Allow responses.) **They were telling everyone in our church that they want to teach you about Jesus and help you grow up to know and love and serve Him. It is also one way your parents show their thankfulness to God for you. They know that you are a gift from God to them.**

Ask: **Who is a gift from God? Let's see who is.** Hold the mirror up to each child, and ask: **Who is a gift from God?** Answer it by saying: **(Child's name) is!** Say: **Each of you is a gift from God. Are you Jesus' child too?** (Yes.)

Debriefing

Say: **When you were a baby, you couldn't choose to love and obey Him yet because you didn't understand things like that. But now you are bigger, and you understand more. You can choose to love Jesus and obey Him and serve Him. By doing that, you are dedicating yourself to Him.**

Ask: **Do you choose now to be dedicated to Jesus? Do you choose to love Jesus, to be His helper, and to help others as He does? If you do, you have accepted God's special gift to everyone: His Son, Jesus.** Encourage the children to say yes and affirm their decision. **Let's say our message together again:**



God shares His gift with everyone.



Sharing the Lesson

Bookmark

You Need:

- Bookmark pattern (see p. 150)
- heavy paper
- scissors
- crayons

In advance, make a copy of the Bookmark pattern (see page 150) for each child. Either cut them out, or let the children cut out their own. Let them color their bookmarks.

Debriefing

Allow responses as you ask:

Do you know what your bookmark says? Read it aloud:

“Children are a gift from the Lord” (Psalm 127:3, ICB).

Say: **Take your bookmark home with you, and share it with someone this week as you tell them about Baby Jesus’ dedication service.**

And remember how special you are to Jesus, because you are a special gift from Him to your parents. Let’s say our message one more time:



God shares His gift with everyone.

Closing

Say a short prayer, thanking God for each of the children and for Jesus’ special gift to save us all.

PRAYER AND PRAISE



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Jesus Loves Me" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 102)

"Jesus Loves the Children" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 106)

"Baby Jesus" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 142)

"God's Best Gift" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 145)

"Mary Loved Baby Jesus" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 150)

Mission

Say: **Not all the children in the world know that they are a special gift from God. Some don't even know that Jesus loves them. Let's hear a story about someone who learns about Jesus.** Use a story from *Children's Mission*.

Offering

Say: **God gave us the best gift ever—Jesus! But did you know that you are a special gift from God too? We gladly give our offerings to Jesus to thank Him for loving us.**

Prayer

Say: **Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us so much. Thank You for making us a gift to our families. We love You. Amen.**

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

STUDENT LESSON

Dedicated to God

References

Luke 2:21–38;
The Desire of Ages,
 pp. 50–58

Memory Verse

“Children are a gift from the Lord” (Psalm 127:3, ICB).

The Message

God shares His gift with everyone.

Have you ever seen a baby dedication in church? Were you dedicated to God? Jesus was.

Hello, young friends. My name is Mary, and this is my little baby boy. His name is Jesus. Joseph and I named Him that because that is what the angel told us to name Him. He is a special baby. He is God’s Son. But He is also my little son, and I just love Him so much. I think He is beautiful and so precious.

I want to tell you about what happened the other day. We took Baby Jesus

to the temple in Jerusalem to be dedicated to God. In our country it is our custom to take the first baby boy in the family to the temple for a special service. We took with us an offering of two pigeons.

While the priest accepted our offerings, an older priest named Simeon saw our baby. He came over to us and asked if he could hold Baby Jesus. I was pleased and gladly let him.

Simeon held Baby Jesus in his arms and looked into His face. Then he started thanking God for letting him see this special baby, the Saviour of the world. “Lord, as You have promised, let me go my way in peace, for I have seen this child who will bring salvation to all people, a light to all people.”

Simeon even blessed Joseph and me.

We were surprised! We knew Jesus was special, but we didn’t quite understand everything yet.

Then an older woman, Prophetess Anna, came to us, and she asked to see Jesus. Of course, we let her. She smiled the biggest smile I’ve ever seen. She too began thanking God for letting her see our Jesus. She began telling people who were watch-

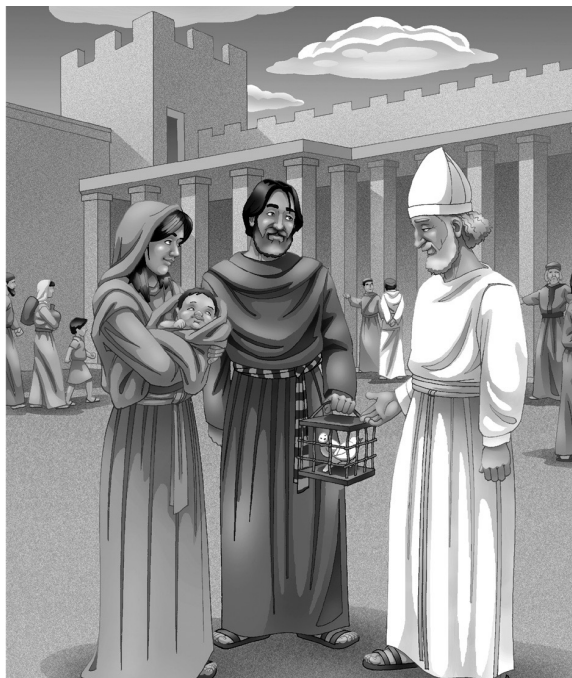
ing us what a special child Jesus was. She said our baby was the promised Saviour.

There was so much going on and so many things to think about that I was a bit confused, but pleased too. Later I thought again and again about the things that Simeon and Anna had said about our special baby.

It had been an amazing day!

Both Simeon and Anna had seen something special about our baby. Both had said that He would bring salvation to all, that He was the promised Saviour of the world.

Joseph and I love Jesus just because He is our baby. We know that He is a gift from God to us, and to all the world. Your parents love you too. Children are very special to God.



Do and Say

Sabbath

Each day this week, read the lesson story and review the memory verse:

Children Point to children.

are a gift Hands forward as if giving.

from the Lord. Point upward.

Psalm 127:3 Palms together, then open.

Sunday

Encourage your child to share the bookmark they made in Sabbath School with someone and tell them about Jesus' baby dedication. (Or help them cut one out of heavy paper, write the memory verse on it, and decorate it.)

Monday

Read together Luke 2:21–38. Ask: Where was Jesus' baby dedication? (in the temple at Jerusalem) Who was happy to see Baby Jesus in the temple? (Simeon and Anna) Why? What did Mary think about all that Simeon and Anna said?

Sing "Away In a Manger"; then thank God for Jesus.

Tuesday

Look at books with pictures of babies, young children, and their families. Talk about how Mary and Joseph loved Baby Jesus and about how parents today love their children too.

Before prayer, sing together "Jesus Loves Me" or "Jesus Loves the Children."

Wednesday

Put a beanbag (or something similar) on your child's back, and ask them to crawl around without letting it fall off. Talk about how they crawled as a baby but now they walk. Ask: What other things have you learned to do? What have you learned about Jesus since you were a baby? Thank Jesus for your "growing" child.



Thursday

Together, look at your child's baby pictures and pictures of his or her baby dedication. Describe the events and how you felt.

Have your child look in a mirror while you ask: Who is a special gift from God? Say: You are! Ask: Who is God's special gift to all of us? (Jesus)

Friday

Act out the Bible story with your family. Use a baby doll for Baby Jesus, and wrap Him in a small towel or blanket.

Give your child a hug. Say: "You are a special gift from God." Tell them you love them. Sing songs about Jesus' birth; then thank God for your child and for Jesus, God's gift to the whole world.

