



**Messy Envelope for Candlemas
by Mary Judkins (member of the Messy
Church Advocates Support Team)**



I hope you have enjoyed your Covid 19 Christmas with all the presents, food, chocolates, games and more. It was different. We still celebrated the birth of a special baby...one who changed the world! I pray that, at some time, you were able to focus on the real meaning of Christmas, God's gift to us in Jesus.

Mary and Joseph returned to Nazareth with Jesus, and welcomed the kings or magi with their unusual gifts. The next part of the story is when Mary went to the Temple in Jerusalem for ritual purification (a religious custom in those days). Mary and Joseph presented their baby son to God as a thanksgiving.



In the Church's calendar, Candlemas, (or the Presentation of Christ in the Temple,) is celebrated on February 2nd, forty days after Jesus was born. The word "Candlemas" comes from the practice of the priest blessing candles on this day for use throughout the year.

When Mary and Joseph had done all that the Law of Moses required, two people approached them. The Bible says there was a godly man named Simeon. He was very old and had been waiting for God's Messiah to come to save His people. God had told him that he wouldn't die until he had seen the Messiah. Simeon saw Jesus and knew that He was the Messiah!

Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. He said, "Lord, now I can die in peace. I have seen the Saviour you have given to all people. He is a light to lead all people to God (Luke 2:30-31)."



Joseph and Mary watched in amazement. Simeon told them that not all people would accept their Son as the Saviour. He said that some people would reject Him - that means that they would not believe that He was sent from God.

Simeon was not the only one who was excited to see Jesus! A widow named Anna was also in the Temple that day. Anna was an old woman who worshipped God all the time. She was very close to God. While Simeon was talking to Mary and Joseph, Anna began praising God! Then she began telling people that the Messiah had come. Messy Video 16 told her story.

Simeon's words make 'light' a theme for Candlemas.

In this envelope are things to do:

- In your home please find the following to help with the story. If you like, pretend you are me telling the story in a Messy Video!!
Find: some building blocks, a baby doll, a blanket, a candle (battery if possible), a cross, a globe, and a picture of Jesus as a grown man.
- Some talk together suggestions for after the story
- A Growing-up quiz
- How to make a prayer light tube
- How to make a card to encourage someone else
- How to make a Candlemas cake
- Some links to worship songs. Anna worshipped God all the time. We can do that too. eg "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High," "Open the Eyes of My Heart," "Come, Now is the Time to Worship," "My lighthouse" etc



- The snowdrop story. It is due to their traditional flowering time – around February 2 – that the first spring flowers are also known as 'Candlemas Bells'. As its name suggests, the snowdrop flowers may not wait for the snow to fully melt before

emerging from the ground. Custom says the snowdrops flower at that time to symbolise hope, and Jesus as the “light of the world”.

- A suggestion for Lent! (cooking pretzels)
- A ‘looking after yourself’ plan for Lent - colour it in as you follow it.
- Or maybe just start a ‘thank you jar’ and write things you are thankful for on a strip of paper and put it in the jar.



- Don't forget that the weekly Messy videos are still happening on my Facebook page every Sunday - there are 44 now!

A special Candlemas prayer.

You could maybe say this when you go to bed:

Jesus, thank you that Simeon and Anna recognised you as a special baby, and knew you would grow up to do God's special work.

Help us to discover who you are, and how you are special.

Help us to discover how special we are to God, and give us courage to tell others about you.

Amen.



Growing up quiz:

Try to answer the questions on your own.

1. I was born in...
2. When I was a baby, I...
3. When I was a toddler, I...
4. When I was in Year...

5. Now I am... years old, I can...
6. Next year, I would like to be able to...
7. When I grow up, I want to be...
8. When I am a grown-up, I hope that...

Share your answers with the adult(s) in your home. Talk together about growing up: what we are looking forward to and what we are not. Be honest. It's tough still being in a pandemic!

Story

Open the Bible at Luke 2.22-40 and choose from these two ways of telling the story.

1. Picture the story

Use the script below and the objects/pictures that you collected to tell the story.

Thousands of years before Jesus was born, God gave Moses a list of rules. They said that every firstborn son should be brought to the Temple to be blessed. So Mary and Joseph took their baby, Jesus, to Jerusalem. (Build Temple with building blocks.)

Simeon lived in Jerusalem. He was a good man, who prayed every day for his country, Israel. The Holy Spirit had told Simeon that he would not die before he saw the Messiah. (Bring hands together in prayer).

The Holy Spirit led Simeon to the Temple, where he met Mary and Joseph. He saw their baby son Jesus and took him in his arms. (Cradle the baby doll tenderly in your arms. Look down at the baby and smile.)

Then, to Mary and Joseph's amazement, Simeon began to praise God for their child. (Lift up the doll, lift your head and eyes upwards and smile.)

Simeon said, 'Master, now you can let me go in peace; I have seen your plan to save the world with my own eyes.'

(Cradle the doll in one arm and lift up a world globe in the other. Look down at the baby.)

'Everyone will see what you've done; your plan will be a light which reveals you to foreign nations and brings glory to Israel.' (Cradle the doll in one arm and lift up the candle. Look down at the baby.)

Mary and Joseph were speechless with surprise. Simeon blessed them both, then he said to Mary, 'Although this child will save many, others will be against him. And through how they treat him, God will reveal what people are really like. But your own soul will feel like it's been pierced by a sword.' (Cradle the doll in one arm and lift up a cross. Look down at the baby.)

At that moment, an old prophetess called Anna, who prayed and worshipped in the Temple, day and night, came and joined Mary, Joseph and Simeon. (Bring hands together in prayer.)

She also started praising God for Jesus, then began telling people about him, saying that he would save Jerusalem.

(Lift arms up praising God and then open arms wide.)

Having followed all the rules that God had given to Moses, Mary and Joseph went home to Nazareth. Jesus grew up to be strong and wise and God was pleased with him. (Show the picture of Jesus as a grown man.)

2. **Mime** the story

As one of you narrates the story, ask others to play the parts of Mary, Joseph, Simeon and Anna and mime appropriate actions.

Talk together suggestions

- What's it like to wait for something for a long time? How do you feel when it finally arrives?
- I wonder how Simeon and Anna knew that Jesus would grow up to be a special man.
- How do you think Mary and Joseph felt after hearing Simeon's words?



Make an encouragement card - a 'God bless you' card

Encourage others with a special message

You will need: coloured card, felt tips/pencils, stickers, sparkles, envelopes.

Simeon blessed baby Jesus. That means he prayed for God's blessing on him. We can pray for God's blessing on people, too. It could be for someone who needs God's love, his help or protection, or to feel God's presence.

- Think of someone for whom they would like to pray God's blessing.
- Make a card, saying 'God Bless You', and write a special message in the card.
- Give the card to the person (socially distanced or through the post) and pray that God will bless them every day this week.

Bubble wrap prayers - we did these in Collective Worship at St Uny Academy recently.

Tell God what you are worried about and pop a bubble on the bubble wrap as a sign of giving that worry to God and asking him to help you.

Thank God for something you are happy about and pop a bubble as you say 'thank you.'



Make a Prayer Light Tube



This is a fun way to celebrate Jesus as the light of the world, especially at Candlemas.

Traditionally at Candlemas (or the Presentation of Christ), the passage from Luke 2 where Simeon and Anna meet Jesus is read with the famous lines: "Now, Lord, you can let me, your servant, die in peace as you said. I have seen with my own eyes how you will save your people. Now all people can see your plan. He is a light to show your way to the other nations. And he will bring honour to your people Israel." (Luke 2: 29-32)

Jesus is recognised as the saviour who has come to bring light to dark situations and to show people the way.

Find: battery operated tea lights, A6 size paper, felt tip pens, glue



Put the A6 Paper in landscape mode and draw pictures of people and places who are going through dark, hard times and need to see some light and hope.

Wrap the paper around the tea light and glue down the edge to make a tube.

Ask Jesus to bring his light and hope to these people and situations. Switch off the lights and switch the tea lights on. Look at the light shining through the situations as a sign that they have been handed to Jesus. Tell Jesus about the people if you like.



Make a Quick and Simple Candlemas Candle Cake

Ask an adult to buy some mini rolls (for small candles) or a jam and cream sponge roll (for a big candle). Place it vertically on the plate.



Made up a fairly thick batch of icing...using icing sugar, butter and water (vanilla essence for flavour may be nice) and cover the cake.

Make a flame with some icing or a piece of fruit (use your imagination!)
Enjoy sharing the cake, and enjoy sharing the light of Christ.



Prayers

Candlemas candles

A prayer of light and blessing

You will need: a sand tray, votive candles, one per child, matches or a taper (or for safety use battery candles if you have them).

- Sit in a circle with the sand tray in the centre. Give everyone a candle.

- Explain that today we are celebrating Candlemas. Christians traditionally use candles to pray at this festival to remember Simeon's description of Jesus as a 'light' to the world.
- Say that you are going to ask God's blessing for each other using candles.
- Invite each child to hand over their candle, and as you light it for them and place it in the sand tray, say the following prayer:

Jesus, thank you for your light.

Thank you that your light shines in each of us.

Thank you that your light shines in (insert name)

God bless (insert name)

(Sit in silence and enjoy the light for a short while.)

Close with: Thank you, God, for your blessing.

Amen.

Scone 'pretzels': not the same but quicker than the traditional kind!!

Pretzels are traditionally linked with Lent because they are said to resemble arms crossed in prayer. I have never prayed like this, but I like the link!

Ingredients:

100g self raising flour

30g butter

milk to mix

tablespoon sugar

Pinch of salt

1 Egg

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 180C
- Rub the butter into the flour until it resembles breadcrumbs.
- Mix in the sugar and salt.
- Gradually add milk to the mixture until a dough is formed. Don't let it get too sticky!

- Split the dough into 6. Make each piece into a sausage shape and then form it into a pretzel shape (see



photo).

- Place on a greased baking tray.
- Whisk an egg and use a pastry brush to 'wash' it over the top of each pretzel shape.
- Bake pretzels for 10 mins until golden
- Leave to cool and then eat with butter and jam

When the pretzels are baking make a list of (or draw) favourite foods that you want to thank God for. Talk about people in the world and in our own country who don't have enough food and ask God to help them.

The Snowdrop Story

Many years ago when, the Earth was being made by our Creator, He was being very generous with the amounts of colour He handed out to the plants and animals. So much so, that by the time, Snow had heard that colour was being given out, when she came to ask the Creator for a little colour there was none left. Snow was transparent.

The Creator was a little perplexed by this mistake. "Never mind," He said to Snow, "I'm sure some of the flowers will share a little of their colours with you. I gave them lots. Just go and ask."

So off Snow went, looking for flowers and a little of their colour. Before long, she came across Daffodil, who was looking gloriously yellow in the sunshine. "Hello Daffodil," said Snow, "I'm afraid the Creator ran out of colour and I'm looking for some. Would you be able to share a little bit of yellow with me?"



Daffodil waved her trumpet head around importantly. "No, no, no! I'm afraid that's impossible," she said, fixing Snow with an arrogant stare. "I'm too busy catching the sun's rays. If I lose any of my colour, I may not be noticed as much and not receive the warmth I need to grow. Go and look elsewhere for colour."

Snow shrugged her wet shoulders and kept on looking. Before long, she saw Bluebell, who was looking ever so bonny. "Hello Bluebell" said Snow. "Would you mind giving me a little of your colour? The Creator suggested I asked a flower for some colour."

Bluebell looked horrified at the thought. "Oh no, Snow!" she exclaimed. "That simply isn't possible. You see, I make a beautiful carpet of blue every spring in the woodlands. If you were my shade of blue, then everyone might get mixed up between us and that would never do. Go and find another flower to help you."

Poor Snow was beginning to feel quite desperate. Every flower seemed to need all their colour. Just then, she heard a little voice. It was the white Snowdrop. "Did I hear that you are needing some colour, Snow?" asked Snowdrop. "You can have some of mine. I've got lots of white. Here..."< Snowdrop carefully scraped some of the white of her inner tepals, revealing some of her underlying green and handed the white to snow, who immediately transformed with her colour.



To this day, you can look closely at a snowdrop you can see the area of green streaks on the inner tepals where she scraped off her white colour to give to snow. And although when you see snow, it looks very white. If you hold a little snow up to the light, you will see it is transparent. Only a little white was ever needed to make snow visible.

In return for colour, Snow made a special promise to Snowdrop. "As you gave me your colour, I am giving you the freedom to emerge safely through my blanket of snow, every year. You will be the flower that symbolises the end of winter and will announce that spring is coming. You will be forever special, because of this."

And so it was to this day.

There are other stories about snowdrops that can be found. Hans Christian Andersen, wrote one. The Grimm's brothers wrote a fairy tale which is now better known as Snow White, though originally it was about a girl called Snowdrop!

Can you find snowdrops in your garden, or gardens nearby, or in pots? Thank God for His creation as you walk in your garden, on the beach, around the area where you live (socially distanced of course!).

Next time you walk somewhere, perhaps pause a few times to breathe in the air or look at the view and give thanks to God. It can be silent!