

# JESUS AND THE NEW COVENANT

## UNIT ONE: THE WAY IS PREPARED

### Lesson 1: Jesus is Presented: Whose Son is He?

#### CONTENT:

1. The Presentation was a religious ceremony which had its roots in the Exodus event. Every first-born male was presented to God. Thus the Jews remembered God's action in protecting their first-born sons from death (the final plague). They acknowledged that they belonged to God.
2. For Mary and Joseph the Presentation was not just a ceremony to be gone through, but an acknowledgement that Jesus was the first born Son who belonged to God. Their action said, "This child is yours. Do whatever you want with him."
3. Through Simon and Anna we get a glimpse of God's plan for his son: To save the world, and to be 'a light to the nations'. At the same time he would face opposition (a sign that is spoken against) and would bring sorrow to his mother (as she witnessed his suffering.)
4. God has a plan for each person. Parents should recognise that their children belong to God and should allow them the freedom to discern God's plan for them, even if it means giving up their own hopes and plans for them.



"Parents must regard their children as children of God and respect them as human persons." CCC222

"When they become adults, children have the right and duty to choose their profession and state of life. Parents should be careful not to exert pressure on their children either in the choice of a profession or in that of a spouse." Children in turn, should have "a trusting relationship with their parents, willingly asking and receiving their advice." CCC2230

**ASSIGNMENT:** Share the Church teachings [numbers 2&3 in handouts] with your parents and pray about it at home.

**REFERENCES:** CCC 2222, 2230. Luke 2:22b,23,25-35,36a,37b-38.

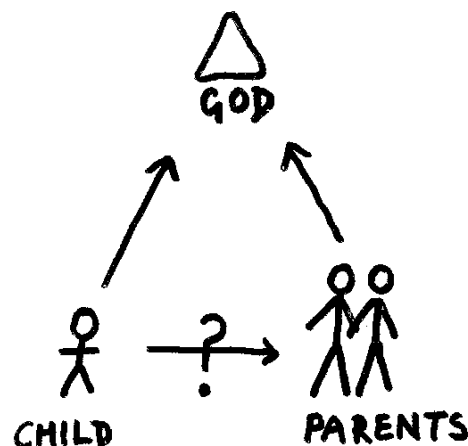
**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Handouts: blackboard.

#### I. STARTER:

• Today we are going to talk about God, parents and their children. [Draw a rough sketch on the blackboard as shown, but without the arrows!]

• Out of these three, who belongs to whom? Would anyone like to come up and draw arrows to show who belongs to whom? [Allow a volunteer to try. The correct solution is as shown alongside: Children belong to God, parents belong to God.]

• What about children and parents? Do children also belong to their parents or not? [Draw arrow with a question mark between them] We will find out the answer to this during this class, as we look at what the Bible as well as the Church tells us. (What are these called?) *[Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.]*



## II. DEVELOPMENT:

[Give out handouts at this point. Read the first paragraph of the passage and bring out the answers to questions 1 and 2:]

1. Where did the practice of presenting the 'first-born son' start?

- i. The presentation was a religious ceremony which was done when a child was about 1 month old. In some ways it was like your baptism. Your parents also brought you to Church as a baby.
- ii. Centuries before, when the Jews were slaves in Egypt, God worked wonders to help them escape. There were 10 plagues which came upon Egypt. During the last one all the first-born males, including animals died. But the Jewish boys were spared, if they smeared their doorposts with the blood of the special lamb.
- iii. Remembering this, the Jews always presented their first born sons to God. It was a way of saying 'Thank you for saving our sons!' and also 'This child's life is yours!'

2. What do you think Joseph and Mary were saying through this action?

Joseph and Mary did not just do this action because they had to do it. (Sometimes people do go through religious ceremonies 'Naam-ke-vasthey'.) They realised that Jesus was not really theirs, but God's Son. So as they presented him in the temple, they were saying through their action, "This child is yours! Do whatever you want with him!" This is not at all easy for any parent to say!

[Students write the answers to the first two questions of [1] They now continue with 3 and 4, working in pairs. After 5 to 7 minutes bring out the following with the help of the students' answers:]

3. Who were the 2 people who met the family in the Temple? Simeon and Anna.

4. Words/phrases that show God's plan for Jesus:

With my own eyes I have seen your salvation; A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles; chosen by God for the destruction and the salvation of many; a sign from God which many people will speak against; sorrow, like a sharp sword, will pierce your own heart.

In other words, God's plan was that Jesus would save the world. He would be like a light shining in the world. Some would accept him and some would reject him. People would speak against him. His mother would suffer deep pain because of his suffering.

- Joseph and Mary must have been both excited and frightened to hear of what God had planned for their little baby. But both trusted God and were ready to cooperate with him.
- Let's look now at the last section of our handouts. Let us see what the Church has to say to us about parents and children. [Read section [2] and then ask the students to discuss the two questions [3]. Bring out the following points and let the students write them:]

1. *Give a good reason why parents should not put pressure on their children about choosing a career or a partner.*

- i. Because their children actually belong to God.
- ii. Because their children are ultimately responsible for their own lives. They have to answer to God for their choices.

2. *What should a young person do when trying to decide on these big issues?*

- i. Pray and seek God's plan for your life.
- ii. Talk to your parents and other wise and God-fearing elders. Listen to their advice carefully.
- iii. Then make a free decision, remembering that finally you have to live with your choice.

## III. REFLECTION & PRAYER:

[Ask the students to spend a few moments in silence, reflecting on all they have discovered and talking to God about it.]

**Home assignment:** Share numbers [2 and 3] of your handouts with your parents. Talk about it and then ask God to help you to put his Word into practice.