



a Kendall Hunt Company

Catechist: Presentation of the Lord - RCLB Lectionary



Background for Catechists and Teachers

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

Malachi 3:1-4

Psalm 24:7-10

Hebrews 2:14-18

Luke 2:22-40

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Is there a particular reading that appeals to you? Is there a word that engages you?

Read the following Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need.

The Word in Liturgy

The feast of the Presentation, which had for some centuries in the Latin church been known as the feast of the Purification of Mary, was restored to its original meaning as a Christological feast by the Second Vatican Council. By restoring this focus, the church invites us to reflect on this feast as a celebration of Jesus the Christ. It also proclaims his coming as the very visitation of God (Malachi), offering salvation and light to all nations (Simeon's canticle).

All of today's readings involve the temple in some way. The first reading is from the prophet Malachi, who preached in about 460 BC. A staunch upholder of Judaism, the prophet was critical of the corrupt and ignorant priesthood of his day, as well as of abuses in the temple that Ezra and Nehemiah were later to correct.

Luke's narrative in this gospel makes it clear that Jesus comes into a family and a society within Judaism that is deeply ingrained with piety and lives in expectancy of the fulfillment of divine promises. The humble eloquence of Simeon, the profound piety of the elderly prophetess Anna, and even the simple poverty of the holy family (a pair of turtledoves was the sacrifice of the poor—those with greater means offered a lamb as well) combine to form a touching portrait of the manifestation of God's Son to the faithful of Israel. Simeon's canticle transforms a personal gift into a broad proclamation to the world. Mary here, as elsewhere, personifies Israel. The passage does not shy away from the prediction that Jesus will cause conflict and division within Israel, but at the same time proclaims that his coming is Israel's glory.

Catholic Doctrine The Two Natures

Catechist: Presentation of the Lord



a Kendall Hunt Company

Catechist: Presentation of the Lord - RCLB Lectionary

The Catholic Church confesses the belief that Jesus possesses two natures: Jesus Christ is fully human and fully divine. The way the Church expresses this is to assert that Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of the Virgin Mary (CCC 724). The two natures of Christ, one divine and one human, are not confused, but united. They are united in the one person of Jesus Christ (CCC 481). This union does not cease (CCC 469).

Thus the feast of the Presentation celebrates that Jesus, the light of all peoples, is the only Messiah, “destined to be the downfall and rising of many.” The Son of God is the only mediator between the Most High and humanity. How else could this be? If Jesus is not fully and truly human, how can he understand and identify totally with us? And if Jesus is not fully and truly divine, how can he ever assist us and transform us?

