

# The Presentation of the Infant Jesus (Luke 2:21-38)

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**Guidelines (For Groups):** Protect confidentiality and follow the leader's prompts.

**Ignatian Meditation Process:** Ignatius chose this Gospel reading for Week 2 of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Read the introduction and then "Ask for the grace". Then quietly read the passage by using your imagination to enter into the story, sensing and feeling what's going on. Don't analyze the passage or seek insights — *experience yourself as a character in the story*. After the second reading have a "colloquy" (short, personal conversation) with the Lord. You can use the prompts and questions at the bottom to guide your prayer time and journaling (and sharing with others).

**Introduction:** Mary and Joseph are devoted to God and to their baby Jesus. They take him to the temple to dedicate him to the Lord. Simeon, an old prophet, and Anna, an old prophetess, greet them and pray over the Christ child.

**Ask For the Grace:** Lord Jesus, I ask for the grace I desire: to know you more intimately, to love you more intensely, and to follow you more closely.

## Imagine Yourself in the Gospel: Luke 2 (MSG)

21 When the eighth day arrived, the day of circumcision, the child was named Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived.

22-24 Then when the days stipulated by Moses for purification were complete, they took him up to Jerusalem to offer him to God as commanded in God's Law: "Every male who opens the womb shall be a holy offering to God," and also to sacrifice the "pair of doves or two young pigeons" prescribed in God's Law.

25-32 In Jerusalem at the time, there was a man, Simeon by name, a good man, a man who lived in the prayerful expectancy of help for Israel. And the Holy Spirit was on him. The Holy Spirit had shown him that he would see the Messiah of God before he died. Led by the Spirit, he entered the Temple. As the parents of the child Jesus brought him in to carry out the rituals of the Law, Simeon took him into his arms and blessed God:

God, you can now release your servant; release me in peace as you promised. With my own eyes I've seen your salvation; it's now out in the open for everyone to see: A God-revealing light to the non-Jewish nations, and of glory for your people Israel.

33-35 Jesus' father and mother were speechless with surprise at these words. Simeon went on to bless them, and said to Mary his mother, "This child marks both the failure and the recovery of many in Israel, A figure misunderstood and contradicted — the pain of a sword-thrust through you — but the rejection will force honesty, as God reveals who they really are."

36-38 Anna the prophetess was also there, a daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher. She was by now a very old woman. She had been married seven years and a widow for eighty-four. She never left the Temple area, worshiping night and day with her fastings and prayers. At the very time Simeon was praying, she showed up, broke into an anthem of praise to God, and talked about the child to all who were waiting expectantly for the freeing of Jerusalem.

**1st Reading:** Visualize yourself in the Gospel story. Don't seek intellectual insights — stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with or are you a bystander?

**2nd Reading:** Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?