

An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for December 31, 2023

Fifth Sunday in Advent

Lectionary Year B

Scripture: [Luke 2:22-40](#) [**Summary:** *A Faith Community For Mary, Joseph, and Jesus*]

Supplies Needed: No supplies needed

ASK (a.k.a. *The On-Ramp*)

Good morning!

- I have a tough question for you, but I know you'll give it your best try: Can you tell me what a *community* is?
- That's right! It's a group of people who live or gather together for shared reasons.
- A community is helpful in a number of ways:
 - It can teach you things that you don't yet know.
 - It can remind you of things you know but have forgotten.
 - It helps you keep doing the things that the community cares about and why you joined it in the first place.
 - It listens to you and cares about what you say.
- So, how many communities do you think you belong to? [*Wait to see what they say – if anything*]
- Well, I definitely think you belong to more than one community. Here are the ones I know of for sure:
 - Your family is a community.
 - And here at [*name of your church*], we are a community – a *faith* community that you belong to.
 - Your friends at school are a type of a community, too.

TELL (a.k.a. *The Freeway*)

- In today's scripture, we hear that Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus had a faith community, too.

- Two of those people in that faith community were Simeon and Anna.
- In today's story, we hear Simeon talking to Mary and Joseph and what he shares with them are reminders about who Jesus will be and what he will do with God and for their faith community.
- And did you hear what Mary and Joseph's response was?
- Yes, that's right – they were amazed!
- This make me think that they were listening very carefully – that these were really important words that Mary and Joseph needed to hear.

SHARE the Good News (a.k.a. *The Destination*)

- And, guess what? Just like Mary and Joseph, we too are part of a faith community where we can be reminded about God and can hear important words that encourage us to keep paying attention to God.
- Just like Mary and Joseph were in a community that supported and encouraged them to raise Jesus to pay attention to God, so too do you and I have a community here at [*name of your church*] that reminds and teaches us to pay attention to God.
- I am thankful for the ways in which this community teaches and reminds us about God.
- By being here, we are likely to receive the same type of encouragement that Mary and Joseph received from Simeon and Anna.
- And, we can share with others the same type of encouragement that Simeon and Anna shared with Mary and Joseph.
- Which is why I want to thank you and everyone who is here today for belonging to this faith community so that we might have moments like Mary, Joseph, and Jesus did in today's story – where we support each other with God's words of encouragement.
- And that's the good news for today.
- Let's pray. This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

CLOSING Prayer

Dear God,

Dear God,

Thank you for this faith community...

Thank you for this faith community...

...that reminds us...

...that reminds us...

...to keep paying attention to you...

...to keep paying attention to you...

...so that we can live...

...so that we can live...

...like Mary, Joseph, and Jesus did.

...like Mary, Joseph, and Jesus did.

Thank you and Amen.