

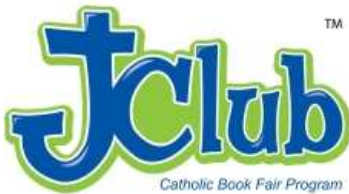
February 2 Presentation of the Lord

It was Jewish Law that the firstborn son belonged to God and had to be bought back from God 40 days after his birth. At that time the mother was to be ritually purified after childbirth. On February 2nd, 40 days after Christmas, the Church celebrates the day when Jesus was presented in the temple. This feast has been celebrated in the Eastern Church since the sixth century and in the Western Church since the seventh century. Candles are blessed on this day to commemorate Simeon's prophesy about Christ as "a light to the Gentiles." The popular name for this feast day is Candlemas Day.

If possible participate in Mass this day in order to enter most fully into the mystery of this day. If that is not possible have a candlelight supper for your whole family. At the beginning of the meal say together this short prayer:

Leader: Forty days ago we celebrated the joyful feast of the birth of Christ. Today we recall the holy day on which he was presented in the temple. Led by the Spirit, Simeon and Anna came to the temple, recognized Christ as their Lord, and proclaimed him with joy. Simeon said: "With my own eyes I have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people."

Leader: Christ is the light of the nations
Response: Christ is the light of the nations
Leader: and the glory of Israel his people
Response: and the glory of Israel his people



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