





# ENGAGE (15 MINUTES)

**THE POINT** WE HAVE A SURE HOPE WHEN WE TRUST IN JESUS.

## LEAD OPTION 1

Have the students sit in a big circle and select one student to be “it.” Ask him or her to leave the room. While the student is gone, select a leader. Once the student reenters the room, he or she will stand in the middle of the circle. Students sitting around the circle will study and mimic the leader. Try not to let the student in the middle guess the correct leader. Allow the student in the middle three tries to guess the leader. Have the students play a few rounds. Say, **“We can’t always trust people in the world to guide us in the right direction, but we can always trust in Jesus.”**

## LEAD OPTION 2

Place a large marker and poster board up front. As students enter the room, have them write one word or phrase on the board describing Jesus’ character. Say, **“If we place our hope and trust in Jesus, we have no reason to worry about any of life’s challenges.”**

## LEAD OPTION 3

Search the Internet for “From Stone Age to Tech Age: The Big Ideas that Shaped History.” Play the video as you begin the session. Say, **“A lot can change over the course of time. God’s promises of the coming Messiah took place well before Jesus arrived, but God never changed His plan to fulfill His promises.”**

**NOTE:** Always make sure you preview any video clip you show students and ensure that it is appropriate for your church and ministry.



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## LEADER PACK ELEMENTS

*If you have the optional Leader Pack, consider one of the following:*

**ITEM 5:** Consider beginning your session by using the *Experience* poster to introduce students to the idea of a “bucket list.” (You may need to spend some time explaining the concept.) Ask students to consider experiences or events they dream of completing during their lifetime. Allow them to either write their answers directly on the poster or on sticky notes to be placed around the poster.



# THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

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## THE SETTING

After the birth of Jesus, shepherds came to worship Him, and Mary pondered all that had happened since the angel first visited her. She made preparations with Joseph for a special day in the life of her child. Eight days after birth, the baby would be circumcised and named (Luke 2:21-24), and they would make an offering for Mary's purification rite from childbirth. These events would have been great in themselves, but a surprise awaited them.

**FACT:**

IT'S PRETTY COOL THAT A 3D PRINTER CAN MAKE A SURVIVAL WHISTLE OR A PAIR OF SUNGLASSES FRAMES, BUT NOT NEARLY AS COOL AS AN ENTIRE OFFICE BUILDING OR A FULLY-FUNCTIONAL SPORTS CAR.<sup>2</sup> YEP, THESE ARE REAL THINGS!

More and more people are buying 3D printers. Whereas old-school printers put words on paper using ink, 3D printers create objects in just about any shape you can dream up. But what if a 3D printer could be used to reproduce, say, a human liver? Researchers are already looking into the possibility. Instead of stacking successive layers of plastic to create an object, a "bioprinter" would use a person's own cells to construct living tissue.<sup>1</sup> In the future, you could receive a transplantable organ with no risk of rejection.

Seems impossible, right? Just think how far-fetched a 3D printer sounded just a few years ago. And smartphones! Can you imagine taking pictures with an actual camera? Selfies were a lot more complicated ten years ago.

The Jewish people had waited centuries for the Messiah. Through the prophets, God had promised He was coming, but the Jews wondered if it would happen in their lifetime? One man in the Bible knew the answer. We don't know a lot about him, but we know this one thing: he knew he would see the Messiah.



# IMPART

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## LUKE 2:25-27

*There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking forward to Israel's consolation, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, he entered the temple. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform for him what was customary under the law, **LUKE 2:25-27***

Most people have a "bucket list," experiences a person hopes to have during her lifetime, such as swimming with dolphins or setting foot on every continent. Personally, I'm an outdoorsy guy, and I enjoy hiking. One item on my list is to summit all the 14ers (mountains over 14,000 feet) in Colorado's front range. Last year, I checked two mountains off the list, and this year I hope to complete it!

According to Scripture, we know of only one thing on Simeon's bucket list. Simeon's heartfelt desire was to behold the promised Messiah, the Son of God, who would come to save us from our sins. We don't know a lot about Simeon, but Luke did note three revealing characteristics.

- **Righteous and devout:** "Righteous" simply means living rightly in obedience to God. Most people live according to selfish desires that are contrary to God, but Simeon's life was defined by doing right. "Devout" means reverent and faithful. Simeon lived with great respect for God in all he did.
- **Looking for the Messiah:** Simeon looked forward to Israel's consolation. Israel's hope was in the Messiah who would bring comfort to the weary souls of Israel.
- **Full of the Holy Spirit:** Prior to the Holy Spirit's coming on all believers in Acts 2, only certain individuals experienced the indwelling presence of God's Holy Spirit. Simeon was devoted to God, so his heart would have been receptive to the Spirit's work in him.

Just as the Spirit promised Simeon he would see the Messiah, now he was guided by the Spirit to enter the temple at just the right moment. We don't know how Simeon recognized the infant as the Messiah, but we can assume the same Holy Spirit who guided him there opened his eyes to who was in front of him.

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**VERSE 27:** How many people passed Jesus and His parents that day with no recognition? The Holy Spirit was on Simeon and had him in the right place at the right time, and the Holy Spirit made the difference in his recognizing Jesus.

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During a certain period in Israel's history, the people were waiting expectantly regarding the coming Messiah. Despite such high expectations, only a small number of people realized Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecies. But Simeon knew. We too, when we are in tune with God, will recognize His presence and His working among us.

### DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 38)

- 1** *How does the Holy Spirit influence how you see and approach the future?*
- 2** *In what ways is Simeon an example for us?*



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## LUKE 2:28-32

*Simeon took him up in his arms, praised God, and said, Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace, as you promised. For my eyes have seen your salvation. You have prepared it in the presence of all peoples—a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory to your people Israel.* **LUKE 2:28-32**

Every year during the holidays, our family makes the trip from Baltimore to Alabama. This year, our foster daughter, who grew up in the inner city, got to go for the first time. Leading up to the trip, she'd heard stories of what it was like to visit the grandparents—the food and gifts, bikes and trails—but because she'd never been, her sense of anticipation and excitement was almost overwhelming.

Simeon, a righteous man who was devoted to God, knew of the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. Further, the Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would personally see the Messiah before he died. We tend to get excited about birthday gifts or vacations—think about Simeon's anticipation in regard to seeing the long-promised Savior!

**Leader:** Ask students to describe something they're excited about in the future.

When Simeon went to the temple, he not only beheld Jesus with his eyes, he held Him in his arms. In that moment, all he'd anticipated became a reality. God had fulfilled His promise, and Simeon was moved to worship with what we now call "Simeon's Psalm."

- **You can dismiss your servant in peace:** Simeon had awaited the coming of the Messiah, and it had finally happened! He was now ready to go home according to God's will.
- **For my eyes have seen your salvation:** To see Jesus was to see the embodiment of God's saving grace. He's the only One who could rescue rebellious sinners from death.
- **A light to the Gentiles and glory to Israel:** The Jews were fiercely proud of their status as God's chosen, covenant people, and they saw the Messiah as their deliverer who would establish their kingdom. Simeon, however, recognized Jesus as not only the glory to Israel, but also a light to the Gentiles. God's purpose in salvation is to draw all peoples to Himself (Rev. 7:9).

**VERSE 28:** Like a priest, Simeon took the child in his arms and began to pronounce a blessing over Him. Simeon also "praised God," which in Greek means to speak a good word. Simeon's blessing of Jesus was an act of worship, which also turned out to be a prophetic word about Him.

### DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 39)

- 3** *What are some promises we look forward to God fulfilling?*
- 4** *What does Simeon's statement of praise teach us about God's mission?*
- 5** *When you think about the salvation God has given to you, what is your response?*

**God's purpose in salvation is to draw all people to Himself. #BSFLfullpicture**





# IMPART

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## LUKE 2:33-35

*His father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and told his mother Mary: "Indeed, this child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed—and a sword will pierce your own soul—that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."* **LUKE 2:33-35**

Joseph and Mary were absolutely amazed at the blessing pronounced over their child. They already knew their son Jesus was special, but the words Simeon spoke were overwhelming for them to take in. Though the angel Gabriel had revealed to them their son was the Savior and Messiah, they likely hadn't fully understood all this meant.

**VERSE 34:** Simeon's blessing over Jesus described who He was, which was truly amazing! His words to Mary described *what* He'd come to do.

After blessing Jesus, Simeon pronounced a blessing over Mary and Joseph. He then shared with Mary three things about Jesus:

- **Jesus would cause many to rise and fall:** People are divided into two groups based on our response to Jesus. Those who accept Him by faith are raised out of sin and enter into eternal life in relationship with God. Those who reject Him fall into eternal punishment.
- **Jesus would be opposed:** Jesus would endure not only verbal insults, but also hatred and the rejection of His people, Israel. Ultimately, Jesus would be crucified by those who opposed Him. As a result of the opposition against her son, Mary would experience pain, as if a sword had pierced her soul. It would be the most tragic event in Mary's life, and yet, at the same time, the greatest event in history.
- **Jesus would reveal our hearts:** Through Christ's life and ministry, the thoughts of many hearts were revealed—and still are today. Christ exposes us as we truly are. How we respond to Jesus and the truths of Scripture, through either obedience or disobedience, reveals who we truly are inside.

**VERSES 34-35:** The blessing pronounced upon the whole family may not seem like a blessing at first glance, and it contained some difficult words of prophecy, especially to Mary. However, though it would require sacrifice of them, it was the best news and the ultimate blessing.

The truth is we've all fallen into sin, and we've all opposed Jesus. However, for those who are humble, the Holy Spirit reveals to us the brokenness of our hearts and convinces us of the power of Jesus to transform. When we confess and trust in Jesus for salvation, He forgives, and our eternal destiny is changed. We truly have a sure hope when we trust in Jesus.

### DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 39)

- 6** *How does Jesus cause people to "fall and rise"?*
- 7** *Why do some people respond positively to Jesus and others do not?*
- 8** *How can we appropriately respond to those who oppose Jesus today?*





# LIVE IT OUT (10 MINUTES)

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## ▶ CHRIST

Simeon said our hearts would be revealed through Jesus' coming to us. Take a look at your life. What does your heart—your thoughts and desires—reveal about your standing with Jesus?

**9** How does your life demonstrate you truly love Jesus?

**10** What things do you need to give up in order to live more closely in relationship with Him?

**11** What practices do you need to grow in to love Him more deeply?



**Make it a point every day this week to pray about and practice these things.**



# LIVE IT OUT

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## ► COMMUNITY

When Simeon encountered Jesus, he was impacted in such a way that God used him to bless and encourage others.

**12** What are some things about Jesus which have recently impacted you?

**13** How can you share these with others in your church family in order to bless them?

## ► CULTURE

When we share the gospel with people in our culture, they will respond one of two ways—they'll rise or fall, accept or reject. Nonetheless, the good news of Jesus is meant for all people, and we are called to share.

**14** Who do you know that isn't a follower of Jesus, but seems to be open to the gospel?

**15** How do you think God would use you to help lift him or her out of darkness and into the light of Christ?