

## Background Notes for Parents/Carers

### About the theme – Local Church

After Christmas children will explore the theme of Local Church, which is our story. The **parish** is where people gather together to celebrate and practise care and love for each other. The **diocese** is the community of the Christian faithful. The Local Church theme focuses on the people of God, gathered in Christ, united in the journey of faith, in care for one another, in sharing their story and in celebration.

The experience of community is an essential and enjoyable part of life for people of every age and faith. The cycle of a year and the span of a lifetime contain occasions for regular celebrations as well as unexpected surprises, when people want to celebrate with family, friends and communities.

The Church's celebrations are also community occasions. On Sundays, the parish family gathers together. It is a time to remember how much there is to celebrate; a time to say thank you; a time to know that God's love is offered and made visible here and now in Jesus and in people. Sacraments are more formal special moments: signs of 'God-with-us', who journeys with his people; signs of strength and blessing for life.

## Overview

<b>Key Vocabulary</b>	<b><u>EARLY YEARS</u></b> <b>Celebrating</b> <b>LOCAL CHURCH THEME</b>
Church Priest celebrate celebrating Parish family family community celebration party memory Father altar Temple parish	<p>The local church gives thanks for God’s blessings in its liturgical celebrations and in the way, it lives its parish life. Christians belong to the local church community – the parish, which celebrates in a variety of ways. They celebrate tradition and story and find their meaning in Jesus.</p> <p><b>Children will know and understand:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• what a celebration is</li><li>• how the parish family celebrate</li></ul> <p><b>See Background Notes for Parents.</b></p> <p>In <b>EYFS</b> children will explore what a celebration is and be able to name different family and school celebrations. They will go on to look at celebrations in the local parish church. Children will hear the story of how Mary and Joseph took baby Jesus to the Temple to present him to God and how they met Simeon and Anna there.</p> <p><b>This week:</b> Look at the key vocabulary and help your child to remember what they have learned about celebrating.</p>



## The Our Father Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven  
Hallowed be Thy Name;  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us;  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.

Amen.



## Act of Worship "CELEBRATING"

### EARLY YEARS

You might like to set up a Focus table with some of the following:

**Gathering  
Together**

Brightly coloured cloth

Bible (open at Luke 2:23 - 40)

Several balloons or Party poppers or streamers

Plate of small biscuits

Your child's drawing or a picture of the "Presentation in the Temple"

Welcome to our celebration. We gather **In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit Amen.**

When we have special times in our lives, we often show our happiness by having a special celebration. For example we have special celebrations at Christmas and for birthdays, weddings, baptisms and anniversaries.

Often we decorate our rooms and the things around us in different ways for celebrations. We decorate our rooms using bright and shiny colours to show how happy we are and to make people feel welcome. We try to make our rooms special for special celebrations.

We also usually ask some friends to join us and have some special food to share with them.

Not so long ago we celebrated the birth of Jesus, and in our "Celebrating" topic we heard of the celebration when his family thanked God for him.

We are now going to listen to a reading from the Bible which reminds us of some other people - Simeon and Anna - who celebrated when they found that Jesus had been born.

**The Word  
of God**

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

**Glory to you, O Lord**

Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple. He was their baby boy and they wanted to thank God for him. At the temple they met Simeon and Anna. They were both old and had been going to the temple to pray for many years. They were very happy to see Jesus and thanked God for him.

The Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ**

**Response to  
The Word**

When we celebrate some special event with our friends or family, we thank them for coming, or thank them for inviting us to join in their happy event. Now let us thank God together for the many things God has given us to celebrate.

**The response is, “We thank you, God.”**

Like Simeon and Anna, who celebrated the birth of your son Jesus **We thank you, God**

For the celebrations and love we share with our families **We thank you, God**

For the happy times we share with our friends **We thank you, God**

For the music we enjoy and the songs we sing **We thank you, God**

For our parish family who celebrate together **We thank you, God**

**Going**

**Forth**

Now think quietly of a celebration which you especially enjoyed. Remember the things that made you feel so happy, and in your heart thank God for that special time....

**In the name of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit Amen.**

You might like to have a little celebration, sharing the biscuits from the focal table.

