**Badarak: Meaningful Moments**

*45 minutes to a richer worship experience (5th grade and above)*

1. **Vesting**

*This session needs to be planned in conversation with your pastor. Choose a good Sunday for your class to be with him when he vests. Request that the prayers be done in English so that students might understand them as they’re being said (with no distraction of following in the pew books). Remind students the week before to arrive early for this session (and parents should be welcome to join them). After the vesting --we’ll allow 15 minutes but this is approximate -- return to class for the balance of the session as follows.*

**Materials Needed**

* *For Teacher:* This sheet, Pew Book
* *For Students:* Pew Book
1. We just witnessed our priest prepare himself to celebrate the Divine Liturgy by putting on special clothing. Let me ask you something: what other professions require special clothing? *Have someone come to the board to record answers. These might include (or you can add them to the list)*: *astronaut, soldier, deep sea diver, ballerina, stage actor, queen, surgeon*. Now let’s think together of the reasons they wear this clothing. *Again, record answers on the board: (protection, to symbolize who they are, to help them do their jobs)* In the same way, an Armenian priest – and the priests and ministers of other Christian traditions – wear special clothing for many of the same reasons. And these vestments have evolved over centuries, starting from Old Testament worship. *Ask students to turn to Exodus 28: 3-5 and have a volunteer read.* Amazing isn’t it? We see that thousands of years ago, the people of God wore similar garments to the ones our priests wear today. *You can skim the rest of the chapter with them and point out all the specific elements – precious stones, linens, etc.* (10 min)
2. Not only did our vestments have their beginnings in Temple worship, but there were other influences as well, from the royal courts of the time, for example, and from other Christian churches (like the bishop’s tall hat, called a miter, which came to us in the 14th century via the Catholic Church). And you know there is a history to each of these garments but we don’t need to go into that today. Today, the most important thing for us is to understand *why.* Turn to Ephesians 6:10-18 and let’s see what St. Paul tells us about our spiritual clothing. *Have a volunteer read and as he/she is reading write on the* *board: full armor of God, struggle against evil, stand firm, belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, feet fitted with the readiness, shield of faith, helmet of salvation*.  What do you think of this? Impressions? *Wait for thoughts and discuss.* I think we can surmise that if you are in the business of upholding God’s goodness in a world where there is evil, you do need armor!(10 min)
3. Okay, *now* let’s look back at each prayer the priest reads as he put on this “armor of God.” *Have students turn to the bottom of page 2 in the pew book; these prayers conclude at the bottom of page 3. Go through each vestment quickly by having students take turns reading each prayer, stopping before the phrase “by the grace of” each time. This way they are focusing only on the vestment and its meaning. Record on the board (or simply verbally repeat):*

 **Helmet/crown (saghavard):** of salvation, to fight against the powers of the enemy…

 **The alb (shabig):** a robe of salvation and gladness

 **The stole (poroorar):** to clothe my neck with righteousness and cleanse my heart from all filthiness of sin

 **The belt (kodee):** the girdle of faith to encircle me around my heart and my mind and quench vile thoughts

 **The cuffs (pazban):** give strength to my hands and wash all my filthiness so I can serve you in health of mind and body

 **The collar (vagas):** clothe my neck with righteousness and cleanse my heart from all filthiness of sin

 **The cope (shoorchar):** clothe me with a radiant garment and fortify me against the influence of the evil one

*Skip to…*

 **The towel (tashgeenag):** cleanse my hands from all filthiness of sin

*Then have everyone read together, in unison the prayer (second paragraph from the bottom) that the priest reads when he has been fully vested.*

1. *Ask for any thoughts or impressions about the prayers.* When all is said and done, the priest is truly putting on “the armor of God,” asking with each vestment for strength, purity, and joy as he celebrates this miracle of Christ with us in worship. Let this be our final prayer: “Lord, we now know how serious a thing it is to prepare to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. Our priest needs to be spiritually clothed with your purity, strength, wisdom, and faith as symbolized in these beautiful, traditional vestments. Clothe us, too, Lord, in the spiritual armor we need to live as good sons and daughters of God in a challenging world, amen. (10 min)