**Badarak: Meaningful Moments**

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

**10. The Requiem (Hokehankeesd)**

*Be in church at least for the Last Blessing and Dismissal which begins on page 52 in the Pew Book. Although this session is 45 minutes (church attendance included), 15 additional minutes will need to be conducted at the beginning of your next class, as students will be dismissed directly after the hokehankeesd in church.*

**Materials Needed**

* For Teacher: This lesson, Bible, Pew Book
* For Students: Bible, Pew Book
* Lined paper, pencils or pens (see #5)

1. *Begin:* “I’m going to ask you a few questions (*don’t think this is a flippant way to begin; it’s a helpful way to ease into a discussion on death for kids this age, especially one built on the foundation of Christian hope rather than despair; after each question, wait for hands to be raised but move quickly on*). Raise your hand if you have ever had a family member who died. Raise your hand if you ever knew someone your age who died. Raise your hand if you have ever known *anyone* who has died.” *Continue, to lighten the mood:* Raise your hand if *you* have ever died. Raise your hand if you are not *going* to die. *Pause for amused expressions, hopefully, then say* “in all seriousness, we pray for the dear souls of the people you had in mind when you answered those first three questions.
2. Then I guess it’s safe to say we all have a personal understanding that death is the inevitable end of every life. As Christians we believe that this life we have on earth is part of a much longer story. And our liturgical prayers reflect this. And the way we think of loved ones who have passed reflect this. We’re going to spend a few moments thinking together about a special service that often takes place at the end of Badarak. Do you know what I’m talking about? (*Wait for answer: requiem service or hokehankeesd*). We’ve been in church as a Sunday School for these, but how many of you have been in church for a requiem for a family member? How did you feel? (*sad, inspired, bored, or?)* There are a lot of misconceptions about *hokehankeesd* – which literally means “repose of the souls,”*hokee* meaning soul and *hankeesd* meaning rest – so here are some basics:
   1. It’s not a part of the Divine Liturgy per se. But it very fittingly takes place in the sanctuary when we are all together and can pray for one another together.
   2. Since we are called as Christians to love one another, it’s not like we have nothing to do with this person who has passed away. We are one Christian family and this person is a beloved member of that family.
   3. We believe that the Church consists of both the living and those who have died or, in the language of faith, have ‘fallen asleep in Christ.’ In that same language the living and the dead are referred to as The Church Militant (those still fighting the good fight) and the Church Triumphant (those who have finished the race and now rest in Christ). And guess what? We *all* pray for each other! Although they have passed from their earthly lives, they live in Christ and so pray for us even as we are praying for them. And, in a way, we are all present together in church.
   4. *Hokehankeesds* are most often held on the 40th day and one year anniversaries but can be requested on any anniversary of a loved one’s passing.
3. *Review this by asking (and see above to confirm or add to students’ answers): “So, let’s quickly review:* Is the *hokehankeesd* part of the Divine Liturgy? So why do we pray and sing it together? Why is it important that we pray for the person who has passed? Tell me a little about the living and the dead in the church’s understanding.” (15 min)
4. You know, as Christians we look at death differently. And where would we learn more about that? Yes, the Bible. So let’s turn now to just a few places that add to our understanding. *Have students look up these readings and discuss:* 
   1. **John 11:25** “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die” What do you think Jesus means that we live even if we die? *(After our physical death, we live eternally with him.)*
   2. **1 Thess 4: 13-17**: **13**Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of humankind, who have no hope. **14**For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. **15**According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **17**After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. What does this describe? *(The Second Coming)* What’s happening here? *(Jesus will lift up all who have died and were resting in him and then all who are alive and we will be reunited - poetically, “in the clouds.” If anyone asks what is happening to the dead until then, cite what Jesus said to the thief on the cross -* [*Luke 23:43*](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2023.43) -  “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise” so we know through our faith that those who pass are immediately resting in a blissful peace, close to God.
   3. **Romans 14: 8-9** **8**If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. **9**For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. *Just comment:* So here’s the Church Militant and Church Triumphant, the living and the dead. (15 min)
5. Church. *Before leaving the classroom make sure everyone has something to write with and a piece of paper. Have them write their names on the paper. Say:* When the requiem service begins, open your pew books to page 56 where you can follow along. Here’s what I’d like you to do. As the service is taking place, copy down words or phrases that strike you, that you think are important, or that you have questions about. I’ll collect these from you when you leave church. *Dismiss students from church after collecting their notes.*

(15 min)

1. **At next session**. *Having read through the students’ comments and reviewed any questions with your pastor, discuss. Have them open their pew books to page 56 and conclude the session by bringing their attention to a few points:*
   1. While the three requiem hymns may have sounded mournful, if we look at the English translation of the words, they are full of hope. Draw their attention to:

* In *Vor haneyitz* (p.56),we are asking the Father who created us all and the Son who redeemed us on the cross to forgive those who died or have “fallen asleep” of their sins. *(God is great and merciful!)*
* In *Kahanayk* (p.59), we ask the Lord to receive us as well one day into that “heavenly Jerusalem” where there is eternal song and joy. *(There is a place of eternal bliss beyond this world!)*
* In *Ee Vereen (*p.60), we again sing of a heavenly Jerusalem where the ancient prophets live “old in age like doves” (what a gentle, lovely image) and ask of God’s mercy for us all. *(God will accept us mercifully in this place where the saints precede us!)*
  1. Read the Gospel verses from John on p.59. Ask: “What do you think it means that ‘he who loves his life loses it and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life’”? Discuss, noting Jesus’ teaching technique of stressing a point through exaggeration (i.e. we are to forgive one another not 7 times but 77 times). Here it’s not so much about losing and hating but understanding that *God’s* ways, not the world’s, lead us to live our best lives and not just here and now but for eternity with him….

1. *Have them turn to page 61 and close with the final blessing: “May we be blessed by the grace of the Holy Spirit and depart in peace. And may the Lord be with us all. Amen.’*

(15 min)