**Badarak: Meaningful Moments**

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

**7. Confession**

*This session should be announced a week in advance so that students can come prepared to receive Holy Communion.**Arrange ahead of time with someone who is at Liturgy to be informed when* ***Der Voghormya*** *begins so you can take your students to church in time for group confession and communion. Or, depending on how much time you have for church, you may go in earlier for the Lord’s Prayer or at the time Amen Hayr Soorp is sung (and leave after the priest blesses the congregation and the curtain is closed).*

**Materials Needed**

* For Teacher: This sheet, Bible, Pew Book
* For Students: Bible, Pew Book
1. *Begin*: “Today our special Badarak focus is on what comes *before* we receive Holy Communion -- the very important sacrament of confession or penance (*write these words on the board*). What does it mean to “confess?” (*admit, reveal, disclose; comes from the Latin for acknowledge or declare*) In Armenian the word is “khosdovanootyoon.” Before receiving Holy Communion, what is it we want to confess? Yes, our “sins.” So what does it mean to “sin?" The Greek word hamartia – used in the classical world as “missing the mark or not reaching the goal.” What is a Christian’s goal? *Discuss. Answers might include doing the will of God; the two great commandments: loving God and loving one another, etc.*
2. In the earlier tradition of the Armenian Church, confession took place *before* the liturgy even began, and it would be done privately with the priest. In the very early church, public confession was widespread, so that others would hear the specifics of someone’s sins. Seems strange to us, because even though we blow open our private lives in social media, we are very private and protective of our moral missteps. Yet mental health professionals and addiction healing organizations are aware of the healthy value of sharing, of revealing, and *confessing* wrongdoings to others.

Now in our Badarak we participate in a general confession and absolution – ok there’s another word (write it on the board). What does absolution mean? A kind of “declaration of forgiveness.” (From absolve from Latin *absolvere* ‘set free, acquit’, from *ab-* ‘from’ + *solvere* ‘loosen’.) (10 min.)

1. *Have students turn to page 48 in Badarak books and read through. After each paragraph ask a question to confirm understanding:*
2. So who are we confessing before? (*God, Mary, all the saints, the priest*) And what are we confessing? (*the sins we have committed in thought, word and deed, willingly and unwillingly*)
3. *Explain the evolution of the 7 deadly sins: a summary of sins described in various ways and places in the Bible and grouped in this way as early as the 4th century by a theologian named Evagrius and then formalized by Pope Gregory the Great in the 6th century. Note: covetousness is the desire for things, or people; gluttony can be an overconsumption of anything; lust can be the mere objectification of someone. Have students think of one sin of their own that falls in any category.*
4. *Discuss the phrase “I accepted the laws but was slothful in keeping them” Ask for an example.*
5. *4th stanza: We ask the priest to “release me of the bond of my sins.”*
6. *In the priest’s absolution, have them look up the quotation that begins “Whatever has been loosed on earth,” which comes from Matthew 16:19 when Jesus is speaking to Peter.*
7. So now when we go up to church, we will be in time to hear *Der Voghormya*, a later addition to the Badarak, that asks God’s forgiveness for our failings. Behind the closed curtain as we pray for ourselves and the church, the priest himself partakes of Holy Communion. Before we leave here, think for a moment of one way you “missed the mark” this past week, maybe an unkind thought, or something you did you weren’t proud of. Offer that up to God during confession for His merciful forgiveness. (15 min)
8. Church. (15 min)
9. *Once back from church, ask how the experience went. Did they actually reflect on that one sinful act or thought or word? How did it feel to have it healed and released?* Through confession and Holy Communion, we are renewed, ready to start again on our walk with God. It should be a great feeling. How does it make *you* feel? (*Discuss)*Let’s close the day by listening to Colossians 3:9-10 which tell us this:

…you have taken off your old self with its practicesand have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

This is what we have the chance to do every time we participate in confession and receive Holy Communion. May we continue to be renewed every Sunday and every day. Amen! (5 min)