

Unit One: A Community Over Time

Lesson 2

The Bible



Pray Together

Hanoon Hor, yev Vortvo, yev Hokvooy'n Surpo, Amen.
Send forth your light and your truth,
let them guide me;
let them bring me to your holy mountain,
to the place where you dwell.
Then will I go to the altar of God,
to God, my joy and my delight.
I will praise you with the harp,
O God, my God.

Psalm 43:3-4 (NIV)

Quick Quiz

True or False

- The knowledge base of the Armenian Church, which is founded on Scripture and the working of the Holy Spirit through the church community, is called Holy Orders.
- Thaddeus and Bartholomew were two of Jesus' twelve original disciples.
- Nicodemus was proud to have the Pharisees see him visit Jesus.
- Nicodemus provided the tomb for Jesus' burial.
- The domes on Armenian Church buildings are a symbol of heaven.

A WORLD OF BOOKS

People read for many different reasons. We read to learn about people, places or things or to make ourselves laugh or for fun or for a school assignment or to learn how to build or do something. Whatever the reason, reading helps us expand our imaginations and learn about our world.

Books help us in many ways.

Can you name a book that was important to you and why it was?





The Greatest Book of All

Have you ever been there when your family picked up a new car from the dealer? If so, think back on what you observed that day. You probably remember a lot of excitement on the way to the car dealer. You may have been a bit impatient waiting for the paperwork to be finished so you could ride in the new car.

At the car dealer, did you notice that

the salesperson took a book from the glove compartment of the new car, sat inside with the driver, and explained things from the book? The book that comes with every new car is called the owner's manual. The owner's manual tells you what each piece of equipment is and how to operate it safely. It tells you how to recognize when something is wrong and what you need to do about it. If you read it in advance, it will show you how to avoid problems in the first place. This book comes from the car's manufacturer, so we know the information is correct. You keep the owner's manual in the car at all times so you always have it near whenever you need it.

Have you ever wished that your life came with an owner's manual, like a car? You may be surprised to learn that it did! Like the one in your family's car, it comes directly from the manufacturer, so we know we can trust it. Who is the inspiration for our instruction manual? God! What is the name of this very special book? The Bible.

How do we know this? In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the Bible says, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so the person of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." Wow! According to this verse, what is Scripture and what can it do?



Did You Know?

The 5th century Armenian historian Moses of Khoren wrote a three-volume *History of Armenia* which records many of the events and legends of our ancient times.

Scripture at Work in the Real World

Read each Bible quotation and scenario that appears below. Choose one situation and write a four or five-line skit about it. Make sure every member of your group has a part. Perform the skit for the rest of the class.

Scenario 1

“Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”
Proverbs 12:18

One of the kids in your gym class is the world’s worst athlete. In class, you are picked as captain of the soccer team. You have to choose the people you want on your team, and you end up with the student who cannot play at all. Everyone is laughing at you because you got stuck with the “loser,” and they’re teasing him or her as well. What should you say in this situation that would please God?



Scenario 2

“He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished”
Proverbs 17:5

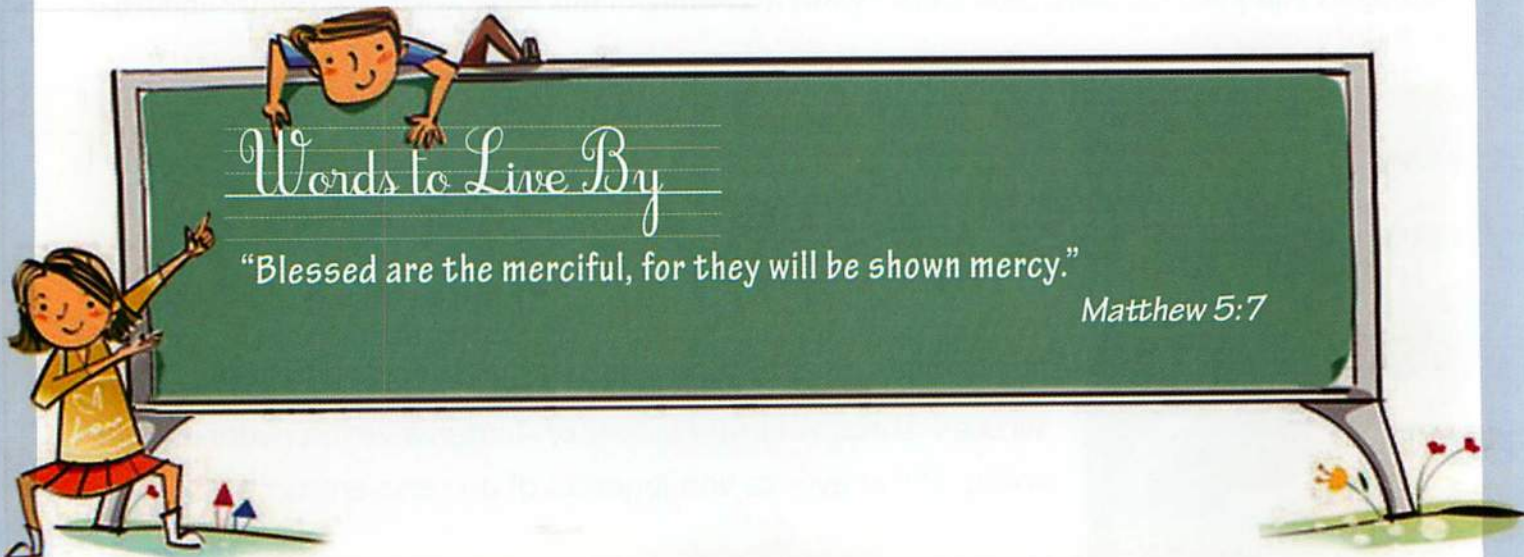
You just heard that the class bully’s mom lost her job so they have to move away. Your friends are rejoicing. How do you think God wants you to react in front of your classmates?

Scenario 3

“God is faithful; he will not let you be tested beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

I Corinthians 10:13

You’re at the party of the season. You and your friends have been excited about it for weeks. You’re having a great time, when suddenly someone brings out beer. You feel a lot of pressure to drink, because you don’t want to look weird. Knowing you’re way too young to drink and your parents would be angry, what do you do or say?



When Your Warning Lights Come On, Check the Owner's Manual

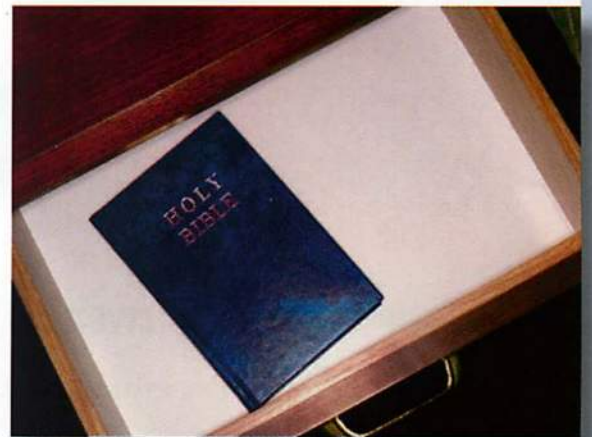
Have you ever been in the car when a light came on or a noise sounded to let the driver know something was wrong? When this happened, the driver most likely pulled over as soon as it was safe, opened the glove compartment, and looked in the owner's manual to identify the problem. Based on what the manual said to do, the driver took appropriate action, such as driving to a gas station, calling a tow truck, or making an appointment for a repair.

We can always look to our owner's manual, the Bible, for help in any situation. Just like the driver of the car, we pull out of the traffic of our lives, consult the manual, and do what it says. As in the case of the car, if we become familiar with what the Bible says - with the help of Sunday School and all the church's teachings - we will learn to spot trouble before it becomes a problem for us. For example, turn to James 3:2-6. What important life lesson does it contain? How about Romans 12: 9-16. Any helpful advice?



A Lifeline Away From Home

If you open the top drawer of the nightstand in almost any hotel room in the United States, you will see a Bible. A Christian organization (Gideon) has been placing them there for decades. A hotel room may seem like an odd place for the Bible, but imagine what it is like to be homesick, lonely, tired, and perhaps burdened with work or family problems in a strange city where you have nobody to talk to about it. What a comfort it is to know that all you have to do is open a hotel room drawer to have the guidance and security of God's Word wherever you go!



Our Armenian Way

In the 5th century, St. Mesrob Mashdotz created the Armenian alphabet with the encouragement and help of the Catholicos St. Sahag. An incredible accomplishment! The very first words they translated into this new written language were from Holy Scripture: Proverbs 1:2, which says "for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight." This new alphabet and a passionate desire to share the good news of Jesus Christ among the Armenian people led to many years of translating and writing called "The Golden Age."

The Armenian translation of the Bible is so accurate and so beautiful that it is referred to as the "Queen of Translations."

3. Read the instructions in **Identify Yourself!** to the students. Distribute paper and pencils and tell them this exercise will be part of a guessing game. Making sure they do not write their names on their papers, have them list some of the things that make them who they are. Encourage each child to identify at least five items. When they have finished, collect the papers. Mix them up, then redistribute one paper to each child. Be careful to not give a student his or her own sheet. Tell the class to read the page they have received. In turn, call on each student and have them guess whose paper they hold. Some of them will know each other already and this will be easy, but it should be a fun ice-breaker. 15 min.
4. Teach or have the students read **Identity and the Armenian Church** and **Nicodemus: A Reminder from God**. Read the Scripture verses and discuss questions. (Note: “Born again” simply refers to one’s spiritual as opposed to physical birth; it is also a popular Evangelical Christian term for someone who has suddenly found Christ.) You can read or work together as a class, or give the students quiet time to work alone, in pairs, or in small groups, depending on the size of your class. Review questions as an entire class. 15 min.
5. Read **The Right Road**. Have them complete the exercise. Review the answers with them. The first and third passages are the ones that emphasize the importance of Scripture; the 2nd simply describes a man who has broken the rules of hospitality; the 4th describes the early church living its faith out in beautiful practices of prayer and fellowship; and the 5th shows the Biblical inspiration of liturgical vestments (it comes from a much longer passage that details all the temple vestments). 10 min.
6. Read **Our Armenian Way** and conclude class with a prayer: “Dear Lord, open our hearts to your Holy Tradition and the new ways of living in Christ it can help us discover. Fill us with strength and wisdom and patience this week so that whatever we say and do honors your name. Amen.” 5 min.

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Key Concepts

1. The books of the Bible were inspired by God and collected and canonized by the Spirit-led Church.
2. The Bible is useful in daily life.

Objectives

During the session students will

1. Recall a book that has helped or guided them in their lives.
2. Read a selection about how the Bible is like an owner’s manual for humankind.
3. Write a short skit about handling real-life situations and perform it with their classmates.
4. Explore how God’s Word can help them deal with and avoid problems.
5. Learn about the Gideons’ placement of Bibles in hotel rooms.
6. Make and decorate a bookmark that features Proverbs 1:2.

Materials Needed

- Car owner's manual (optional)
- Pencils, pens, markers
- Lined paper
- Bookmark-shaped (2" X 8") thin cardboard, enough for everyone in the class, with a hole punched at top
- Glue and glitter or sequins, if desired
- Small, colorful stickers, if desired
- Colorful yarn cut to seven inch lengths
- Color copies of an Armenian miniature from this or another lesson.

Procedure

1. Welcome the students and stand to say the opening prayer together. Have them take the **Quick Quiz**. Answers: F (Holy Tradition), T, F (No, he would not have wanted them to know about it), F (No, Joseph of Arimathea did), T
2. Read **A World of Books** with the students. Poll students and have them describe a book that was important to them. Be prepared to answer this yourself (aside from the Bible, of course). 5 min.
1. Teach the **The Greatest Book of All** (if you were able to bring in a car manual, hold it up!) and pause to point out key sentences. Students can be asked to underline these, e.g. "God" and "Bible" in the third paragraph. 5 min.
2. Read the first paragraph of **Scripture at Work in the Real World** to the class. Form groups of 2 to 4 depending on the size of your class and have the students choose one of the three scenarios and write a four or five line skit about what they would do in that situation. (If your class is small, work together on one or more, as time allows.) After ten minutes, have each group "perform" their skit for the rest of the class. Discuss as appropriate after each skit. 25 min.
3. Teach or have the students read **When Your Warning Lights Come On, Check the Owner's Manual**. The verses from James refer to the damage we can do with things we say and the importance of controlling our tongues. The verses from Romans are concrete guidelines for authentic Christian living.
4. Have students read **A Lifeline Away from Home** silently. 5 min.
5. Read **Our Armenian Way**. Distribute the posterboard bookmarks, miniatures, and any other craft materials you have chosen for this project. Have the students write the Bible verse from **Our Armenian Way** on the bookmark, color and then glue on the miniature, then have them decorate and embellish it as they choose. Allow a few minutes to help them attach a tassel through the hole. Talk about the blessing of God's Word for the Armenian people and end class with a prayer bringing these thoughts together: "Thank you God for the blessings of a language invented for our people to know you better through your Word and worship. Help us to be grateful for the Spirit-filled origin of the Armenian language and to be determined to grow closer to you, whatever language we may speak. Amen." Dismiss the class. 20 min.