

## ASCENSION DAY ACTIVITY

Each year, the Feast of the Ascension of Christ is celebrated 40 days after Easter, the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ and His Victory over Death. The central focus of this feast is two-fold:

- 1.) It recalls our Lord's physical departure from this earth and His return to our Heavenly Father.
- 2.) It reminds us that part of our duty as Christians is to go into the world as witnesses to our Lord Jesus Christ.

In one very real sense, it is a charge to Christians to carry the news of Jesus Christ and His mission and ministry into all the world.

While this feast is first and foremost a religious/church observance, there have been folk practices associated with it. One of these is the practice of "drawing fortunes". This custom was dramatically presented in Tigranian's opera ANOUSH. Here, on Ascension Day, the young girls of the village gather. When Anoush's fortune is drawn, it tells of romance.

This custom of "drawing fortunes" or "drawing lots" is found in the New Testament, in the Book of Acts 1:23-26, when the Apostles were trying to choose a successor to Judas.

With this as a background, the following Ascension Day activity is presented for use in Sunday School classes and/or ACYO meetings.

- 1.) Read the Ascension Day story as found in Acts 1:1-14

IN THE FIRST BOOK, O THE-OPH'ILUS, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, <sup>2</sup> until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> And while staying<sup>a</sup> with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, <sup>5</sup> for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

<sup>6</sup> So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem

and in all Judea and Sama'ria and to the end of the earth." <sup>9</sup> And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, <sup>11</sup> and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

<sup>12</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away; <sup>13</sup> and when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. <sup>14</sup> All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

- 2.) Be sure to explain the meaning of the following words:
  - a.) Ascension = to move upward i.e. Jesus went up to heaven
  - b.) witness = to furnish proof; to make a statement based on personal knowledge and belief
- 3.) Pass out 3x5 cards or comparably sized pieces of paper.
- 4.) Have each one list on the 3x5 card one way of WITNESSING to Jesus Christ, i.e. How can we proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ? Be sure to point out that our own example is the most effective witness we can give. Rephrased, the question might read "What can I do to be a witness for Christ?"
- 5.) Have the students individually place their cards in a box. Mix-up the cards. Then, either the leader or the individual students can pull the cards, one by one, from the box, reading the card notation aloud.
- 6.) As the card notations are read, list each suggestion on the chalk board. As each is listed, have the class discuss the suggestion.
- 7.) When #6 is finished, have the class prepare a newsprint banner, using classroom paints. The banner should complete the statement: WE WITNESS TO JESUS BY . . . (List the suggestions.)
- 8.) When the banner is completed, it should be exhibited in a conspicuous place.

#### WHO AM I ?

Using the provided clues, see if your Sunday School students and/or ACYO members can decide who/what is being described. The answers will be given in the next issue of YES.

- 1.) In Armenian history, I am referred to as the FATHER OF ARMENIANS.
- 2.) I am the Armenian word for Armenian.
- 3.) I had a boat that came to rest on a high Armenian mountain.
- 4.) I am the mountain where the boat in #3 landed.
- 5.) We were the first to bring Christianity to Armenia.
- 6.) I am the first woman to become a saint of the Armenian Church. My father was a king.
- 7.) After spending several years in a dungeon, I play a major role in making Christianity the state religion of Armenia.
- 8.) I was the king of Armenia when Christianity became the state religion of Armenia.
- 9.) I was the queen of Armenia when Christianity became the state religion of Armenia.
- 10.) After extensive travel and work, I founded the Armenian alphabet.
- 11.) My Armenian name means THE PLACE WHERE THE ONLY BEGOTTEN (Jesus Christ) DESCENDED.
- 12.) I was the main Armenian military leader in the war against the Persians who tried to force the Armenian people to accept the false religion of Zoroastrianism.