

church for adults only. 'Sunrise' speaks to them and listens as well, by requesting responses from our readers."

"Sunrise" indeed talks directly to middle graders, treating them to stories that deal with things they are thinking about as well as puzzles, fun activities, and important tidbits of information on the Church that are offered up in palatable portions. As with "Avedis", it is a mini-magazine that finds its way into the Armenian home and can be read and re-read at one's leisure, hopefully stimulating family discussion on the Armenian Church and modern living. "Children in our churches need religious reading matter beyond their school books to enrich their knowledge, awareness, and love for the Church."

As for Barbara, her own love for the church is amply evident in her work as superintendent of St. Leon Armenian Church in Fair Lawn, N.J. and all her other church involvements both locally and through the DRE. "I love the Armenian Church and want to see it grow stronger in this country. I think this can be done by nurturing our young to love and understand their church by every conceivable means."

Schools throughout this and other Dioceses are already subscribing to "Sunrise."

Understanding and love: these are the two great lessons of the Armenian Church from its very beginnings. They are lessons being energetically carried on by such publications as "Avedis" and "Sunrise." Subscription information can be obtained through the DRE at Diocesan offices (212) 686-0710.



THE BEATITUDES: AN ADULT STUDY ON PEACE

After teaching two courses on the American Roman Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on peace, I discovered that even adults must be spiritually disposed toward inner peace before any sincere thoughts concerning world peace can enter their hearts. I have written the following learning centers for use with any group of adults — for the first class in a series on peace. Teacher-catechists, I believe, also need a better understanding of Jesus' Beatitudes, because they are basic to all of life.

I got my inspiration for this project after reading *Jesus' Pattern For A Happy Life*, by Marilyn Norquist, Liguori Publications, 1981.

The activities in this exercise of self-learning could actually be done at home, in order to save class time or to allow more time for personal reflection. Participants could also work on more than one Beatitude if they chose. Discussion could then follow the next week.

1. Participants first brainstorm about the "Sermon on the Mount." The leader lists their ideas on the board.
2. They listen to *Matthew 5:1-16*.
3. Each participant receives a paper on which the eight Beatitudes have been typed. After each Beatitude is an assigned Scripture reference. The learners read the reference in the Bible for one Beatitude at a time.
4. They answer the questions that follow the reference citations. Some Beatitudes will be more challenging because they have more questions and invite more reflection. Students may choose which questions they will answer in the time provided. If the activity is taken home, all of the Beatitudes may be assigned for study.
5. After the allotted time, the leader will gather the group for discussion of what their particular studies of the Beatitudes revealed. The leader should facilitate and direct the group discussion, relating each Beatitude to the objectives, i.e., (1) toward *inner* happiness and peace, and (2) to our *external*

happiness and peace. They cannot be separated. Living the Beatitudes is living the Kingdom of God, a pattern for peace. End the discussion with *Matthew 7:24-27*.

This can't help but be an interesting discussion. It 'breaks the ice' for getting to know one another and will help learners to talk more freely in future classes on other subject matter. The leader should have read Norquist's book in order to facilitate the discussion.

Below are the *Beatitudes*, the related and revealing *Scripture references*, and the *questions* designed to help learners feel and think about *internal* happiness and peace which effects *external* happiness and peace.

1. *Blessed are the poor in spirit; the reign of God is theirs (Matthew 5:3).*
Read *Matthew 6: 26-34*. Reflect. Answer and reflect on some or all of these questions:
 - a. What does God give to people who are poor?
 - b. Read *Mt. 6: 12-21* and *6:33*. Where is your goal (your treasure) in life?
 - c. Read *Mt. 6:24*. Are there times when you do not trust God to take care of your wallet? Write briefly about one situation.
 - d. Read *Mt. 7:7-11*. Are you sure you have a need? Look deeper into your request. Do you want the Kingdom of God or something else?
2. *Blessed too are the sorrowing; they shall be consoled (Matthew 5:4).*
Answer and reflect on some or all of these questions:
 - a. Have you ever been happy and sad at the same time? Explain.
 - b. What is it that makes you sad? Explore your next sorrow. What happens when you don't fight sorrow, let it be, and live with it?
 - c. What is the purpose of sorrow? Can you learn something from it?
 - d. Is it possible to profit from sorrow? How? Ask Sadness what gifts it brings you. Wait for the answer.
3. *Blessed are the lowly (meek); they shall inherit the earth (land) (Matthew 5:5).*
Answer and reflect on these questions:
 - a. Read *Mt. 5:38-42*. Is turning the other cheek a form of foolishness?
 - b. What would you do if you caught a burglar in your house?
 - c. Is Jesus interested in whether we get our money back? What is more important to him? (*See Mt. 6:32-33*.) Are you really happy when you fight and successfully get your possessions back? (*See Mt. 5:20-26*.)
 - d. How is it possible to feel secure. When you are offering *your* security to others?
 - e. Read *John 2:13-17*. Is it all right to be angry over injustice? Explain. Can anyone be anger-free?
 - f. What were your feelings the last time you got angry? Could you have chosen a different way with different feelings? How would it have turned

out then? Which way do you prefer to act next time?

- g. At a later time, examine *John, chs. 18* and *19*. What is meekness for Jesus?
4. *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for holiness; they shall have their fill (Matthew 5:6).*
Answer and reflect on these questions:
 - a. Read *Mt. 7:13-14*. Who makes us holy, Jesus or ourselves? Is it possible for us to be holy, or chosen as saints?
 - b. Read *Mt. 5:27-30*. How much do you want holiness? How hungry and thirsty do you have to be to be holy?
 - c. What are the advantages to holiness (wholeness)? Make a list of your difficulties. Opposite each difficulty, list what would be the result if you were holy. Examples:
fear _____ security
anger _____ reconciliation
 5. *Blessed are they who show mercy; mercy shall be theirs (Matthew 5:7).* Answer and reflect on these questions:
 - a. Read *Mt. 7:1-2*. Explain: "To receive, give it."
 - b. We all need mercy. Do we also deserve it? What does judging do to the quality of our inner life?
 - c. Read *Mt. 7:3-5*. Do you have to make a judgment in order to show mercy? Explain.
 - d. Read *Mt. 7:12*. Is it foolish to keep forgiving the same unforgivable act? Is *unforgiveness* less harmful to us then? Explain.
 - e. Should you forgive yourself as easily as you forgive others?
 - f. Is forgiveness an act of feeling or an act of the will?
 - g. What is the result of forgiveness?
 6. *Blessed are the single-hearted (pure of heart); for they shall see God (Matthew 5:8).* Answer and reflect on these questions:
 - a. Is it practical to have one aim in life? How, or why? If you could choose one permanent condition, what would it be? Why?
 - b. Read *Mt. 6:1-6*, and *16-18*. What have power and ego to do with all this secrecy?
 - c. Read *Mt. 5:33-37*. What is wrong with taking oaths?
 - d. Read *Mt. 6:22-24*. What is the fundamental decision that each of us must make? Why will we not have to give up a lot of things when we 'seek only God'?
 - e. Sort out your priorities: Make a positive list and a negative list. Write *peace/joy* to head one list. Write *turmoil/stress* to head the other list. List your goals under the proper heading. Include material things, values, and emotions. This will clarify your actual present state of being. Is it possible for you to move from the negative to the positive side? All you need is readiness of heart.
 7. *Blessed too are the peacemakers; they shall be called*

children of God (Matthew 5:9). Answer and reflect on these questions:

- a. How do you respond to conflict?
 - b. Is it possible to negotiate for peace without having inner peace?
 - c. Why do you think this Beatitude is found near the end?
 - d. Explain how you think peacefulness may be "catching."
 - e. Read Mt. 7:6. What are our pearls?
 - f. Read Mt. 7:15-20. How can you know with whom to share?
 - g. Read Mt. 7:21-23. What is the only thing that matters if we are spiritual people working for peace? How is it possible really to have heaven on earth?
8. *Blessed are those persecuted for holiness' sake; the reign of God is theirs (Matthew 5:10)*. Answer and reflect on these questions:
- a. Read Mt. 5:10-12. What is the underlying reason for persecution? Is persecution a proof of holiness? Is all pain persecution? What kind of persecution brings holiness? Do we find much persecution in our society? Explain why or why not.
 - b. What persons in today's society are persecuted for peacemaking?
 - c. Do you fit into society? Are you reaching out to work for peace? Do your answers to these questions bother you? Why?
 - d. Do you ever feel unworthy, unloved, or unaccepted because you cannot be like the rest? Why can't you be like the rest? Do you let others determine what you will do or be? Are you recognized as a person of peace by another person of peace?
 - e. Would you really like to know the happiness that few others know? Do you seem to choose the values of the Sermon over the values of society?
 - f. How would you go about gaining peace? How do you react toward those who don't agree with your values? Do you feel you have a special gift to give? Do you accept yourself?
 - g. If everyone wanted true peace, imagine what the world would be like.
 - h. Reflect on the *Lord's Prayer*. Do we really want God to forgive us exactly as we have forgiven others?

Marie Nelson
CHURCH TEACHER
1984



FEBRUARY CALENDAR

- Saturday, February 1
St. Sahag
- Tuesday, February 4
St. Ghevont and companions
- Thursday, February 6
Vartanantz
- Saturday, February 8
Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.)
- Sunday, February 9
Poon Paregentan
- Monday, February 10
First Day of Lent
- Friday, February 14
Presentation of the Lord
- Saturday, February 15
St. Theodore
- Sunday, February 16
Sunday of the Expulsion
- Saturday, February 22
St. Cyril Patriarch of Jerusalem
- Sunday, February 23
Sunday of the Prodigal Son

DRE BULLETIN

Published monthly except for July and August
Department of Religious Education
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
630 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Editor: Elise Antreassian
Artist: Adrina Zanazanian
Typesetting: Voskedar
Printing: Michael Kehyaian