

Make a Church Censer ("Poorvar")

In the Armenian Church, there are several vessels that are used on the altar and in the church for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, one of which is the Censer, ("Poorvar" in Armenian). A *Poorvar* is a silver incense burner suspended by 4 chains, symbolizing the Holy Trinity and one Godhead. There are 12 bells hanging on the chains (3 bells on each), representing the disciples. The upper part of the censer, which is dome-shaped, symbolizes heaven. The lower part, where the incense is burned, symbolizes the world. The censer symbolizes the human soul, in which the spiritual fire burns its worldly desires and sends up its prayers to God as a pleasing fragrance.



Materials Needed:

- Styrofoam cups (each student needs 2)
- Yarn, ribbon, or string (thin enough to string a bead through) - each child needs 4
- Beads or small bells that may be strung on a string - each student needs 12
- Small piece incense or something to represent the incense (options: a Hershey's kiss or other small chocolate covered in gold or silver paper, a little pebble, small flower or something else to represent "fragrance")
- Paper cut into small squares
- Tape

Preparation:

1. Cut yarn into 18-20 inch pieces, (each student needs 4)
2. Younger students: Teacher may want to do Steps 1 & 2 below before class

Directions:

1. Give each child 2 Styrofoam cups.
2. **Cup #1** will be the **BOTTOM** of the poorvar:
 - Instruct students to write, "**WORLD**"
 - Using a hole punch, carefully make four holes evenly around the top rim of this cup.
 - String a piece of yarn through each of the holes and make a knot on the inside of the cup so that the yarn doesn't slip through.
 - Place whatever you are using as "incense" inside.
 - Give each child a small piece of paper and ask him/her to write their own personal prayer on it. Place inside the cup with the incense. Set this cup aside.
3. **Cup #2** will be the **TOP** of the poorvar:
 - Turn cup upside down. Write, "**HEAVEN**"
4. Tape your 2 cups securely together, rim to rim, making sure the 4 pieces of yarn remain outside of the cups.
5. On each of the 4 pieces of yarn, string 3 beads/bells (12 total representing the disciples), knotting after each bead so that they don't slip down.
6. Join the ends of the 4 pieces of yarn together at the top so the cups hang below. Tie the 4 ends together, creating the poorvar's handle.

