

Grade 3

Walking With God



We Believe Curriculum
Student Text

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By order of
Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate

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Walking With God

God's Light Shining Through the Lives of Faithful Men and Women *In the Beginning: Adam and Eve*



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, as we start our Sunday School year, help us to appreciate the beauty and goodness of the earth that you created. Let us care for each other as you care so much for us. And may what we learn together this year bring us closer to you. Amen.

Daily Bread

When we open the Bible, the first book we see is Genesis. The beginning of Genesis tells us how God made the earth and sky, the birds and fish, the plants and animals, and man and woman. The story gives us an idea of how caring God is and how he wants us to be strong and healthy. He provided everything we need to do this – water, air, food to eat. Although God made all of the plants and animals with love, we are different and very special to God. He made man and woman (later they are named Adam and Eve) *in his own image*. He did this because he wanted us to be especially close to him. Out of his great love for us, he gave us all we needed to be happy. This is very much the way your parents love you and want to take care of you.

One of the best things that God gave to us was his love and our ability to love each other. We need each other just as much as we need the food we eat and the air we breathe. That is why God put two people in the Garden.

When Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, they spoke to God all the time. He was present in their lives every day. We can still be with God. We certainly speak to him when we pray, but he is also with us when we're playing, writing, singing, working, and when we come to church and take part in the *Holy Badarak*.

- What did God provide for Adam and Eve?
- Can you compare God's love for Adam and Eve to something in *your* life?
- Can we talk to God? How?





BIBLE BYTES

The word “adam” literally means “made from the earth.” So God created an “earthling.” Later God decided it was important for this human being to have a partner. Only then did the human being become two different creatures: man and woman.

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Make a Creation Collage!



SCRIPTURE SOURCE



“Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing . . .’ *Genesis 1: 26*

In these verses, God tells us that, as human beings, we have to take good care of the plants and animals on the earth. If we are the very “image” of God, then we will be in charge of the world as God is in charge: with goodness and wisdom. Without our ability to grow plants and raise animals, we would not be able to have food or clothing. That is why we should do our best to take care of the earth and be good stewards of all that God has given to us.

Did you know...!?

The beautiful verses of the Creation story told in Genesis 1 were probably sung or chanted. They have a singsong quality and repeat phrases such as “and God said” or “and it was good.” What instrument would you use if this story were put to music?



In the Armenian Tradition

The Bible names two rivers in the Garden of Eden, the Tigris and the Euphrates. These rivers still exist and have the same names today. Also, by the description of rocks and metals found in the area as well as directions to nearby lands, we believe that Eden was most likely the exact location of ancient Armenia. This is why many people call Armenia “The Cradle of Civilization.”

Well Versed

“Then the Lord God formed humankind from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”

Genesis 2:7

Family Focus

Today we learned about the Creation of the world. Our focus was on the loving relationship that God had with the first people, Adam and Eve, and still has with us. We also read in the book of Genesis that God provided us with all we needed to thrive and asks us to be good stewards of ourselves, each other, and our earth.

Living Your Faith

1. Say a prayer of thanks for the beautiful earth that God provided for us.
2. Cut any fruit open to find the seeds inside. Discuss what we do with seeds to make new trees which, in turn, make more fruit to feed the world. Point out to your children that we cannot *create* a plant. We can only use the seeds that God created.
3. Look at different maps of the Middle East with your family. Look for the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as well as the location of ancient Assyria (currently northern Iraq) and modern Armenia.

Walking With God

Builders: Noah

UNIT

1

Lesson
Two



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, help us to recognize your will, so that we may always do what is best.

We pray to make the right choices in our daily lives and to trust your word, just as Noah did when he built the Ark. Amen.

Hye-Q

Check the right answers.

1. Which two rivers were mentioned in the Bible as being in the Garden of Eden?

- a. Euphrates ____
- b. Nile ____
- c. Mississippi ____
- d. Tigris ____
- e. Amazon ____

2. What did God provide for Adam and Eve?

- a. House ____
- b. Clothes ____
- c. Plastic cups ____
- d. Food and water ____
- e. All of the above ____

3. How can we talk with God?

- a. In prayer
- b. Through song
- c. At church
- d. All of the above



Daily Bread

In the story of Noah, God tells Noah to build a very large boat called an “ark.” God gives him very specific details about how to make the ark. He tells him the exact size and shape. He instructs him to gather a male and female of all animals and prepare for a great flood.

Even though he had been given a very big task, Noah was a man who had faith and obeyed God. He could have ignored God’s warning and instructions. He could have doubted that God would do what he said, but Noah believed in God and trusted him. Noah knew that the flood would happen as God told him and that God wanted Noah and his family to be safe.



When your parents ask you to get to bed at a certain time, they are thinking of your well-being. You need sleep to be alert, healthy, and to continue to grow. They have a reason to ask you to obey this rule: they love you and want you to be strong in body and mind and at your best. When you trust that your mom or dad wants what is best for you, it can be easy to obey.

Sometimes, obeying is difficult. When we think of only what we want right now, we forget about patience and trust. Some people say that being obedient means that you are weak or can't think for yourself, but from the story of Noah, we see that the exact opposite is true. Noah had to be strong and steady to put so much effort into building the ark and because he did, his family and the animals survived the flood.

God wanted the best for Noah, his family, and the animals, so Noah obeyed.



BIBLE BYTES

God asked Noah to build the ark and gave him very specific directions, using a measurement called a **cubit**. People used this measurement throughout ancient times and into the Middle Ages. It was originally based on the length of a man's forearm from his elbow to his fingertips. Many places used this measurement for cloth and timber up to the 1800's.



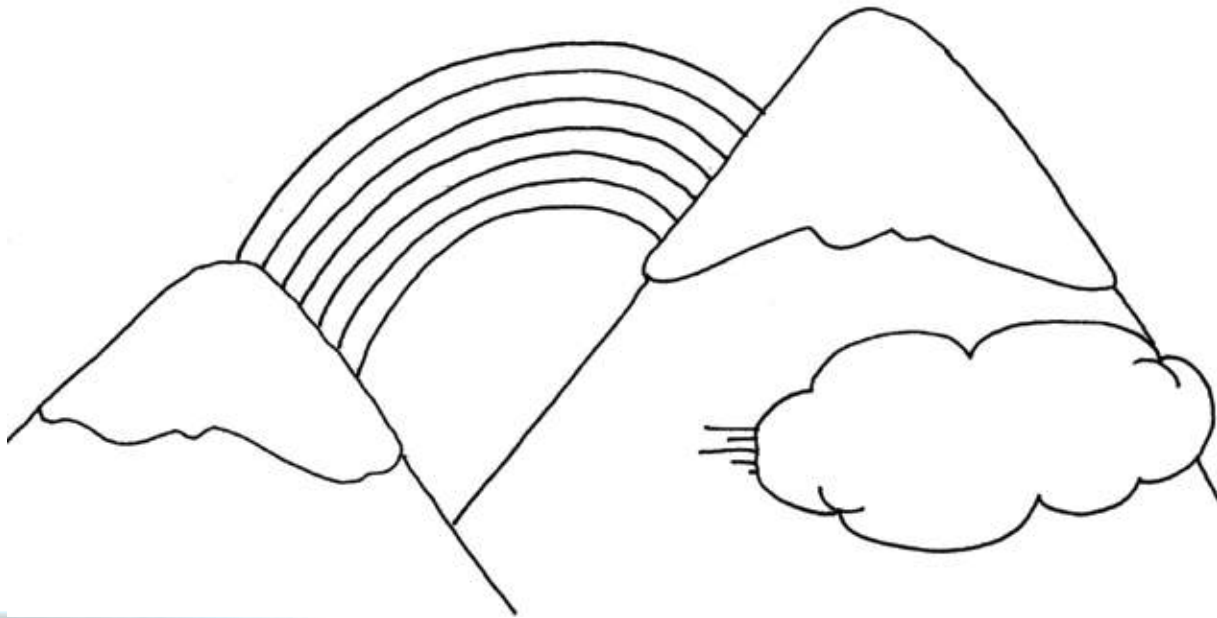
Play a game of "Simon Says." While you play, think about the reason you should obey the leader. It is not about what you are asked to do, because you know that what the leader is asking you is actually silly. You are obeying because you know that by doing what the leader says, you have a better chance of winning the game.



CELEBRATE WITH GOD

The Rainbow Covenant

“I set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.” *Genesis 9:13*



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

“I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” *Genesis 9:11*

When Noah, his family, and all of the animals were safe after the flood subsided, God made a “covenant” with him. A “covenant” is a solemn promise and it means that both people will treat each other a certain way. God promised Noah and his family that he would never again destroy the earth or humankind. As a symbol of this promise, he set a colorful bow in the sky after the rain to remind us of how much he loves us. In turn, his people would continue to be just that: God’s own beloved creation, who would follow and obey.

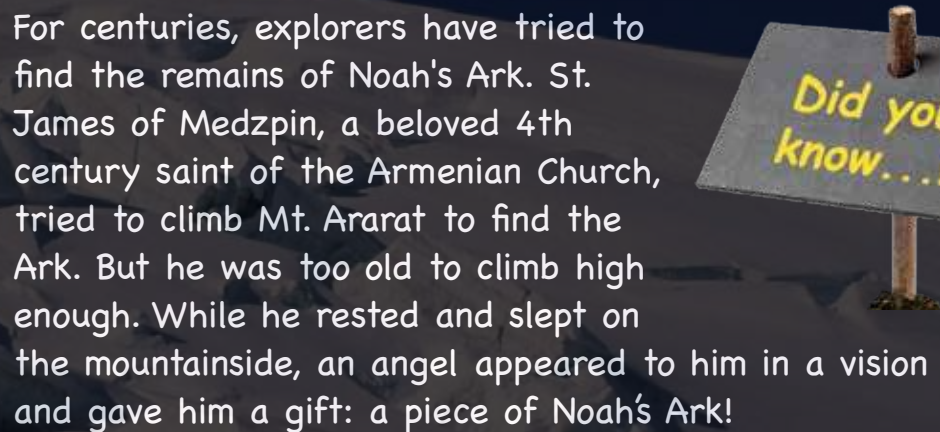
Well Versed

“I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”

Genesis 9:13

In the Armenian Tradition

When the waters of the big flood went down, Noah's Ark settled on Mt. Ararat (Genesis 8:4), once a part of historic Armenia. Although today Mt. Ararat is located inside the borders of eastern Turkey, Armenians around the world identify with the image of Mount Ararat as their homeland. All people who know the Bible also know the location of this important mountain as the resting place of Noah's Ark.



For centuries, explorers have tried to find the remains of Noah's Ark. St. James of Medzpin, a beloved 4th century saint of the Armenian Church, tried to climb Mt. Ararat to find the Ark. But he was too old to climb high enough. While he rested and slept on the mountainside, an angel appeared to him in a vision and gave him a gift: a piece of Noah's Ark!

Family Focus

In this week's lesson, the students reviewed the powerful story of the Flood in the book of Genesis and learned about the exemplary trust and obedience of Noah. Trusting in God is mirrored in the trust children have for their parents, knowing instinctively that you have their best interest at heart, just as God does for us. Obeying makes sense when we trust those who direct us! Your child completed an activity sheet, "The Rainbow Covenant." Review it with him or her; display it at home.

Living Your Faith

1. If you have any paintings or other items with the image of Mt. Ararat, show them to your family.
2. The next time you are together in the car (perhaps on the way to Sunday School!), discuss the significance of obeying the rules of the road. Why must you obey the rules to stop at a red light, drive on the correct side of the road, or slow down when an ambulance goes by?

Walking With God

Patriarchs: Abraham and Sarah

UNIT
1
Lesson
Three



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...
Dear Lord, help us to welcome new things into our lives every day and learn from our experiences. We trust that life will lead us in interesting directions. We know that your love and guidance can help everything we do bring us closer to you. Amen.

Hye-Q

What do you remember about Noah and the Ark? Discuss the following questions with your teacher:

- How did Noah know how to build the Ark?
- Why was Noah so sure that the Ark would save him, his family, and the animals?
- How did Noah and his family know that the flood was over and that there was land nearby?

Daily Bread

Change can be scary and difficult. But sometimes, we must change what we are used to being or doing in order to follow God and make our lives better.

Abram was a descendant of Noah. He and his wife, Sarai, lived in a place called Haran all of their lives. They had servants and livestock and their nephew, Lot, lived with them. They had no children of their own. God had great plans for them, so he asked Abram to leave his home and move to a place called Canaan. This was a very scary thing to do in those days. Abram could not look up Canaan on a computer to find out what it was like. There was no way to learn if the weather was good there, or if there was enough food and water to keep his household alive.

Abram trusted God, so even though he was unsure of how this change would turn out or how long it would take, he followed God's word. It took many years and adventures for Abram and Sarai to finally get to Canaan



and be settled there. Their experiences were not always easy, but they trusted God and were persistent. God changed his faithful servants' names to Abraham and Sarah. He made a covenant with Abraham, promising him that he would be "father of many nations."

Abraham questioned this since he did not have any children. Then God promised him that his wife, Sarah, would have a son. At first, neither he nor Sarah believed it. They thought they were too old to be able to have a child. But, after a few years of living in Canaan, Sarah did have a healthy son whom they named Isaac.

Abraham and Sarah were patient and in the end God delivered to them a family and their own land. So even though they left what they were used to, they ended up with something better.



In the time of Abraham and Sarah, the land of Canaan was located between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. There were several different tribes of people living in that area then.



CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Faith Family Tree



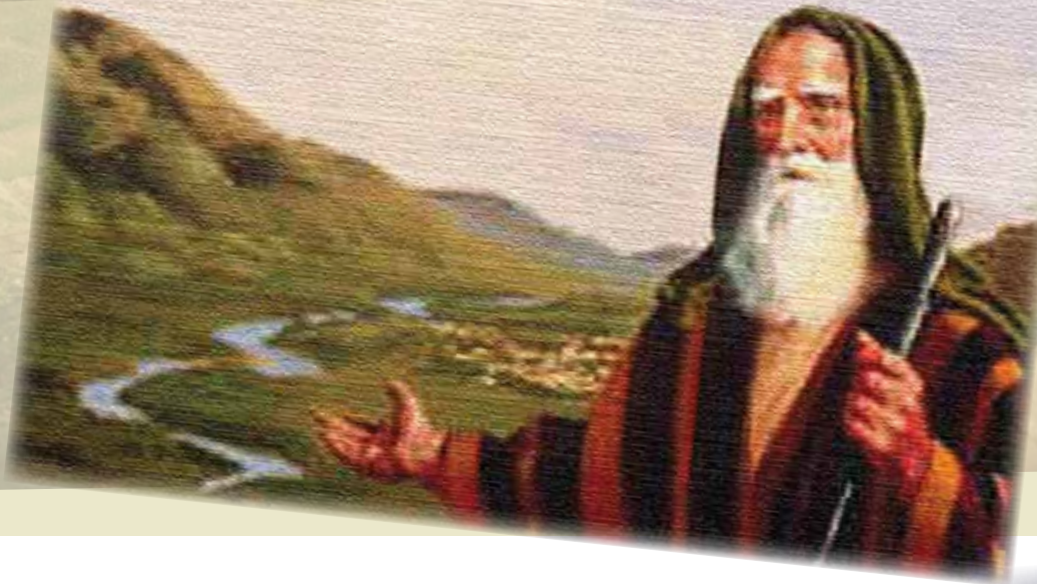
SCRIPTURE SOURCE

"Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him."
Genesis 18:18

In this verse, God tells Abraham that his descendants will touch everyone on earth, but he does not say exactly how. Their descendants became the Jewish people and the land of Canaan became Israel. Also, God's promise created the community where Jesus was born, many years after Abraham and

Sarah's lifetime.

Jesus was one of their descendants. Now, in the 21st century, we can see how all the nations of the earth have been blessed by the descendants of Abraham.



In the Armenian Tradition

King Drtad and Queen Ashkhen

The King and Queen of Armenia made a very bold decision for their country to become a Christian nation. There were many people in Armenia who had become Christian since the time of Sts. Thaddeus and Bartholomew, but there were more people who worshiped pagan gods. Armenia's King Drtad was pagan. Christians had to hide that they believed in Jesus because King Drtad had banned the religion and imprisoned or executed those who claimed to be Christian.

It was St. Gregory the Enlightener who taught Drtad and his wife, Queen Ashken, about Jesus and baptized them. This was the beginning of a big change in Armenia, which was to become the first Christian nation in 301 A.D. We'll learn more about that story next week!





BIBLE BYTES

Sojourn is a word that is used often in the Old Testament, especially in the story of Abraham and Sarah. It means to go to a place to stay a little while or to visit. During Abraham and Sarah's journey to Canaan, they stayed in many places, knowing that they were not going to settle there. The people in those places called them "sojourners."

Well Versed

"As for me, this is my covenant with you; you shall be the father of many nations."
Genesis 17: 4

Family Focus

Today, we learned about the life of Abraham and Sarah, who trusted God so much that they left everything behind to begin a new life and generations of believers in the one true God. Their willingness to change and grow under God's guidance was a great inspiration to the class. We also read about the change of heart in King Drtad and Queen Ashkhen that led to Armenia's conversion to Christianity, becoming the "first Christian nation."

Living Your Faith

1. Discuss the changes in your family that have turned out good for you, such as the birth of a new baby or moving to a new place. Or tell your children how you have been patient, maybe over years of hard work or turmoil, to arrive in a great place. Examples might be being in school for many years in order to graduate or saving money in order to take a special trip or buy a home.
2. Abraham and Sarah were once called Abram and Sarai, but God changed their names when he invited them into a new covenant with him. Ask your child what Abraham and Sarah mean (they learned in Sunday School). Every Armenian priest receives a new name when he is ordained. Find out the original name of *your* priest.

Walking With God

Liberators: Moses

UNIT
1
Lesson
Four



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...
Dear Lord, give us the courage to follow you in every way: as we make choices, when we have doubts, when others question our faith. May your Spirit fill us with the love and wisdom that are the source of courage. Amen.

Hye-Q

Abraham and Sarah left their home and followed God's will to a new life. What do you remember about their journey? Think about and discuss:

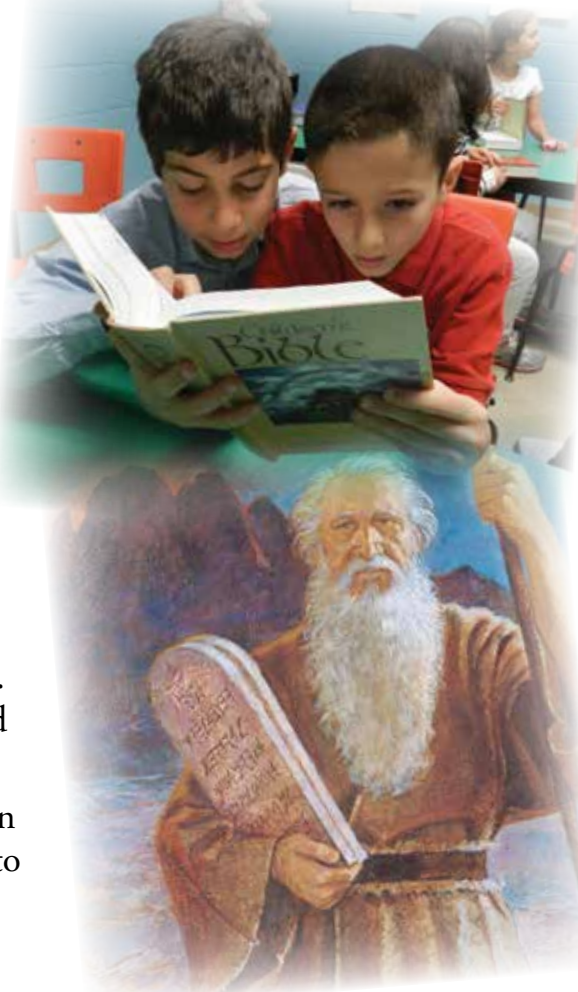
1. Why did Abraham and Sarah leave home and go to Canaan?
2. Did Abraham and Sarah have children when they left their home?
3. Were they afraid of the changes in their lives? Why or why not?

Daily Bread

We have all heard the story of how Moses brought the Ten Commandments down from a mountain, but now you know that this was only *one* of the amazing things that Moses did for his people. God asked Moses to help free the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. In order to do this, he and his brother Aaron had to go through many hardships. Sometimes Moses actually did not feel confident that he could convince his people to follow him. He turned to God many times to ask for help. God gave him the tools to guide them, by creating miracles like parting the Red Sea and producing water from a rock.

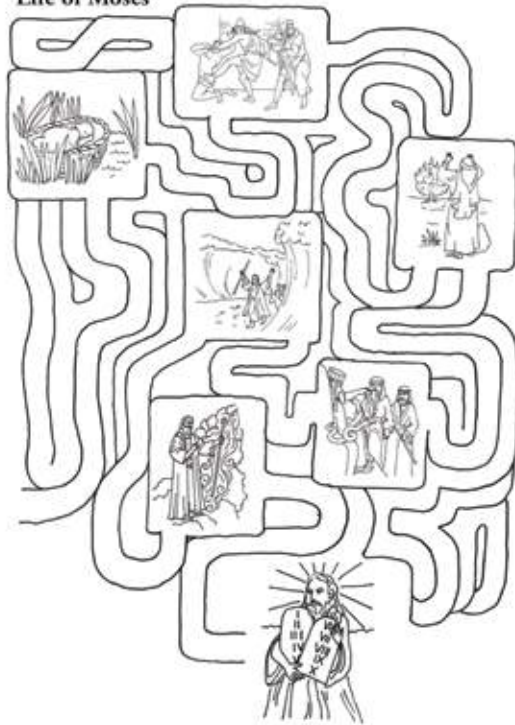
Once the Jewish people were actually free from slavery, their troubles did not end. Life in the desert was very difficult. There was little food and water. They were worried that they might not survive. But Moses was a great leader to his people. He listened to them and tried to make sure that they got what they needed.

Being a leader takes a lot of courage and confidence. Even when people are complaining or criticizing you, you must stay true to your goal to do the best for the people you are leading.



CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Life of Moses



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

You have come upon the Ten Commandments before in your Sunday school classes. These were given to Moses by God after the Jews left Egypt and lived in the wilderness. The people still complained to Moses about their problems, so God asked everyone to come to the base of Mount Sinai so that he could talk to them. He asked Moses, alone, to come up the mountain. There, he gave him these commandments on two stone tablets:

1. You should not have other gods beside me.
2. You should not make false idols or images to worship.
3. Do not say or call on the name of God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and mother.
6. Do not kill anyone.
7. A husband and wife must be faithful to each other.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not tell lies about your neighbor.
10. Do not be envious of your neighbor's belongings or your neighbor's wife.

Exodus 20:1-17

In the Armenian Tradition

St. Gregory the Enlightener

Scene 1

Courage and faith are the reasons that Armenia became the first Christian nation in the world. There was a man who was part of King Drtad's court named Gregory. Gregory was a Christian. When King Drtad ordered Gregory to worship the statue of the pagan goddess Anahid, Gregory refused. Even though Gregory had worked for the King many years, the King became so angry that he ordered his guards to beat Gregory and to put him in a pit.

Scene 2

King Drtad thought that Gregory would surely die down in a pit. The secretary of the King's court wrote that someone felt bad for Gregory and brought him food by throwing a loaf of bread into the pit every day. Many people think it was the King's sister, Princess Khosrovitookht, who did that. The Princess and the King's wife, Queen Ashkhen, were beginning to believe in Jesus' teachings.

Scene 3

Thirteen years went by and one day, King Drtad became very, very sick. Everything was tried to cure him, but nothing worked. With God's prompting, Queen Ashkhen and Princess Khosrovitookht thought that Gregory could help and sent for him to be taken out of the pit. When Gregory prayed over King Drtad, the King immediately felt better.

Scene 4

The King asked Gregory to stay with him and, during that time, Gregory taught the King about the life and teachings of Jesus. Finally, King Drtad understood why Gregory refused to worship another god. Gregory told King Drtad that the love of Christ can make him feel well. The King recovered from his illness.

Scene 5

After that, King Drtad, Queen Ashkhen, and Princess Khosrovitookht went to the river and were baptized as Christians.

Scene 6

Gregory waited in the pit for many years in order to help them become Christians. King Drtad decided that Armenia would be a Christian country and, with the help of the Queen and Princess, they built the Cathedral of Etchmiadzin that is still there today.



Today we call Gregory, "Saint Gregory the Illuminator" or "Saint Gregory the Enlightener." Both "illuminate" and "enlighten" mean, literally, "to light up." But in a spiritual sense, they mean to help people understand in their hearts.



Did you know...!?



BIBLE BYTES

When Moses asked God who he was, God answered simply: "I am." The seventh letter of the Armenian alphabet, "eh," means the same thing. You often see it over the altar of Armenian churches. Sometimes people wear it on a chain around their necks, like a cross.

Well Versed

"God called to him from within the bush 'Moses! Moses!' And Moses said, 'Here I am.'"
Exodus 3:4

Family Focus

Today's lesson was about courage and conviction. The children talked about occasions when courage is needed in their own lives. They learned about the life of Moses by doing a maze and hearing his story at each stop along the way. They also reviewed the Ten Commandments and acted out the story of St. Gregory and the conversion of Armenia to Christianity. You would have enjoyed their performance! Please feel free to stop by and join us in class any morning.

Living Your Faith

1. Talk to your children about the Ten Commandments and how many of the laws of our country and states are actually based on some of them.
2. Watch the animated movie, "Prince of Egypt." It is a children's film about the life of Moses.
3. Look on the internet with your family for photographs of ancient Armenian churches in and around Armenia. Since Armenia was the first Christian nation, it is also the location of the oldest Christian churches in the world.

Walking With God

Warriors: Joshua

UNIT

1

Lesson
Five



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, being a good Christian takes courage and determination. Make us as strong as a soldier in following your ways and guide us with your wisdom. For we know that we are fighting a good fight and the ultimate prize is a life with you. Amen.

Hye-Q

Last week, we studied Moses and all of the important things he did during his life. Check the correct answer in each question.

1. When Moses' mother heard that her baby son might be in danger, she

- a. returned to Israel for safety___
- b. hid in her father's house with her children___
- c. placed her son in a basket for the princess to discover___
- d. protested to the Pharaoh___

2. When God asked Moses to free the Hebrew slaves

- a. he was afraid he wasn't up to the job___
- b. he was immediately sure he could do it___
- c. he asked God for help___
- d. he ran away___

3. When the Pharaoh kept refusing Moses' request to free the slaves, God

- a. threatened to kill the Pharaoh and his family___
- b. sent 10 plagues as warnings___
- c. ruined all the wheat stored in Egypt, causing a famine___
- d. brought on a 40-day flood___

4. The last plague threatened first-born sons. To be spared that punishment, the Hebrews

- a. gathered their belongings and fled___
- b. ripped their clothes in mourning and prayed___
- c. brushed their door frames with lamb's blood___
- d. baked bread and waited___

5. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments so the people could

- a. live safely in the wilderness___
- b. never be hungry or thirsty___
- c. know what was going to happen next to them___
- d. live in holiness___



Daily Bread

While Moses grew old, he taught a young man named Joshua how to lead the Israelites. After many years, Moses died and Joshua took his place as the leader. God told Joshua to be strong and follow in the footsteps of Moses and to know that God would always be with him.

Years before, God had promised Moses that the Israelites would eventually live in the land of Israel. At the edge of that land was the city of Jericho. God told Joshua that it was time to go and live in the city of Jericho. There were already people living in the city, and their King did not want the Israelites there, so he closed up the city, not letting anyone in or out.

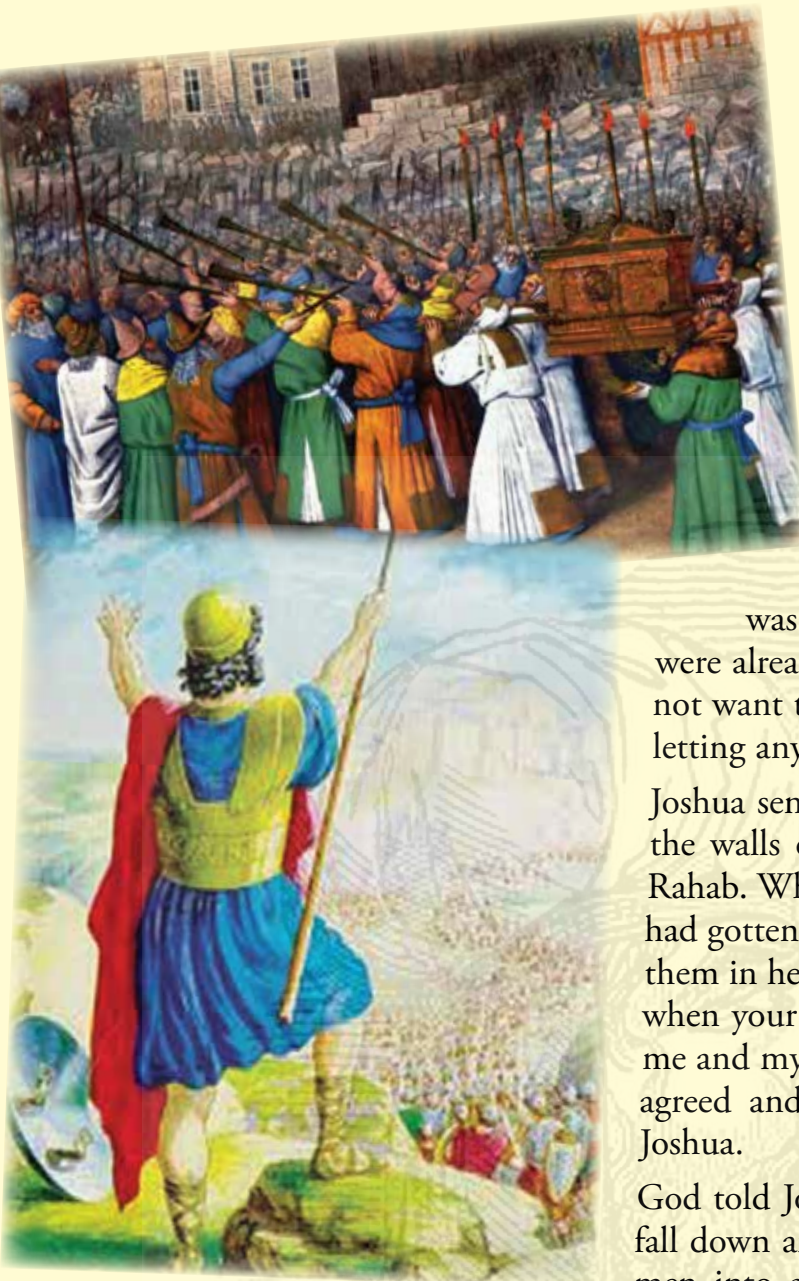
Joshua sent two men to sneak in and look around inside the walls of Jericho. They stayed with a woman named Rahab. When the King of Jericho found out that the spies had gotten in, he sent his soldiers to find them. Rahab hid them in her attic and told them, "I will hide you now, and when your people come to take over the city, please spare me and my family and let us stay here in peace." The men agreed and Rahab helped them escape and go back to Joshua.

God told Joshua exactly how to make the walls of Jericho fall down and this is what they did: First, Joshua gathered men into an army to march around the city. Following them were seven priests with trumpets made from the

horns of rams. Behind them, more priests carried the Ark of the Covenant. (This held the tablets bearing the Ten Commandments.) And behind the ark, the rest of the army would follow. Every day for six days, they all paraded around the outside of the city one time, while the priests blew their horns and the army kept silent. Then on the seventh day, the Israelites marched around Jericho six times while the priests blew their horns again. On that day, after they went around six times, they paraded around a seventh time and Joshua ordered everyone to yell and shout with all of their might!

At the sound of the yelling and the trumpets, the walls of Jericho began to crack and crumble. The noise shook the walls so badly that they all fell to the ground and all who were inside the city ran in fear. All except for Rahab, who knew that she and her family could stay safely.

With the walls of the city in ruins, the Israelites could enter the city and begin their lives in their new land.



BIBLE BYTES

In the Bible, the word “Ark” may seem like it means different things. We all remember Noah’s “ark.” It meant a boat. It was big and was used to put the animals inside to save them. When it is used as “Ark of the Covenant,” it means a special box in which to put the Ten Commandments.



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

“Be strong and very courageous. Obey all the laws Moses gave you. Do not turn away from them and you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of the Law continually. Meditate on it day and night so you may be sure to obey all that is written in it. Only then will you succeed. Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” *Joshua 1: 7-9*

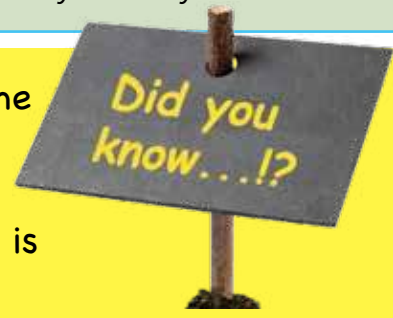
The Book of Joshua continues the story Moses began and tells us all about the adventures of the warrior Joshua. This was the wise and brave young man Moses had appointed to take command. Right from the beginning, God has advice for this new leader.



What does he tell the young Joshua to do?

Do you think this is good advice for you, thousands of years later? Why or why not?

The celebration of St. Vartan is held on the Thursday before the first day of Lent. A special hymn is sung at that day’s liturgy: **Norahrash Busagavor**. Many of the commanders and priests present at the Battle of Avarayr are mentioned by name. Here is the first line:



ՆՈՐԱՀՐԱՇ

NORHRASH



Նո - րա - հրաշ աղ-սա-կա-ւոր եւ զօ-րա-գլուխ ա - նա-քին - եաց, —
 No - ra - hrash bu - sa - ga - vor yev zo - ra - klookh a - ra-keen - yats, —

Wondrous crown-bearer and leader of the virtuous.

In the Armenian Tradition

In the 5th Century, over 1500 years ago, *Vartan Mamigonian* was a soldier and a nobleman. At that time, part of Armenia was ruled by Persia, modern-day Iran. The Persians were not Christian. They had a different religion that worshiped fire. Yazdigerd, the King of Persia, wanted all of his subjects, including the Armenians, to turn away from their own religion and start to worship fire, like him.



At first, the Armenians didn't know what to do! They did not want to give up being Christians. The Armenians argued with each other about how to keep their beliefs and also keep peace in their country. They gave in to many of the King's other demands, and even tried to make the King think they would worship fire. The King sent in his own religious leaders, called Magi, to conduct pagan worship services. But in the end, the Armenians had to follow their hearts. They could not give up their love of Jesus Christ just because the King told them to. They sent the Magi back to Persia.

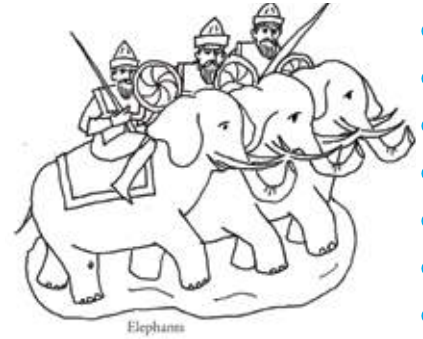
When the King saw this, he decided that he would force the Armenians to give up their religion with a war. He sent an army of 260,000 men with elephants for the soldiers to ride on and shoot arrows from above. The Armenians only had 66,000 soldiers to defend themselves. The night before the battle, Catholicos Hovsep and the devoted priest Fr. Ghevont prayed with the soldiers and gave them Holy Communion. The next day, on the field of Avarayr, Vartan and his small army fought with bravery and dignity. That day, they died for their beliefs.

But, this was not the end. It was just the beginning of the Armenians' fight to remain Christian. There were more battles and after some time, the Persian King gave up trying to convert the Armenians. He saw how hard they defended their religion and this made him have respect for them and their faith. He did not tell them to worship fire anymore.

If Vartan and his men did not die for their right to be Christian that day, we might not have the Armenian Church today. That is why we have a special celebration for him and all of the people who defended Christianity back then. It is also why the Church considers Vartan a saint.

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

St. Vartan Soorp Vartan Սուրբ Վարդան



Well Versed

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9

Family Focus

Today, the students learned about Joshua and St. Vartan. Comparing these two warriors helped them understand how important it is to know God’s teachings and truly live them which will make us strong and successful in every important way. We discussed how God promises to be with us wherever we go. Students reenacted the fall of the walls of Jericho and created a poster on St. Vartan. They’re on display in the classroom, if you want to see them.

Living Your Faith

1. Attend Vartananz celebrations this year. If you cannot come to the church that night, say a prayer that evening with your family to remember how Armenians defended their faith.
2. Discuss occasions in everyday life - at home and school - where feeling God’s presence and knowing his ways can make us strong.

Walking With God

Prophets: Isaiah



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, in the spirit of your great prophets, show us, too, how to share the message of your good news. We pray that your guidance helps us to understand our faith and find the best in ourselves and in the people around us. Amen.

Hye-Q

Moses or Joshua?

Circle the name of the person who did the following:

1. Brought the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai

Moses

Joshua

2. Sent spies into the city of Jericho

Moses

Joshua

3. Saved a woman named Rahab

Moses

Joshua

4. He and his men walked around the walls of the city with the Ark of the Covenant

Moses

Joshua

5. Taught a younger man to lead his people

Moses

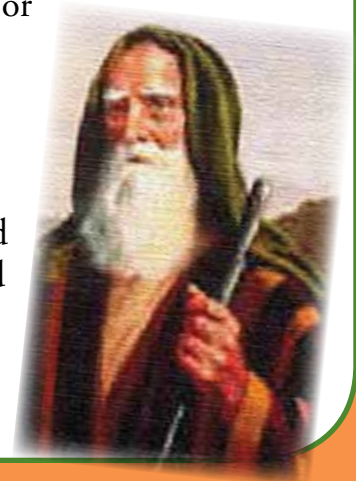
Joshua



What's A Prophet?

Prophet Markareh Մարգարէ

- are called by God to express his will to others
- share God's plans and promises as revealed to them by God
- remind people very boldly of how they are or are *not* following God's ways



Daily Bread

Some of God's special messengers in the Bible were called "prophets." God chose them to remind the people about the right way to live or even to scold them when they were behaving badly. God also often shared what could happen if believers forgot what it meant to be good and to act wisely.

Isaiah is a prophet who lived about 2800 years ago in the Kingdom of Judah.



During his lifetime, Judah and Israel were at war. He must have been sad to look around him and see that he and his countrymen were not living in the way that God asked them to. They were certainly not following the greatest gift God gave them, the Ten Commandments! He thought that he himself did not live a clean life.

One day, he had a vision. He saw God on a big throne with angels all around him. He was filled with awe. The angels came down from the altar with a burning coal and touched his lips and told him that he was forgiven of anything that he did or said before that was bad. He had a chance now to do good things.

At that moment, God called him to serve in helping people understand how to live according to God's ways. He became God's messenger. Isaiah wrote everything down.

God told Isaiah that the people of his country and the countries around his would have a bad time in the future.

He also said that from those bad times would grow a better time for the whole world. He gave Isaiah many details of things that would happen in the future.

In Isaiah's writings, he described the virgin birth of a baby in the family of David and described some of the things in the life of Jesus Christ that would not happen until over 700 years later.



Well Versed

I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"
Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

Isaiah 6:8

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

"The wolf and the lamb will feed together. The lion will eat hay like a cow. But the snakes will eat dust. In those days no one will be hurt or destroyed on my holy mountain. I, the LORD, have spoken!" *Isaiah 65:25*

All of the things that Isaiah wrote were supposed to be sharing a vision of the future through the words of God. In this passage, God tells Isaiah that after many wars and hard times and after the arrival of a Savior (Jesus), all the creatures of the world, including people, will live in peace and no longer fight with each other. God wants our cooperation to fulfill this prophecy. We, as Christians, want to remind the world about this message of peace. Can you be a messenger of God?



Celebrate with God

Isaiah describes his vision of God in the Bible (Isaiah 6:1-7)

1. I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple.
2. Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew.
3. They were calling out to each other, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Heaven's Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!'
4. Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke.
5. 'Woe to me!' I cried. 'I am ruined! I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.'
6. Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand which he had taken with tongs from the altar.
7. With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.'

Imagine you are Isaiah. What do you tell a friend about what you saw, heard, felt, and smelled as described in the verses above?



BIBLE BYTES

Seraphim is a plural form of the word "Seraph." Isaiah describes what they look like in the Bible verse above. His description does not fit our perception of angels as cute little winged creatures with baby faces! Seraphim were fierce and majestic-looking. They were always at God's side, praising him constantly.

St Nersess Soorp Nersess

In the Armenian Tradition



Մարտ Երբսու

meant to be prayed at every hour of the day.

St. Nersess Shnorhali was Catholicos* of the Armenian Church in the 12th Century. He worked very hard to lead the people of Armenia to a deeper Christian faith, filled with prayer and worship and right living. He wrote countless poems, prayers, hymns, and essays, most of which are still in use today. Here is one of those prayers we use often in Sunday School. It appears in the Rest Service, one of the daily Armenian worship services (known as the "hours"). It is one of a set of 24 prayers popularly known as "I Confess With Faith"

*"Catholicos" is the title for the leader of all Armenian churches in the whole world. He is elected for life by the National Ecclesiastical Assembly, which consists of clergy and laypeople representing Armenian churches throughout the world. He resides in Etchmiadzin, Armenia. The first Catholicos was St. Gregory the Enlightener.

An Exercise In Prayerful Thinking

Jesus, Wisdom of the Father

Write each line in your own words

O Jesus, Wisdom of the Father, grant me wisdom

That I may always think, speak and do

That which is good in your sight

Save me from evil thoughts, words and deeds

And have mercy upon me, a great sinner, Amen.

We remember Isaiah's vision every Sunday at our Divine Liturgy! The angels' song of praise – "Holy, holy" – has become our beautiful church hymn "Soorp, Soorp."



Family Focus

Today students learned that a prophet is more than someone who knows God's plans for the future. More importantly, prophets remind us of how to live godly ways. We talked about the most important prophet, Isaiah, and students drew their interpretation of his amazing encounter with God. They also learned a prayer by St. Nersess Shnorhali that was all about living right.

Living Your Faith

1. Take the drawing done by your child and place it in a location where other members of the family can see it and talk about it.
2. Look up the website of the Armenian Holy See (www.armenianchurch.org) with your child. Show them a photo of the Catholicos and discuss his role in the Armenian Church.
3. Recite the prayer "O Jesus, Wisdom of the Father" together often, in English or Armenian.

Walking With God

Protesters: Esther



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, we know that you stood up for what was true and good during your time on earth. Help us, too, always stand up for what is right in your eyes. We know we can do this in small ways even now, with your help and guidance. Amen.

Hye-Q

Prophets and Leaders

CATHOLICOS

GOD

ISAIAH

MESSENGER

NERSESS

PROPHET

SERAPHIM

THRONE

VISION

C	T	Q	O	H	A	I	A	S	I	G	A	B	M	P
T	A	H	E	R	W	O	L	S	I	O	V	V	I	R
H	N	T	H	T	A	D	C	M	Z	D	I	P	H	O
R	V	O	H	M	E	S	S	E	N	G	E	R	P	P
O	I	A	I	O	S	S	E	S	R	E	N	H	A	H
N	R	O	O	S	L	O	T	B	F	Q	X	Z	R	E
E	D	W	L	W	I	I	C	D	J	G	Z	Y	E	T
Y	S	B	K	Q	P	V	C	T	K	T	O	M	S	T
L	N	T	Y	D	W	P	W	O	X	Z	H	A	G	W
A	Q	D	F	H	L	H	J	C	S	I	S	A	T	R



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

“. . .And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the King. If I must die, I must die.”
Esther 4:16

Esther said this in a message to her step-father, Mordecai. During that time, the King had many laws in his palace. One of them was that nobody could approach the King without being asked to come. So, Esther had many dangers in going to the King to plead for the Jews. Just going into his throne room uninvited was against the law of his kingdom, but she did it anyway to save her people.

Daily Bread

Esther: Standing Up for What's Right

King Ahasuerus ruled over the land of Persia which was a very big country with a lot of people. When he needed a wife, he searched for her all over Persia. He chose a woman named Esther. She was good, wise, and very beautiful. She was an Israelite (meaning, she was Jewish) and the King did not know this. A kind relative named Mordecai had adopted Esther as a child, and raised her as his own daughter. He warned her not to tell anyone she was an Israelite, because there were many people in the palace and all over Persia who did not like the Israelites.

A powerful man named, Haman, became angry at Mordecai. Haman knew that Mordecai was an Israelite, and he tricked the King into granting him the right to have all Israelites in Persia killed.

Esther and Mordecai were very afraid for their people and for themselves. Esther wanted to ask the King to send a decree to stop this from happening, but she was afraid. In that time, it was against the law to approach the King if he did not invite you. Also, she did not know how he would react to the fact that she was Jewish. She made a plan to serve a dinner for the King and Haman. While they were there together, she said to the King, "Dear King, if you are pleased with me, I beg you to spare my life. And also spare the lives of my people."

At first the King did not understand why she would be killed. He loved her and she was his Queen. That is when she told him that she was Jewish and reminded him that he had signed a decree given to him by one of his subjects to kill all of the Jews.

The King understood that the fact that others did not like the Jews was unfair. He knew that he loved his Queen and accepted that she was a Jew.

"Who dares to do this?" demanded the king.

"It is this cruel Haman," said Esther, pointing to her enemy. The king ordered the decree to be stopped and had Haman put to death for his tricks.

It took bravery for Esther to approach the king. She risked her life. We, too, may have to take a risk when we speak up for what is right. But, like Esther, we can follow our hearts.



BIBLE BYTES

Apostle *The term Apostle comes from the Greek word, "apostolos." It means one who is sent out into the world as a messenger. An "apostle" is different from a "disciple." A disciple is a follower and learns directly from a teacher. Thaddeus was both a disciple of Jesus and an apostle of Christianity.*

Thaddeus was one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus. He, and another disciple, Bartholomew, came to Armenia after their time with Jesus. They taught as many people as they could about the life and message of Jesus Christ. Thaddeus inspired the Armenian princess Santookht and she became a Christian.



In the Armenian Tradition

The Apostle Thaddeus went to Armenia to spread the word of Jesus. At that time, he met King Sanadrook's daughter, Princess Santookht, and told her about Jesus. She came to believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ, so she converted from her pagan religion to become a Christian. When her father heard of her conversion, he was angry with her and tried many ways to get her to return to paganism.

He told her that if she gave up her belief in Jesus, she would have a great life in the palace and wear the most beautiful crown. She believed with all her heart that the way of Jesus was the best and stood up to her father.

The king became very upset, so he finally told her that she had to choose between the crown and a sword. Remaining strong in her faith, she chose the sword and she was put to death.

The Armenian Church remembers her as the first witness for Christianity in Armenia. While she learned from the Apostle Thaddeus, she led many others to convert to Christianity. She became the first Armenian saint to be honored by the Armenian Church.

While she chose the sword of martyrdom, she was given the crown of sainthood by God.

How is St. Santookht's story like Esther's?



CELEBRATE WITH GOD

St. Santookht



Well Versed

“Keep alert, stand strong in your faith, be courageous, be strong.”

1 Corinthians 16:13

Family Focus

Today, the students learned about two important women of faith: Queen Esther, whose courage saved herself and her people, and Princess Santookht who bravely chose death in order to follow Christ. We learned that sometimes standing up for what we believe can be difficult or even dangerous, but that our faith in God will help us through.

Living Your Faith

1. Talk together about what a “saint” is. People often say anyone who does something good is a “saint,” but they are much more special than that. Ask your child to talk about the faith and courage of Princess Santookht and why we consider her a saint.
2. Tell your child something you did to help others that took some bravery on your part, such as standing up for a co-worker or sacrificing something to help another person.

Walking With God

Mother of the New Creation: St. Mary



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, we grow closer to you as we learn about all the amazing people of the Bible whom you called to walk with you. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was faithful and full of love for her son and for the world. Help us to be like her. Amen.

Hye-Q

Answer the questions below with one of these names:

Mordecai

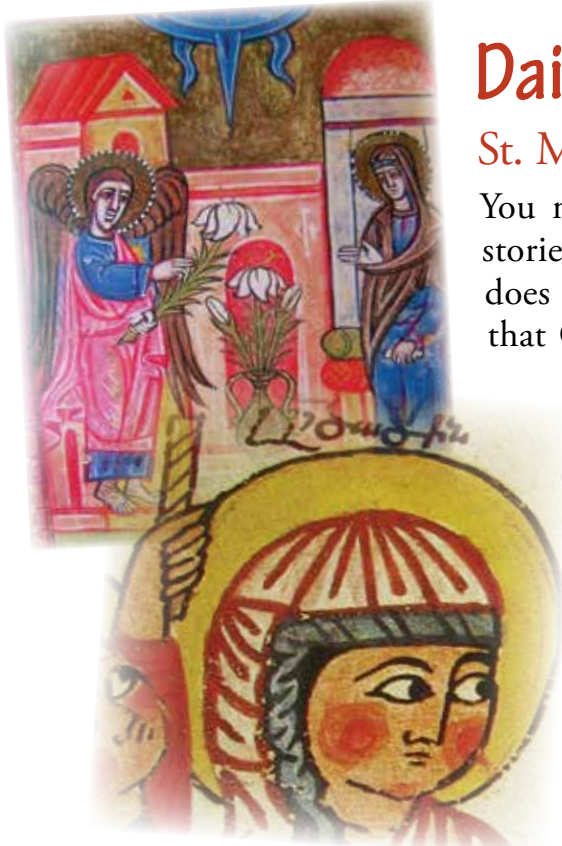
Esther

Haman

King Sanadrook

Princess Santookht

1. Who married the King of Persia and helped to save the Jews from being killed? _____
2. Which King threatened his daughter? _____
3. Who tricked the King of Persia? _____
4. Who died for her Christian beliefs in Armenia before the country became Christian? _____
5. Who raised Esther as his own child? _____



Daily Bread

St. Mary Soorp Maryam Սուրբ Մարիամ

You may remember the story of St. Mary from the Christmas stories that you have heard. Mary is the mother of Jesus. The Bible does not tell us much about the life of Mary, but it does tell us that God chose her for her faith and devotion and that she was

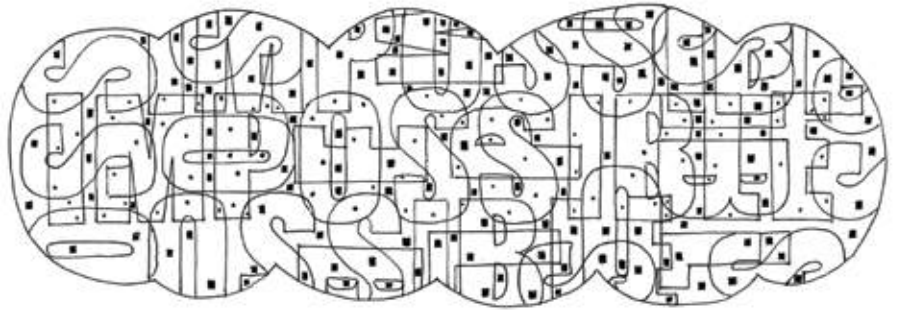
brave and willing to follow God's plan for her and her family. She gave birth to Jesus, loved him, raised him, and believed in him. Not only was she devoted to Jesus as his mother, she was also his first disciple. Think about it! She was the first to love and follow him, which she did, all the way to the cross.

This is why she is really the most important of all the saints of the church – those people who have shown themselves to be deeply committed to following Jesus. The Armenian Church devotes prayers, worship services, and special feast days just to our beloved St. Mary.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Luke 1:26-38 (NRSV)

“NOTHING IS



WITH GOD.”

Shade in the shapes that have a small dot •

Mary's Song (The Magnificat)

Luke 1:46-55

After Mary heard that she was going to have a baby, she went to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. Elizabeth was also going to have a son. Elizabeth's son grew up to be John the Baptist, who spent his life preaching the word of God and telling everyone that Jesus was coming. (He baptized Jesus in the Jordan River.)

Immediately after Mary visited her cousin, she was so happy that she sang a song which has come to be called “The Magnificat” (which means a song that praises God).

Here it is, from the book of Luke, chapter 1. The numbers are the verse numbers.

“⁴⁶And Mary said: My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy extends to those who are in awe of him, from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵²He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful

⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”



Armenian Christians love St. Mary. In Armenian, she is called *Asdvadzadzin* (Asd-va-dza-dzin, with the accent on the last syllable). This means "Mother of God." Most Armenian churches have a blessed painting (icon) of St. Mary holding the baby Jesus on their main altars.



In the Armenian Tradition

After Jesus rose to heaven, his mother Mary lived on for many years. She was kind, comforting, and patient with everyone who came to her looking for the love of Jesus Christ. She helped the disciples with their work of teaching and helping the poor.

Tradition tells us that when she died as an old woman, 11 of the 12 disciples came to her burial. St. Bartholomew could not be there for her actual burial. He was far away and took days to get there after he heard that she died. When St. Bartholomew arrived, they opened the tomb so that he could say his prayers over her body, but her body was not there. We believe that Mary rose up to heaven just as Jesus did. We call this taking of her body into heaven an "assumption."

Every year, on the Sunday that falls between August 12 and 18, we celebrate this amazing event. It is one of the five major feast days.

*Why do you think Mary was taken up to heaven this way?
What are the Five Major Feast Days of the Armenian Church? Write them here:*

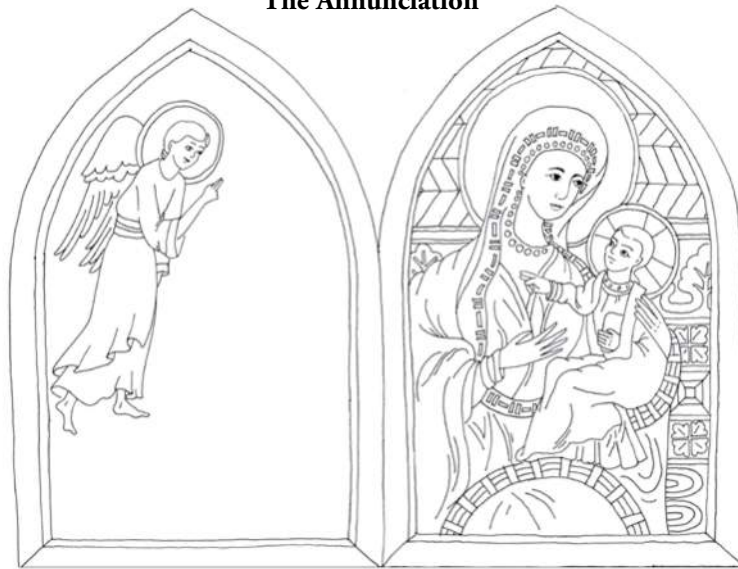
_____ , _____ , _____ , _____ , _____

On the Feast of the Assumption, Armenians bless grapes in a special ceremony. The grape is usually the first fruit of the autumn harvest. In blessing grapes, we are thanking God for all he gives us throughout the year!

Even before Christianity came to Armenia, people had special ceremonies using grapes as the symbol of a good food harvest and a happy life. For Christians, the grape also became important since Jesus Christ shared wine (made from grapes) and gave it to his disciples as a symbol of his life blood. The image of grapes is often on khachkars (Armenian crosses carved into stone) and other pieces of art in the Armenian Church. In past times, Armenians would not eat grapes until they were properly blessed on Assumption Day.

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

The Annunciation



What do you think Mary was doing when the angel Gabriel came to her? She is often pictured reading a book.
What do you think? Draw what she might have been doing.

BIBLE BYTES

Mary's song is often referred to as the "Magnificat." This simply comes from the words in Latin for "magnifies or glorifies" from the first words of the song which say: "My soul glorifies the Lord."

Well Versed

"In a loud voice she exclaimed: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!'"

Luke 1:42

Family Focus

Today we learned about St. Mary, the mother of Jesus, focusing on her qualities of love and faith-filled obedience. We had a chance to look closely at her song of praise, "the Magnificat," and learned more about the Feast of Assumption and the blessing of grapes. Students imagined what St. Mary might have been doing when the angel Gabriel visited her.

Living Your Faith

1. Read the Magnificat with your child and ask him or her to explain it to you.
2. On a happy occasion when you feel like celebrating, make up a song of praise for God as Mary did.

Walking With God

Witnesses: St. Paul



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of faith you gave to the great men and women of the Bible. Help our faith grow, too, and show us the way to share it with all the people around us. May our hearts always be open to you. Amen.

Hye-Q

Fill in the correct answer:

1. The angel who announced to Mary that she would be Jesus' mother was _____.
2. Mary visited her cousin, _____, who would be the mother of _____ the _____.
3. *Asdvadzadzin* is the Armenian word for Mary. It means _____.
4. The day we remember Mary's being taken into heaven is one of the Five Major Feast Days of the Armenian Church. It is called the Feast of _____.
5. The other four major feasts are : _____, _____, _____, _____.
6. An Armenian tradition on Assumption Day is to bless _____.

Daily Bread

Soorp Boghos Սուրբ Պօղոս

St. Paul is a very important person in the story of how the faith grew after Jesus was crucified. He was first called "Saul." He started out as a person who was trying to *stop* people from following Jesus' teachings. He traveled from town to town, finding and arresting Christians. There were a lot of places where being a follower of Jesus was against the law at that time.

Then one day, he was on his way to a city called Damascus and suddenly, he saw a bright light on the road and heard a voice speaking to him. The voice asked, "Why do you persecute me?"

He asked, "Who are you?"

The voice answered, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting!"



Jesus then told him to go to the city and that Jesus would send someone to tell him what to do.

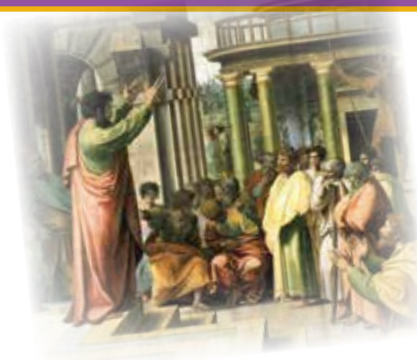
The men traveling with Paul were very surprised. They heard sounds and saw Paul fall on the ground, but they did not see anyone else or understand. They helped Paul get up, but when he opened his eyes, he could not see anything. His companions took him into the city and for three days, he was blind and did not eat.

In Damascus, Jesus appeared to a Christian named Ananias in a vision. He told Ananias that Paul was going to be the person to spread the good news of this new faith to the rest of the world, even outside of Israel and to others who were not born as Jews. Jesus told Ananias to go to Paul and teach him all he knew about Christ.

He told Paul that he was sent to make him see again and that Paul would soon be filled with the Holy Spirit. Suddenly, Paul *could* see again! *Acts 9:1-19*

Paul's experience filled him with so much love for Jesus that he started to preach about him and help others to see how he was the son of God.

A Witness is _____



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

"Then he said: 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard.'" *Acts 22:14-15*

These are the words that Ananias said to Paul when he was in Damascus.

What is he telling Paul to do?

Why should he do this?

How can you share your faith?



BIBLE BYTES

The Book of Acts is the very next book in the New Testament after the Gospels. The word "Acts" refers to all the acts and adventures of Jesus' followers after he died and rose to heaven. St. Paul's journeys take up much of the book - these are exciting and feature daring escapes, powerful miracles, and rousing speeches.

Well Versed

St. Paul wrote, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 3:28

In the Armenian Tradition

Two Other Witnesses for Christ



Saint Nooneh Սուրբ Նունէ

Nooneh entered Armenia with a group of Christian nuns. They came to Armenia because they were fleeing from the persecution of the Roman Emperor. Nooneh then went to Georgia where she helped the Georgian royal family become Christians. She started churches all over Georgia and taught people about Jesus.

Years later, after Armenia had become a Christian country, she asked St. Gregory to send priests to Georgia so that the Georgian Church could grow even more.

What kinds of problems would St. Nooneh have had traveling to a new country?

Saint Maneh Սուրբ Մանէ

Maneh, like Nooneh, came with the same group of nuns to Armenia. She had a vision and decided she wanted to live a life of prayer, meditation, and solitude in the Armenian mountains. Many years later, when St. Gregory passed the nun's place of retreat, he called to her. She asked him to wait three days. After the three days had passed, St. Gregory found that Maneh had died. He buried her with prayers and blessings and stayed in that place until his death.

Why do you think Maneh chose a quiet life of prayer?

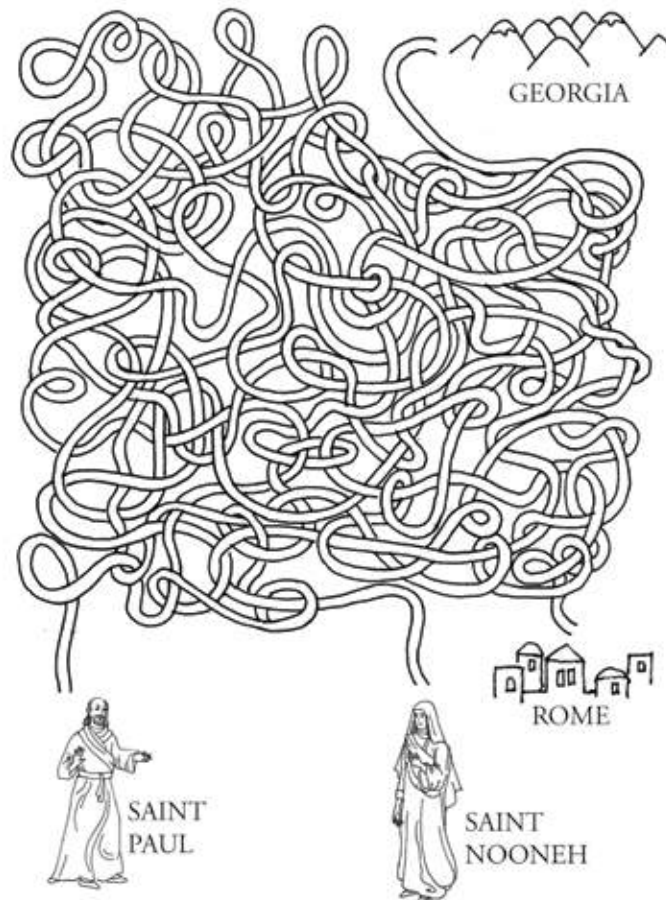


Georgia lies north of Armenia. Its capital, Tbilisi, was known as Tiflis to Armenians, and was an important center of Armenian cultural life for centuries. There are still many Armenians living in Georgia, particularly in the southern region.



CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Help St. Paul and St. Nooneh Find Their Way



Family Focus

Today we learned about St. Paul and how his own change of heart when he became a Christian went on to change the entire world. Talk about the difference one person can make! The children also briefly looked at the lives of Sts. Nooneh and Manch, two holy women who chose two very distinct paths to God. One converted the country of Georgia to Christianity. (Ask your child who it was...)

Living Your Faith

1. Talk about your faith. This beautifully imitates the model of the saints we learned about today.
2. If there is a Georgian church in your neighborhood, visit. Or, look it up together on the Internet.

Walking With God

Following By Faith The Twelve Disciples



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, thank you for the opportunity every Sunday to grow closer to you. As we learn about your very first followers, help us, also, open our eyes and ears to all you have to teach us. Amen.

Hye-Q

Put a check next to the right answers:

- What were St. Paul's feelings about Christians before he found Jesus?
 - He didn't want to think about them_____
 - He went out of his way to be unfriendly to any Christian he met_____
 - He worked arresting Christians in order to have them put in prison_____
- What happened to St. Paul after Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus?
 - He floated up in the air_____
 - He lost his sight_____
 - He screamed out in fright_____
- Who helped St. Paul understand what Jesus wanted from him?
 - A Christian man named Ananias_____
 - The men who traveled with him on the road to Damascus_____
 - His close friend Andrew_____
- Like St. Paul, St. Nooneh was a missionary. She converted the people of
 - Caucasia_____
 - Georgia_____
 - Russia_____
- St. Nooneh's fellow nun chose a life of prayer and meditation and was visited by St. Gregory the Enlightener shortly before her death. Her name was St. _____.
- How do you think you would want to serve God? In prayer in a quiet country setting? Or being a teacher or missionary of the faith?



Daily Bread

Jesus came to earth to bring us a message about God's love. As he gathered followers around him, they themselves were so filled with faith, that it seemed to overflow! Have you ever poured yourself a glass of milk and it overflowed? That is exactly how Jesus' teachings work. You become so filled with his love and faith, you can do nothing but share it with others.

Many people heard him preach and believed in him, but only a few people decided to devote their whole lives to him.

These people were called the disciples. They were all different kinds of people who left their work and families to follow Jesus. Some of them were poor and some of them owned businesses. Some of them were gentle and some of them were tough.

Jesus started preaching to the people of Israel and people started to listen to him as their teacher. Many people heard his teachings and learned from him. There were 12 special men who were disciples of Jesus. A "disciple" is a student who follows his teacher and learns everything from him. Jesus called on them because of their great faith and devotion.

Jesus knew that when he was gone, the Holy Spirit would give the 12 disciples all they would need to share their beautiful new faith. From disciples, they would become apostles! (Remember: an "apostle" is someone who has learned as a disciple and then goes out into the world to teach others.

How are you a disciple?

How are you an apostle?



Well Versed

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of people.”

Mark 1:17



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

(Luke 5:4-11)

⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon [Peter], "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

⁵Simon [Peter] answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

⁶When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.

⁷So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

⁹For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken.

¹⁰and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon [Peter], "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch people."

¹¹So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him."

In this passage from the Bible, Jesus shows Peter and his brothers what the power of faith could do. These men were all good fishermen. But they had had no success that night. And yet, once Jesus directed them and told them what to do, they were successful. Now they knew they would be able to be good "fishers of people."

What does this tell us about the best way to be strong in our faith?



BIBLE BYTES

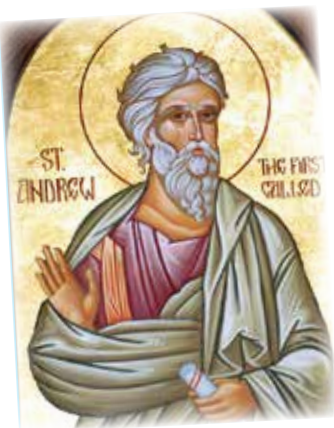
The people who followed Jesus called him "Rabbi." This is the title that the Jewish people call their spiritual teacher, the same way that we call our priest Der Hayr or Hayr Soorp.

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

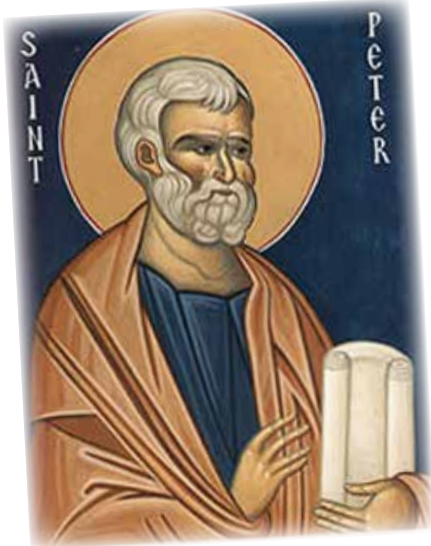
The Twelve Disciples: A Reader's Theater

“He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.”

Matthew 10:1-4



Andrew: My name is Andrew. I am a fisherman. I actually knew John the Baptist first. He was the cousin of Jesus, and told us all that Jesus was here. Simon Peter is my brother and our father's name is Jonas. I brought my brother and many others to meet Jesus. Some of them became disciples, too. After Jesus left us, I traveled to many places, including Russia, Greece, and Scotland to tell everyone about him.



Peter: My brother, Andrew, introduced me to Jesus. We both worked together with our father as fishermen. Some people call me Simon. Some people call me Peter. It might be easier to call me Peter, because there is another disciple from the Bible who is called Simon, too. I knew Jesus was special after I spent time with him. I always asked him a lot of questions, because I knew I wanted to get his message right. Along the way, I also had many doubts about him. I get mad easily, but that is because I am a passionate man and believe that Jesus came to save us. Some people say I am the leader of the

disciples because Jesus asked me first to be an apostle. They also know that I spent a lot of time with Jesus and that I understood what he wanted from us.



James (son of Zebedee): James is a very common name where I come from. That is why everyone has to say that I am the son of Zebedee and the brother of John to make sure they know which James I am. My brother and I were also fishermen when we met Jesus. Our family had a very big fishing business. I don't talk as much as the others, but I followed Jesus and went out with my brother to teach about him.

John: James and I worked very hard in our family business with our father. After we met Jesus, we left all of that and devoted our lives to him. I was lucky because after Jesus left us, I lived a very long life. I preached all around the land where, today, Greece and Turkey are. Then one of the kings got very mad at me and he sent me to a small island. While I was there, I wrote a book about Jesus and our experience with him. It is one of the four gospels.

Philip: I came from the same town as James and John. We were friends growing up and when I heard about Jesus, I had to tell my other friends. I went to Bartholomew and told him that we found the Chosen One. I don't like to argue with people. I'd rather just show them what I see. I also helped Jesus feed thousands of people from two loaves of bread and a fish. That was a good one!



Bartholomew: Philip was a friend of mine. When he came to tell me about Jesus, I didn't really believe him. But when I went to listen to Jesus preach and saw all of the miracles he did, I was convinced. I knew I had to let everyone know about Jesus after he left us. I went very far away from Jerusalem to tell everyone about Jesus. I went to Armenia and converted members of the royal family. That helped to start the Armenian Church! After that, I went all the way to India and back. I was the one who discovered St. Mary's empty tomb.



Thomas: My name is Thomas and I am from Galilee. I was with Jesus when he brought Lazarus back from the dead. After Jesus was crucified, we all thought he was gone forever. But he rose again! When I saw him later, I wanted to touch his wounds to be sure it was really him. But I never did. Just seeing him made me know he was my Lord and my God.

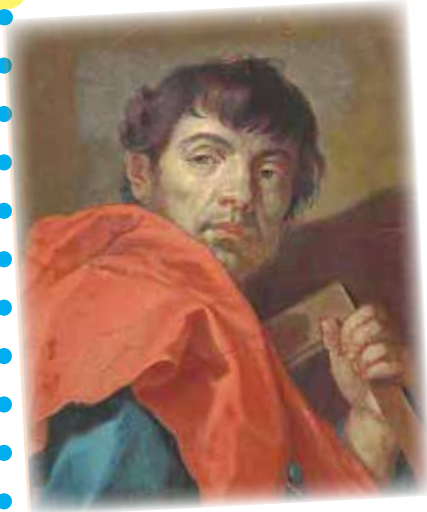
Matthew: Before I met Jesus, I worked for the Roman government. I was a tax collector and everyone hated me! But Jesus saw that I had a good heart and that just because some people did not like the job I did, it did not mean that I could not become his student. My Gospel comes first in the New Testament because I have so many references to the prophecies about Jesus. I wanted the Jewish people to understand that Jesus *was* the Messiah!



James (son of Alphaeus): The Bible doesn't talk about me that much, but I was there and I believed in Jesus all the way. After Jesus left us, many of the other apostles headed east, away from Israel, but I went south. I preached in Palestine and Egypt.

Thaddeus: In the Bible, I have a lot of different names. In some other churches, they call me Jude. I preached in Armenia before Bartholomew got there. I cured King Abgar of Edessa and converted his court to Christianity. Then I went further east to where I taught the daughter of King Sanadrook, Princess Santookht, to become Christian. The King didn't like that very much. The Armenian Church made the Princess their first saint.

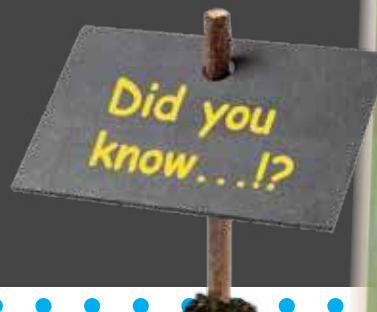
Simon (the Zealot): They call me a "Zealot" because I was part of a group of people in Israel who wanted the Romans out of our country. We were in a war with the Romans because they took our money as taxes and told us what to do. My old friends thought it was strange that I would follow Jesus alongside a tax collector like Matthew, when before I would always fight with someone like him. That was before I knew the love of Jesus.



Judas Iscariot: My name is Judas. All of the other disciples were from Galilee and I was from Judah near the town of Jericho. For a long time, I thought Jesus was going to take over Israel and kick out the Romans. You all probably know that I told the Pharisees where to find Jesus the night he was arrested. I regretted it so much that I killed myself. Jesus knew I would betray him, but he loved me anyway.



According to tradition, St. Thaddeus brought to Armenia the spear with which a Roman soldier pierced Christ's side on the cross. It was kept at Ayri Vank (Cave Monastery, present-day Geghard Monastery) in Armenia. Now, the spear is in Etchmiadzin.



In the Armenian Tradition

Two of the 12 apostles, Thaddeus and Bartholomew, traveled far away from Israel to spread the word of Jesus Christ. They both came to Armenia separately and converted many people to Christianity. Thaddeus cured the Armenian King of Edessa and taught his court about Jesus. He kept going east and entered the kingdom of King Sanadrook, converting his daughter. Thaddeus lost his life because of his beliefs.

Bartholomew came later and converted the sister of King Sanadrook and many others. He went on to India. These two disciples are considered the “First Enlighteners” of Armenia.

Who was the Second?

Thaddeus and Bartholomew are honored as saints and have special feast days dedicated to them in the Armenian Church.



Family Focus

Today we learned all about the 12 disciples and what it means to be a disciple. The children performed a “Reader’s Theater” about these twelve special followers of Jesus.

Living Your Faith

1. Take a moment to talk with your children about what it means to be devoted to learning something. Discuss a special teacher or mentor in your life that helped you in your work or personal life. Compare that to the followers of Jesus.
2. Think of the people you know who bear the disciples’ names. Some of them may be in Armenian: i.e., Bedros=Peter; Hovhanness=John.
3. Show your Bible to your children. Point out the four Gospels and how two of them were written by the Apostle John and the Apostle Matthew, both disciples of Jesus.

Walking With God

Good Helpers: Priscilla, Aquila, Lydia, and Me!



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, as we learn today about other people who followed you long ago, give us, too, all the gifts needed to be good disciples in our daily lives. We know that in loving you, we are able to love and serve all people. Amen.

Hye-Q

Draw a line from the description of some of the disciples on the left to their names on the right

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. He is considered a leader of the disciples. Some people call him Simon. | Matthew |
| 2. He has a brother named James and wrote one of the Gospels, which is part of the Bible that tells the story of Jesus' life. | Bartholomew |
| 3. He went to Armenia to share the good news of Jesus Christ; he also discovered Mary's empty tomb. | Thomas |
| 4. At first, he could not believe that it was actually Jesus who appeared to the disciples after he rose from the dead. | Peter |
| 5. He was a tax collector before he met Jesus. | Thaddeus |
| 6. He came to Armenia and converted the King's daughter to Christianity. | John |

Well Versed

“In the same way, let your light shine before people, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

Daily Bread

Many people followed Jesus during his life, not just the 12 disciples. There were crowds of people who came to see him and listen to him and learn from him. The people who understood his words and accepted him as the Messiah were filled with love and wonder.

After Jesus rose from the dead and went up to heaven, believers began to gather and remember him, as he had asked them to. They shared meals. They talked about his teachings and miracles. They prayed and worshiped together. They shared the communion cup – the bread and wine that now stood for Jesus himself. And their numbers grew.

Turn to Acts 2:42-47 to learn more...

Name 5 things people were doing in Jesus' name, only a few years after he had left them!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Soon people began to reach out to others in whatever way they could to help this new community. St. Paul had joined the 12 disciples in traveling and teaching. We read about some of them in Scripture.

Purple cloth was a real luxury item – like the Rolex watch of Bible times! Dyes were made from things found in nature. The color purple came from a certain shellfish and it took thousands of them to make a small amount of dye.



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Acts 18:1-3 ¹After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ²There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, ³and because he was a tentmaker as they were; he stayed and worked with them."

The book of the Bible called "Acts" is a history of the work and travels of the apostles as they helped to build communities who believed in Jesus. Many of the chapters are about St. Paul's journeys. During those travels, many people help him along the way: by giving him a place to stay, or food to eat, or good company.

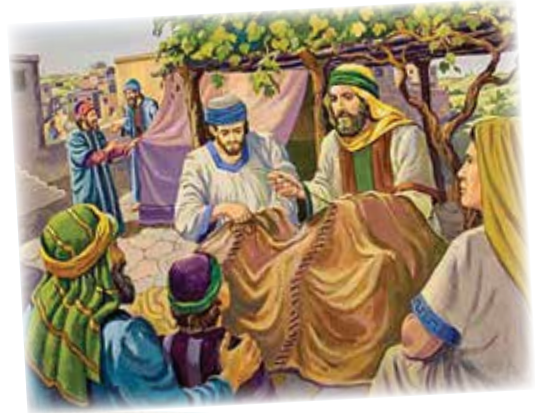
A.

1. In the reading above, what two people are mentioned?

2. What is their occupation?

3. What did St. Paul do when he stayed with them?

4. How do you think that was helpful?



B. Now turn to Acts 16: 13-15, 40.

1. Who is this story about?

2. What was her profession?

3. How did she become a Christian?

4. How did she help St. Paul?



BIBLE BYTES

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. Over the years, the Bible was translated into every language on earth! Even the Bible in English has different versions. Some use bigger words or older words and some use simpler ways to tell the stories.

In the Armenian Tradition

Priest: The Priest is the spiritual leader of your church community. He conducts all of the religious ceremonies and blessings. People who are priests study at a special school called a “seminary.” This may take many years to do. Once they graduate from the school, they may be ordained by the church. This is a full-time job.

Deacon: The deacon helps the priest do all of the things he does on the altar, whether it is during badarak or at a wedding or other ceremony.

Parish Council: People on the Parish Council help run the community. They keep the building in good repair, raise money to pay the bills, support the schools and organizations, and help the parish remain true to Christ’s mission.

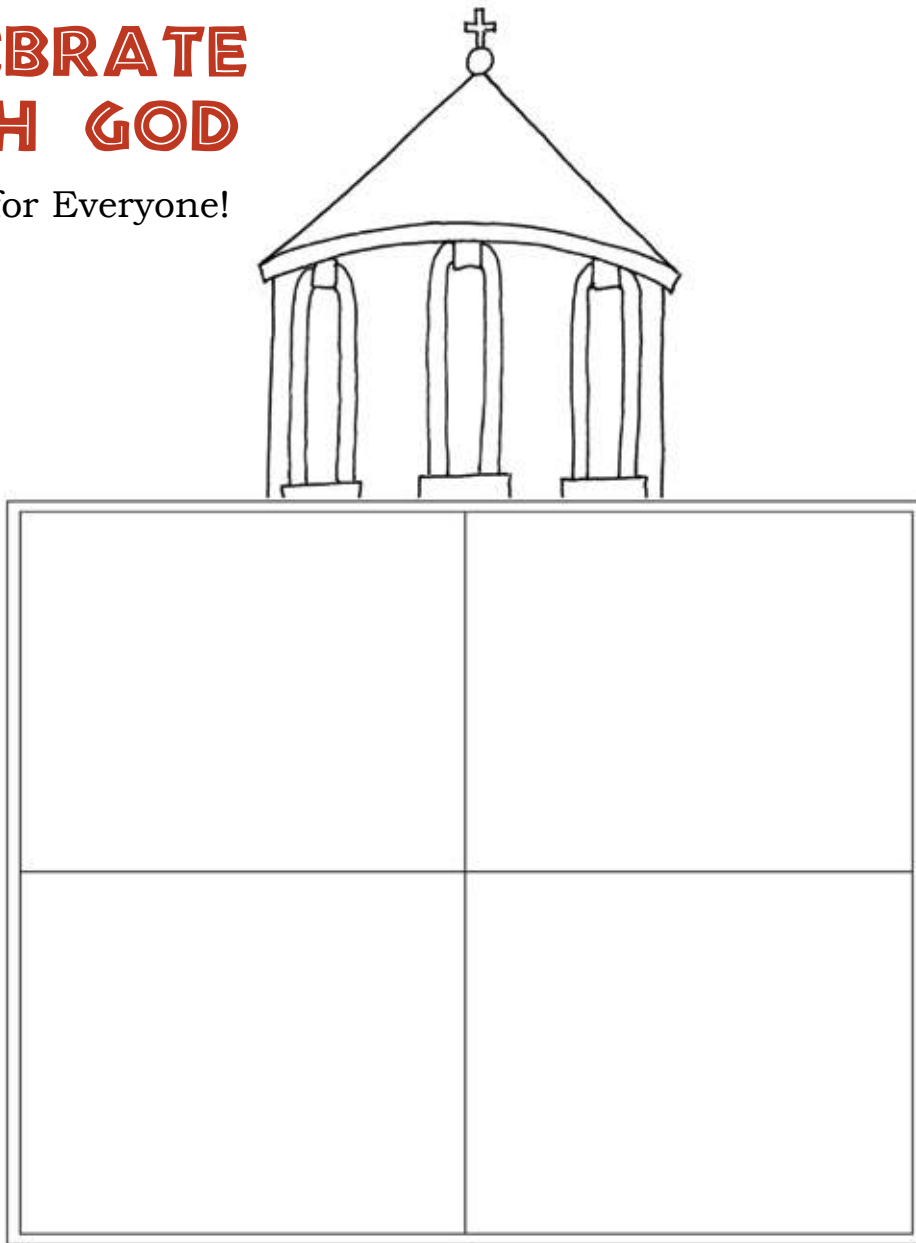
Teacher: Sunday School teachers teach you about Jesus and about the Armenian Church. They are your spiritual guide to help you learn how to be a good Christian. Armenian School teachers teach the Armenian language and culture.

There are many other groups who serve the church such as the Choir, Women’s Guild, and all the committees that run events (such as picnics, concerts, seminars) and serve (soup kitchens, visiting the sick).



CELEBRATE WITH GOD

A Place for Everyone!



Family Focus

People *are* the Church. Today, we learned how important and rewarding it is to work together towards a goal. Students read about some of the earliest believers in the 1st century church. They also looked closely at a few specific people who helped the apostles spread the good news. Finally, we explored the kinds of loving service we might be part of in today's church.

Living Your Faith

1. Participate in the life of your parish as a good example to your child. Have him or her join you whenever appropriate - it's good practice!
2. Volunteer with your child at a community event like a soup kitchen, food drive, or other faith-based charitable function. Show them that this is part of what it is to be a Christian.

Let us Bow Down Before God!

Loving God Through Worship



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...
Dear Lord, we come to church to show our love for you and all that you have done for us. Give us happy hearts as we come before your altar and share in life-giving Holy Communion. Clothe us with the armor of God so that we may always fight the good fight. Amen.

Daily Bread



One of the first things we learn in Sunday School is how to cross ourselves. It is the way we begin and end prayers. In church, we cross ourselves

- when we enter and take our seat in the pew
- when the priest turns to bless us with the sign of the cross
- before and after receiving Holy Communion
- before and after kissing the Gospel

During church, we smell the incense, we see the altar, flowers, candles, pictures, we hear the voices of the choir (and our own) singing. By doing this, we use all of our senses to help us participate in the Divine Liturgy.

We also use our body and hands. What gestures and movements do we make?

Divine Liturgy Soorp Badarak Մուրթ Պատարագ

We _____

We _____

We _____

We _____

We _____

We _____

We _____

We _____

We _____



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

"Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Philippians 2:9-11

In this letter to the people of Philippi, a city in Greece, St. Paul tells us that because Jesus is Lord, whose name is greater than all others, bowing is a natural response. Kneeling and bowing in church are ways of expressing our humility before the greatness of God.



Some of the gestures of our *Badarak* come from interesting sources. For example, the processions down the aisles are said to have come from processions of the royal courts hundreds of years ago.

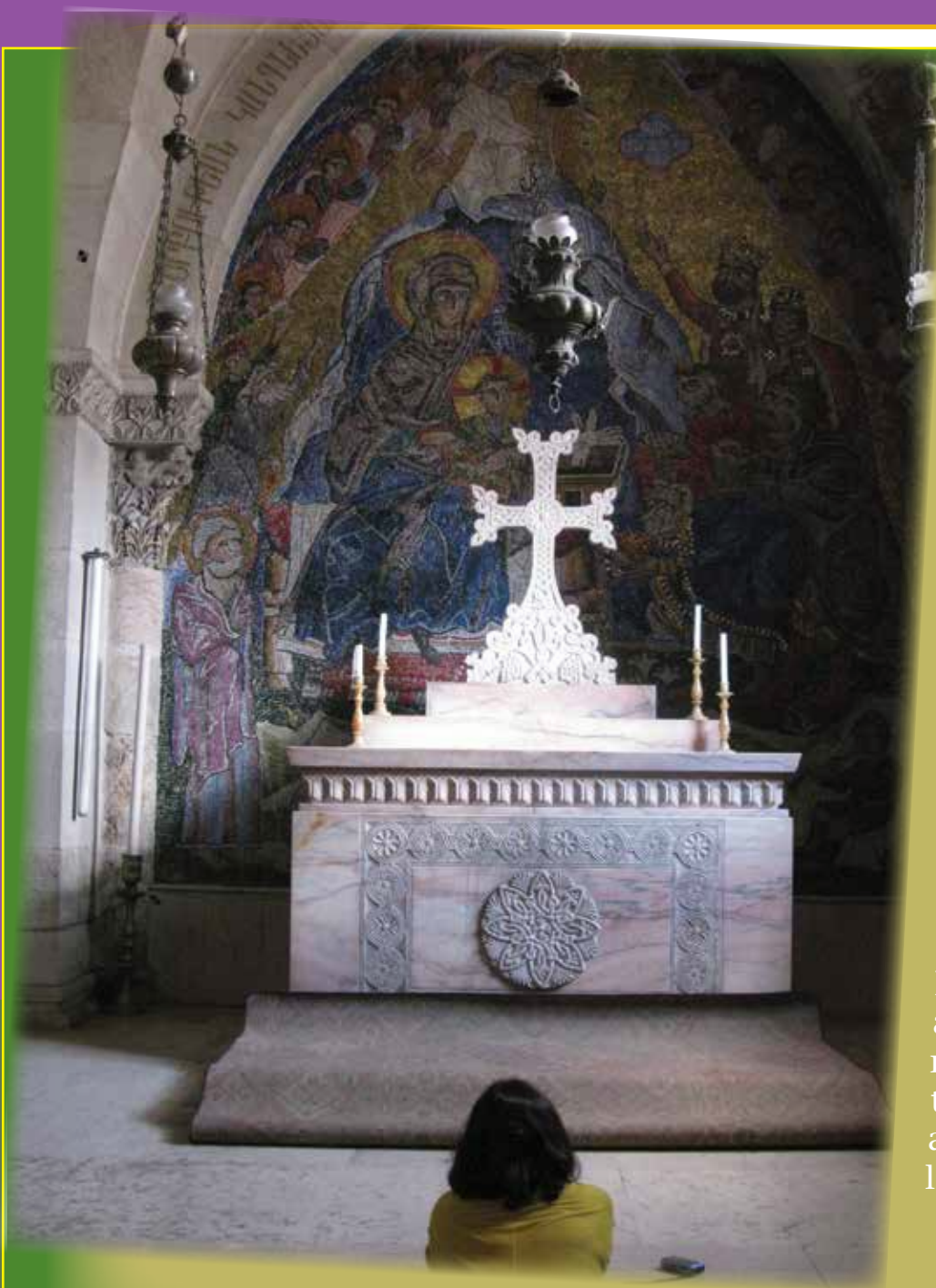
BIBLE BYTES

The Bible gives us many different postures of prayer. Miriam sings and dances her prayer (Exodus 15:20); we see examples of people shouting, falling to the ground, bowing heads, standing with arms and hands raised, and...kneeling. Jesus knelt in the Garden of Gethsemane as he prayed to his Father in great agony. Kneeling is a symbol of a person who is dependent, feeling at the mercy of God and aware of his own smallness in God's presence.

In the Armenian Tradition

Until very recently, Armenians worshipped in church with no pews! If you visit Armenia today or even the Armenian Quarter in Jerusalem, you will see that the ancient churches did not have seats. The accepted posture for church worship was standing. People bowed, held their hands out in prayer, knelt, and crossed themselves, but everyone was *standing* together.

Traditionally, the altar was located at the eastern end of the building, so worshippers would be facing east as they prayed. This is because Jesus himself was called the “light” and the greatest light, the sun, rises in the East. Scripture also tells us that he will come again in the East and so we look to the Second Coming.



Well Versed

“Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

Psalm 95:6



Hye-Q

Describe the jobs of the following members of a church.

Priest _____

Deacon _____

Parish Council member _____

Sunday School Teacher _____

Family Focus

Today we discussed the way we participate in the *Badarak* with *all* our senses. We attended church and actually recorded the many gestures we observed – all of them signs of how we express our awe and love of God and our bond with our fellow worshippers.

Living Your Faith

1. Review how to make the sign of the cross with your child and let him or her know that there are other times that we can use the sign of the cross outside of church, such as when we pray. Many people will cross themselves when they pass a church or an ambulance passes by as a way of saying a quick and silent prayer.
2. Ask to see your child's worksheet from church today. Attend together one Sunday and make notes together on what you see, hear, smell, and do while worshipping. Discuss.

Let Us Bow Down Before God!

Why Do We Go To Church?

UNIT
2
Lesson
Two



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, we come to church to share in your love and be among others who care for you as much as we do. Help us feel your presence in church and in everything we do and say. Amen.

Daily Bread

Inside an Armenian church, there are many items that are important to the way we worship. Some of the things in the church are used every Sunday. Some of them are only used for certain ceremonies, like baptisms.

Every item that is inside the church, on the altar, or worn by the priest and deacons has a special meaning that always reminds us of Jesus Christ. For example, there are candles all over the church. We don't need candles in order to see indoors anymore. We have electric lights. But the candles are there to symbolize the light and warmth of Christ in our lives.



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

"If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to that person, and then come and offer your gift." *Matthew 5:23-24*

This quote from the Gospel of Matthew is part of a sermon that Jesus gave to his followers. Here, he is saying that we need to share peace and love with each other. Even if we are in church, in front of the altar, before we do anything else, we need to be at peace with our Christian brothers and sisters. That's where the Kiss of Peace comes in.

In the Armenian Tradition

Every Sunday, there is a moment in the Badarak when we greet each other with a “holy kiss.” Of course, it’s not the same kiss we give friends and family when we greet them.

The earliest Christians greeted each other this way. Look at Romans 16:16 and 2 Corinthians 13:12. What words do they both repeat?

So, during the service, we, too, turn to each other and share a symbolic greeting to express our unity and love – both for Jesus and each other. You have already shared it many times when you’ve been in church. We don’t actually kiss, but we put our hand on our heart, lean toward each other (right shoulder, then left), while we share the very ancient Armenian greeting.

The interesting part is how the Kiss of Peace “travels” around the church, given from one person to the next. It starts at the altar, from the priest to the deacon to the ushers who come forward to receive it from him.

Then the ushers bring the kiss to the pews, where they exchange the greeting with the person sitting at the end of each pew. Each person who receives the kiss then gives it to the person next to them. Since you are both giving and receiving the greeting, you will always say both parts of the greeting.

Here it is:

Kreesdos ee mech mer haydnetzav!
Քրիստոս ի մէջ մեր յայտնեցաւ

Orhnyal eh haydnootyoonun kreesdosee!
Օրհնեալ է յայտնութիւնն Քրիստոսի

The greeting in English is
Christ is revealed among us!
Blessed is the revelation of Christ!



BIBLE BYTES

Jesus talked about placing an “offering” on the altar. In those days, people who attended the Temple would bring all sorts of offerings to present to God, including birds and animals. As Christians, we offer ourselves at the altar when we receive Holy Communion. We should do this with a pure and sincere heart, at peace with everyone.

Last week, we learned about some of the basic gestures of Badarak. List them here.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____



Well Versed

“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”
Romans 16:16

Family Focus

The children learned the history and practice of the Kiss of Peace. We attended church specifically to observe and itemize the church vessels as well as participate in the passing of the Kiss as a class. When we returned to class, we reviewed some of the interesting things we saw.

Living Your Faith

1. Review the Scripture Source section of this lesson with your children. It is a beautiful reminder to all of us to be at peace and harmony with others.
2. Practice the Kiss of Peace with your family.
 - Kreesdos ee mech mer haydnetsav! (Christ is revealed among us.)
 - Orhnyal eh haydnootyoonun Kreesdosee! (Blessed is the revelation of Christ.)

Let Us Bow Down Before God!

A Walk Through the Badarak

UNIT
2
Lesson
Three



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...
Dear Lord, thank you for our church family and for all the beautiful ways you have given us to know you. Help us open our hearts to you in prayer, at church, with our family and friends, and in all creation. These are all your gifts to us. Amen.

Hye-Q

“Kreesdos ee mech mer haydnetsav.” (‘Christ is revealed among us.’)

Քրիստոս ի մէջ մեր յայտնեցաւ

“Orhnyal eh haydnootyoonun Kreesdosee.” (‘Blessed is the revelation of Christ.’)

Օրհնեալ է յայտնութիւնն Քրիստոսի

Daily Bread

Every Sunday we are invited to take part in a very important gathering - the Divine Liturgy or Soorp Badarak. On that day, we are together with our church family, worshipping God, remembering the story of Jesus and sharing in Jesus’ life through Holy Communion. We attend Sunday School for part of that time, but we’re still all together as a church family.

When we leave the church at the end of the service, we kiss the Gospel and go back out into the world with the love of Jesus Christ inside us and on our lips.

The Divine Liturgy service book is a great help when you worship. What do you notice about it?

1. It’s in four languages! Armenian, English, old (or classical) Armenian, and something we call “transliteration.” That’s a way of spelling out a word in Armenian into English letters. Here’s an example: **Քրիստոս=Kreesdos**
2. It is in two parts: the first half is in Armenian; the second in English.
3. It includes the hymns we sing.
4. It explains what’s going on.
5. It has pictures to help us understand.



The Divine Liturgy



1. Preparation:

This is the very beginning of the service where the priest prepares himself to celebrate the service with the people in the church. He puts on special vestments (we can't see this part) and washes his hands and confesses before he approaches the altar.



2. The Teaching:

(Called the Synaxis or Liturgy of the Word) During this section of the service, we hear readings from the Bible, especially the Gospels, say the Creed together—which states what we as Armenian Christians believe, and pray for the church and its people. This starts on page 11 in the pew book.

3. The Eucharist:



We share the Kiss of Peace, sing the Lord's prayer or Hayr Mer. Through the prayers of the priest and the people, the bread and wine are transformed by the Holy Spirit into the body and blood of Jesus; then we ask for forgiveness of sins and receive Holy Communion. This starts on page 23 in the pew book.

4. Dismissal and blessing:

In the last part of the service, we say final prayers, the priest blesses us, and we kiss the Gospel book, taking our faith out into the world with us. This starts on page 50 in the pew book.



The Psalms are a set of 150 prayer-poems that are a part of the Old Testament of the Bible. They are filled with all kinds of feelings: sadness, hopelessness, anger, joy, and fear among many others! But all of these beautiful prayers are also about trusting God. Many of them appear in our Divine Liturgy.





SCRIPTURE SOURCE

I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, O Lord, proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds. I love the house where you live, O Lord, the place where your glory dwells." *Psalm 26:6-8*

At the very beginning of every *Soorp Badarak*, the priest washes his hands and recites Psalm 26 from the Bible. This is a symbol of "being pure and clean" as he is about to perform an important duty – celebrating the *Badarak*! There are many other symbolic actions during

this service. When we understand the meaning behind the actions, we can appreciate the service more and it will not seem boring to us.

In the Armenian Tradition

The special clothes a priest wears at *Badarak* are called vestments. These are based on the dress of Old Testament priests of the Temple. Their vestments were made of beautiful fabrics and precious metals and jewels. Over centuries of Armenian Church history, each piece of the vestment has changed a bit in style, but not really that much. Think about how different fashions are today from just 100 years ago. The reason vestments have not changed very much is because each piece has a deep and ancient meaning. They help give spiritual strength to the priest.



BIBLE BYTES

Ephod *An ephod is an embroidered vestment believed to look like an apron with shoulder straps, worn by priests in ancient Israel. In the Old Testament book, Exodus 28, God tells Moses about what a priest should wear. He refers to an ephod with a breastplate as part of that outfit and describes how to make it.*

Well Versed

"For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations."

Psalm 100:5

CELEBRATE WITH GOD



The crown... is a “helmet of salvation” to fight against evil.



The belt... puts a circle of faith around heart and mind.



The shabig... is a “robe of gladness” a sign of purity of heart and innocence.



The cuffs... give strength and cleanness to the hands.



The stole... covers the neck with “righteousness” a sign of a clean heart.



The collar... again, covers the neck with “righteousness” and cleanness.



The cape... gives strength against evil.



Slippers... with designs of scorpions and snakes, are symbols of trampling on evil.

Family Focus

Our Third Grade went into church today to be present for the Kiss of Peace. An in-church assignment was to observe the special clothing the priest wears. Back in the classroom, we learned more about the Soorp Badarak, our Divine Liturgy, and the Psalms, and made a vestment doll complete with paper vestments as a review.

Living Your Faith

1. Have your child show you the vestment doll he or she created.
2. Look through the Bible with your child and read some of the psalms together. Several psalms are recited or sung during the Badarak, especially Psalm 24: 7-10; Psalm 34: 1, Psalm 113:2.
3. Look at **Bible Bytes** in this lesson. With your child, do an internet search for this word. Compare pictures of the ancient Jewish “Ephod” with the modern-day Armenian vestments. Discuss the similarities and differences with your child.

Let Us Bow Down Before God!

Jesus – This is My Word

UNIT
2
Lesson
Four

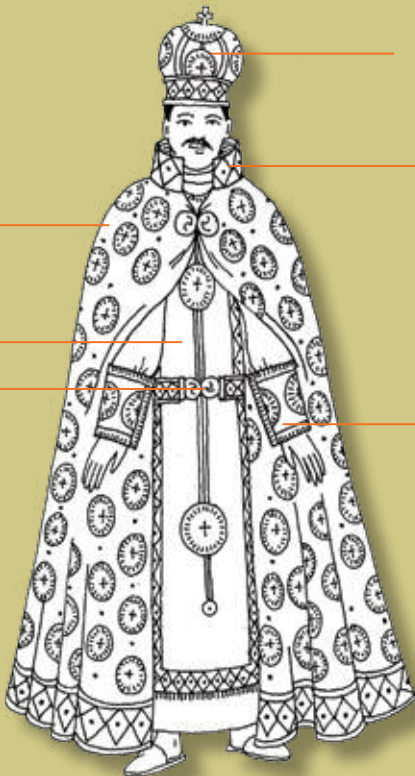


Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...
Dear Lord, help us to find the meaning of your life and teaching in our own lives. Let us learn from your love and use its power to love others. May the words we read in the Bible live in our daily actions. Amen.

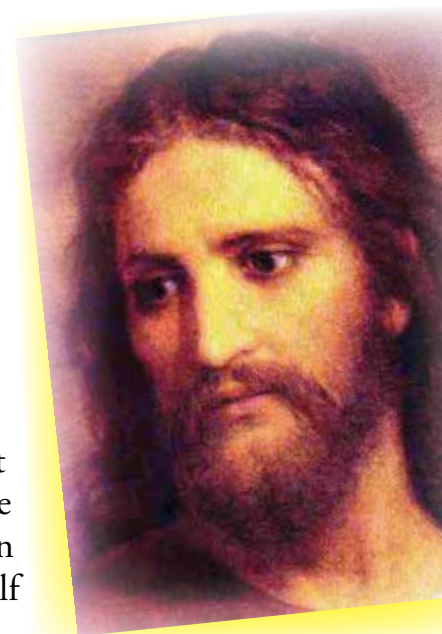
Hye-Q

Write the correct vestment name on each line. Extra credit if you know it in Armenian!



Daily Bread

The Gospels are a very important part of the Bible that tell the story of Jesus' life. There are four Gospels in the Bible and they are the first four books of the New Testament. They are named after the people who wrote them: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Even though each of them tells the same basic story, they all give different details about Jesus, his life, his teachings, and different things that happened to him and to the disciples. The most important thing about these books is that they contain the words that Jesus himself spoke.



We also learn about his death and resurrection and how the disciples saw him again after he rose from the dead. Jesus told them they should go out into the world and make disciples of *all* people.

These books are the foundation of Christian life. During our Soorp Badarak every week, passages from the Gospels are not just read out loud. The deacon chants them, almost like a song.



Before the deacon begins to chant the Gospel, the priest makes the sign of the cross over the people, saying *Khaghaghootyoon amenetsoon* [Peace to all] and we reply by saying *Yev unt hokvooyt koom* [And also to you]. Finally, when the Gospel is announced, the deacon asks us to be attentive and then we sing *Aseh Asdvadz* [God is speaking].

They do all of this preparation and ritual to show that these words are important life lessons for us to learn.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:13-16



In the verses above from Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is teaching people who have gathered around him to hear his inspiring words. We refer to the whole speech as “The Sermon on the Mount,” and there are many famous parts of this sermon. Here Jesus is reminding everyone that they (and we) should not hide our good words and deeds. The good things that we do bring glory to God.

Well Versed

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

Matthew 5:8

In the Armenian Tradition

The Gospel Procession

Since the Gospel contains the words of Jesus, in the Armenian Church, we have a special book of those Gospels on the altar. It has a cover made of gold or silver. The deacon calls everyone to attention by chanting *Broskhoomeh*, "Be attentive." He holds the Gospel book in front of his face as he reads to show the people in church how important the words are.

Then, the altar servers follow the deacon as he walks around the holy altar. This is called a "procession." Just as we honor a hero by organizing a parade, in church we honor Jesus by processing around the altar with the Gospel book that contains his Word. At the end of the procession, the deacon lowers the Gospel book so that the person who is reading the Bible that day kisses it as a sign of their faith.



**CELEBRATE
WITH GOD**



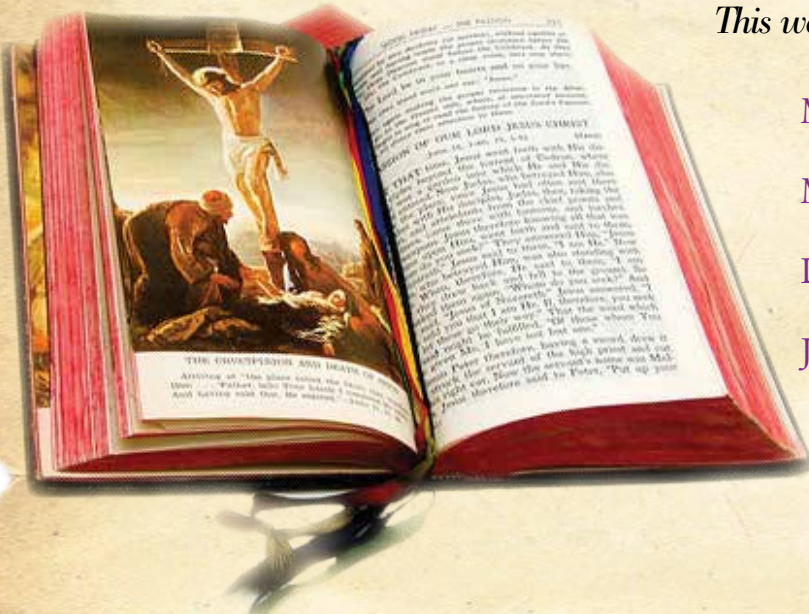
The gospel writers Matthew and John were two of the twelve disciples of Jesus. Matthew was a tax collector. He wrote his view of the story soon after knowing Jesus. John spent his life preaching in Greece and western Turkey. He wrote his version of Jesus' story toward the end of his life.



BIBLE BYTES

Gospel Avedaran Աւետարան

The word “Gospel” comes from two Old English words: “God” meaning “good,” and “spel” meaning “news.” This was indeed the good news of Jesus Christ!



Matthew	Մատթեոս	Mateos
Mark	Մարկոս	Margos
Luke	Լուկաս	Ghoogas
John	Յովհաննէս	Hovhaness

Family Focus

The children learned that the Gospels are the most important part of the Bible for us because they contain the words and actions of Jesus. We attended church to prayerfully observe the Gospel procession; the children noticed with what reverence the deacon held up the Gospel book as he proceeded around the altar and then offered the book to the reader to kiss. Students made their own little Gospel book, using an Armenian miniature of the Gospel writer Matthew.

Living Your Faith

1. Look at the little Gospel book your child made in class today. Read the verse together. Then post it in a place where everyone can see it.
2. Examine a Bible together, looking at the four Gospels; review their names in English and Armenian. Read a story together.
3. Before meals this week, read from the Gospels.

Let Us Bow Down Before God!

Jesus – This is My Body

UNIT
2
Lesson
Five



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, we know your love through Jesus Christ. Help us to listen attentively to all you have to tell us through the reading of the Holy Gospels in church. And give us the power and will to take your word out into the world in all we say and do. Amen.

Hye-Q

Use your Bible to answer the following questions on the four Gospels.

1. Which Gospel is the shortest? _____
2. Which Gospel starts with the words “In the beginning was the Word...”? _____
3. The shortest verse in the Bible is in the Gospel of John 11:35. Write it here: _____
4. Which Gospel starts with a list of the ancestors of Jesus? _____
5. What story is told in Luke 22:7-20 and Matthew 26:17-30 and Mark 14:12-26? _____
6. Look at Luke 15:11-35. This is the only Gospel that tells this story. What story is it? _____



Daily Bread

The last time Jesus was together with all of his disciples has come to be called the “Last Supper.” It took place at the Feast of Passover. Jesus sat with his 12 disciples and had dinner. As part of the dinner, Jesus did something very different. He blessed the bread and gave some to each of the disciples and said, “Take this and eat it. It is my body.” He blessed the wine and offered them the cup, saying to them, “Take this and drink it. It is my blood.”



When he did this, he was using the symbols of the bread and wine to say that when they believe in him and his teachings, he becomes a part of them. He is like food and drink that will nourish them. They are filled and healthy spiritually by having faith in his love and teachings, just as people are filled and healthy physically by eating and drinking.

In a way, every Sunday is a Last Supper. Just as the disciples, we too, are invited to Jesus’ table to share in the bread and wine which is Jesus himself. We have a chance every week to start new and be part of the new “covenant” Jesus established that night.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

And he took bread and gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after the supper, he took the cup, saying: This is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you..”

Luke 22: 17-20

Notice the underlined sentences. Write each one on the first line. On the second line, write what this means to you.

1. _____

2. This means _____

1. _____

2. This means _____





IN THE ARMENIAN TRADITION

In a way, an Armenian priest recreates the Last Supper of two thousand years ago every Sunday!

He blesses the bread and wine, asks for the Holy Spirit to change it into the very body and blood of Jesus and then turns to all of us in the pews, lifting the chalice and wafer high above him. It has now become Jesus himself.

Confession then becomes a time to clean our hearts, preparing it for Jesus. We go up to the altar, receive Communion, and now have new spiritual strength to face a new week.

BIBLE BYTES

Covenant *The word “covenant” is used often in the Bible. It means a promise or an agreement. Jesus uses this word at the Last Supper when he says that the bread and wine are signs of the new covenant.*

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Receiving Holy Communion





Jesus and his disciples had their special dinner during the Jewish feast of Passover. (Since it was their last time all together, it is known to Christians as "the Last Supper.") Passover is a celebration of the story of

Exodus from the Old Testament, when Moses led the Jews out of slavery. The Jewish community still celebrates Passover today with a special meal called a "seder."

Well Versed

"This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

Luke 22:19

Family Focus

This week, we took a close look at the Last Supper when Jesus instituted the central act of our Liturgy – the Eucharist (Holy Communion). Students learned the meaning of the bread and wine and how we re-experience the Last Supper every Sunday at Badarak. If you joined us today when we received Holy Communion as a class, you know what a joy it was to be together for this spiritually nourishing sacrament.

Living Your Faith

1. Take time this week to look up famous paintings of the Last Supper with your family. You can do this on your computer or at the library. The most famous one is by Leonardo Da Vinci.
2. Draw a picture of the cup that might have held the wine at the last supper. What would it have been made out of?

Let Us Bow Down Before God!

Starting Over Every Sunday

UNIT
2
Lesson
Six



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, we know that we are not perfect. Thank you for giving us the chance to start fresh when we realize how we could do better and ask your help. As we make our confession and receive Holy Communion, help us feel your love for us. Amen.

Hye-Q

Last week you learned about the Last Supper. Circle the right answer to see how much you remember.

1. Who was at the Last Supper?

- a. Jesus and his 12 disciples
- b. All of Jesus's followers and believers
- c. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph and their family
- d. Peter and cousins

2. What type of food did Jesus break apart and distribute to those at the supper?

- a. Cookies
- b. Bread
- c. Roast Beef
- d. Saltines

3. Why did Jesus bless and share the bread and wine?

- a. To honor the Passover traditions
- b. It was his job as prayer leader
- c. He announced a "new covenant" through this act
- d. It was harvest time and the bread and grapes were fresh

4. How does the Armenian Church remember the Last Supper?

- a. By saying "Lord Have Mercy" during Badarak
- b. By having gold covered items on the altar
- c. By singing a lot of songs during Badarak
- d. By offering Holy Communion



Daily Bread

As we learned last week, every Sunday during the Soorp Badarak or Divine Liturgy we live the words and actions of the Last Supper.

What are those words and actions?

The most important part of Badarak is the Eucharist, the bread (the wafer or *nushkhar*) and wine of Holy Communion. By receiving Communion on Sundays, we are giving ourselves the strength to live as Jesus wants us to. It's like refueling ourselves with the power of faith and love that only Jesus can give us, almost like going to the gas station to refill the tank of a car.

We spend the week at school, at play, at home...just living! There may be things that are difficult for you during the week. There may be things that you are very thankful for. Coming to church on Sunday and receiving Communion, we are filled again and that helps us to be stronger in our faith when we leave church and go back out into the world.

How will being stronger in your faith help you this week?



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. *1 John 1:9*

¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. *James 5:16*

In these verses, the Bible gives us a way to have a “do over” when we have done something wrong. We can sincerely admit our sins and be forgiven. God forgives all who are willing to start over and do better in the future. This is a way for us to learn from our mistakes and make our lives better.

In the Armenian Tradition

In the Armenian Church, before we receive Holy Communion, we confess our sins to God and to ourselves. We make our confession with the congregation when we kneel in front of the altar together. As the priest listens, we say the words of confession written in our Badarak books. While we do this, we know in our own hearts what we are admitting to ourselves and to God. We can take this time to think about the things that we may have done or said that hurt ourselves or others. We admit that we may not have done our best and that we can do better. Then, we ask for forgiveness.



By honestly confessing and asking for forgiveness, we clear our conscience. We empty our hearts of everything that we are sorry about so that there is space to fill it up with God. That is what happens when we receive Communion.

Every week, we have a chance to “start fresh”!

Well Versed

“The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”

John 1:29

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

We confess and receive Holy Communion

In the Armenian Church, we are welcome to receive Holy Communion from the day we are baptized. In fact, on that very day, we receive our first communion. Some Christian churches do not allow this until you are older. Other Christian churches do not offer Holy Communion at all.



BIBLE BYTES

Pride *This is one of the seven deadly sins listed in our confession. These sins are said to be deadly because they are a very serious threat to the soul. But here pride has a very different meaning than we are used to. In everyday language, we might say that we are proud of earning an “A” on our report card. This is not the sin of pride that we mean in the Bible or our confession.*

The sin of pride is when a person believes they are so smart and so great that they cannot see the true worth of anyone or anything else. Adam and Eve were the first to commit this sin. They thought they were smarter and better than God.

Family Focus

Today, we learned about the sacrament of penance (confession) as being essential for Holy Communion. Students learned a simple concept of sin: not living up to God’s standards. The process of confessing our sins and receiving the love of Christ through the bread and wine renews our souls every Sunday.

Living Your Faith

1. Discuss with your child how helpful it can be to admit when you’ve made a mistake and be able to learn from it.

Let Us Bow Down Before God!

Sunday For the Rest of the Week

UNIT
2
Lesson
Seven



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, help us to feel your love and take what we learn in church out into the world with us. When we leave your house, we can become your voice and hands in the world with our actions, our words, our feelings, and our thoughts. Amen.

Hye-Q

Draw a line connecting the right meaning for each word.

Confession	What we do while we are saying confession during the church service.
Nushkhar	What we ask for from God after confession.
Kneel	When we say out loud the things that we have done wrong.
Forgiveness	The round wafer that the priest makes from flour and water. He then blesses it and gives it to us during Communion.



Daily Bread

We make two important promises while we are in church. One is that we are asked and we pledge to “sin no more.” The other is that we will take the blessings we receive through the Scripture, prayers, hymns, and Holy Communion with us when we leave church. These two things are our goal for the coming week as we go home each Sunday.

After we confess and receive Communion, we are now able to start fresh for the week. We have been reminded of the love of God and our church community. We can then use that faith and love to leave the church and share them with our family, friends, classmates, and all of the other people we will be with during the week. In the Badarak, the last hymn we sing together before we go up to kiss the Gospel book is from the Psalms. Read more....

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

"I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall be at all times in my mouth."

Psalm 34:1

ՕՐՀՆԵՑԻՑ զՁՏԷՐ ORHNETSEETS uZDER

Oph-նե - ցից ըզ-Տէր յա - մե-նայն ժամ, յա - մե-նայն ժամ,
Orh - ne-tseets uz-Der ha - me-nayn zham, ha - me-nayn zham,

4
oph - նո - փիւն նո - րա ի քե - րան իմ:
orh - noo - tyoon no - ra ee pe - ran eem.

As you learned earlier in this Unit, the Psalms – songs or poems that were once used as people gathered to pray – are all about feelings. King David wrote many of them. In this one line, the writer says something so simple, something that could change the way you live each minute of every day. Just think – we are all singing this together as the last song of the Divine Liturgy.

What does it mean?

It means that now that we have worshipped and praised God together, now that we are full of thanks, we will go out into the world full of praise and blessing for God!

In the Armenian Tradition

At the very end of the Badarak, the priest stands in front of the people holding the beautiful Gospel book. This is the same Bible that the deacons read from during the service. In the Armenian tradition, we don't leave the church before we go up and kiss that Bible. This is another way that we show our respect for the word of Jesus and show how much he is a part of us.

You can think of this kiss in the same way that you might kiss your mother, father, or another adult in your life who is very, very important to you. A truly loving kiss is something that works both ways. So, when you go up to the Bible at the end of church and kiss the Bible, you are expressing your love and respect for Jesus and all

the words in that book that tell us about him. And in return, Jesus and all the words in that book that tell us about him become part of you and all you do.

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Here are just a few ways kids can show the love of Jesus to the world:
Being nice; helping people; doing your best in school; creating something from nothing, like art, music, cooking; feeding people who are hungry; bringing happiness to people who are sick or lonely just by spending some time with them.

Draw four different pictures of ways that you could bring your love out from church and into the world.

I Am God's Heart and Hands in the World

BIBLE BYTES

Psalm. The word “psalm” comes from the Greek for the harp-like instrument that would be played as people sang. We use the same word in Armenian. You will hear the deacon chant “Sagh-mos a-sa-tzek Dyarn As-doo-dzo me-room” right before we sing “Orhnyal eh Asdvadz” which is based on a Psalm.

In English he is saying: “Sing psalms to the Lord our God!”

In Armenian “psalm” is “sagh-mos.” **Սաղմոս**



Well Versed

“Taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him!”

Psalm 34:8

Kissing the Bible is just *one* of the ways we share our respect and love in church. We kiss the priest’s hand cross as he proceeds around the church. We share the Kiss of Peace with one another. The priest bows and kisses the altar.

Did you know...!?

Family Focus

Today we looked at how our faith is renewed at Badarak through the Word, the Eucharist, and our prayers with the community. When we leave church, we kiss the Gospel as a symbol of our commitment to God’s way through the rest of the week, through kindness, diligence, good works, and love. Third graders talked about – and even drew some examples – of how we are God’s heart and hands in the world. We ended our Unit on the Divine Liturgy by attending church and kissing the Gospel together at dismissal.

Living Your Faith

1. Look at your child’s pictures of how faith is put into action in the world.
2. Participate in a charitable event with your child, where they help someone in need.
3. Share a story about a time when you served as God’s heart and hands in the world, by being of service to someone outside of your family, without asking for anything in return.

Celebrating Our Lord

Advent

UNIT
3
Lesson
One



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ...
Dear Lord, help us prepare and learn about Jesus and his birth in our world.
We hold his light in our hearts and hope these coming days of Advent will
be filled with your spirit and grace. Thank you for all your gifts. Amen.

Daily Bread

The word “Advent” means “coming,” the coming of Christ! In the Armenian Church, Advent is a 50-day period that leads right up to Armenian Christmas. It is a time for us to look inside our own hearts to see how we can follow Jesus more closely.

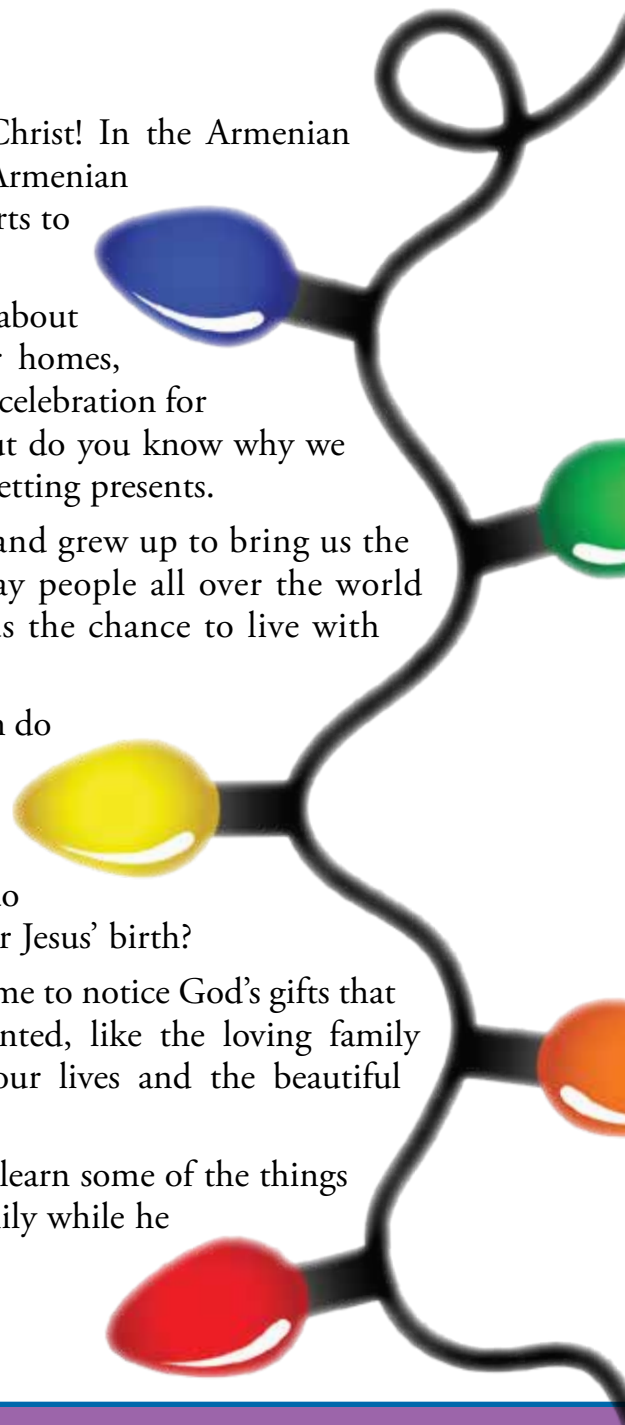
Every year in the middle of November, we start to think about and prepare for this celebration. People decorate their homes, send greeting cards, and have holiday parties. It is a great celebration for all Christians. We make a big deal out of Christmas, but do you know why we do these things? It is not just for putting on a show or getting presents.

It is to celebrate the amazing fact that Jesus was born and grew up to bring us the word of God. His love and teachings changed the way people all over the world lived. It was Jesus whose sacrifice on the cross gave us the chance to live with God forever.

During Advent, we can do things to feel closer to Christ through our actions, thoughts, and prayers. What can we do to prepare our *hearts* for Jesus’ birth?

Advent is also a good time to notice God’s gifts that we might take for granted, like the loving family members we have in our lives and the beautiful earth that we live on.

We can use this time to learn some of the things about Jesus’ life and family while he was still a boy.



BIBLE BYTES

Behold *The Bible uses this word often. It means “to look at or to see” something. It is a word that we still use sometimes, but not very often. In the Bible, it means something a little bit deeper – not just to see but also to know and understand. When the angel Gabriel tells Mary, “Behold, you will conceive . . .” Gabriel is telling her to consider this news very carefully.*

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Jesus is the Reason for the Season!

The angel came to Mary and said to her: “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” Mary was greatly troubled at this and wondered what kind of a greeting this might be. But the angel said to her: “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and his kingdom will never end.”

Luke 1:28-33

Well Versed

“And the angel said, ‘Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favor with God. For behold, you will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.’”

Luke 1:30-31

In the Armenian Tradition

In the Armenian Church, we call the season of Advent “Hisnag,” which comes from the word for “50” in Armenian. It is the 50 days before we celebrate the Feast of Theophany on January 6th. We do something different in the Armenian Church than other Christian churches do because we celebrate not only the birth of Jesus, we also celebrate his baptism on the same day. Jesus’ birth and baptism mark the beginning of his mission. At first, all churches celebrated them together; but for different reasons, this changed over time.

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Make an Advent Calendar!



The Feast of Nativity and Theophany is the “church” name for the Feast of Christmas on January 6. The word “Theophany” has the dictionary meaning of “the appearance of God in material form.” We, as Armenians, use this word because Christ himself, in his whole life, work, and death, is really about God on earth.



Family Focus

This week’s lesson was about Advent. The children learned today about the importance of preparing during this 50-day period for the Feast of Theophany. We discussed the different ways we prepare for Christmas in our homes and then how we prepare for Christmas in our hearts. They made an Advent calendar to keep track of the days until that amazing day.

Living Your Faith

- Use the advent calendar in the coming weeks to mark off each day until Armenian Christmas.
- Make a list with your child of your pre-Christmas preparations. Then get his or her help in getting them done, whether it’s preparing Christmas cards, decorating the house, baking cookies, etc.
- Along with each activity above, help your child prepare for Christmas in his or her heart. Read Bible stories, pray, help others through donations.

Celebrating Our Lord

Christmas



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, thank you for sending your Son to us. We learn from him how you love us and how to find our way to your grace. Help us to understand his teachings and live them every day. We celebrate his birthday and the joy you brought to the world that day. Amen.

Daily Bread

At the time right before Jesus' birth, the emperor asked everyone to pay their taxes in the city where they were born. This was bad news for Joseph and Mary, because Joseph had been born in Bethlehem and they would have to travel over 50 miles from where they lived to get there. In those days, you had to walk or ride a donkey or camel to get places. Traveling that far by foot would take days. Mary was expecting a baby, so this journey was very hard for her.

When they arrived in Joseph's hometown, there was nowhere for them to stay. All the rooms in the hotels were full because so many people were visiting to pay their taxes.

They had to sleep inside a stable with the animals.

Soon after they got to the stable, Jesus was born. Joseph and Mary wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, which is a small box that is usually used as a feeding dish for horses and cows.

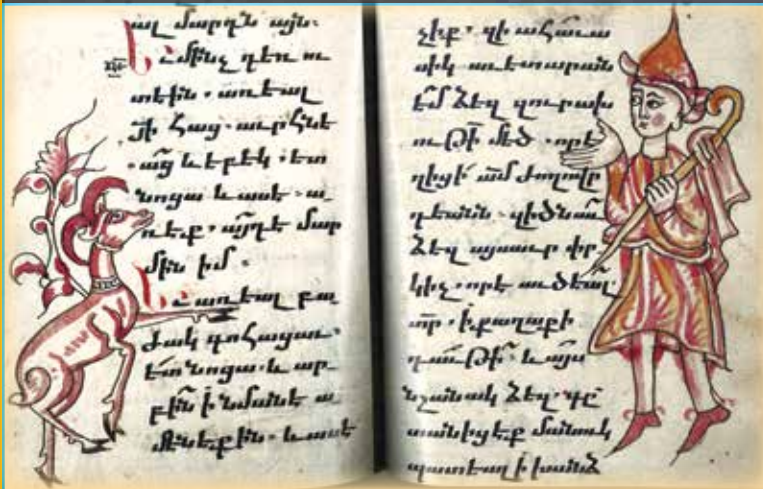
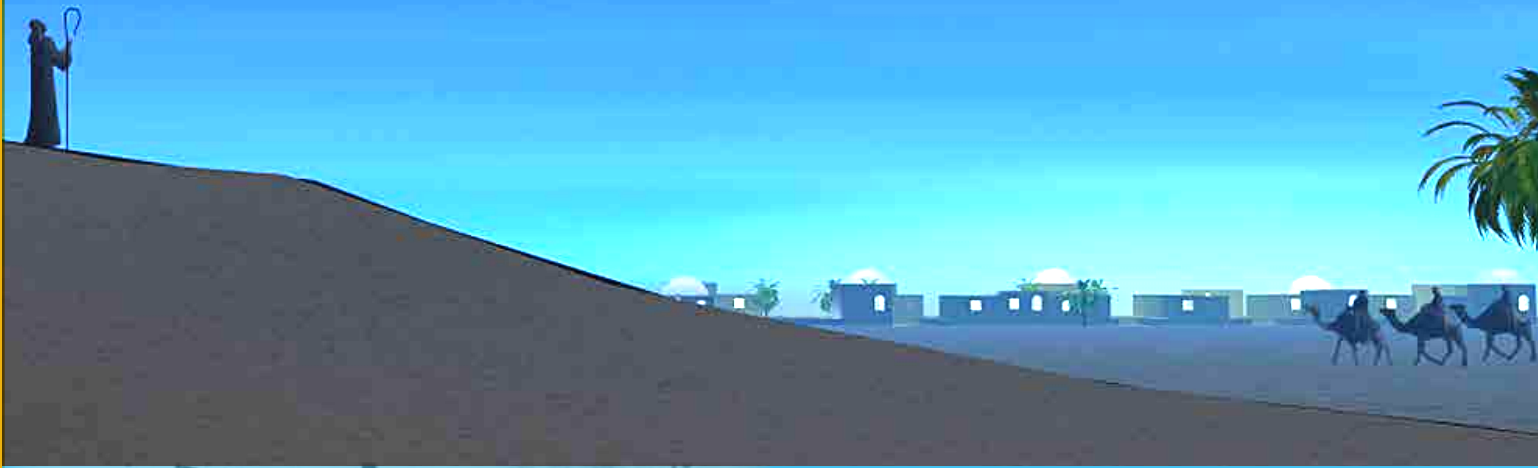
A few hours later, Mary and Joseph were interrupted from their rest when shepherds arrived at the stable. At first, Mary and Joseph did not understand why they were there. But the shepherds explained how angels told them about this special child that was sent by God and told them where to find him.

The same night that Jesus was born, a star appeared in the sky over Bethlehem. In the East, three wise men were watching. They knew this was special and that a great king was born that night.



Each decided to leave his own country and follow the star so they could give gifts to the new king. They had three gifts: frankincense, myrrh, and gold.

Both frankincense and myrrh are types of incense that smell good and were used for many different reasons in those days, including for religious ceremonies. This was a symbolic gift to wish good health and a happy life to the child. The other gift of gold was to help Jesus' family take care of him as he grew up. Today, it would be like giving money.



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

"While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them at the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they

were terrified! But the angel said: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord!" Luke 2:6-11

This quote from the Bible is one of the most beautiful and mystical in the New Testament. Even though this baby Jesus was being born in a stable to a poor family, he was the one who would change the world. The angel told the shepherds this to begin spreading the good news of the love that can fill each of us inside, even today.

In the Armenian Tradition

Every year, Christmas celebrated on December 25th is a lot of fun. Sometimes, we spend too much of our thoughts and energy on shopping, getting gifts, and having parties and the real point of Christmas gets lost in the shuffle. We spent time on this very topic in our lesson on Advent.

We are lucky that we, as Armenians, have a quieter time after the rush of the American holiday season to really pay attention and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and how his presence on earth changed everything. We celebrate the birth of Christ on January 6th along with his baptism by John the Baptist. A baptism is like a spiritual birth, a birth into a life with God. By being baptized, Jesus gave us all an example of how to begin a life as a child of God.

We call the day the Feast of Theophany. There are three special services that are traditionally done around this Feast.

Jrakalouyts Divine Liturgy (the lighting of the lamps service)

First, we have a Christmas Eve service on January 5th. People hold candles during the service to symbolize how Jesus' birth on earth brought the light of God's love to us.

Feast of Theophany Services

Then on January 6th we have a special Christmas day Badarak service. At the end of the Badarak, we have another ceremony called "The Blessing of the Water."

During this ceremony, the cross is dipped in water, just as Christ entered the Jordan River and was baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist. Blessed oil, called *muron*, is poured into the water from a dove-shaped container, just as is done at baptisms.

At the end of the ceremony, members of the congregation take home some of the blessed water. Drinking the blessed water helps us to remember that Jesus was baptized for a reason - to show that he planned to share his love with the world and teach us God's will.

Home Blessings

Home Blessings are usually requested at this time of the year. Every family can invite the priest to come to their home and perform the blessing. The family provides bread (a symbol of the Word of God), salt (a symbol of the things that give our life 'taste' or meaning), and water (the most important element of life).

The priest brings a *nushkhar* wafer and incense. He blesses the bread, the water and the salt. These three fundamental elements are essential life-giving gifts for human life. The priest asks God to bless the home and the people who live there. He prays for God to provide for them, physically and spiritually, so they have enough to eat, live well, and have grace and love in their lives.



CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Create a Birthday
Card for Jesus!



BIBLE BYTES

Swaddling cloths *For centuries, in almost every culture all over the world, mothers have wrapped new-born babies in narrow strips of cloth or some kind of blanket in a very tight way. They all end up looking like a burrito with a cute head coming out the top. The idea is to make them feel just like they did when they were crowded inside their mother – warm and having something close up against their skin. The act of wrapping babies this way is called “swaddling.” Our Armenian great grand-mothers would have done this as well.*

Well Versed

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace among all people. . .”

Luke 2:14

Muron is made by the Catholicos at Holy Etchmiadzin in Armenia. It is made of olive oil, balsam and forty different flowers and herbs. The Catholicos along with many Armenian bishops make it and bless it. Then some of it is sent to every Armenian church in the whole world.



When your church gets some, it is put into a special, small, dove-shaped pitcher. Then, your priest will use the *Muron* during the blessing of the water ceremony on the Feast of Theophany. He also uses it at all baptisms and chrismations. Your priest probably touched you with the blessed *muron* at your baptism and chrismation when you were a baby.



Family Focus

Today, the children discussed the meaning of Christmas and the Feast of Theophany. They learned details about when, where, and how Jesus was born and compared it with the details of their own births. It was a fun discussion. We celebrated the fact that we, as Armenians, get to have two Christmases, and we looked at the distinct Armenian services connected with Christmas.

Living Your Faith

- Look at the “Me and Jesus” handout your child filled in and discuss it together. You will certainly be able to add to the information!
- Armenian Home Blessings are traditionally performed around Christmastime. Request a home blessing from your priest and create a special time for your family to make the connection between your church and your home.

Celebrating Our Lord

Great Lent

UNIT
3
Lesson
Three



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...
Dear Lord, thank you for bringing us together to share ourselves with each other as you have shared yourself with us. We hope to know your love and live a faithful life. Help us to use the season of Great Lent to learn more about praying and giving and being true disciples. Amen.

Daily Bread

1. What is Great Lent?

After Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit sent Jesus out into the desert to spend time alone. There he could think about his mission to spread the word of God. He was there for forty days and during that time he was tempted by the devil. This story is told in three of the Gospels of the New Testament.

We base our own preparation during Great Lent on this event in Jesus' life.

Great Lent is the forty days before Easter. That is almost six weeks! We use this time to reflect on our relationship with God and prepare for Easter.

During Great Lent we want to think about how to become true disciples, followers of Jesus. We do this through prayer, good deeds, and worship in order to be closer to God.

2. Why do we fast during Great Lent?

"Fasting" is eating less or not eating at all for a time. Jesus did not eat during his time in the desert. During Great Lent, we try not to eat meat for these 40 days. This is a way to remind ourselves of a simpler life. It's also a way to appreciate the abundance that God has given us.

3. Why do we give something up or try to change our ways?

We give something up that we feel is important. Maybe it's spending time on the phone or watching certain TV programs.

When we do without it, we find out two things: 1) Maybe these things are not as important as we think they are! and 2) we can have a new appreciation for how much we enjoy them and can thank God.



We often take things in our lives for granted – such as having enough food, being able to play our video games, or eating sweets. We can appreciate something more if we understand what it feels like to be without it. It also teaches us how, sometimes, we take more than we need for ourselves. There are people in the world who do not have even the basics, while we have everything we need. This can teach us to feel compassion for others in need and move us to be more giving and helpful to others.

4. Why do we give to good causes?

Great Lent is a time we want to spend less time and money on ourselves and more on God and others. There are so many people who have less than we do; Great Lent is a good time to think of and care for these.



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Jesus returned from the Jordan where he was baptized. He was led by the Spirit to the desert for forty days where he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'People do not live on bread alone.'"

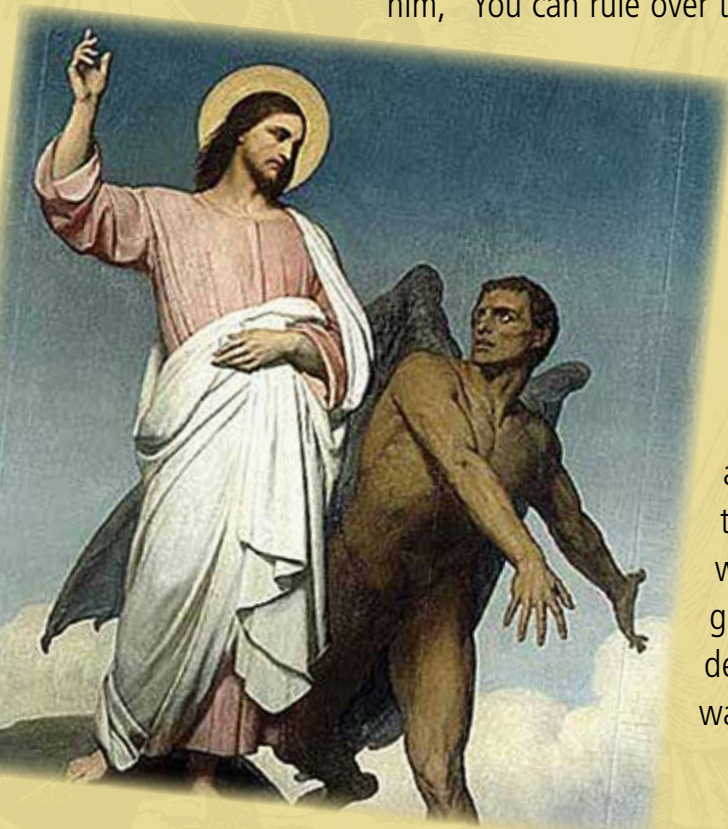
The devil led him up to a high place and showed him all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "You can rule over them all, if you worship me."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

Then the devil led him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple. "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down and nothing will happen to you." But Jesus said:

"The Bible tells us not to test God." *Luke 4:1-12*

We often think that it was easy for Jesus to do what he did because he was God. But as a human being, he actually had a choice of how to live. We all have a choice to use our talents and skills in a positive way or a selfish way. The devil tempted Jesus to use his power for his own glory, but Jesus knew himself well enough to fight the devil's temptations. He knew that life was better when it was lived in God's way.



In the Armenian Tradition

During Great Lent in the Armenian Church, we have Bible readings each Sunday that focus on different parts of the Bible. Each story is meant to teach us how we should live and what we need to do to grow closer to Jesus.

The Sundays of Great Lent

- **Poon Paregtan** (not a Sunday of Great Lent but an important Sunday right before Lent begins) *recalls.....the happy, innocent life of Adam and Eve in Paradise.* (Genesis 2)
- **Sunday of the Expulsion** tells us about...*the loss of that original happiness through pride and disobedience. We are not going to lose Paradise forever; we are on the road home.* (Genesis 3)
- **Sunday of the Prodigal Son** tells the story*of a lost son who returns to his father and family home in sorrow and penitence. How great is the father's love and forgiveness! This is a lesson on the nature of God's love both for the "lost" and for those who never stray.* (Luke 15:11-32)
- **Sunday of the Steward** reminds us that.....*we need to be as smart about our spiritual lives as we are about everything else.* (Luke 16:1-13)
- **Sunday of the Judge** tells the story of how.....*if we keep praying from the heart we will always get God's attention* (Luke 18:1-8)
- **Sunday of Advent** is dedicated to....*The Second Coming of Christ that will bring in a new era, a new heaven, and a new earth. Then there will be no need for "Lent" since we will be in total and joyful union with God's will.* (Matthew 22: 34-23:39)

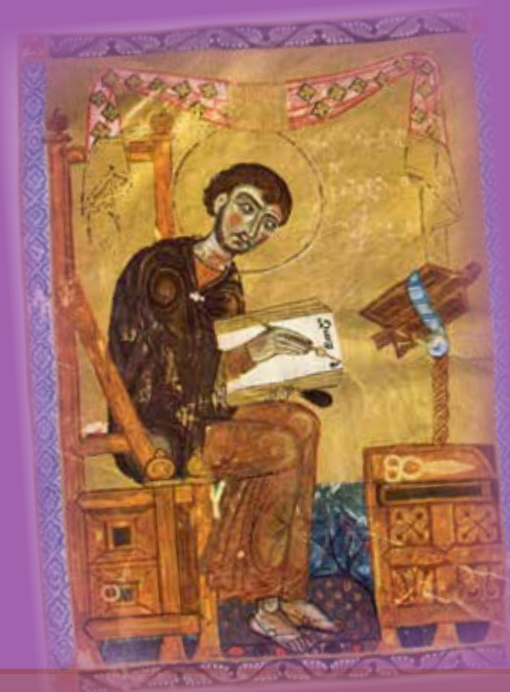


St. Gregory of Narek was a monk, teacher, and poet who lived in the 900's. That's over 1,000 years ago! He was born in Narek and became a student in the monastery of the same name (near the famous Armenian lake, Van). He wrote about the Bible among many other topics. But his most famous poems are the hundreds that are collected in *The Book of Lamentations*. A "lamentation" is a song or poem expressing deep sadness.

The sub-title of this book is *Speaking to God from My Heart*. Here is a part of Prayer 61:

Like the leaves of the cedar tree
That come streaming down in the howling storm,
The evil spirit tries to break
The fruit-filled branches of my life...
The life you shaped with your loving hands, God.

Restore these broken branches
And let them live again
Under your good care, o Christ our King,
Who gives us all good gifts.



CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Caterpillars go into a chrysalis – a little pod, where they can be alone and use what they have inside themselves to become something even more beautiful than they were. When they come out they are able to fly! Jesus came back from the desert, resisting all temptations and ready to begin his mission. The caterpillar comes out of the chrysalis ready to fly. And we can also come out of Great Lent changed.

During Great Lent, we hope to transform ourselves with God’s help, like caterpillars do when they go into a chrysalis. They stay inside for some time to make their transformation into a butterfly.

BIBLE BYTES

The “desert” Jesus stayed in for 40 days was probably different from what we think of as a desert. There were plants and trees and water. Wild animals would have been living there. Imagine how scary that would have been at night!



Well Versed

“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

Matthew 4:4

Family Focus

Today, the children learned about Great Lent, distinctive spiritual practices of the season and how to use these practices to transform their lives and become closer to God. They made a butterfly and cocoon craft as a beautiful symbol of change. We also reviewed the lessons of the Sundays of Lent.

Living Your Faith

1. Review the Sundays of Lent with your child at home.
2. Place his or her craft in a prominent place as a reminder of how we are changed with God.
3. Put aside a few minutes each day to say a prayer with your family. It can be as simple as asking for a blessing or thanking God for your days together as a family.

Celebrating Our Lord

Easter

UNIT
3
Lesson
Four



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ...

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of hope that you gave us on Easter morning. Because of this day, we know that Jesus still lives. This helps us believe that there will always be love in our lives and a chance to always start again through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Daily Bread

Easter is a time of great joy. After Jesus died on the cross, on what we now call “Good Friday,” a man named Joseph, who was one of his followers, took Jesus’ body for burial. Jesus’ body was wrapped in a clean white cloth, as was the custom in those days. Joseph placed the body in a special tomb carved from solid rock and a large stone was placed in front of the opening to the tomb.

Pilate had guards at the tomb to make sure that no one could steal Jesus’ body. Three days later, Mary Magdalene, another follower of Jesus, along with some other women, went to the tomb early in the morning to anoint the body with oils and spices. When they got to the tomb, she found that the stone was rolled away! They were very upset. She thought that someone had taken the body, but did not know how that could be, since there were guards there.

Angels appeared to the women and told them that Jesus was not in the tomb because he was no longer dead. He had risen and was alive.

The women were very happy to hear this and went out of the tomb. Then they saw Jesus, himself. He told them to go tell the other disciples that he was alive and would come to them all to explain everything.



the service, candles are lit and then put out one by one as the Bible is read.

On **Holy Friday**, the Armenian Church also has two special services. These remember the Crucifixion and Burial of Jesus.

On **Holy Saturday** evening, we have a special Easter Eve Badarak.

Then, on Easter Sunday, we celebrate in joy that Jesus is really still alive. This fact that Jesus rose from the dead is the very basis of our faith. We celebrate this holiday with symbols of new life (such as Easter eggs, bunnies, and lambs and butterflies).



A traditional Armenian custom is to dye Easter eggs using onion skins. For the month before Easter, you can collect onion skins from red or yellow onions that your parents use

to cook. You can simply put a large number of onion skins into the boiling water while you boil the eggs and after boiling for about 10 minutes, the eggs will turn a deep orange or red color.

Another method which will produce a pattern on the egg is to wrap the eggs with one layer of onion skin, then tightly wrap that in a cotton cloth around it and tie the cotton off with a rubber band or piece of string so the onion skin and cotton are flat against the egg. Then place it in boiling water for ten minutes. After you have taken it out and unwrapped it, it will look like a very beautiful tie dye or wood grain pattern.



Well Versed

“ . . . but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he is risen!”

Luke 24:5-6

BIBLE BYTES

Robes In Biblical times, men and women wore similar types of clothing, usually a tunic-type long shirt with a tie around the waist. Nobody wore pants as we know them today. Often, they would wear a robe over the tunic. Rich people would have robes made of silk. Poor people might have robes made of wool or cotton. Today, that type of garment would be called a coat or a cape. When we use the word “robe” today, we usually mean a bathrobe that you don’t wear outside of the house.

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Easter eggs



Family Focus

Today we learned about the greatest feast of the Church, Easter. Students took a close look in the Bible at the last days of Jesus’ life. We also reviewed how these are marked in the Armenian Church with special services during Holy Week. To celebrate appropriately, we dyed eggs and had a good old-fashioned Armenian egg-cracking contest!

Living Your Faith

1. Dye some eggs with your children in the traditional Armenian method using onion skins. Instructions are in **Did You Know?** of this lesson.
2. Read the story of Easter in the Gospels with your family and compare them. They are all the same general story, but are presented from different points of view with emphasis on different details. The passages are Matthew 28:1-10, Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-18, Mark 16:1-8.

Celebrating Our Lord

Presentation

UNIT
3
Lesson
Five



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ...
Dear Lord, thank you for bringing us together to celebrate our love for you and so that we can be a part of our parish family. We want to be with each other and help each other as friends in your name. Amen.

Daily Bread

In keeping with traditions of Old Testament times, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the Temple to be “presented” forty days after his birth. In those days, and in some places still today, a new mother would stay away from the public for 40 days, just to recover from giving birth and also to take special care of the newborn baby.

After the 40 days, there was a tradition where the mother would give gifts to God in thanks and also to offer the first born son of a Jewish family for blessing and for service to God. It was a way to welcome the child and celebrate the mother in the religious community. It is something like when you were baptized as a baby.

When Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus for this ceremony, there were two people at the Temple who knew that Jesus was very special.

One of them was a man named Simeon, a very old and religious man who had prayed to God to keep him alive until he could see the Savior who had been promised to the world in Scripture.

When he saw Mary and her baby, Simeon suddenly sensed God’s presence. Simeon knew he had seen the Savior who would bring the light of God to the world. He told Mary and Joseph this.

At the same time, an old woman named Anna came to them. She was called a prophetess, a person who was very religious and had a special understanding of God’s will for the people. She thanked God for Jesus and began to tell everyone who he was.



CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Cast

Mary, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, Priest, Parishioners 1 and 2 (can be played by one or more person)

Props

Baby doll, two stuffed birds or other small animal

Instruction to actors

Read your parts with the emotion in parentheses at the beginning of your lines.

(The priest, Simeon, Anna, and the parishioners are in the Temple. Mary and Joseph enter. Mary holds the baby. Joseph holds the birds.)

Mary: (happy) I had my baby 40 days ago and now I came to bring gifts of joy and purity. I am here to thank God for my healthy baby and to ask that I be taken back into the community.

(Joseph gives the priest the birds)

Priest: (pleased) Mary, you are welcome back into Temple. You are now pure again.

Joseph: (humbly) We bring our first born son to you. We ask you to bless him and also offer him and his future to the service of God.

Priest: (lovingly) Your son will be a servant of God.

(Simeon and Anna step up and look closely at the baby. Simeon becomes very happy, as if he is meeting his best friend.)

Simeon: (excited) I know who this child is! He will be a light for all people all over the world. Dear God, I am very old and now I can die in peace, because I've seen our Savior. Mary and Joseph, may God bless your baby Jesus.

Joseph: (confused) What are you talking about? How do you know this?

Anna: (wise and happy) I see it too. This child is very, very special.

Simeon: (wise and happy) I have prayed to God for many years to see the savior before I left this earth. I know in my heart that this baby will grow up to be that man.

Parishioner 1: (curious) Let me see, too.

Mary: (amazed) Is this true? How will this be for our family?

Simeon: (lovingly, like a father) Mary, Jesus will be the reason many people in Israel will rise and fall. People's true feelings and thoughts will come out, sometimes not in a good way. Sadly, in the end, it will hurt you as his mother.

Anna: (excited) (to the parishioners) Simeon tells the truth. Thank God for bringing us our Savior! See the light that shines from this child?

Parishioner 2: (agreeing) Yes, I think she is right. This baby is truly from God.

Joseph: (happy) Mary, this is amazing. Everywhere we go, others see the light in our child.

Mary: (happy) Yes, he will be a voice of God on earth.

Priest: (happy and caring) You and your family are blessed and purified. Go home and raise Jesus in faith. Teach him of God and our traditions. Bring him back to the Temple on all the feast days.

Joseph: (thankful) (*shakes hands with the priest, Simeon, and Anna*) Thank you. I will take my family back to our home in Galilee. We are the humble servants of God.

Mary: (thankful) Thank you, thank you all. We will teach him all we know. Goodbye.

(Mary and Joseph leave with the baby)

Parishioner 1: (curious) (to parishioner 2) Do you think it's true that this baby is our Savior?

Parishioner 2: (curious) I saw the shining face of his mother Mary. There is something different about this child.

Anna: (confident) Of course he is the Savior. He is the son of God made as a human being. Just you watch. He will be the one who changes the world by bringing love and peace to our hearts.

Parishioners 1 and 2: (amazed) Wow!

-The End-

In the Armenian Tradition

The Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord

On February 14 each year, the Armenian Church celebrates *Dyarnuntarach*, which in English means “the bringing forward of the Lord.” This is the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord. This feast is always forty days after Armenian Christmas. It is in honor of the day when Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the Temple as a baby.

The feast is also about Simeon and Anna. They knew that Jesus was the Savior. Their faith allowed them to see what others could not so easily see. Since they had faith, they were both open to the idea of the Savior being among them. They were both hoping and expecting the love of Christ to come into their world. So when he appeared there as a baby in the arms of his mother, they were able to recognize him.

Also, this story reminds us about how Jesus is a **real person**, fully human. In his presentation at the Temple, we see that he did all of the things that all people of his time did, starting at the beginning of his life.



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Unscramble the letters for each word; then use them to fill in the blanks below.

lgith ygrol seey lepope

“....my _____ have seen your salvation, which you prepared for all _____ to see – a _____ that will reveal salvation to the gentiles and bring _____ to all people..”

Luke 2:30:32

This is what Simeon said when Jesus was presented at the Temple. So, even as a baby who could not talk or walk, Jesus had an effect on people that was deep and meaningful.

Mary and Joseph brought Jesus as a baby to the Temple to present him to God. By doing this, they were presenting him to their friends and family of faith and making a promise for the future. This is very similar to the Armenian sacraments of baptism and chrismation. When you were a baby, you were presented to the church family, with the help of a godfather, godmother, and the priest. The people who attended your baptism pledged to uphold you in your Christian faith as you grew up.



Did you know...!?

BIBLE BYTES

Gentile *This word is still used today, but you don't hear it very much. In the Bible, this word means any person who is not an Israelite or who is not Jewish. In Biblical times, this could have meant the Romans or travelers from other lands. Today, this word is usually used to specifically mean people who are Christian.*

Well Versed

“And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.”

Luke 2:40

Family Focus

Today, the children learned about how Jesus was presented to the Temple by Mary and Joseph. They made the same pledge to a life of faith that you made when you had your child baptized. The children very creatively re-enacted the story as it is told in Luke 2:22-40. They made valentines for you, emphasizing God's love. Enjoy the valentine!

Living Your Faith

1. Tell your child about his or her baptism. Go over photos, if you have them.
2. Read the story of the Presentation in Luke 2:22-40.
3. Post your child's valentine where everyone can enjoy it.

Celebrating Our Lord

Transfiguration



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ...
Lord, we remember and celebrate the day you took your disciples Peter, James, and John to a high place to pray. There you became as bright as the sun and the Father spoke from the heavens. Help us follow you as He commanded that day. Amen.

Daily Bread

When Jesus began planning to go to Jerusalem, he talked to his disciples about some of the bad things that he knew would happen to him. Jesus wanted them to be prepared.

His disciples didn't believe that Jesus could possibly be killed or treated badly by others. They also had a hard time believing that he could rise again after being killed.

So, Jesus took three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John, and went up Tabor Mountain to pray. It took a long time for them to climb. Once they were there, Jesus began to appear physically brighter to his disciples. He was glowing. It seemed like a light was coming from inside his body.

Then the disciples saw more glowing light coming from the sky. Suddenly they saw the great men Moses and Elijah standing next to Jesus. The three disciples were so amazed and moved, they did not want to leave the mountain.

Then a cloud covered them all and they heard the voice of God saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to Him!" (Luke 9:35) The disciples were so terrified at this that they fell to the ground. But Jesus told them not to be afraid.

They saw and heard for themselves how Jesus was truly one with God. They suddenly saw Jesus as more than their teacher. This moment, when they saw him in a different way, they realized that what was happening here was much more important than they had ever dreamed. This moment is called the Transfiguration.

After the Transfiguration, Jesus asked his disciples not to talk about it until he rose again from the dead.



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Below is one of the descriptions in the Bible of the Transfiguration (Mark 9:3-4). It was a moment of realization for the disciples when the true and awesome nature of Jesus was revealed to them.

Do the math and then match the numbers with the words to fill in the blanks.

Jesus= $3+5=$ _____

Whiter= $8-2=$ _____

Elijah= $10-1=$ _____

World= $7+6=$ _____

Clothes= $6-4=$ _____

Bleach= $1+2=$ _____

Appeared= $2-1=$ _____

Dazzling= $11-6=$ _____

Talking= $6+6=$ _____

Moses= $7-3=$ _____

“His _____ became _____ white, _____ than anyone in the
_____ could _____ them. And there _____ before them _____
and _____, who were _____ with _____.”

In the Armenian Tradition

In the Armenian Church, the Feast of the Transfiguration is called Baydzaragerbootiun. It is one of the five major feasts of the Armenian Church. In the Armenian calendar, the feast takes place on the 14th Sunday after Easter, so it is always on a different date between June 28 to August 1.

In church, we sing the Hymn of the Transfiguration. These are the words in English:

By your Transfiguration on the mountain
You show your divine power
We give you glory
Oh, light divine

Well Versed

“This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to Him!”

Luke 9:35

CELEBRATE WITH GOD



Armenians often use both roses and water to celebrate “Vartavar!”



BIBLE BYTES

Transfigure is a word that we don't use much in everyday life. It means to change in outward form or appearance, to transform or to change so as to glorify.

In Armenia, this feast of Transfiguration is also called Vartavar (the Festival of Roses). The reason for this is that a very long time before Christianity, Armenians had a feast around this time of year to honor a goddess named Astghig and to celebrate the harvest. People would play games with water and decorate with roses.

Today, people in Armenia and the Middle East still have fun celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration by throwing water on each other in the hot August weather. They chase each other outside, like a game of tag.

A small sign on a wooden post that says "Did you know...!?" in yellow text.

Family Focus

Today, we learned about the Transfiguration, one of the Five Major Feasts of the Armenian Church. To make the radiance of Jesus that day more understandable, we did a classroom activity on how things seem in darkness and then in bright light. Students colored a picture of the event and learned a line from the special hymn of that day. Finally, we read about some distinctive Armenian traditions connected with the feast.

Living Your Faith

1. Take your child into the church on Feast of the Transfiguration. Splash water on each other afterward in an old Armenian practice!
2. Discuss the concept of how your perception of someone changes when you see them in different circumstances, like the way that Jesus appeared to his disciples. We may think we know everything about someone, but we actually do not.

We Are a Family of Faith Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

We Are Part of a Long Story

UNIT
4
Lesson
One



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ...
Dear Lord, thank you for our families and for our church family. Bless us as we worship and learn together. Help us know you and love you more each day. Amen.

Hye-Q

Seasons of the Church Game

Find two things about each feast or special church season from the list below. Put the correct numbers in the spaces.

- A. Advent _____
 - B. Nativity and Theophany (Christmas) _____
 - C. Great Lent _____
 - D. Easter _____
 - E. Presentation _____
 - F. Transfiguration _____
-
1. This feast is a fifty-day period leading up to Armenian Christmas.
 2. This feast celebrates how Jesus suddenly shone and appeared with other prophets to some of his disciples.
 3. During this feast, we celebrate with symbols of new life, like eggs and baby bunnies.
 4. We celebrate this feast on a different date than other Christians.
 5. On this feast, we remember when Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the Temple.
 6. Many people fast during this time.
 7. This feast recalls the amazing day Jesus rose from the dead.
 8. People decorate their homes, put lights up, and send out cards during this time.
 9. This day not only celebrates the birth of Jesus, but also his baptism by John.
 10. This lasts 40 days.
 11. Two wise elders in the Temple knew that the baby Jesus was the Savior.
 12. This feast recalls something that happened on Mt. Tabor.



Daily Bread

Our faith as Christians begins with Jesus and his teaching. He taught his disciples and they went out and taught others about the love of Jesus. He promised them that the Holy Spirit would come after him and help the church grow. When we think about coming to church, first we must think about who brought us here in the first place. Usually, we came to church for the first time with our parents or grandparents.

They probably brought us here because their parents took them to church too. And it goes backwards through the history of our families, all the way back to Armenia, where our church began.



Many people struggled to keep the Christian faith through the centuries. It began with Jesus, who sent out his disciples to spread his word throughout the world. Two of his disciples went to Armenia. They were Thaddeus and Bartholomew.

They converted many people to become Christian when most people still believed in many gods. Several generations passed before the man we know as St. Gregory was born. Gregory became a Christian because there were others who showed him the love of Jesus Christ. He then converted the King and his family and started the Armenian Church.

From that time, each generation of people taught more and more people about Jesus and gave their time, money, and talents to the church. They built churches, wrote prayers and hymns, wrote the Divine Liturgy, studied the Bible and other religious writings, and most importantly, they taught their children to grow up as Christians.

You are the outcome of this great history. And you are the future of the church too. When you grow up and bring your children to Jesus, you will become part of the love that can be spread around the world.



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.” *Hebrews 11:40*

God sent his Son to us so that we could know him and live with him forever. This quote from the Bible shows how by being part of something bigger than ourselves, we can all become better. We look to Jesus for guidance, but it is also how we grow in faith together and love one another that brings us together with God.

Well Versed

“Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let’s also run the race with courage!”
Hebrews 12:1

In the Armenian Tradition

The story of the Armenian Church is the story of all the people who were part of it once and those who are today. That’s a lot of people! There is a place in our Holy Badarak where we pray for all of these men and women. These prayers are called “intercessions.” We ask God to bless those saintly people in history who have helped our church to stay strong and faithful.

Look at pages 35, 36, and 37 of the *Badarak* book. Write as many names as you can find among the people we pray to be remembered. The first and most important one is done for you!

1. Mary, the Mother of God
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.



CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Our own prayers to honor and remember...

BIBLE BYTES

Elders *Today, this word mainly means anybody who is an older adult. But in the Bible, the reference didn't only mean that someone was older than you. It meant that the older person was a wise leader and a person to whom everyone in the community listened.*

Bartholomew and Thaddeus were disciples of Jesus who both came to Armenia after they left Jerusalem to spread the word. Thaddeus came first; he converted many people, including Princess Santookht. They shared the teachings of Jesus with people throughout Armenia during a time when most people worshipped other gods. Those people taught others. And it took almost 300 years of more and more people turning to Jesus before St. Gregory went to Armenia. He changed the hearts of the king and queen and Armenia became the first Christian nation!



Family Focus

Today, the children learned about how the church is a family of many generations. Since all the faithful of the church, past and present, are honored and remembered at the Divine Liturgy, we looked at the Badarak book together and listed some of the people we pray for by name. There were quite a few! The class completed a Connect-the-Dots puzzle that depicted the fullness of the church through time.

We also reviewed the story of how Armenia was converted to Christianity by St. Gregory.

Living Your Faith

1. Talk with your child about the puzzle; mount it where it can be seen by the family.
2. Share stories about *your* faith and involvement in the church as well as your parents' and grandparents'.

We Are A Family of Faith

We Belong to a Faith Family Now

UNIT
4
Lesson
Two



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit ...
Dear Lord, thank you for all the people in our parish that help our church family. Bless our priest, our parish council, our deacons and choir members, and everyone. Help us be strong and happy in our faith. Amen.

Hye-Q

The history of the church began with Jesus. Put the following names in order of how the story of Jesus came to you: my grandparents, St. Gregory, me, Bartholomew, King Drtad, my parents, the first Armenian Church, Thaddeus.

1. Jesus
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____



IN THE ARMENIAN TRADITION

In the Armenian Church of America, there are many parishes all over the country that are connected to each other by their faith in Jesus and their roots in the history and traditions of the Armenian Church. Each parish is similar to yours. They all began with a group of Armenians living in a certain place. Eventually, they grew in number and asked the bishop of the

Diocese to send them a priest so they could become a true church family.

In the same way, there are Armenian churches all over the world. And the Mother Church for all of them is in Armenia: Holy Etchmiadzin.

Daily Bread

The first followers of Jesus were very excited about their faith! They knew that Jesus would come again and that he had promised them the Holy Spirit to guide them. The Holy Spirit did come to all the disciples. He came in the form of flames over each disciple's head. (We remember that day on the feast of Pentecost.) The Holy Spirit gave them a great energy to go out into the world and help the new church grow.

We read about the first church family in the Bible: Acts 2:42-47. What were they doing?

Read and underline the *action* words. Then copy the words you underlined on the lines below.



Acts 2:42-47

42 The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together. They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed. 43 Everyone felt that God was near. The apostles did many wonders and miraculous signs. 44 All the believers were together. They shared everything they had. 45 They sold what they owned. They gave each other everything they needed. 46 Every day they met together in the temple courtyard. In their homes they broke bread and ate together. Their hearts were glad and honest and true. 47 They praised God. They were respected by all the people. Every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

The first Christian family we read about:

- | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. <u>Studied</u> | 5. _____ | 9. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ | 10. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ | 11. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ | 12. _____ | 16. _____ |

Well Versed

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”
Galatians 6:2

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

John 13:34

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

The church is a place where God’s love rules! In a parish, people are called to love and support one another. We hear this in so many places in the Bible. Here are just a few:

Love one another. *John 13:34*

Honor one another. *Romans 12:10*

Accept one another. *Romans 15:7*

Be patient, bearing with one another in love. *Ephesians 4:2*

Encourage one another. *Thessalonians 5:11*

Spur one another on toward love and good deeds. *Hebrews 10:24*

Forgive one another. *Colossians 3:13*



The first Armenian church in America was built in 1891 in Worcester, Massachusetts and the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America was formed in 1898. There are about one million Armenians in the United States and Canada today.



BIBLE BYTES

Love *We use this word in so many ways that have nothing to do with love. We can say “I love chocolate.” Or “I love to go to the beach.” It’s really more about liking something a lot. But when we read in the Bible that the most important thing we can do is love God (as he loves us) and love one another – wow! That love is about giving, caring, and being close.*

Family Focus

Today’s lesson introduced children to the very first church family as described in Acts 2: 42-47. Students read the Bible passage, summarized it with words and drawings and then compared it with their church family today. We also made a paper fan, using the beautiful “one anothers” of the Bible which captured all the different ways God asks us to care for and encourage one another.

Living Your Faith

1. Review the “one anothers” that are on your child’s paper fan. Hang the fan in a prominent place.
2. Share your faith with others. Invite some of your friends or child’s friends to visit your parish for Holy Badarak or a church event.

We Are A Family of Faith

We Live in Jesus

UNIT
4
Lesson
Three



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ...

Dear Lord, Thank you for bringing your words to our ancestors and to us. We come to church to learn more about you and remind ourselves of the love you brought to the world. Allow us to open our hearts and to understand your message so that we can bring that love to our lives everyday. Amen.

Hye-Q

1. Who were the two disciples of Jesus who went to Armenia to spread the Good News?

_____ and _____.

2. What famous saint helped Armenia become the first Christian nation?

_____.

3. Where in the Bible do we read about the first church community? The Book of _____.

4. What were some of the things they did? _____.

_____.

Daily Bread

In church and through the Bible, we learn about Jesus. Even though he lived 2000 years ago, his teachings and life story are more than history. People ever since then have realized that his love was really forever. It's not something that is stuck in the past, in a dusty book that sits on the shelf. Or in the lives of people in the past. The love of God lives in us today and every day. Jesus' message was meant for the ages, not just for the time in which he lived.



His message to the world is a personal one, like something you share with your best friend. Jesus is a friend who gives us his advice and love right now.



Think about what you do with your best friend.

You might

- share your thoughts
- talk about how you feel
- want to spend time with them
- give them gifts

This is how we can feel about Jesus. And one of the best ways to be with him every day is through prayer.

Many people think that praying is not that important. But prayer is the most personal way to get to know Jesus. Prayer is not just about asking for something, like a certain toy for Christmas. It's not just for church.

Through prayer, we can keep a conversation going with God. When we are sad, prayer can help us to feel better. When we are happy, prayer is a way to express our gratitude. If we are trying to do our best, but become selfish or are tempted to be unkind, prayer can help bring us back on track.



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

"This, then, is how you should pray:

'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'" *Matthew 6:9-13*

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

My Prayer

In the Armenian Tradition

Our faith began 2000 years ago with Jesus. Many people have lived and followed the faith since then! No matter how long ago Jesus was here on earth in person, ever since then, people have found him and looked to his love in their daily lives. Many have written prayers or set prayers to music. They all lived in different times, yet their love for Jesus was just as strong from one century to another. Here are two of those people:

St. Sahagtookhd

Sahagtookhd was a woman who lived in Armenia in the 700's A.D. - over 1300 years ago! Her brother was a bishop and she, too, devoted herself to the church. She lived in a convent where she praised her Lord through poetry and music. Later in her life, convents were closed, but she continued to compose, write, and teach the church songs to others. One of the best known of her hymns is "Saintly Mariam." Each verse of the hymn begins with a letter of Sahagtookhd's name (in Armenian, of course) in the popular style of writing at the time. The hymn begins:

Saintly Mariam, golden urn,
ark of the covenant
Who gave to our hungry hearts
the gift of the bread of life from above;
Remember us to Him always
So that He might forgive us."

Because of her devotion and gifts to the church, she is a saint of the Armenian Church.

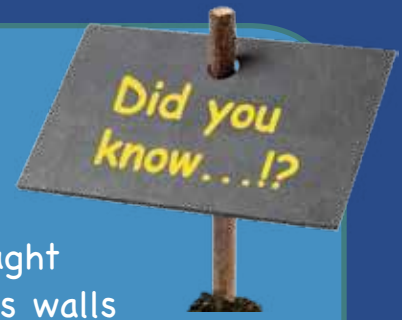
St. Hovhannes of Garni

St. Hovhannes was a well-known healer and preacher who lived in the 13th century. He came from Garni, an ancient town not far from Yerevan, the modern capital of Armenia. He traveled throughout the country and the Holy Land where he converted many people to the Christian faith. He spent many years alone, in prayer, at the famous Monastery of Geghard, carved out of a rocky mountainside. He wrote many well-loved prayers.





Just outside Jerusalem, there is a Catholic church called the Pater Noster (which is Latin for “Our Father”). It is believed to be built over the very place where Jesus taught his disciples the “Lord’s Prayer.” On its walls are 62 large ceramic tiles of the Lord’s Prayer in different languages. One of them is in Armenian!



BIBLE BYTES

Hallowed This means “holy.” So “hallowed be thy name” means “your name is holy.” The popular version of the Lord’s Prayer we all say together is said in older English. We don’t speak this way anymore. But this famous translation continues to touch people’s hearts just the way it is.

Well Versed

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” *Romans 12:21*

Family Focus

Today, we discussed the special friendship we have with Jesus. The children compared it to how they relate to their own best friends. We reviewed the Hayr Mer and discussed the basic components of prayer. The children wrote their own original prayer. And finally, we learned about two renowned people of prayer in the Armenian Church. (Ask your child who they are! Hint: St. Hovhannes of Garni and St. Sahagtookhd).

Living Your Faith

1. Ask your child to share the prayer they wrote in class with you and the rest of your family.
2. Research on the Internet the two saints your child learned about today.

We Are A Family of Faith

We Continue the Work of Jesus

UNIT
4
Lesson
Four



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit ...
Dear Lord, thank you for our Third Grade Sunday School class! We learned so much about you and about each other this year. Help us to take your love and spirit into all we do in the weeks ahead. Amen.

Hye-Q

A Backward Glance...



Daily Bread

Jesus taught people to love others and serve one another. Remember all those beautiful “one anothers”?

Wherever he went, he helped the sick, fed the poor, and taught people to do the same. Even at the Last Supper, he knelt down and washed the disciples’ feet. He told them he had come to serve, not to be served.

Think of times when someone has helped you, even in a small way, such as picking up a toy you dropped or making



a meal for you. Or saying some kind words when you weren't feeling very good. Every time you smile at somebody or make some one else's life easier, you are doing the work of God.

Faith is a powerful thing when you understand it in your heart. The love of God is easy to share. We often think about ourselves first. But when we are able to think of other people's needs, that is when we are truly showing God's love.

What are some simple everyday ways to share God's love? Helping your parents with work in the house or a teacher to clean up the classroom. Or something bigger: collecting coats for poor people who may not have them in winter or bringing food to a soup kitchen or homeless shelter.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

When the righteous see Jesus in heaven, he will tell them something surprising:

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

They will ask him a question:

"Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

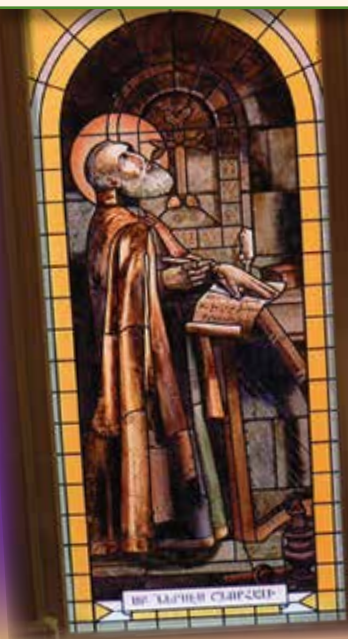
And Jesus will say something very important!

"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me." *Matthew 25:35-40*



Well Versed

"... I will show you my faith by what I do." *James 2:18*



IN THE ARMENIAN TRADITION

One of the very important leaders of the Armenian Church was St. Nersess the Great. He lived in the 4th century and was the great-grandson of St. Gregory the Illuminator.

He was asked to be the Catholicos of the Armenian Church, even though he was not yet a priest at the time. The King and the church leaders knew he was a faithful, smart, and loving man. He became famous for helping people in need. He built schools and hospitals, orphanages, and shelters for the poor and the sick. He wanted Armenian Christians to always help the poor and the needy.

St. Nersess was a true champion of Christian charity in Armenia.

What can you do this summer to help others?

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

Celebrate a beautiful year in 3th grade!

St. Nersess saved many lives with his prayers. Once, when he and other priests and bishops were punished by an angry king and put on a desert island without food or water, he saw that his brother priests were starving. He prayed for a miracle and all of a sudden, swarms of fish flooded from the sea onto shore. A spring of fresh water burst from a rock. At last, everyone could eat and drink.



Did you know...!?

BIBLE BYTES

Righteous *This word means to be faithful to God. In the Bible, it describes those who will be with him in heaven.*

Family Focus

Today we surveyed our year's work with a fast review of the textbook. The children learned about how important it is to translate our faith into loving good deeds. We read about the 4th century Catholicos, St. Nersess the Great, who was renowned for building hospitals, shelters, and orphanages in his service to those in need. The children made a pledge to be more involved with helping others. It was a pleasure having your child in our class – God bless all of you and have a great summer!

Living Your Faith

1. Look through the 3rd Grade Textbook and share some of the stories. Ask your child questions.
2. Work on a service project or two with your child. Perhaps you can help clean up a public park, donate to a shelter, help a neighbor.



Department of Christian Education
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)
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