

Unit One: A Community Over Time

Lesson 5

Lives of the Saints



Pray Together

Hanoon Hor, yev Vortvo, yev Hokvooyñ Surpo, Amen.

If the faith of a mustard seed
Can cast a great mountain
Into the depths of the sea, then truly
We should accept it as the first step
Toward eternal life.
Faith means setting aside doubt
To see the future and the hidden
With the eye of the soul.

*St. Gregory of Narek
Speaking With God From the Depths of My Heart
Prayer 10*

Quick Quiz

Write the correct answer in the space.

1. The leaders of the Armenian Church realized that people might have trouble understanding God's word because they could not _____.
2. Church law may also be called _____ law.
3. In 325, Emperor _____ organized a meeting of church leaders in the city of Nicaea.
4. The First Ecumenical Council developed the _____.
5. The Armenian representative at the Council in Nicaea was Aristakes, the son of _____.

Who's Your Role Model?

We all have someone we admire. When we think about their accomplishments, sometimes we would like to be just like them.

Who is your role model?

Scripture and church history are full of men and women who were living examples of God's principles. Many of them were so loyal to Jesus that they gave up their lives rather than disobey him. These individuals and their special qualities help God's Word and our church teachings come alive for us so many years later. We can look to their actions as models for our own lives.

Which quality – faith, obedience, courage, forgiveness, humility – best describes these saints? Choose one for each saint and write it on the line below.



Stephen

As he was being stoned to death for teaching about Jesus, he cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

(Acts 7:59)



Centurion

He had a sick servant at his home and asked Jesus to heal him. When Jesus offered to go to the centurion's house to heal the servant, the centurion said "Lord, I do not

deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed."

Matthew 8:5-13



John the Baptist

Even though he was a great teacher, he didn't want anyone to think he was important, so he said, "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie."

(Mark 1:7)



Mary, Mother of Jesus

She willingly carried out God's plan for Jesus' birth, even though she did not fully understand it.



Vartan Mamigonian

After the Persian ruler ordered Armenia to start worshipping the sun and fire, Vartan was killed leading Armenian troops against a much larger Persian army in 451 AD.

Rules for God's Role Models

Read Colossians 3:12-17

1. Who are the "chosen people" referred to in verse 12?
2. Do you think verse 16 authorizes you to judge people every time you see them behaving in a non-Christian way?
3. Read verse 17 again. How could this be put into effect by: rock stars, police officers, doctors, business leaders

Here I Am, Lord

"Here I Am, Lord" is a hymn written and composed by Dan Schutte in the 1970's. It describes a person seeking to respond to God's call to shed his light everywhere. Some of the words are as follows:

I

I, the Lord of the sea and sky,
I, have heard my people cry.
I, who made the stars of night.
I, will make their darkness bright.
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Chorus

Here I am, Lord
Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

II

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide,
Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Chorus

Here I am, Lord
Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

When he calls, how will you answer?

Here I Am, Lord

Based on Is 6

Dan Schutte

VERSE: *Majestically*





Words to Live By

“Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

Colossians 3:13



Did You Know?

King Drtad and his family needed a new hobby. Drtad’s father was murdered while he was hunting. Drtad lost his sanity while on a hunt, and he was eventually wounded by a traitor while he was hunting, and finished off with poison immediately after. Perhaps painting or tennis might have been safer!

Our Armenian Way

In the time of St. Gregory the Enlightener, a beautiful nun named Hripsimeh, her abbess Gayaneh, and 36 other women came to Armenia to escape the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. When King Drtad heard about Hripsimeh’s beauty, he had her brought to his palace so he could meet her. Even though King Drtad was already married to Queen Ashkhen, he offered Hripsimeh marriage and all the luxuries of the palace. Hripsimeh refused him, and she and her friends tried to run away. Unfortunately, King Drtad’s soldiers caught up with the women and the king executed them all. This wicked act led to Drtad’s mental illness, which was only cured when Gregory was brought from the pit to heal him.

I never knew that _____.
I’m amazed that _____.

Lord, in the hope that I might live in the spirit of the saints, please help me be more _____.



2. Read **Law and Order** and discuss questions. Accept all answers, of course. For the last question, it might be important to conclude that all Christian communities struggle to understand their faith (with the help of the Holy Spirit). This can be compared to how societies struggle to define their values and develop constitutions and laws that reflect them. Our values are defined by God first (through Scripture and the church teachings that interpret Scripture and the life of Christ) and then lived out in conscious ways by the community of believers. And so we develop canon laws, regulations for sacraments, for the priesthood, for worship, etc. 20 min.
3. Tell the students to imagine their town is going to open a new skate park and they are responsible for setting the rules for the park. They must consider the following:
 The park is in a quiet residential neighborhood.
 The rules must consider safety.
 Who should be allowed to use the park?
 What happens to someone who breaks the park regulations?

 Write the responses on the board or large sheet of paper taped to the wall. When you have accumulated an adequate number of rules, have the students vote on each one with a show of hands. Put a check next to the rules that are adapted. Point out to the class that if it was this much work to come up with simple rules for an imaginary skate park, picture how difficult it must have been to set church doctrine long ago. 15 min.
4. Read Psalm 119:97-104 and have students answer the text questions. Review the answers with them. The correct responses are love, enemies, elders/teachers, path/way, honey.
5. Have children take turns reading **The Nicene Creed - Our Statement of Belief** aloud. When they come to the Creed itself, have them hold their hands in the way we do when the Creed is read during Badarak. 15 min.
6. Read **Our Armenian Way** with the students. Dismiss class with a concluding prayer: “Lord, thank you for the gift of exemplary people in our church history, saintly men and women. We are grateful for all those who have helped us understand God’s story - through the decisions of Councils and the traditional rules and laws of the church - and have made it easier for us to live out that story in our own daily lives. Amen.” 5 min.

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Lesson 5

Lives of the Saints

Key Concepts

1. Role models have special qualities that make them attractive to us.
2. The Bible and the Armenian Church have many heroes and heroines.
3. Their loyalty to Jesus Christ often cost them their lives.
4. We can look to these men and women as models for our own behavior.

Objectives

During the session the students will

1. Examine role models and their special qualities.
2. Read about God's role models and complete an exercise.
3. Read and discuss Colossians 3:12-17.
4. Explore the hymn "Here I Am, Lord."
5. Review the story of St. Hripsimeh.

Materials Needed

Pencils
Lined index cards
Chalkboard, large sheet of paper, or dry erase board
Chalk, markers, or dry erase markers

Note to the Teacher

Next week, your class will make a presentation to the 5th grade (or the grade grouping before your own). Plan accordingly.

Procedure

1. Welcome the students and stand to say the opening prayer together. Have them take the **Quick Quiz**.
Answers: 1. read, 2. canon, 3. Constantine, 4. Nicene Creed, 5. St. Gregory. 5 min.
2. Distribute the lined index cards to the class. Have the students write the name of their favorite role model, as well as their own names. Collect the cards. Have the class brainstorm various qualities that role models should have. List their responses on the board. Try to come up with at least 6 or 7 suggestions. Discuss each answer as it is given. If someone says a role model is someone who is "successful," ask them to define success and make sure the discussion focuses on *God's* idea of a successful life. Return the students' cards to them. Have them jot down the qualities possessed by the role model they named at the beginning of the exercise. Ask them if their choice of a role model is still a good one, as well as why or why not. 20 min.
3. Read **Who's Your Role Model?** to the class. Have the students complete the accompanying matching exercise. The answers are Stephen - forgiveness, John the Baptist - humility, Vartan Mamigonian - courage, centurion - faith, Mary - obedience. 5 min.
4. Have the class read Colossians 3:12-17. Discuss the questions as a class. Guidelines: 1. "God's chosen ones" are all Christians 2. No, the key is that if the word of Christ is indeed in us, then we know *how* to wisely and appropriately "correct" one another; suggest to students that perhaps the best way to admonish others is through our own Christian behavior. 3. There can be a great discussion here about the many ways the virtues outlined in verses 12 – 17 would impact behavior in these groups. Look at the specific virtues: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bear with one another, forgive one another, etc. and apply them to these specific professions. 15 min.
5. Read **Here I Am, Lord** in "reader's theater" style, by assigning one student the first stanza, one the second, and one the concluding question (have them stand to read). Everyone reads the chorus together. Or have all students stand and read line by line. Once they are seated, ask what they feel God might be calling them to do right now in their lives. Grow closer to him? Come to Sunday School and church? Follow him in their daily lives? Be a good brother or sister? Etc. If they ask: "how do we *know* what God wants us to do?" suggest that it's easier than it seems: by learning about his ways through the Bible and church and our own prayers, there's a lot we can know!

6. Have students read **Our Armenian Way** aloud line by line, pausing after each line. As the reading is being done, students may fill in the answers in their text. As a concluding prayer, ask each student to write in the quality they are praying for (you participate as well). Pray together by having each student read his or her line. Then have everyone say: “*Lord, hear _____’s prayer.*” Dismiss the class.

15 min.

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Lesson 6

The Writings of the Fathers

Key Concepts

1. The work of holy men of the past helps us understand Scripture and the teachings of the church.
2. These holy fathers gave up comfortable lives to pursue knowledge of God and teach others about him.
3. These writers and teachers endured great hardships, sometimes even giving their lives for their faith.

Objectives

During the session the students will

1. Explore the role of the important teachers of the early years.
2. Read Scripture passages on how the written word was used to teach believers.
(Acts 1:1, Romans 1:1-6, and 1 Corinthians 15:1-3)
3. Examine mini bios of some of the greatest Christian teachers.
4. Make masks of their particular church father.
5. Present introductions of each to a younger class.
6. Review “Jesus, Wisdom of the Father.”

Materials Needed

Pencils/pens
Index cards
White posterboard pre-cut into face-sized masks (large ovals)
Markers
Paint stirrers, one for each mask, or other sturdy handle for the masks
Strong tape or fast-drying glue to attach the handles to the masks
Scissors for cutting tape if necessary

Note to the Teacher

Today’s activity requires preparing for and then presenting information to another class. You might want to extend this into the next lesson.

Procedure

1. Welcome the students and stand to say the opening prayer together. Have them take the **Quick Quiz**.
Answers: stones, Persian, any two: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, John the Baptist, Gayaneh.

5 min.