

Sacraments: A Call to Holy Living

THE LIVING WATER: BAPTISM

UNIT

3

LESSON
TWO

From Our Hearts to God

Bless my parents and godparents, Lord. Give them long life and good health. Amen.

MY WORLD

single copy: free



EXTRA! EXTRA!

Gregory Baptizes King Drtad In Euphrates River

301 AD. Hundreds gathered along the banks of the Euphrates River to witness the baptism of King Drtad and the royal family by Bishop Gregory. The king was recently healed from his illness by Gregory who was released from his imprisonment of 13 years in the pit at Khor Virab by the king. Upon the restoration of his health, the king accepted Christ and wished to become a Christian.

This amazing change of heart from persecutor of Christians to becoming one himself shocked the nation. There has been an underground Christian community in Armenia for three centuries. It is even said that the king's wife, Queen Ashkhen, and his sister, Princess Khosrovitookht, were following Christ. Now Armenian Christians can worship openly with their king.



GOD'S GUIDING WORDS

Jesus said: I tell you for certain that before you can get into God's kingdom you must be born not only by water, but by the Holy Spirit.

John 3:5

Getting Closer to God

Baptism is our first sacrament.

Jesus was baptized. What do you remember about his baptism?

Turn to Matthew 3: 13-17. Imagine you are there.

What do you see?

What do you hear?

Along with the sacraments of Chrismation and Holy Communion, Baptism brings us into a holy life, our life with God. We are called to holy living and our parents and godparents respond by having us baptized. This sacrament opens the doors of heaven to us, making us a child of God. Christ is now our brother. The grace of God can now enter our lives. With baptism we are adopted by God. God becomes our heavenly, spiritual father. A new bond and closeness begins.

Parents choose a godfather (gnkahayr) and godmother (gnkamayr) to sponsor their child at baptism. The priest asks the godfather, "What does this child want?" and the godfather replies, "Faith, hope, love and baptism." Our parents and godparents guide us to living a God-pleasing life, a good life.

As we grow up to adulthood our parents and godparents, our grandparents and Sunday School teachers, our priest and our church are there to help us live a holy life. What do you think shows we are living a holy life?

RESPONDING IN FAITH

Thank you God for adopting me into your family. Amen.





Taking a **Closer** Look

Jesus called himself the LIVING WATER. Being baptized in water we are born again of the Holy Spirit. We have a new life through the living water of Jesus Christ.

Our Armenian Way

In the Armenian Church, a special necklace is prepared by the priest to place around the baby's neck. It is made of two strands of ribbon or yarn, one red and one white. Red is the color of blood. It is a symbol of life and of sacrifice. White is a symbol of purity. A cross is placed on the narod. Together they represent Jesus himself. To place this around the baby's neck is a beautiful way of saying: "You are now walking with Christ. He is with you and around you!"



Time to Celebrate

Making a narod

White= purity and hope

Red=sacrifice and life

FAMILY CORNER

Sharing Our Faith

Today we learned more about baptism and becoming part of a Christian family. The children reviewed the story of St. Gregory's baptism of King Drtad, making Armenia the first Christian nation. They also reflected on what makes a life holy, since baptism calls us to holiness.

Living Our Faith

1. If your child's godparents live nearby, invite them for dinner.
2. If your child's godparents live far away, sit with your child and make a card for them.
3. Make a "Growing Up Booklet" with pictures of your fourth grader from infancy to today, including their baptism. Put one picture on each page and have everyone in the family write a comment around the picture.

information about the sacraments before playing the game.

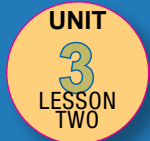
2. Knowing what the sacraments are about is important but the main idea about the sacraments is that our lives intersect with God through them. Do your students give you a sense of understanding this?

Extending the Lesson

Use reference books to read more about the sacraments.

Sacraments: A Call to Holy Living

The Living Water: Baptism



Key Concepts

1. The three sacraments of initiation (baptism, chrismation, and Holy Communion) start our life journey with God and our church community, affirming that each of us is called to holy living.
2. Our physical birth is possible with a father and mother and our rebirth into God's family gives us special parents called godparents who, with our parents, help us to live a holy life.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Reexamine the story of St. Gregory's baptism of King Drtad.
2. Read about Jesus' baptism in the Gospel of Matthew and discuss.
3. Review the sacrament of baptism.
4. List elements of holy living.
5. Explore the concept of Jesus as "living water."
6. Make a baptismal "narod" or braid.

Materials Needed

How Armenia Became the First Christian Nation

A clear glass or pitcher of water

Strands of red and white yarn or ribbon, one of each color for each student (cross will be strung onto braided yarn, so make sure loop is wide enough or yarn is thin enough)

Inexpensive Armenian crosses, one for each child

Procedure

1. Pray **From Our Hearts to God**. Offer your own prayer and ask for student suggestions as well.

2. Have students read the "news article" in **My World** and ask the following questions:

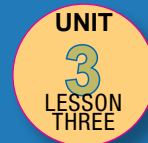
1. Who is this article about? (King Drtad and St. Gregory)
2. What is happening? (King Drtad and the royal family are being baptized)
3. When did it happen? (In 301 AD)
4. Where did it happen? (In the Euphrates River)
5. Why did it happen? (King Drtad wanted to become a Christian)
6. How did the people get baptized? (They went into the river and Gregory baptized them)

Ask if anyone knows the whole story of St. Gregory and King Drtad. If no one can tell you, quickly review the story using the coloring book *How Armenia Became the First Christian Nation*. Hold up the book for students to see (they reviewed the story with this same coloring book in Third Grade), as you might for a much younger group – don't worry, they will enjoy it!

3. Conclude by saying "we know how important baptism is to starting our walk with Christ" and then have a student read aloud the verse in **God's Guiding Words**. 20 min.
4. Turn to **Getting Closer to God**. Read the first five lines and then have students do the brief Bible study. Discuss answers (see: John trying to stop Jesus, thinking he was unworthy; Jesus entering the water; the heavens opening and a dove descending; hear: a voice from heaven saying: "This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased.") Ask students to read the remaining text and underline key phrases and words; then have them share something they've underlined. Allow them a few moments to write about a holy life. Walk around the room and look over their responses. When they are finished, ask for volunteers to share - they can come up and write their answers on the board. When everyone has had a turn, review the list together. 20 min.
5. Hold up the glass or pitcher of water. Segue with: "What's so important about what I'm holding up? Yes, it's water. Can anyone explain why water is important?" Discuss and make sure answers include that we can't live without it, all living things require it, our bodies are mostly made up

Sacraments: A Call to Holy Living

The Sealing of Oil: Chrismation



of it. Read **Taking a Closer Look** and comment: “Well, water is one of the few things we *must* have to live. Without water we would die. But you know what? Without Jesus Christ we are also not truly alive and would not have the chance to live forever with God in heaven. So, just as water is absolutely essential to our bodies, so Jesus is absolutely essential to our souls.”

6. Read **Our Armenian Way. Time to Celebrate** is a narod-making activity. Distribute materials. Show students how to braid it, then take a cross and put it on the narod, tying ends together.

7. Read prayer in **Responding in Faith**. Conclude by getting children’s attention and asking: “What does the godparent ask for the child in the baptismal service?” (Faith, hope, love, baptism). “So when we are baptized we are promised the gift of faith, hope and, love. Say just those words for me again.” After they repeat ‘faith, hope, and love,’ say “Beautiful. And I wish you a week *filled* with faith, hope and love. Everybody together: Amen!” 20 min.

Evaluating Your Lesson

1. Note what worked well and what did not. Make notes for how the lesson could be improved or changed.
2. Do the students enjoy movement games? Does it help them improve their memory of terms? Next week, as the students walk in, ask them to tell you what the godfather asks for the baby.

Extending the Lesson

If you have included reading about St. Gregory and King Drtad in your session, have the students make a drawing of the event.

After church, try to take the students into church to see the baptismal font. Ask a deacon ahead of time to be on hand to show it to the students.

If your church has a window or picture of the baptism of King Drtad, take your students to see it after services.

Key Concepts

1. Anointing the newly baptized with oil marks and seals that person to a holy life.
2. Muron is the special holy oil, prepared by the Catholicos in Etchmiadzin, to use for chrismation.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Brainstorm ways they can demonstrate their love for God.
2. Read and discuss a story on the special mark of one extended family.
3. Reconsider the idea of living a “holy life.”
4. Learn about holy muron.
5. Participate in a muron-making activity.
6. Review the meaning of anointing in chrismation with a sticker activity.
7. Create their own Christian symbols.

Materials Needed

Pencils, color pencils, markers (fine line)
A small plastic bowl; small dishes of nutmeg, cinnamon, allspice and crushed dried flowers
Small cruet of olive oil
Dictionary
Gold cross stickers

Procedure

1. Read the prayer in **From Our Hearts to God**. Ask students what it might mean to “show” that we love God in all we do. As children share answers, write them on the board or have each child come up and write it on the board. Discuss answers. 10 min.
2. Read **My World** (remember to use the creative reading ideas listed in the introduction). Ask the students to share stories of their own family reunions or things they have in common with other family members. Ask and discuss the following: “The child in this story wants his family to be proud of him. How do you want your family to be proud of you? Why do you think your family brings you to Sunday School? Why did they want you to be baptized and chrismated? Do they want you to live a life based on God’s hopes for