

# A People and A Way: The Armenian Church



## Unit Two, Session 1

# The First Enlighteners

### Pray Together

*Hanoor Hor, yev Vortvo, yev Hokoovoyin, Surpo, Amen. O Christ, make my soul worthy to behold with joy the light of your glory, in that day when you call me, and to rest in the hope of good things in the mansions of the just until the day of your glorious coming. Have mercy on me, a great sinner.*

*(a prayer of St. Nersess Shnorhali)*

## Chapter Checkup

Fill in the blanks.

1. The great Armenian church father Khosrov Antsevatsi compared our Divine Liturgy to a “\_\_\_\_\_.”
2. In church, reading the \_\_\_\_\_ and receiving \_\_\_\_\_ help us draw especially close to God.
3. The Divine Liturgy is called Soorp \_\_\_\_\_ in Armenian.
4. Holy Communion came out of events at the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ refers to a set of ceremonial actions established for worship.

## For All Who Are Far Off

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples were in Jerusalem. They were thinking about their next move. They were filled with happiness over Jesus’ visits with them after his death and resurrection. During this time, they chose a man named Matthias to replace Judas, the person who betrayed Jesus and then died shortly afterward.

Through the Holy Spirit, God gave the twelve disciples the ability to speak all the languages they would need to travel far and wide and teach the world about Jesus. The disciples were not men who had gone to college to study different languages. Until the Holy Spirit came on them, they spoke only their local language.

Imagine if God had wanted the twelve to sail for America – the disciples would suddenly have begun speaking the languages of the Cherokee, Inuit (Eskimo), and all the other peoples of this continent!

The Holy Spirit allowed the disciples to visit many nations to tell people the happy news about God’s love for humankind everywhere. Peter told the group of visitors that day that the promise of Jesus was “for all who are far off.”

We are people who are far off, too! We are far off in time from the thrilling events surrounding Jesus, but through the years God gave us dedicated teachers who love to tell us about him.



## Acts 2:1-15, A Reader's Theater

**Narrator:** The Feast of Pentecost celebrates the presence of the Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit came to the apostles as they gathered 50 days after Jesus' Resurrection. They had already seen their risen Lord a number of times but were still not sure what to do. Here's what happened on that amazing day:

**Scripture Reader 1:** *Read Acts 2:1-4*

**Scripture Reader 2:** *Read Acts 2:5-13*

**Scripture Reader 3:** *Acts 2:14-15 and continue with:* Then Peter told the crowd about the signs and miracles the prophets had dreamed and spoken of and how these were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, Son of God. Many people accepted his message of hope and faith – more than 3,000 were baptized that very day!

**Narrator 2:** Today let us celebrate the gift of the Spirit, the gift Jesus had promised to send us, sent on the Feast of Pentecost. The Spirit is present in all we do - renewing, encouraging, freeing, directing, and enlightening us. We read about these gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.

**Scripture Reader 4:** *1 Corinthians 12:7-9*

**Scripture Reader 5:** *1 Corinthians 12:10-11*

**Reader 1:** Let us celebrate these gifts together and pray that we use them to make the world a better place. With the gift of wisdom, which helps us to see clearly...

**All:** Let us renew the face of the earth.

**Reader 2:** With the gift of understanding which helps us to know God and his people...

**All:** Let us renew the face of the earth.

**Reader 3:** With the gift of right judgment, which helps us to make decisions...

**All:** Let us renew the face of the earth.

**Reader 4:** With the gift of courage, which gives us strength and helps us not be afraid...

**All:** Let us renew the face of the earth.

**Reader 5:** With the gift of knowledge, which helps us to see our Armenian Christian part in God's creation...

**All:** Let us renew the face of the earth.

**Reader 6:** With the gift of faith, which helps us hear your voice in the noise of life...

**All:** Let us renew the face of the earth.

**Narrator:** In the spirit of love made real through Christ's sacrifice and the coming of the Holy Spirit, let's greet each other with a holy kiss. *Everyone turns to a partner and gives the Kiss of Peace. Kreesdos ee mech mer haydnetsav. Christ is revealed among us. Orhynal eh haydnootyoonun Kreesdosee. Blessed is the revelation of Christ.*

Now that you have "performed" the Pentecost, put the following events in order. Use the blanks in front of each statement to show the order.

\_\_\_\_\_ Peter stood up with the other eleven disciples to speak to the crowd.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to speak in languages they had never known before.

\_\_\_\_\_ A crowd of foreign visitors gathered to hear the disciples speak the different languages, some of which the foreigners recognized as their own.

\_\_\_\_\_ A sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the house where the disciples were.

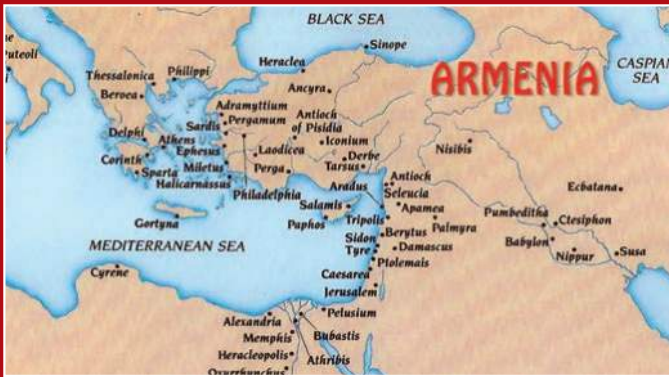
\_\_\_\_\_ Peter reminded the crowd that the disciples could not have been drunk because it was only 9 o'clock in the morning.

\_\_\_\_\_ Tongues of fire rested on the disciples.

\_\_\_\_\_ Some in the crowd made fun of the disciples and said they were drunk.

\_\_\_\_\_ People in the crowd asked one another, "What does this mean?"

# Our Armenian Way



How many languages can you speak? You speak English, and perhaps Armenian. You may know some Spanish or French from school. Do you know anyone who can speak five languages well? Maybe. Ten languages? Doubtful. Dozens of languages? Impossible.

As you know, two of the original twelve disciples, Thaddeus and Bartholomew, at different times, traveled all the way to Armenia to teach people about Jesus. Ancient Armenia was hundreds of miles away from Thaddeus' and Bartholomew's native land. Thaddeus and Bartholomew did not have cars or trains or planes to help them. They walked the entire distance. At most, they may have been blessed with a donkey to carry their supplies.

As the two men hiked through mountains and fields, they encountered many isolated groups of people. Most of these people had their own languages. There were no huge superpowers with common languages, such as English is today.

When Thaddeus or Bartholomew found these groups, they told them about God's plan for salvation through his Son. Each time,

the Holy Spirit instantly gave the disciples a complete knowledge of the local tongues even if the language was spoken by only a few dozen people. Human history will never know how many languages the disciples had to use – certainly more than we will ever know.

First Thaddeus and, later, Bartholomew finally arrived in Armenia. Many of the Armenian people were overjoyed to hear the message about Jesus. They happily believed what they heard, and Christianity took root in Armenia.

Thaddeus and Bartholomew were eventually killed by those who did not want anyone to follow Jesus, but it was impossible to stop him. Churches sprang up, and Armenia went on to become the first nation to make Christianity the official state religion. Through wars, massacres, starvation, earthquakes, and other difficulties, the Armenian people always held tightly to their faith in Jesus.

Imagine that you are one of the early apostles. God has given you the job of teaching strangers about his Son. On the lines below, write down what you would say to teach someone who had never heard of Jesus.

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## Faith Word *Pentecost Hokekaloost* Հոգեգալութ

A feast 50 days (or the 7th Sunday) after Easter that celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples.



ԱՐԱՔԵԼՈՅ ԱՂԱՒՆՈՅ ARAKELO AGHAVNO

# Prayer and Worship

The Armenian Church celebrates Hokekaloost, or Pentecost, with the hymn “Arakelo Aghavno.” It is unclear who the actual author of the hymn is, although some people think it was written by the great historian Movses Khorenatzi and others the 5th century Catholicos Hovnan

Ա - նա - քե - լոյ՝ ա - - - դաւ - նոյ  
 A - ra - ke - lo՝ a - - - ghav - no

ի - ջա - նե - լով մե - ծա - ձայնի  
 ee - cha - ne - lov me - dza - tsayn

հրնչ - մամբ ի բար - ձանց,  
 hnch - mamp ee par - tsants,

*“With a mighty sound from above, the Dove came down...”*

Mantagooni. It is sung at baptisms and during the Blessing of the Water at Christmas as well.

What Biblical story does this hymn recall?

## FAMILY FOCUS: For Parents



### Lesson Roundup

Today, 5th graders studied the events of Pentecost. They learned how the Holy Spirit made it possible for the Good News to go out all over the ancient world. The children explored the mission of Thaddeus and Bartholomew, and they pretended they were missionaries telling people about Jesus. In addition, the class learned about the Pentecost hymn, “Arakelo Aghavno.”

### Family Faith Activity

1. Together, look at the map in today’s lesson. Discuss the arduous journeys that Thaddeus and Bartholomew had to make to reach Armenia.
2. If someone in your home is musical, play and sing “Arakel Aghavno” together. The music appears in your child’s lesson.
3. Call a friend or relative you have not seen in church for awhile, and invite them to join you in church on Sunday. This is part of telling others the Good News of Jesus!

# *A People and A Way: The Armenian Church*



## Unit II, Session 1

# The First Enlighteners

### Key Concepts

1. God gave the twelve apostles the tools they needed to evangelize the ancient world.
2. Of these apostles, Thaddeus and Bartholomew went to Armenia and are called Armenia's "First Enlighteners."
3. The apostles, through the Holy Spirit, surmounted difficulties of language and logistics in order to spread the Gospel.
4. The Armenian Church has a special hymn for the feast of Pentecost.

### Objectives

During the session the students will

1. Learn how the gift of the Holy Spirit influenced the teaching of the Good News.
2. Read the Bible account of Pentecost.
3. Perform a "Reader's Theater" and complete an exercise relating to Pentecost.
4. Review the experience of Thaddeus and Bartholomew.
5. Write down how they would teach people about Jesus.
6. Examine the Pentecost hymn "Arakelo Aghavno."

### Materials Needed

Pens

### Procedure

1. Welcome students and say the opening prayer together.
2. Ask students if they were able to do any of the activities from the family page. Invite them to share their experiences. 5 min
3. Have the class complete the *Chapter Checkup*. Review the answers with them. The answers are "great medicine," Holy Gospel and Holy Communion, *Badarak*, Last Supper, liturgy. 5 min.
4. Read *For All Who Are Far Off*. Then divide up the Reader's Theater parts among your class and perform (you might even want to repeat the performance at an Assembly). You can keep it simple or spruce it up with: flames on headbands – to be put on at the appropriate moment during the Scripture reading; a simple wooden frame "window" with a curtain attached behind

which a table fan can be switched on to blow the curtains at the appropriate moment, etc. After congratulating them for a job well done (hopefully!), break the class up into dyads, review the *Faith Word*, and allow them to help each other complete the accompanying exercise. The correct order is 7, 3, 4, 1, 8, 2, 6, 5. 20 min.

5. Take the children out of their groups. Read *Our Armenian Way* together. Pause to discuss points made in the text. You might want to ask children what languages they know and how to say things in these languages (e.g. “How are you?”) Point out the distance between Jerusalem and Armenia on the map. Explore what problems they may have encountered – lack of food, shelter, wild animals, unfriendly people, etc.) Have the students write their message. When they are all finished writing, tell the children to pretend they are speaking to someone who has never heard of Jesus. In turn, have each child read what they have written. You might consider typing these up for display on a Bulletin Board which the kids can further design with illustrations, pictures of Ararat, flags, churches, etc. 20 min.
6. Read *Prayer and Worship*. Have a choir member or a volunteer (or you can yourself!) sing the first verse of “Arakelo Aghavno.” It’s really quite beautiful. Explain to the children that for people who were not able to read, singing was the most important way people learned about the Bible and their faith. This hymn, for example, is a very poetic summary of the event of Pentecost. 5 min.
7. Invite the students to share the Family Focus section at home. Conclude with a prayer and dismiss the class. 5 min.

*Note: Ask students to bring in a shoebox with a lid for next week’s craft activity.*



## Unit Two, Session 2

# The Second Enlightener: St. Gregory the Illuminator

### Key Concepts

1. God is the source and center of life.
2. People who teach others about God often do so at great personal cost.
3. St. Gregory and other saintly people taught the importance of repentance and conversion.

### Objectives

During the session the students will

1. Read and discuss Matthew 3:1-12.
2. Read a brief account of the life and work of St. Gregory the Illuminator.
3. Make a diorama depicting St. Gregory in the pit.
4. Learn about the relics of St. Gregory and Muron blessing.