

Unit Three* Following Jesus

The Saints



We Speak to God

Dear Heavenly Father: Help us follow the example of your special believers, the saints. Help us to make the same good choices in our lives every day, just as they did.

+Hanoon Hor yev Vortvo yev Hokvooyn Srpo. Amen.



Let's Talk

There are many saints in the Armenian Church. During the Badarak, we remember some of them by name.

Why is a person called a saint?

Do you think that these saintly men and women never had any problems? What did they do? When their hearts were troubled, and they faced serious decisions, they prayed. They looked to God for help, and God heard their prayers.

Listen to This

Mrs. Ashjian's first grade class studied the life of St. Vartan Mamigonian. They were very excited about the play they were going to present to the Sunday School. "Who can tell me one thing about the life of this great saint?" she asked. The students raised their hands eagerly to volunteer.



Ani said, "I know. His teacher was his grandfather Catholicos Sahag. He created the Armenian alphabet along with St. Mesrob."

Aram said, "St. Vartan led the Armenian army in a war so the Armenian people could worship God and not the sun and fire."

The class began to chatter about who was going to play the part of Vartan until finally their teacher said, "No more discussion now. Parts will be assigned next Sunday."

Miriam and her friend Susan were whispering to each other. Miriam raised her hand, "Mrs Ashjian, were there any women in this army?"

"Well, no, but there was a woman who taught Vartan Mamigonian and his two brothers to live their lives as true Christians. This woman was St. Vartan's mother.

Cross out every other letter starting with the 'X', and you will find her name. Write it on the line below.

S/X/A/O/H/P/A/M/G/J/A

Y/N/U/O/C/O/Q/S/B/H/F

S _____

God Speaks to Us

Our Lord Jesus will come again with all his saints. Remember and live your lives in ways pleasing to God the Father.

I Thessalonians 3:13

We Learn About God

Long, long ago, Armenians were trying hard to live in ways pleasing to God. But they had a big problem! It was the year 451 A.D., and the fire-worshipping Persians and the Christian Armenians were about to fight a religious war. Why?

The Persian king ordered all the Christians under his rule to give up their religion and worship the sun and fire. Ghevont Yerets, a priest, called a special

meeting. He invited Vartan because he needed his help to get the Persians out of Armenia. A letter was sent to the Persian king.



Hearts and Hands

St. Vartan's Shield



Our religion is not like a coat that we can put on and take off. It is a part of our blood and bones. We will serve you loyally in your army and pay your taxes if you will leave us alone. If you force us, we are willing to suffer and to die. There is no power on earth that can separate us from Jesus and make us change our religion.

What do you think the Persian king did when he read this letter?

Our Armenian Way

The Persian king sent an army of about 220,000 soldiers to Armenia to make the people change their minds about being Christian. The Persian army even had elephants.

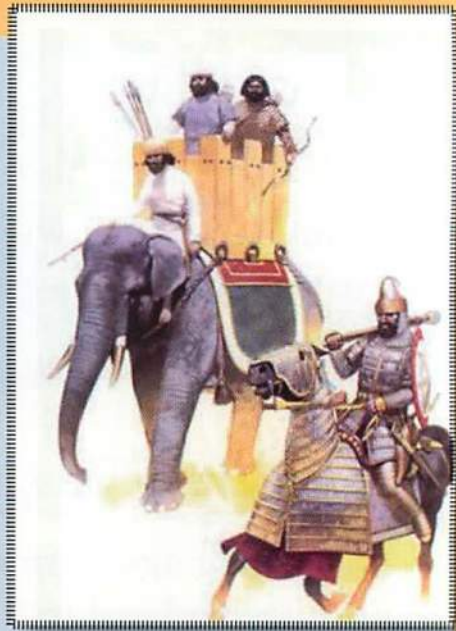
The day before the battle, the Armenian soldiers spent the night in prayer. Leading them were Catholicos Hovsep, Ghevont and General Vartan Mamigonian. At dawn, the soldiers received Holy Communion.

The band of Armenian fighters, 66,000 of them, stood on the field of Avarayr near Mt. Ararat with their leader General Vartan.

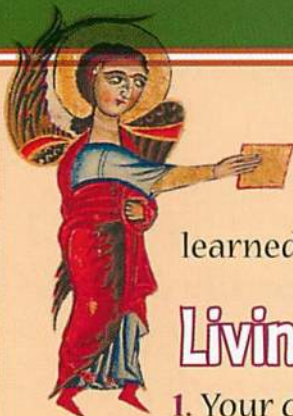
He led the men across as he rode on his white horse. At one point, he found himself surrounded by a circle of elephants. An arrow struck him, and he died. The battle lasted only one day and there were great losses on both sides. Still the Armenians did not give up their Christian faith.

They continued their fighting for thirty years. Then, Vartan's nephew, Vahan Mamigonian made a treaty with the Persians which granted the Armenians full religious freedom.

1. What was the most exciting part of the story about the Battle of Avarayr?
2. Did Vartan really lose the battle?



For My Family



Sharing Our Faith

This morning, we discussed what makes a saint a saint. The children learned about St. Vartan. You can read his inspiring story on this page.

Living Our Faith

1. Your child made a shield. On it, are symbols honoring Vartan, his soldiers and the Battle of Avarayr. Discuss the story of St. Vartan and the symbols your child chose.
2. Together with your child, go to www.armenianchurch-ed.net, the Diocesan website, and look up information about a saint.
3. Next time you're in church with your child, notice one of the stained glass windows that depict a saint and talk about it.