

Ordination



BREAKFAST WITH HAYR SOORP

All was ready in the third grade room. There was milk and juice, an electric oven and frozen waffles, syrup, and even a thermos of coffee for Hayr Soorp. Aram's mother had baked choreg that morning and it was still warm. Today the third grade would take communion and after church they would have breakfast with Hayr Soorp! Vahan checked to see if each place was set properly. Maral had made placemats at home and brought them in for today's breakfast. Simon remembered to bring two packets of sugar for Hayr Soorp's coffee and placed them at the head of the table.

Then the children went into church. They had prepared for penance and each received Holy Communion. They returned to their pew and participated in the rest of the liturgy. After the Last Blessing they waited until the church emptied. Hayr Soorp changed his clothes and came out of the vestry. "Are you ready for breakfast?"

he asked.

Together the children said, "Asdvadz Oknagan, Hayr Soorp. Yes!" They had been practicing the correct greeting to say to Hayr Soorp and he was pleased to hear them say it.

"Asdvadz bahaban," he answered. "Let's go eat!"

As they entered the room they could smell the waffles. Nina's mother had everything ready and hot. They said jashagestzook together and ate. They talked about many things. Hayr Soorp wanted to know how they were doing in their studies and each student was allowed to tell something he or she had learned.

Vahan recited one of St. Nersess' prayers.

Mayda told about how she had used the penance checklist during the week to prepare for today's Holy Communion.

Maral told about how St. Paul was converted.

Aram recalled the story of St. Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew coming to Armenia.

Nina recited Psalm 100.

Harout listed the Ten Commandments.

Hayr Soorp was amazed. He complimented the third grade teacher on her fine job.

"Hayr Soorp," said Mayda, "we were wondering about something and we would like to ask you about it."

"What is it? What do you want to know, children?" he asked.

"Why and how did you become a priest?" Nina was brave enough to ask it.

"Well, well, well!" said Hayr Soorp. He was a little surprised by the question. "I don't remember exactly when I knew that I wanted to be a priest. I just sort of grew into it. I do remember the first time I really felt like *now* I was really a priest. It was the first time I did the badarak in my first church parish."

"When you were little, did you want to be a priest?" asked Harout.

"Yes and no. Some days I wanted to be a fireman. Some days I pretended to be a doctor. Once I remember wanting to be a mountain climber. And once in a while I pretended to be a priest. I had a fireman's helmet I wore when I was pretending to be a fireman. I had a doctor's kit, too. When I played priest I would put my old small blanket around my shoulders and fasten it in front of my chest with a large safety pin. I had a big goblet that my mother had gotten flowers in that I used for a chalice. I would give all my playmates communion. But then it was just a game we children played."

“How about when you were our age?” asked Nina.

“When I was eight I was asked to be one of the apostles for Holy Thursday’s Foot Washing. It was the first time I was at the altar. I remember looking out at everyone and feeling a bit afraid. When I was eleven I started learning how to be an altar server. I really liked holding the candles. As I grew older, I read the Bible, I sang in the choir, I taught Sunday School, and I was in the ACYOA, I didn’t think about becoming a priest then. At school I was a pretty good football player and I thought about playing pro ball.”

“But when did you decide to become a priest?” asked Aram.

“I went to college away from home. A friend of my older brother was the priest in a nearby town. I often visited him. He asked me to help on the altar at his church. Once I asked him the same question you are asking me. He told me he had never been much of a churchgoer when he was growing up. When he was 18 he was in our church helping set up for Holy Week services and he heard a voice call him. Right away he knew it was God. God told him to be his servant and helper. From that day he decided to become a priest. He had a very strong calling. But it was different with me. I thought about becoming a priest, but I didn’t tell anyone. I asked my friend if I could spend a week with him during vacation. I wanted to see what a priest did on a day-to-day basis. He let me go with him to visit people in the hospital. I attended all the meetings he had that week. I helped him make the nushkhars he would need. All in all, I had a great time. I saw that being a priest was a lot of hard work at all times of the day. Some of it was happy work and some of it was very sad. Some of it was tiring and some of it was exciting. I thought to myself, this is a good job for me. I went into the church one night and prayed and prayed. I wanted to hear God calling me. But no voice spoke to me from the altar. I thought that God didn’t want me after all. I went back to school feeling very let down and disappointed.”

For a moment Hayr Soorp looked sad. Maral reminded him, “You did become a priest though.”

“That winter of my senior year at college I realized that I wanted to go to seminary. I felt God’s love for me more and more. I wanted to show my love for God. I applied to seminary and was accepted. I studied hard and graduated. I became a deacon and then I was ordained a priest. The bishop came to our church and performed the special ceremony. He put his hands on me just as Christ had put his hands on his disciples and made me a priest. I knew I had made the

right choice. Now every time I give a sermon, or visit someone in the hospital, or do Christmas Eve service, or have breakfast with a Sunday School class, I know God did call me and he is still calling me. He didn't talk to me from a burning bush or do any miracles or appear in a vision. God spoke to me through all the people I knew that made me feel good about being a priest. God called me in a lot of little ways."

"Could one of us become a priest some day like you?" asked Vahan.

"Oh, yes. And I hope more than one of you will become a priest. And the rest of you that do not become priests, I hope you will always find ways to serve God in all you do."

This had been a very nice day for the third grade. When they had finished eating, they all stood and said "Uzliyootyoon." Hayr Soorp left to go visit someone in the hospital. The children cleaned up with their parents. It had been a special day!

How do I feel in Church?

Write about times you feel like this in church:

I feel happy in church when

I feel joy in church when

I feel excited in church when

I feel helpful in church when

I feel peaceful in church when

I feel at home in church when

by turns.)

After reading, ask the following questions:

What is the sacrament of penance? (The sacrament for forgiving sins.)

Should we have communion if we do not go through penance first? (No.)

What are the parts of the sacrament of penance? (Recognition of sins, feeling sorry, confessing the sins, making up for them, fasting, absolution. List steps on the board.) (25 min.)

3. Text activity: Have children turn to the text activity on page 82 and fill in the steps in the picture. (From bottom to top step: recognition, contrition, confession, penance, fasting.) (15 min.)

4. *Homework*: Penance checklist: Go over with the children the simplified confession and penance checklist. Tell them to use the checklist this week to do the sacrament of penance preparation. Next week they will say the confession and have communion. Remind them to fast. (10 min.)

Closing prayer.

Vocabulary

penance
contrition
confession
absolution
fasting
Der voghormia
megha asdoozo

Session 4—Ordination

Key Concepts

1. God has called many people to serve him.
2. People respond to God's gift of love by becoming his servants.
3. The sacrament of ordination is the process by which people become priests.

Objectives

Students will

1. Recall people they have studied who have been called by God.
2. Read and discuss a story about how a person became a priest.
3. Chart how they feel about being in church.

Background for Teacher

This lesson will introduce children to the concept of being *called* and the vocation of priesthood as a *calling*. It briefly outlines the process a person might go

through to become a priest. It lets the children know that the calling to become a priest may be quite concrete and tangible, or it might be very subtle.

Since the story is about a class having breakfast with their priest, a Hayr Soorp, after church, you might also make arrangements for your class to have breakfast with their priest. The same question: "How and why did you become a priest?" might be posed to your priest. Be sure to inform him ahead of time of this possibility.

Resources

The Sacraments: The Symbols of Our Faith; Saints and Sacraments, your priest

Materials Needed

- Pencils
- Items which symbolize "calling": telephone, bell, tin can or paper cup telephone, telegram, bugle/horn, note

Procedure

Getting the room ready: Display calling devices which children may handle when they arrive until you call the class together.

1. As the children enter, briefly discuss homework. When ready, call to order.

Opening Prayer: a prayer of St. Nersess (#21):
O Christ, make me worthy of the joy of knowing you on the day when you call me. Let me feel the rest and peace of the hope for the good things you will give me in your Kingdom when you come again. Have mercy on all your creatures and on me, a person who often sins. (simplified/adapted) (10 min.)

2. Say: "The items gathered here today are all things used to call people. Can God call us in any of these ways?" (No.) "Can anyone recall how God called people in some of the lessons we have had this year?" (Children should recall story of Moses, the apostles, Paul, and perhaps some from other years. If not, remind them of these examples.)

"A long time ago, the Bible tells us, God called certain people to serve him in some special way. He often spoke directly to the people. Today we don't hear very much about God speaking directly to someone and asking that person to do something extraordinary. But God does still call people. He speaks to them and lets them know there is something special he wants them to do. Sometimes people do hear a voice. Sometimes people just know God has spoken to them. Today's story is about a special calling. It is about someone who was called by God to become a priest. We often say that being a priest is a special calling. As we read the story, think about how this priest knew he was being called by God to do his special work." (15 min.)

3. Read story on page 85 to the children or have them

read by turns. After reading, ask the following questions:

Why did the priest respond to God's call? (Because he loved God and wanted to show his love for God in that way.)

How did he become a priest? (Studied at seminary and was ordained; a bishop laid his hands on him in a ceremony, through the sacrament of Holy Orders/Ordination.)

How did the priest in the story feel about being a priest?

Why is the priest someone special to us?

Why is the priest someone special to God?

(These last few questions are open and the chil-

dren may respond as they feel, as long as their thoughts are reasonable.) (20 min.)

4. Text activity: How do I feel in church? (15 min.)

Closing prayer.

Vocabulary

greeting for priest: (Der Hayr) orhnetzek; (Hayr Soorp) Asdvadz oknagan.

sacrament of ordination

calling

seminary

ordained

Holy Orders

Notes