

## DECEMBER FEAST DAYS... and teaching suggestions

### 3rd—Saints Thaddeus and Bartholomew

With this feast commemorating the apostles who came to Armenia, give your students a chance to see how the Church of Christ was started in all the world by the apostles' travels and preaching. Consult a history of the Church, or the C.R.E. pamphlet "About the Apostles and Paul", to see where each of the original twelve preached. Be sure to read the day's Gospel passage, Matthew 9:35-10:7, to your students.

### 9th—Conception of the Virgin Mary by St. Anna

This feast shows us the reality of Mary's birth—her complete humanity. Notice that the Church places this feast nine months before the feast of Mary's birth, in September.

### 10th—Saint Nicholas

This is "the" Saint Nicholas, who was a fourth-century bishop of Myra in Lycia. Patron saint of sailors and lover of children (hence the tradition of him as Santa Claus bringing gifts), his story is fascinating. Let older students find out about him in books from the library.

### 17th—Saint James, Bishop of Nisibis

St. James lived in the fourth century, and was educated at Caesarea with St. Gregory the Illuminator. He was one of the participating bishops at the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea—325 A.D.

Like many other saints, he is known as "wonder-worker" (in Armenian, *skantchelakordz*) because he was a man who truly loved God and received the power to do wondrous good works for others. St. Gregory of Narek wrote an oration dedicated to him, and the chant for his feast day was written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled.

This is the name-day of churches or men named after St. James of Nisibis (or Medzpin.)

### 24—Saints David the King and James the Apostle

James "the Less" and son of Alphaeus, is the one commemorated on this day.

### 26—Saint Stephen, First Deacon and First Martyr

The day's Bible readings tell the story of this brave man. Read them with students, and have them notice how the Church remembers Stephen in each Liturgy, during the diptychs just after "Hoki Asdoodzo"—page 31a in the blue hard-cover Liturgy book.

Stephen was the first one to "lay down his life for Christ," but also served *during* his life as a deacon.

This is the name day of all those named Stephen, and

it is also a day of celebration for deacons. Ask your clergyman or someone who has visited an Armenian monastery overseas to describe the special ceremonies that take place on this day in Jerusalem and other centers.

### 27th—Saints Peter and Paul

Let your students read about these two followers of Christ to see the ways in which they witnessed to the faith, both as they lived and as they gave their lives.

### 29th—Saints James the Apostle and John the Evangelist

The two brother apostles, called "Sons of Thunder" because of their zeal. James, the first of the Twelve Apostles to be martyred, is the one after whom the Armenian monastery and monastic brotherhood in Jerusalem are named.

### 30—First Day of the Fast of Nativity

Before the major feast, there is a week of preparation and fasting, like Holy Week before Easter. Make your students aware of this special week and urge them to observe it in some way at home—at least by reading the daily Scripture passages.

### 31st—Saints Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Silvester of Rome, Ephraem of Syria

Basil of Caesarea (330-379): called "the Great", Basil was responsible for giving a lasting order and structure to monasticism in the early Church. He was Bishop of Caesarea and, rather like St. Nersess the Great, built hospitals and orphanages while he was bishop.

Gregory of Nyssa (330-395): brother of Basil the Great, and a foremost theologian. He lived during a time when many heresies were being expounded, and always defended the teachings of the Nicene Creed in a learned and convincing way. He, Basil, and St. Gregory of Nazianzus are often referred to together as the "Cappadocian Fathers," because all were Cappadocians by birth and all were great expressers and defenders of the faith.

Silvester of Rome: considered to be the baptizer of Emperor Constantine, he was Bishop of Rome from 314 to 335, the time when Christianity was first given legality in the Empire.

Ephraem of Syria (303-73); a voluminous writer, especially of hymns and prayers, but also Bible interpretations and dogmatic works. He wrote in Syriac, but very early his work was translated into Greek and into Armenian (so this means that his writings were widely used in the early centuries of the Armenian Church.) From these translations, later translations into Latin and Slavonic were made.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for transparency and accountability, particularly in financial reporting and auditing. The text notes that incomplete or inaccurate records can lead to significant errors and potential legal consequences.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the use of statistical software and data visualization techniques to identify trends and patterns in the data. The author stresses the importance of using reliable sources and ensuring the integrity of the data throughout the analysis process.

3. The third part of the document provides a detailed overview of the results of the study. It presents a series of tables and graphs that illustrate the key findings. The data shows a clear correlation between the variables being studied, and the results are consistent across different samples and time periods. The author concludes that the findings have significant implications for the field and suggest further areas for research.

4. The final part of the document discusses the limitations of the study and offers suggestions for future work. It acknowledges that the study was limited by the scope of the data and the methods used. However, the author believes that the results provide a solid foundation for further exploration and that the findings can be applied to a wide range of related issues.