

DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA
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DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

bulletin

VOLUME THIRTEEN

NOVEMBER 1983

NUMBER NINE

Thanksgiving Ideas

FOR YOUR HOME:

Did you know that there are three kinds of meals in the world?

1. 29% of the world eats full scale meals, with large portions, plenty of meat, and lots of vegetables.
2. 33% of the world eats sufficient meals, which are made up of mostly rice or wheat, no meat and few vegetables.
3. 38% of the world eats inadequate meals, which are made up of a cup of watery soup or a small portion of rice and no meat or vegetables.

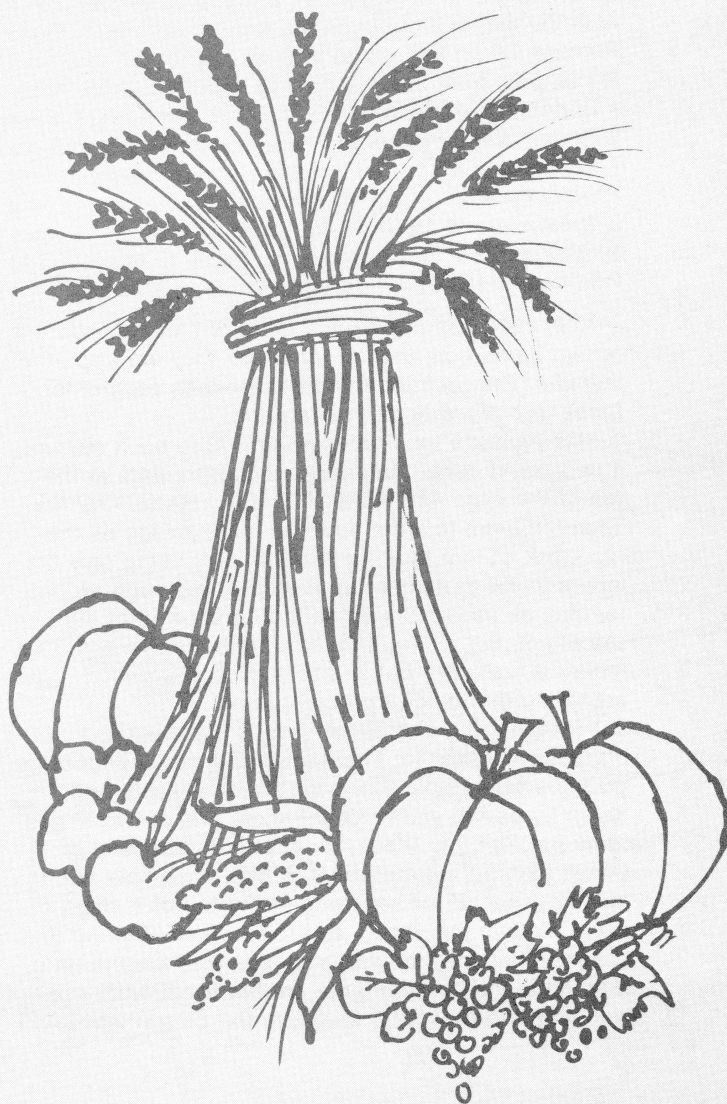
One way to express our thanks that we are among the 29% is to have a family fast one or two meals a week for a month. Then send the money that is saved to a world hunger agency.

FOR YOUR PARISH: "Thanksgiving Graffiti"

Hang a large blank sheet of paper in your parish lobby. Have your pastor announce (or put it in your Sunday Bulletin) that after Badarak, everyone—young and old—is invited to write, print or draw something that represents what they are thankful for. Students should be ready with felt-tip pens, crayons, water colors, etc. for people to use. If this is done in early November, the resulting graffiti can be displayed in a prominent place in the parish to remind people of how much we do have to be thankful for. (Makes for an excellent Sunday School project.)

FOR YOUR CLASSROOM:

1. "Counting Biblical Blessings" - Print up a sheet with the following Scripture verses on it, and ask students





to write after each verse what the various writers or biblical characters were thankful for:

Psalm 30:4-5
 Psalm 97:10-12
 1 Chronicles 29:6-13
 Daniel 2:23
 Acts 27:34-35
 Romans 1:8
 Romans 6:17-18
 1 Corinthians 15:55-57
 2 Corinthians 2:14
 2 Corinthians 9:15
 Philippians 1:3-5
 2 Thessalonians 1:2-3
 1 Timothy 4:3-5
 Revelation 11:16-17

After the class has done this, have them choose one or two items from the list for which they are also thankful. They can then share these with each other. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving.

2. "My Reasons for Thanksgiving" - Give each student a pencil and paper. Ask each student to write at the top of the page: MY REASONS FOR THANKSGIVING. Then tell them to write down as many things as they can think of that they are thankful for - using only the letters in the statement at the top of the page. No letter may be used more times than it appears in the statement. Set a time limit of around ten minutes. This makes a fun game but is also a good discussion starter on the topic of giving thanks.

3. "Thanksgiving Exchange"-This is another good discussion starter for Thanksgiving, especially for older grades where students know each other fairly well. Begin by having each student share one or two things he is thankful for. These will usually be the kind of things that are most obvious to him. Then have each student write his or her name at the top of a sheet of paper. Collect the sheets and redistribute them so that everyone has a sheet with someone else's name on it. Now have each person write on that sheet what she would be thankful for if she were the person whose

name is on that sheet. She can list as many things as she wants. Following this, pass the sheets back to the person whose name is on each sheet and discuss the following question:

- (1) What things are written on your sheet that you haven't thanked God for lately?
- (2) What things are written on your sheet that you have never even thought about thanking God for?
- (3) Is anything written on your sheet that you disagree with or that you don't think you should be thankful for?

This exercise helps young people realize that they often take for granted many things that they should be thankful for.

4. "The Thankful Leper"- This exercise can be used as a way to help students recognize the need for expressing thanks to God rather than constantly bombarding Him with requests. Together read Luke 17:11-19, the account of Jesus healing the ten lepers. (A modern translation of the passage is the most effective—the Good News Bible will do.) Prepare a sheet with the following instructions and questions and pass out to each student. (You'll also need construction paper, crayons or felt-tip pens of various colors.)

Carefully re-read the account of Jesus healing the ten lepers. As you read, attempt to identify with the feelings of the lepers who did not return to thank Jesus, with the leper who did, and with Jesus in this situation. Then answer the following questions:

1. How do you think Christ felt when only one individual out of ten returned to give thanks?
2. Describe what you think the grateful leper must have felt and thought during his healing encounter with Christ?
3. What excuses can you think of for the nine healed lepers who did not return to give thanks to Christ?

Now attempt to apply this passage of Scripture to your life by reacting to the following:

1. With whom in this story do you most identify, the nine who did not return or the one who came back?
2. What excuses do you usually think of for not thanking Christ for what He has done in your life?
3. What was the last thing Christ did for you or provided for you that you wish to thank Him for?
4. Using the materials provided for you, construct a colorful thank-you card addressed to Christ. The outside of the card should express through symbolic colors and expressive symbols the event or object for which you are thankful. On the inside of the card, write a short letter, poem, or prayer that expresses your thankfulness. After completing this assignment, divide the class into small groups to share their answers and explain the meanings of the cards they made. Close with a prayer, emphasizing thanksgiving.