

Unit 3: GOD'S GREATEST GIFTS

LESSON 3.1: Holidays and Family Traditions

Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

Video Lesson: [The Christmas Story](#) (duration 3:30)

Craft/Activity: DIY Jingle Bells

**Consider making this a two-part craft activity to allow some time for the paint to dry.*

Items needed: an egg carton cutouts (made to look like bells), paint and optional glitter glue, pipe cleaners, jingle bells

For homework:

Printed and cut out cards of the Christmas Tree for the Christmas cart for each child.

Words of the Week:

աւանդութիւն – avantootyoon – tradition

Սուրբ Ծնունդ – Soorp Dznoont – Christmas (Holy Birth)

նուէր/ընծայ - nver/undza – present

Memory Verse:

“Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.”

- 1 Corinthians 11:2

Lesson

Lesson Opening & Creating Interest:

Open with prayer:

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

Lesson Body:

We all like celebrations and feasts. During the holiday season, right after Thanksgiving, as lights slowly appear on houses, there is a special holiday most people, especially children, look forward to. It is an entire season, filled with many beautiful traditions – decorating a Christmas tree, making special Christmas cookies, favourite holiday meals and get-togethers with our loved ones in joy and gift giving. All of these are fun holiday traditions.

Different countries have different Christmas traditions. Traditions may also be different from family to family. In Armenian families, especially in America, the Christmas season is a little bit longer and is full of many family traditions. We often say that Armenians celebrate Christmas twice: American Christmas on December 25th and Armenian Christmas on January 6th.

Q: What can be a family tradition?

Traditions are special things people do year after year. A tradition is something that could have begun a long time ago, even before our great grandparents, which we follow and pass along. It is not just families who have many traditions, but different cultures do too. This means that they are only followed by a specific nation or group of people, such as Armenians. Some traditions are religious and are based on a belief or religion, just like the traditions of our church. And as we said, there are also family traditions that are special for the family members of a specific household who pass them on from generation to generation.

Q: Can you think of any traditions your family follows during Christmas?



Image from www.vevmo.com

Read out loud:

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- 1 Corinthians 11:2

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Soorp Dznoont – Christmas (Holy Birth)**

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Some Christmas Traditions of American-Armenian Families

Decorating a Christmas Tree – This is a fun tradition loved by Christian families. Putting up a Christmas tree is a special day and even some families have their own tradition(s) of decorating the Christmas tree. The evergreen, a tree that stays green through the entire year, is a symbol of Jesus’ birth and life, which is eternal (meaning it never ends). This is why Christians decorate a Christmas during this season.

Gift Giving - During Christmas we give and receive gifts. Children wait for St. Nicholas to visit and give them presents. This is all so exciting, but we must remember that passing on the tradition itself is a gift that holds culture, nations, and families together. Traditions are cherished and shared with love just as gifts of Christmas are.

Christmas Carolling – Although, it is not an Armenian tradition, some families like to celebrate in their neighborhoods and churches. When we sing, we join the ranks of angels in celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, just as the angels rejoiced and spread the good news. Carols are special hymns that tell us about Jesus’s miraculous birth.

Following this tradition, let’s make some beautiful jingle bell ornaments, that can be not only great decorations for our Christmas trees, but also wonderful gifts.

Craft: DIY Jingle Bells

**This craft can be completed in two parts. After painting the bells, set them aside to dry. Feel free to watch the video lesson during this break.*

Directions:

1. (Make ahead) Cut up the egg carton as displayed below and trim the extra ridges till it has the desired look.
2. Use a toothpick to make the top holes for where the pipe cleaners will be inserted, before painting.
3. Distribute cutouts to students and have them paint any color they choose.
4. Once the paint is dry, use the toothpick again to make sure the little holes are open.
5. Cut a pipe cleaner in 3 equal pieces, bend a little hook on one end then insert from the top of the egg carton bell downwards and secure the jingle bells by just folding the pipe cleaner upwards on the other end.



Image from www.powerfulmothering.com

Now we do fun and important things during Christmas time, but the most important thing is to be thankful to God for the greatest gift, Jesus Christ.

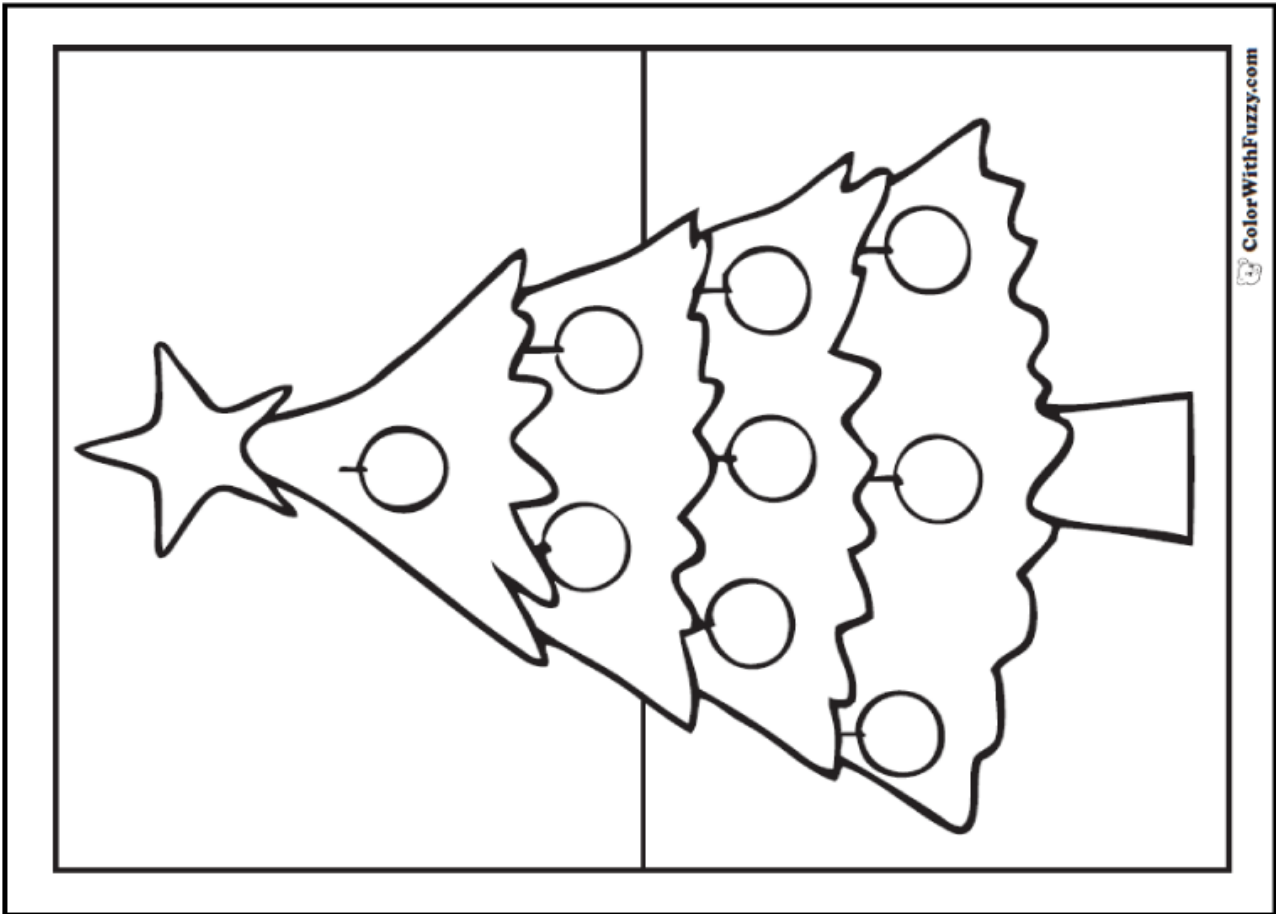
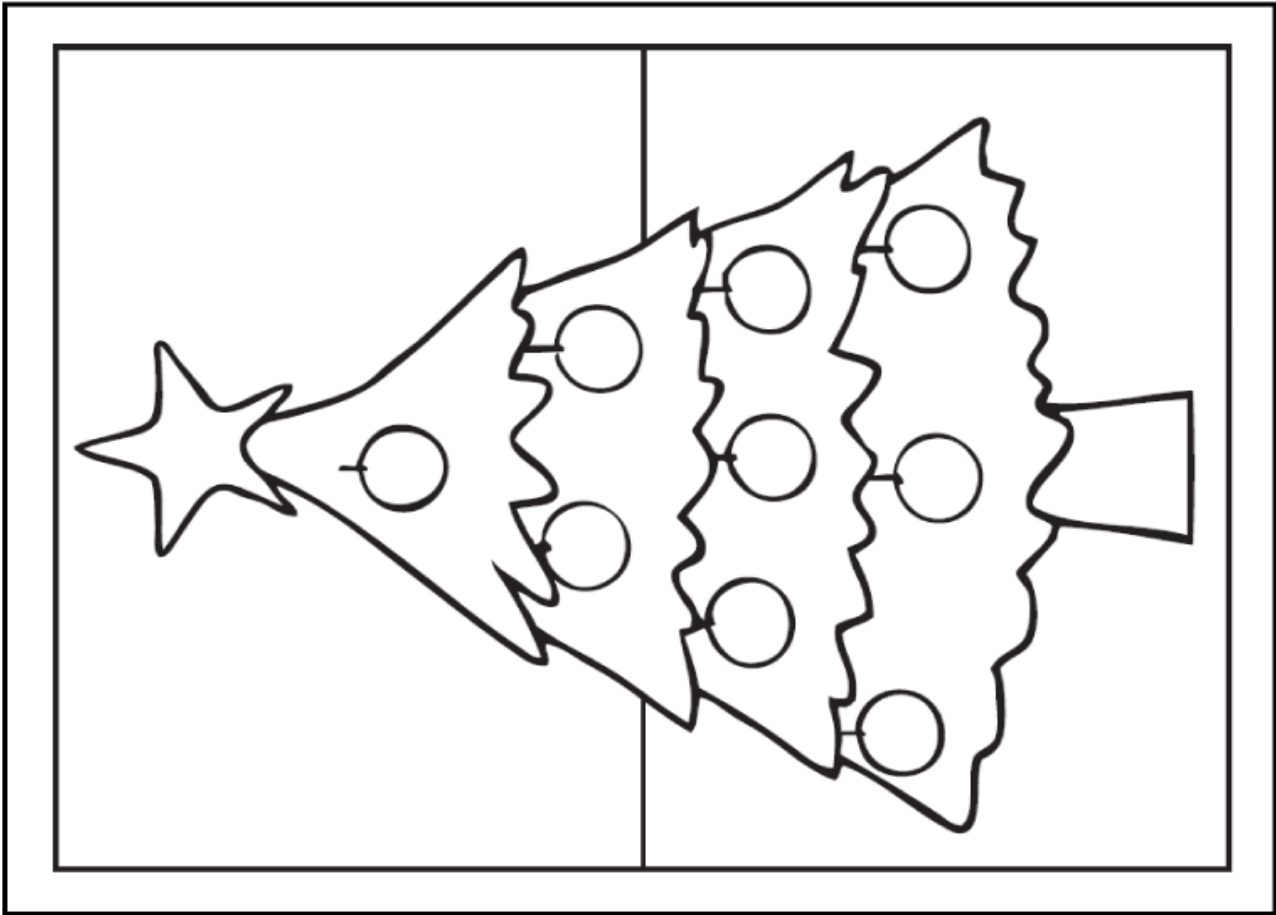
Video Lesson: [The Christmas Story](#) (duration 3:30)

Candlelight Liturgy (Jrakakalooyts) and Blessing of Water (Choororhnek)

As a part of the Armenan Christmas tradition attending Candlelight Liturgy at church/Jragalooyts. On the evening of January 5, families go to church for a Christmas Eve service to pray and celebrate. We attend this beautiful service to celebrate, give thanks, pray and praise God. During the evening’s Holy Badarak, the priest gives out a fire from a candle to all the faithful who are present. They later take the flame home as a blessing and spread the good news of Christ’s birth and the light of God entering the world.

The Blessing of Water usually takes place on January 6 at the end of Holy Badarak. The priest blesses and gives out water as a symbol of the “Baptism of Christ”. In the Armenian Church, this service is called CHOORORH-NEK.





Review

Memory Verse Review:

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- 1 Corinthians 11:2

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Lesson Review:

Questions:

1. What do we call customs that are passed from one generation to another? (Traditions)
2. Who can have traditions? (Cultures, families, and religions)
3. What does the Christmas Tree represent? (Eternal life, because it never loses its leaves)
4. When do we celebrate Armenian Christmas? (January 6)
5. What does the flame from the candle on Christmas Eve remind us of? (How the light of God, Jesus Christ, came into the world)

Life Application:

What are we going to do with what we have learned today?

→ Traditions are important to who we are, because we continue to do what our ancestors did.

→ Traditions teach us about the past, but also help us create the future.

→ Traditions in our faith have been given to us from long ago and remind us of Christ, allowing us to worship Him the same way many generations have worshipped Him.

Close with prayer:

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

At Home

Please complete the assignment and memorize by next class.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.”

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MAKE A CHRISTMAS CARD:

With the help of your parents, use the Christmas tree image and a sheet of paper (or cardstock) to make a Christmas card for your priest, a teacher, a friend or a relative. Color the image, write a Christmas message and deliver.