

# Celebrating Our Lord

## *Transfiguration*



### Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ...



### Daily Bread

When Jesus began planning to go to Jerusalem, he talked to his disciples about some of the bad things that he knew would happen to him. Jesus wanted them to be prepared. His disciples didn't believe that Jesus could possibly be killed or treated badly by others. They also had a hard time believing that he could rise again after being killed. So, Jesus took three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John, and went up Tabor Mountain to pray. It took a long time for them to climb. Once they were there, Jesus began to appear physically brighter to his disciples. He was glowing. It seemed like a light was coming from inside his body.

Then the disciples saw more glowing light coming from the sky. Suddenly they saw the great men Moses and Elijah standing next to Jesus. The three disciples were so amazed and moved, they did not want to leave the mountain.

Then a cloud covered them all and they heard the voice of God saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to Him!" (Luke 9:35) The disciples were so terrified at this that they fell to the ground. But Jesus told them not to be afraid.

They saw and heard for themselves how Jesus was truly one with God. They suddenly saw Jesus as more than their teacher. This moment, when they saw him in a different way, they realized that what was happening here was much more important than they had ever dreamed. This moment is called the Transfiguration.

After the Transfiguration, Jesus asked his disciples not to talk about it until he rose again from the dead.

## SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Below is one of the descriptions in the Bible of the Transfiguration (Mark 9:3-4). It was a moment of realization for the disciples when the true and awesome nature of Jesus was revealed to them.

Do the math and then match the numbers with the words to fill in the blanks.

Jesus=  $3+5=$  \_\_\_\_\_

Whiter=  $8-2=$  \_\_\_\_\_

Elijah=  $10-1=$  \_\_\_\_\_

World=  $7+6=$  \_\_\_\_\_

Clothes=  $6-4=$  \_\_\_\_\_

Bleach=  $1+2=$  \_\_\_\_\_

Appeared=  $2-1=$  \_\_\_\_\_

Dazzling=  $11-6=$  \_\_\_\_\_

Talking=  $6+6=$  \_\_\_\_\_

Moses=  $7-3=$  \_\_\_\_\_

“His \_\_\_\_\_ became \_\_\_\_\_ white, \_\_\_\_\_ than anyone in the  
\_\_\_\_\_ could \_\_\_\_\_ them. And there \_\_\_\_\_ before them \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_, who were \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.”

## In the Armenian Tradition

In the Armenian Church, the Feast of the Transfiguration is called Baydzaragerbootiun. It is one of the five major feasts of the Armenian Church. In the Armenian calendar, the feast takes place on the 14th Sunday after Easter, so it is always on a different date between June 28 to August 1.

In church, we sing the Hymn of the Transfiguration. These are the words in English:

By your Transfiguration on the mountain  
You show your divine power  
We give you glory  
Oh, light divine

## Well Versed

“This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to Him!”

Luke 9:35

## CELEBRATE WITH GOD



Armenians often use both roses and water to celebrate “Vartavar!”



## BIBLE BYTES

**Transfigure** is a word that we don't use much in everyday life. It means to change in outward form or appearance, to transform or to change so as to glorify.

In Armenia, this feast of Transfiguration is also called Vartavar (the Festival of Roses). The reason for this is that a very long time before Christianity, Armenians had a feast around this time of year to honor a goddess named Astghig and to celebrate the harvest. People would play games with water and decorate with roses.

Today, people in Armenia and the Middle East still have fun celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration by throwing water on each other in the hot August weather. They chase each other outside, like a game of tag.

Did you know...!?

## Family Focus

Today, we learned about the Transfiguration, one of the Five Major Feasts of the Armenian Church. To make the radiance of Jesus that day more understandable, we did a classroom activity on how things seem in darkness and then in bright light. Students colored a picture of the event and learned a line from the special hymn of that day. Finally, we read about some distinctive Armenian traditions connected with the feast.

## Living Your Faith

1. Take your child into the church on Feast of the Transfiguration. Splash water on each other afterward in an old Armenian practice!
2. Discuss the concept of how your perception of someone changes when you see them in different circumstances, like the way that Jesus appeared to his disciples. We may think we know everything about someone, but we actually do not.

different volunteers.

20 min.

5. After you have finished the play, ask the children to settle down and sit back in their seats. Ask them why they think this event was so important. Allow all answers, but direct them to the idea that Jesus was recognized by people of faith and wisdom as the Savior. Remind them of the Christmas story about how the wise men from the East came to see the baby and how the angels appeared to the shepherds. Tell them that having faith is one of the main ways to find your way to feel the love of Jesus in your everyday life.

6. Tell the children that in the Armenian Church, we mark this occasion with a special Feast Day called *Dyarnuntarach*. Go around the room and have each child read a sentence or two from **In the Armenian Tradition**. 5 min.

7. Distribute the materials for making Valentine cards. Tell the children that one of the main reasons we come to church each week is to feel God's love through Holy Communion and through our church family. The Feast of the Presentation is a reminder of how Jesus, even as a baby, brought happiness, hope, and love to all who saw him. Tell the children we are going to make a valentine card to our parents, telling them how much we love them.

Write on the board: "Let us love one another, for love comes from God!" *1 John 4:7*

They can cut out and glue the picture onto the front of their card and color it. Below the picture, ask the children to write the above quote. Tell them they can write "I love you [mom and dad or mom or dad]. Happy Valentine's Day." or their own version of that idea on the inside of the card. Allow the children to work on their cards until the end of class.

8. After the children have cleaned up their tables, ask them to say the following prayer: "Dear Jesus, we remember the day your parents lovingly presented you to the Temple. We feel your love today and will share that love with others after we leave church. Amen." Dismiss the class. 15 min.

UNIT  
**3**  
Lesson  
Six

## Celebrating Our Lord

### *Transfiguration*

#### Key Concepts

1. The Transfiguration was an important affirmation of Jesus as God the Son for the disciples.
2. The Armenian Church remembers this event every summer in the Feast of the Transfiguration.
3. As in other Christian celebrations (Christmas, Easter, etc.), some of the traditions associated with the Armenian celebration are from pre-Christian times.

#### Objectives

During this session students will

1. Participate in an experiment about seeing things in different lighting.
2. Review the Bible story of the Transfiguration and complete a puzzle.
3. Color a picture of the Transfiguration.
4. Read about the pre-Christian traditions from Armenia that are often part of the celebration.

#### Materials Needed

Copies of the coloring page of the Transfiguration from the back of this manual.

Flashlight

Crayons

A box large enough to place textbook in (see procedure #1)

#### Procedure

1. Welcome students and say the opening prayer together.
2. Ask: "I have a question for you. When you wake up early in the morning, let's say, a winter morning when it's not even light out yet, what can you see in your room? Does everything seem colorful and bright?" Children should respond that nothing is clear, colors are indistinct, items on their desk or table might not be distinguishable, etc. Tell the

children that they are going to do an experiment. Make the room as dark as possible by closing the blinds or curtains on windows and turning off the light in the room. Once the room is somewhat dark, hold up the icon of the Transfiguration from the lesson and ask the children what is in the picture. (The room should be dark enough that they don't see much; if it isn't you might want to further obscure it by putting it into a box.) Allow them to answer out loud. Ask them to describe the picture's colors. Ask them what details they see in the picture.

Turn on the lights *and* now train a flashlight on the picture. Ask them what is in the picture and what details they see. They should see more details, more color, more of everything about the picture. At the very least, colors are brighter. 10 min.

- Now, tell them that light is one of things that physically helps you see better, but it also is a word that is used when you suddenly understand something better. There are phrases in the English language using the idea of light, such as when someone has a great idea, they might say that a light bulb went on in their head. Read aloud the **Daily Bread** section of the lesson and have students complete the puzzle. (Answer: his *clothes* became *dazzling* white, *whiter* than anyone in the *world* could *bleach* them. And there *appeared* before them *Elijah* and *Moses* who were *talking* with *Jesus*.) 15 min.

- Ask the children to recall how they saw the picture in the dark and saw the same picture in the light. Was the picture the same picture? Allow them to answer. Then tell them that yes, it was the same picture. The thing that changed was our view of the picture. When we saw the picture with more clarity in the light, we saw something more intense and vivid.

That is what happened with Jesus and the disciples on the mountain. Jesus did not actually change. The disciples just saw in a different way and became more aware of who Jesus was. 5 min.

- Ask the children if they have ever heard the word "transfigure" before today? If they have, ask if they know what it means. Take any answers, and then

ask one of the children to read **Bible Bytes** aloud as a review.

- Distribute the coloring page to the children with the crayons or markers. Before they begin, hold up the page and review the people depicted (Elijah and Moses, the prophet and the holder of the Law, respectively; his disciples – and closest friends - Peter, James, and John at the bottom) While they are coloring, read **In the Armenian Tradition**. 20 min.
- After the children finish coloring and clean up, read or teach **Did You Know**.
- In closing, say the following prayer, "Dear God, thank you bringing us together, for showing us your way, and for giving us ways to celebrate your light in our lives. Amen." Dismiss the class. 10 min.

**UNIT**  
**4**  
*Lesson*  
*One*

## We Are a Family of Faith

### Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

*We Are Part of a Long Story*

### Key Concepts

- The church is a family of many generations.
- All faithful of the church, past and present, are honored and remembered at the Divine Liturgy.

### Objectives

During this session students will

- Review important feasts and seasons of the Armenian Church.
- Explore how our faith is passed down through generations.
- Review the "Great Litany" of intercessory prayers in the Holy Badarak and participate in a class recitation.
- Participate in a prayer activity for their own family members.

### Materials Needed

Optional: *How Armenia Became the First Christian Nation* (coloring book)  
 Badarak Book  
 Lined paper