

The Church Celebrates

TRANSFIGURATION / ASSUMPTION

UNIT

4

LESSON FOUR

From Our Hearts to God

Lord, you were glorified by the Father in front of your dearest friends, Peter, James, and John. Great men of the past appeared at your side. And the Father said again how much he loved you. Help us see and understand your glory, too! Amen.

MY WORLD

Sometimes it's hard to know what is real and what is not real. Television, computers and movies can make things look as if they really happened even when we know it is not true. We can do almost anything through computers and models and animation.

In Jesus' time, these television, computers and movies did not exist. When we read the story of the Transfiguration and the Resurrection and the Assumption and the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples, we know they are actual events.

The story of the Transfiguration appears in the Bible in the Gospels of Matthew 17:1-13, Mark 9:2-13 and Luke 9:28-36. Read these and tell your classmates about it in your own words. When you go home today, tell the story of the Transfiguration to your parents.

The feast of the Transfiguration is celebrated in the early summer in the Armenian Church.



GOD'S GUIDING WORDS

"This is my own dear son and I am pleased with him. Listen to what he says"!

Matthew 17:5

Getting Closer to God

Jesus says of himself, "I am the true vine." (John 15:5)

A vine grows and grows and grows. A grape vine can grow many feet long. If you put a section of the grape vine in the ground, a new grape plant will grow.

Make a grape vine of what you have learned about Jesus and what Jesus has taught you.



Our Armenian Way

The story of the Assumption of St. Mary is not found in the Bible. It is found in other very early writings of the Church. Like the Transfiguration, this feast is one of the Five Major Feast Days of the Armenian Church.

Years after the resurrection, St. Mary, Jesus' mother, died. She was buried in a tomb as was the custom of that time. The disciples and others heard angels singing around her tomb day and night. The disciple Bartholomew had been away when Mary died and when he returned he wanted to see her body and say his good-bye to her. Her body was gone. Jesus had taken it to heaven.

There is a special tradition on this feast day to bless grapes. Most plants grow from seeds, but grapes grow by planting the vine, not the seed. The Church uses the example of new grapes coming from the vine to show that Jesus came from God through Mary. Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit, not of man.

On the Feast of the Assumption, celebrated in August, the priest blesses grapes and everyone gets some grapes to eat and enjoy. It is an Armenian Church tradition.



RESPONDING IN FAITH

Jesus, you are the vine and we are the branches. This coming week, help us to live fruitful lives, pleasing to you. Let us be as faithful as Mary, your mother. Amen.



Taking a Closer Look

Grapes are the fruit of the vine. Jesus is the fruit of God. Grapes are used to make wine. At the Lord's Supper Jesus held up a cup of wine and told his followers to drink it to remember him. We eat the bread which is dipped in the wine. They are the Body and Blood of Jesus when we take Holy Communion.



Time to Celebrate

Remembering Jesus with Grape Juice and Bread
Celebrating *Asdvadadzin* with Grapes



FAMILY CORNER

Sharing Our Faith

Our lesson today explored two of the Five Major Feasts of the Armenian Church. The students reviewed the beautiful story of the Transfiguration using different Bible translations for enrichment. We created a vine of yarn in the classroom, and attached grapes and leaves listing things we learned about Jesus. The Assumption of St. Mary was reviewed and celebrated with a snack of grapes.

Living Our Faith

1. Be sure to attend church as a family on the Feasts of Transfiguration and Assumption.
2. Read the Transfiguration story in the Bible; your child will know where to find it (from today's lesson).
3. Buy and enjoy grapes and retell the story of the Assumption of St. Mary.

that would give them everlasting life; God did not think people were worthy of this yet. But now Jesus has made it possible after our death to have everlasting life with God in heaven. So Jesus can be compared to the Tree of Life. This branch is like Jesus himself, who brought new life to the world. It is also each one of us, since we can flower and blossom when we live in Christ.”

6. Direct the students to look at the cross pictured in this section and note that the base ends of the cross depict life. Have a student read **Taking a Closer Look**. Give each student a paper and crayons or markers and have them draw an Armenian cross that suggests a “tree of life.” Tape the crosses on the board and then use them for a bulletin board display. 15 min.
7. For **Time to Celebrate**, tell the students that you have a bag of balloons for them to pop in celebration of Easter. You’ll need to organize this according to class size. Have students select a balloon. Say: “Pop the balloon by stepping on it and find the Bible verse that is inside. After all the balloons are popped, you will share what event or story from Lent and Easter is behind this verse and then we will tape them on the chart in order.”
8. Close with the prayer in **Responding in Faith**. 15 min.



Key Concepts

1. The Transfiguration commemorates the appearance of Jesus in his glorified form with the prophet Elijah and Moses on Mt. Tabor, recalling the fulfillment of the Law and Prophecy in Jesus.
2. This revelation of Jesus to his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, gave them and us a preview of the resurrection, heaven and God’s eternal power.
3. The Assumption of St. Mary emphasizes her importance to God and the salvation story; only she and the prophet Elijah were taken bodily into heaven.
4. The Feast of Assumption is celebrated with the

blessing of grapes as grapes are propagated by the vine rather than the grape seed (just as Jesus was brought into being as a human being through the Holy Spirit).

Objectives

- During this session students will
1. Review the two major feast days of Transfiguration and Assumption.
 2. Read the Bible account of the Transfiguration.
 3. Explore the concepts of Jesus as the “true Vine” and the meaning behind the blessing of grapes.
 4. Learn about the Assumption of St. Mary.
 5. Create a yarn “grapevine” with grapes and leaves describing what they’ve learned about Jesus and what he has taught them.
 6. Share a snack of grapes, bread, and grape juice.

Materials Needed

Bibles marked to Matthew 17:1-13, Mark 9:2-13, Luke 9:28-36. Use several types of Bibles giving the easiest to read to those students who have difficulty reading. This can be optional; see procedure #2.

The “Importance of the Transfiguration” from the back of this manual, one for each student; see procedure # 3
 Copies of the bunch of grapes and the grape leaf from the back of this manual - one of each for each student
 Pencils, pens, markers
 Grape juice and bread for all the students

Note to the Teacher

Next week, the children will be learning the blessing refrain, **Amen. Alleluia.**

If you are not comfortable singing, plan for a parent or choir member to help teach the students. You might also want extra help with the craft.

If you’re doing next week’s lesson (The Exaltation of the Holy Cross) on the actual Sunday of the feast, plan on attending the brief service at the end of liturgy. Advise parents as well. Since the Exaltation falls in early to mid-September, you might not yet have Sunday School, in which case, schedule the lesson shortly after.

Procedure

1. Say the prayer together in **From Our Hearts to God**.
2. Give each student a Bible with one of the passages about the Transfiguration bookmarked and noted

on the bookmark. Use different Bibles if you have a variety available to you as some mention the name of the mountain (Mt. Tabor) and some do not. *If it is too difficult to have a variety of Bibles, just write the Bible references on the board and assign students different readings by calling names and pointing to a reading. Note that procedure #4 depends on different Bible translations so adjust accordingly.* Read **My World** to the class, then have them find the story of the Transfiguration in the Bible that was given to them and read it silently. Ask for volunteers to retell the story in their own words. Say: “I will share with you some reasons why this event is important. I want you to think about the top two reasons. When I have finished you will talk to each other and decide among yourselves which are the top two reasons.” 15 min.

3. Distribute the hand-out “The Importance of the Transfiguration,” and have students take turns reading aloud; make sure each reason is clear. They may want to reread them as they decide which two are the most important. Discuss.

4. Read **God’s Guiding Words**. If students are using a variety of translations, call on them to hear the variation in translation. 15 min.

5. Read **Getting Closer to God** Ask if anyone has a grape plant at home. If any student does, ask them to tell about how it grows, how the family cares for it, etc. Bring out long, thick green yarn. Tell the students that the yarn represents a grape vine. Tape the yarn to the wall or board. Give each student a copy of the bunch of grapes and the grape leaf from the back of this manual and have them write something they learned about Jesus on the grapes and something very important Jesus taught them on the leaf. As they are done, have them come to the green yarn and tape their grapes and leaf. 15 min.

6. Read **Our Armenian Way**. Remind students that this Feast Day is commemorated in August. Two of the Five Major feast Days take place during the summer, which means, unfortunately, many students won’t be at liturgy on these days!

7. Turn to **Taking a Closer Look and Time to Celebrate**. Enjoy! While you’re eating, ask students to look at the vine the class created and share a prayer of thanks for something on the vine. For example, if someone

wrote:”I learned that Jesus was transfigured,” the prayer of thanks might be: “Thank you God, for showing us your glory on that special day.” Conclude with the prayer, said together, in **Responding in Faith**. 15 min.

Evaluating/Extending Your Lesson

Since the lesson was about two of the Major Feasts of our church, it is important to judge how much of the information about these events was taken in by the students. Can they retell the stories?

Can they explain the significance of each event?

If not, you might want to reinforce the stories of these holy days in other ways by having students

- create a song about them to a familiar tune
- do a sorting exercise by putting statements about each event under the correct title
- write the main details on blocks and stack them up to tell the story from the top block to the bottom block.



Key Concepts

1. The Exaltation of the Holy Cross commemorates Armenia’s celebration of the recapturing of the cross from captivity in Muslim-held Jerusalem.
2. Armenians hold the cross in very high regard as it represents the resurrection, the foundation of our faith.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Write their thoughts about the cross in a prayer activity.
2. Read a “newspaper” account of the exaltation of the cross.
3. Discuss what it means to “take up Jesus’ cross and follow him.”
4. Learn the refrain from the Antasdan blessing “Amen Alleluia.”
5. Make a cross with sticks and basil.
6. Re-enact an Antasdan blessing.

Materials Needed

For procedure #7:

A cross for each student made from two tongue depressors