

My Church

Name of Church _____

When Started _____

First Priest _____

Priest Now _____

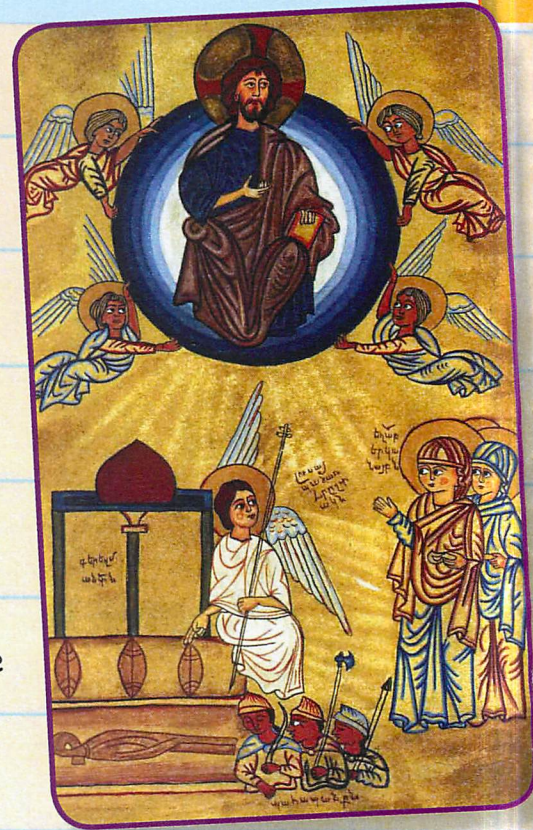


Taking a **Closer** Look

Jesus' followers were very confused and scared after his crucifixion. They were amazed at his resurrection. For 40 days after, Jesus stayed with his followers. He continued to teach them and tell them what was coming. He told them soon the Holy Spirit would come to them and be their guide and helper. He told them to go throughout Jerusalem and then the world teaching others about God and the Good News of the new life ahead with God.

Then Jesus went up to heaven to join the Father. This is the day we call Ascension.

Fifty days after the Resurrection (ten days after the Ascension) the disciples met in the same room they had gathered in for their last supper with Jesus. This time when they were there the Holy Spirit came to them. This event is called Pentecost and we call it "the birthday of the church." (Acts 2: 1-4) From that day the disciples started their mission of spreading the Good News.



GOD'S GUIDING WORDS

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them everything I have commanded you."

Matthew. 28:19-20





Getting Closer to God

The word church means a community of believers and it also means the building built for worship by the community. So the church is people and the church is a building.

1. Believers share in Jesus through Holy Communion.

2. Jesus' disciples Thaddeus and Bartholomew share the Good News in Armenia.



3. The church is a gift from God to help us know him, be with him, and be with others who feel the same way about him.



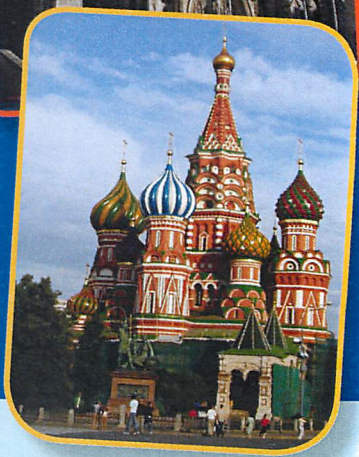
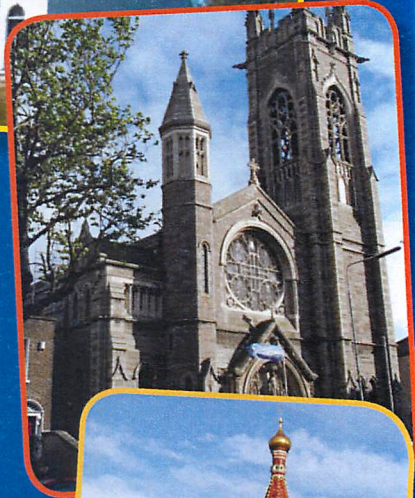
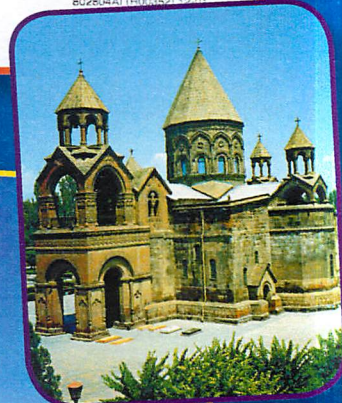
Our Armenian Way

Having our own church - an Armenian Church - has always been very important to us. Wherever Armenians go in the world one of the first things the community does is build a church so they can gather and be with God in our special Armenian way.

There are many other churches in the world. Some are a lot like our church and some are very different. Look at the pictures of the four churches and tell what you see in them that is the same. What is different?

The Armenian Church is a very, very old church. The first church leaders worked hard to teach the people about God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Bible was translated into Armenian and many important writings about Jesus were translated or written to help our people know God and follow the teachings of Jesus.

The Armenian Church is very respected among Christian churches.



Time to Celebrate

Pentecost is celebrated in May or June, often after Sunday School has ended for the summer. It marks the beginning of the church and is a day for giving thanks for those who choose a church vocation – priests, deacons, acolytes, choir and organist, teachers. But *any* day is a good time to think about how *you* can serve your church so the church can continue to tell the Good News of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Think about your future. Write about what you might want to do: _____



Today, we recalled how our church was “born.” So let’s have a birthday party!

RESPONDING IN FAITH

Lord, help your church grow and bless all those who serve the church. Amen.

FAMILY CORNER

Sharing Our Faith

Our lesson today was about the birth of the Armenian Church from its founder, Jesus Christ, through his apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew who preached in Armenia. We learned about Pentecost and even re-enacted the event!

Living Our Faith

Here are some suggestions for a family activity this week:

1. Did your family always belong to this church? If not, make a chart of which churches they have attended through the years. How about the grandparents? See if you can find pictures of the churches to put on your chart. (You may find them online.)
2. Visit different houses of worship in your town. Call and make an appointment for your family to visit. Take a camera along if it is allowed and take some pictures. Later discuss similarities and differences.
3. We all belong to our personal family and our church family. Let every member of your personal family write a list of people in your church family you enjoy spending time with. Invite a family of a classmate to your house for dinner.

we ask for it. He wants us to try to learn from our mistakes and keep trying to follow Jesus' teachings. 10 min.

6. Read **Getting Closer to God** and have the children write their thoughts by completing the sentences. If time is short assign only one or two (or do one or two together, aloud). Then ask them to share what they wrote. Comment positively, i.e. "You thought this through and wrote a good reaction. Sometimes it is hard to put your thoughts into good sentences, but I see you are trying." If children are restless, have them stand in a circle as they share answers, or ask students to stand up when they participate.

Summarize by reiterating: "God is pleased with us when we try to obey him. Jesus is happy when we do right." 15 min.

7. Read **Our Armenian Way** and look at the pictures of the crosses. You may have pictures of saints in your Sunday School area that you could point out to the children or take students into church to look at icons or stained glass windows. (You may want to do this after church is over.)

8. Read **Time to Celebrate** with the children and have them think for a moment about their answers to the question. Then ask them to come up to the board and write their answers as they share them. (Later, copy their answers on a large piece of paper to hang in the class. Have the students sign their name to their contribution next week.)

9. Conclude class by having students read **Responding in Faith** silently and then all together aloud. 15 min.

Extending the Lesson

Have students summarize different parts of the lesson.

Evaluating Your Lesson

Checklist:

- Were the students engaged in the lesson?
- Can the students tell you in their own words what they learned today?
- Now that you have taught the lesson, what would you do differently next time?

Make notes in this manual for future reference.

Jesus, Lord of My Life

The Church Begins



Key Concepts

1. The church began with Pentecost and the disciples spreading the Good News.
2. The "church" consists of those who believe in Jesus Christ but we use the word for the building as well.
3. Christ was first preached in Armenia by the disciples Thaddeus and Bartholomew.
4. The Armenian Church remains very true to the teachings of Christ and the early church leaders.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Participate in a review game.
2. Examine church history – their own parish church and the beginning of the Armenian Church.
3. Read about and reenact Pentecost.
4. Compare Armenian Church buildings with other church buildings.
5. Celebrate the birthday of the Church, Pentecost.

Materials Needed

Review game from back of this manual

Consecration booklet and anniversary booklet(s) of your church if possible

A small cake and a few candles for a church birthday party

Note to the Teacher

This lesson is an important part of this unit's overview of Jesus' life. However, it teaches and celebrates Pentecost, a feast day that occurs in May or June. Teach it in order with the rest of the unit, but you might refer to it later in the year, especially if Pentecost is celebrated while Sunday School is still in session.

Also, you will need to come prepared with the date of when your church was established and its first pastor.

Procedure

1. Open with the prayer in **From Our Hearts to God**. Ask the students if they would like to offer a prayer. Offer your own prayer or read a prayer from a prayer book.

2. Have review cards for “Jesus: Savior” lesson on your desk and follow instructions for the review game. 10 min.
3. Read **My World**. Have the students read the story. If you have the consecration booklet or any anniversary booklets of your church show them to the students (and be prepared to provide the information required in their texts). If your church is planning any anniversary celebrations, talk about them with the class. Fill in the blanks about your church. 10 min.
4. Read or teach **Taking a Closer Look**. You might want to write the terms **crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and Pentecost** on the board to help students remember the terms. If you have time at the end of the session, ask students to define these terms again. Also, you may need to tell them that the word **mission** means a job for which a person has much devotion and determination to complete and that the term is usually used to refer to a religious commitment. Have students turn to the four verses in Acts and tell them that you will do a fun recreation of the event of Pentecost. Instruct students to:
 1. Come forward to the front of the class and scrunch together as you read verse 1.
 2. Have them recreate the blowing sound of wind as you read verse 2.
 3. Have them place one hand gently on their own head as you read verse 3.
 4. After you read verse 4, have some children say the Lord’s Prayer in English and some in Armenian (reproduce and distribute the scripts to children to read; tell them to ignore the confusion of hearing two languages being spoken. If you can find and read the prayer in a third language, even better!)
 5. Conclude by saying: “now we have just a small hint of what Pentecost was like!”
5. After children have returned to their seats, read **God’s Guiding Words** together.
Ask: “Who said these words? (Jesus) This event is called “The Great Commission.” After Pentecost, the disciples followed this command. 10 min.
6. Read the first two sentences in **Getting Closer to God**. Then say (you might want to write key words on the board as you talk): “Let’s look now at how the church began with Jesus Christ. Before Jesus there were many religions. Jesus was a Jew. He and

his followers belonged to the Jewish religion. That religion is the ancestor of our religion. The Old Testament of our Bible was and is the Bible of the Jewish people. Other religions around at that time were what we refer to as pagan religions. Pagans worshiped things like fire, water, the sun, and multiple gods. Before Armenia became Christian, the Armenian people had gods and goddesses and worshiped fire and other things.

“When Jesus was on earth he tried to bring the Jewish people closer to God. He wanted to make the Jewish religion better. He told the people he was sent by God to help them. Some realized Jesus was God’s very own and only son. Many Jews believed in Jesus but a lot did not.

“The New Testament of the Bible tells us about Jesus and the first believers and about the twelve disciples and the many other men and women who followed Jesus. It tells us about the beginning of the church.

“About sixty years after the resurrection, the Jewish religious leaders declared the followers of Jesus could not be called Jews any more. Those who believed in Jesus split from the Jewish religion. Christianity became a “new” religion.

“Thaddeus and Bartholomew were two of Jesus’ disciples. They traveled through many lands to spread the Good News. Eventually they came to Armenia and many Armenians became Christians. Later, in 301, Armenia became the first Christian nation, thanks to St. Gregory the Enlightener. Look at the pictures in your book. They summarize what I have told you.”

Have the students describe what they see in the pictures and read the captions. Bartholomew (on the left) is depicted holding a picture of St. Mary because it was he who discovered that her tomb was empty and that she had been taken up into heaven. Thaddeus carries the spear that was used by a Roman soldier to pierce Christ’s side as he hung from the cross because he was said to have taken it to Armenia. 10 min.

7. Have a student read the first paragraph of **Our Armenian Way**. Look at the map together and identify some of the places where we can find Armenian churches (i.e. U.S., Canada, Brazil, Britain, France, Egypt, Syria, Iran, Russia, Australia, etc.).

Ask a volunteer to read the next paragraph, then study the pictures of the different churches and discuss their differences and similarities. Have a student read through the remainder of this section. 5 min.

8. Read through **Time to Celebrate** and have the students fill in the blank. Discuss.

Celebrate the birthday of the church with a small party. Have children help put candles in the cake, then (you) light them! All sing “Happy Birthday” and blow out the candles. Enjoy this treat together.

9. Clean up and conclude class with the prayer in **Responding in Faith**. 15 min.

Evaluating Your Lesson

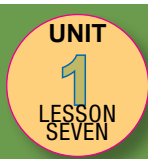
Make notes on how well the students can define terms or describe things in their own words. You may have to help them with definitions by rereading the text. You might have to help them create sentences that give understanding of the terms such as “Pentecost is the feast day when the church began.”

Fourth grade children function on many levels of ability so you may have to adjust the lesson. Make note of who does well and who does not so you can tailor your future lessons to their abilities, making some things more challenging and simplifying others.

Extending the Lesson

1. Read the Bible passages noted in the text.
2. Use blocks or shoeboxes or cardboard to build an Armenian Church.

Jesus, Lord of My Life
We Are Jesus' Disciples Too!



Key Concepts

1. The church began with Pentecost and the disciples spreading the Good News.
2. The Armenian Church has its roots in the mission work of two disciples of Christ.
3. We continue to be disciples of Christ.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Read a story and discuss the excitement of sharing a skill you love.
2. Explore the concepts of “disciple,” “convert,” “martyr,” and “enlightener.”
3. Review some of the details of how the Church began.
4. Examine these beginnings by placing figures of Jesus, Thaddeus, Santookht, Bartholomew, King Drtad, Queen Ashkhen, Princess Khosrovitookht, and Mesrob Mashdotz in chronological order to visualize the progression of discipleship.
5. Participate in a review activity for Unit One.
6. Sing a song summarizing the Christian story.

Materials Needed

Pencils, markers

Figures from the back of this manual. “Me” rectangle should be copied so that each student will have one; for the rest, one copy is all you need. Cut them out as rectangular panels. (See Procedure #5)

Masking tape

Procedure

1. Open with the prayer in **From Our Hearts to God**. Ask the students if they would like to offer a prayer. Offer your own prayer or read a prayer from a prayer book. 5 min.
2. Read **My World** and discuss questions. Conclude discussion by asking if any of them ever share things they know about God with their friends. Ask if any have brought a friend to our church for an event or service. Let your students know that they can share their church with their friends (both Armenian and non-Armenian) and they would be welcome to visit.
3. Read **God's Guiding Words**. 10 min.
4. Read the first paragraph of **Getting Closer to God** and have the class read the bolded definition of a disciple. Present the figure of Jesus and tape it on the board. Then read the second paragraph to the class. Have them read the bolded sentence. Ask students to tell you what the Good News is. The Good News is: in following Jesus we live the most complete and happiest life we can and can live with him forever after we die.
5. Have students take turns reading the paragraphs, but have all read together the bolded sentences in **Our**