

Jesus, Lord of My Life

MARKED FOR LIFE

UNIT

1

LESSON
TWO

From Our Hearts to God

Here I am again, Lord. How great you are that you know me by my name! You know what's inside my brain and heart. Help me to know you, Lord. Amen.

MY WORLD

- the new boy
- the kid with the scar
- that sweet little girl
- Haig
- the fastest runner in fourth grade
- she's caring
- a fantastic artist
- comes up with great ideas
- you can count on her
- the tallest boy in our class
- a great singer
- the class clown



Who are you? Most everyone would answer that question by giving their name. Your name is important to you. It is a **marker** you will have all your life most probably. But who you are is not just your name. Who you are is shown by your behavior, your way of doing things, your attitude and personality. And who you are develops as you grow older.

Write three things about yourself that would identify you to others:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Markers are like labels. They help us categorize, group, define and separate things. “Put all the blue pencils in this box and all the red ones in that box.” “All the left-handed children line up here and the right-handed ones line up there.” Some markers are obvious and very noticeable and some are not. Everyone would know you are Christian if you wear a cross necklace, wouldn't they? The cross is a marker.

Sometimes people are marked for something special. A good athlete might get special training to make the most of those skills. People sometimes show a talent for music from early childhood.

At your chrismation (one of the three sacraments of initiation) you were **marked** with holy oil as a Christian. **Marked for life.** What sort of life? A life that should show your relationship with Jesus Christ. A life that reflects the good things that Jesus wants you to do.

A **righteous** life. A **consecrated** life. CONSECATED means set apart for God's use. RIGHTEOUS means doing what is right for God.

GOD'S GUIDING WORDS

Before I was born, the Lord chose me.

Isaiah 49:1



Getting Closer to God

Jesus' Presentation at the Temple (Luke 2:22-38)

Even Mary and Joseph wanted to mark baby Jesus as God's child. Eight days after his birth they made a special trip to the Temple. In those days the Jews had a ceremony for the firstborn baby boy to be presented to God. It was not like our sacraments of initiation, but similar in its meaning.

At the Temple, the holy family met two people who recognized Jesus as the Messiah (the one chosen by God). Simeon and Anna knew Jesus was God. They were overjoyed to be able to meet the Lord.

What would you say if you met Jesus?



Our Armenian Way

In the Armenian Church, we joyfully remember Jesus' presentation to the Temple on the Feast of the Presentation or *Dyarnuntarach*. In some of our churches today, a special blessing is given connected with *Dyarnuntarach* called "The Blessing of Babies." It is usually done on the Sunday in February closest to the Feast of the Presentation (February 14) just before the Badarak ends. Babies who have been baptized in the year before are presented to God and rededicated to him. The service recalls the Presentation of Jesus. As he blesses the baby, the priest prays: "O Christ our God ... protect and keep your people and especially this child..."



Taking a Closer Look

In past centuries and even in Armenia today, *Dyarnuntarach* has quite a fun side. The people attend church and light candles which represent the light of Jesus. After church they use the candles to light a bonfire. People jump over the fire for good luck. The fire celebrates the end of winter and coming of spring.

RESPONDING IN FAITH

Lord, I love you. Guide me in ways to show that love. Amen.

Time to Celebrate

A Pre-sen-**CAKE**-tion Celebration

Happy Birthday to us! Today we are celebrating that we were born. Decorate your birthday cupcake.



FAMILY CORNER

Sharing Our Faith

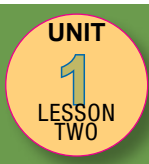
Today, students learned about how special they are as God's children. In their baptism and chrismation, they were marked for a righteous life in God. In the prayer over the oil of the baptismal service, we hear that we are "anointed for holiness, for strength to keep the commandments that leads to virtue and service.... and for salvation." How wonderful! We also learned about the presentation of Jesus to the Temple by his parents (very much like the children's own anointing) and how we celebrate it in the Armenian Church. The children enjoyed a cupcake to celebrate their own birthdays.

Living Our Faith

1. Sit together and talk about what your child would like to inherit from his or her parents or siblings. Don't just think of things. Think of talents (mom's piano playing) and abilities (dad's joke telling), personality traits (the way my brother makes new friends so easily), objects that you value that they also value such as a favorite family photo.
2. Have your own "Family Awards" night. Decide what object will be awarded. For example, chocolate bars, computer-generated award sheets, fresh fruits, etc. Everyone's name should be written on a slip of paper and each person pulls a slip to present an award to the person whose name they got. (If someone pulls their own name they have to put it back and pull another.) Think of what you would give that person an award for. Now start the "Awards Ceremony." Each person should stand and say something like "The award for the person who (tell the category) goes to (name the person)" and present that person with the award object. For example "The award for the person who is the best family chauffeur goes to MOM!" and give mom an apple, "The award for best homework coach goes to DAD!" and give dad a plum. "In the category of best bed maker, the award goes to TOMMY!" and give him an orange.

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Key Concepts

1. Each person is special to God and God knows each of us.
2. At our chrismation we are marked to live a consecrated life – a righteous life, a life in accordance with God’s will.
3. The Feast of the Presentation of our Lord (*Dyarnuntarach*) reminds us of our special relationship to God.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Review Jesus’ life through a timeline activity.
2. List three things about themselves.
3. Explore the idea that the sacraments of initiation mark us as belonging to God.
4. Read about the Presentation of our Lord (*Dyarnuntarach*).
- 5 Participate in an Armenian Presentation tradition.
6. Enjoy cupcakes in a “Presen-*cake*-tion celebration.”

Materials Needed

Life of Christ Timeline worksheet (at back of this manual)

Construction paper, 11 X 17

Glue or tape

Scissors

A poster to make an ongoing word list of terms to remember

A 3 X 5 blank index card, one for each student. Make a crease about an inch from the bottom of the card so it can stand; attach the “Special to God” stickers from the Appendix. You can just cut them out and glue them onto the cards or use Avery 5163 self-stick labels.

Jesus: Bible Stories for Children book for the story “The Baby is Blessed” or any other Bible story book with the presentation of Jesus as a baby at the temple

Battery operated tea lights to form a *Dyarnuntarach* “bonfire”

An unfrosted cupcake for each student and a variety of frostings and toppings, plastic knives for spreading frosting, clean up materials – *you may want to have a parent volunteer*

Procedure

1. Open with the prayer. Ask the students if they would like to offer a prayer. Offer your own prayer if you would like to do so.
2. As a review of last week’s lesson, give students the worksheet and construction paper (on which they can glue the timeline and then pictures). They are to cut the pictures from one and glue them in the correct chronological order on top of the timeline. This can be done in two parts across the page. 10 min.
3. Have the students look at the pictures and phrases in **My World**. Ask them if they have been called any of these names or labels. Read the first paragraph (“Who are you?..”) then have the students list three things about themselves that they feel make them who they are on the lines provided. (If you have time at the end of the lesson, ask the students if they would like to share their lists, but do not insist.)

Continue reading (“Markers are like...”) Ask the students if they would like to relate one marker or label they are identified with. Examples: ‘I’m called junior because my dad and I have the same name.’ ‘I always wear my cross necklace so people know I’m Christian.’

Read the next paragraph (“Sometimes people are...”). Ask students if any of them are in special classes or take lessons (musical instruments, ballet, karate, art, etc.).

Continue (“At your chrismation...”). You may want to spend some time making sure the students know the words **righteous** and **consecrated** and are comfortable saying them. Use a large poster in your classroom to begin listing words you encounter through the year that the students should become more familiar with; review them from time to time.

Discuss what living a righteous, consecrated life would mean. “You would not go around saying ‘I’m special to God’ or ‘I’m a righteous person’ but your behavior and choices would reveal these things about you. Most people would merely say you’re a “nice kid.”

Relate how each person gets to *choose* to respect the fact that they are consecrated and live a righteous life or ignore it. Say: “Living life aware of your relationship with God doesn’t mean you won’t make mistakes or do things that are not what God would want you to do. It does mean that all your life you take time to think

about your relationship with God. God always gives you time and opportunity to improve your relationship with him. Beginning again is more important than counting how many times you fail.”

Some students might question that they had no say in being baptized and chrismated - they did not choose it. Tell them that this choice was made for them by their parents. Their parents made the choice because they love them and wanted this for them. And their godparents made a life-long promise to help them grow in their relationship with God.

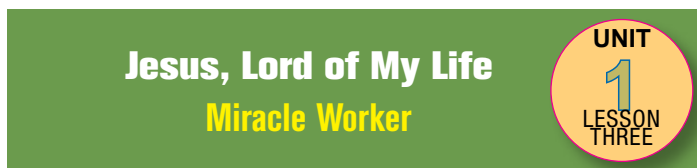
4. Read **God’s Guiding Words** to the students. Have them read it together out loud. Give the students the card of this passage and tell them to put it in their room at home so they can look at it every day. 15 min.
5. Read the Bible passage Luke 2:22-38; a good exercise for understanding is to have students quickly retell the story in their own words (time permitting). Now read **Getting Closer to God** but do not have the students write their thoughts on *What would you say if you met Jesus?* Ask a student to read the story “The Baby is Blessed” in the book *Jesus: Bible Stories for Children*. Point out how Simeon and Anna recognized Jesus as the Messiah, as one who was consecrated. Relate this to other stories of people who recognized Jesus as the Messiah – the shepherds, the Wise Men, John the Baptist. Now have the students share what they would say if they met Jesus. 10 min.
6. Review the information in **Our Armenian Way**. Ask students if they can think of other church customs that recall events in Jesus’ life. For example: Washing of the Feet, Blessing of Water, Christmas and Easter services, Transfiguration Day in the summer (with some fun water-throwing customs connected with it). Ceremonies like these help us acknowledge our relationship with God.
7. Read **Taking a Closer Look**. Have them practice saying *Dyarnuntarach* (*dyar-nun-ta-rach*). Add the word to your list of words to learn this term. If you have battery operated tea lights, you may want to put them together in a bunch and have the students jump over the “fire” to celebrate. 10 min.
8. Now have children prepare their Pre-sen-CAKE-

tion cupcakes (**Time to Celebrate**) in celebration of their being born. They might want to decorate their cupcake with some religious symbols such as a cross. Enjoy your cupcakes! Have students help clean up and put away materials. If you have extra cupcakes, have students work together on decorating them and give them to the priest and others at hospitality hour.

9. Read the prayer in **Responding in Faith** together and dismiss the class. 15 min.

Evaluating Your Lesson

1. As students are working or creating their cupcake, ask individuals to define the words “righteous” and “consecrated” or to relate the story of *Dyarnuntarach*.
2. Are your students listening or distracted by each other? If the latter, what can you do to help them focus on your lesson? Try separating students who like to chat too much. Before starting a section, tell specific students who need to focus that you will be asking them questions about what was read, or to do something after listening. Examples: “John, after I read this part of the lesson, I will ask you to define the word ‘consecrated.’” “Mary, after we get through with our cupcake decorating, I want you to take a picture of everyone’s finished product.” By setting the stage for their listening, you help them focus and be more attentive.



Key Concepts

1. Jesus is God and all-powerful.
2. Miracles supersede what would seem natural and normal in everyday life.
3. Jesus performed miracles out of love and concern for his people and he empowered his disciples to perform miracles.
4. People of Jesus’ times were looking for “signs” of God at work on earth. Miracles were the signs the people could recognize as God’s interaction in their lives.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Complete a quiz on the Presentation.