

Prayer is Talking With God



We Pray Together

Dear God, thank you for always being with us! Through our prayers, we grow closer to you and are comforted knowing that you are always listening.

Hanoon Hor yev Vortvo yev Hokvooyñ Srpo. Amen.

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Let's Discover

Look at all of the items on this page. What do they all have in common?



Our Story

Over the summer, Anahid and her family took a trip to Armenia. While in Armenia they traveled to all of the important sites, seeing beautiful cities and churches, eating delicious food, dancing Armenian dances, laughing and making new friends. One of her new friends was Sosi who lived in Yerevan, the capital city. Anahid was sad because in a few days she was going to fly back home to California to start school.

She asked, “Sosi, when will I see you again? How are we going to keep in touch? We can write letters but that takes too long. Talking on the telephone is hard because when I am awake, you will be sleeping and when I am sleeping you will be awake!” Sosi had a great idea and grabbed Anahid by the arm and took her to the computer.

She said, “We can write on the computer by sending emails to one another!” All of a sudden, Anahid smiled and liked the idea very much. Both girls were so excited as they ran to their parents to get their new email addresses. At that moment, Anahid realized that not seeing Sosi every day did not mean that they had to stop talking and being friends.

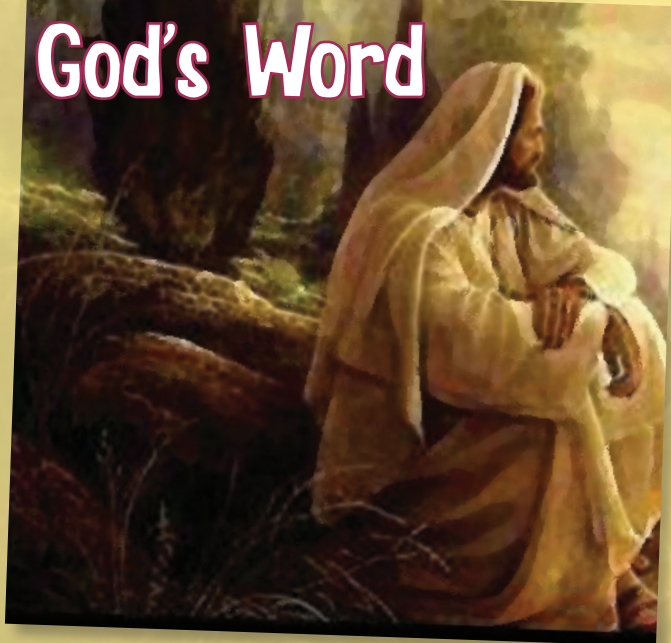


Faith Word

Prayer

Communicating or talking and listening with God.

God's Word



Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place where he prayed.

Mark 1:35

Jesus often went to be by himself to pray.

Luke 5:16

The apostle St. Paul was speaking with the Christians about Jesus. His advice to them was, ‘Don’t worry about anything; instead pray about everything and thank God. Your hearts will then be at peace in Jesus Christ.’

Philippians 4:6-7

We Learn About God

Our Scripture readings for this lesson remind us how important it is to pray to God. Even though we can't telephone God or mail him a letter, we can certainly still talk to him through prayer. God is always listening. We can pray at home, alone, and we can pray at church, together. In our church services, there are times that we pray together as a group and times where we are on bended knee praying alone.

During the Divine Liturgy, there is a time when we place our two hands tightly together and, as one church family, chant a prayer that sums up our beliefs. This special prayer of faith is called the Nicene Creed, the *Havadamk* in Armenian. It explains God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Տէր Ողորմեա - (Կոմիտաս) Der Voghormya - (Gomidas)



Before Holy Communion, we kneel and pray while the choir sings *Der Voghormya*, a hymn that means “Lord have mercy.”

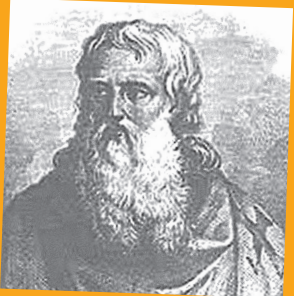
It is during this prayer and hymn that we ask God to remember family and friends who might be ill or those who have died.

Our Armenian Way

If the Armenian Church had superheroes then St. Gregory of Narek and St. Nersess Shnorhali would definitely be part of that group! These two saints wrote many prayers, poetry, and songs and some are used in our Divine Liturgy. They were both from very religious families and had a deep love for God.

St. Gregory of Narek wrote a special prayer book containing 95 prayers, called *Speaking to God From My Heart*, which shared his feelings about God.

St. Nersess Shnorhali wrote many prayers, hymns and poems praising God. One his of best known prayers is “I Confess with Faith” which has 24 verses, one for each hour of the day.

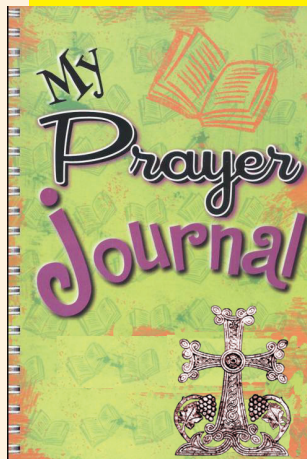


See if you can solve the message that we learn from St. Gregory and St. Nersess.



A _____ian _____s for
o_____ and praises _____ always.

Prayer Աղօթք Aghotk



Handmade With Love

It can be a good idea to keep a prayer journal. Decorate the cover of your journal so it becomes something that you look forward to using. When you are writing or drawing in your journal, always try to include:

- A **praise to God** such as *God, you are the best!*
- An **I'm sorry to God** such as *I'm sorry I hurt my friend's feelings.*
- A **request for others** such as *I pray for the health of my grandmother.*
- A **request for you** such as *God help me study hard for my math test.*
- A **thank-you to God** such as *thank you for my wonderful family.*

For My Family

Sharing Our Faith

In today's lesson, the students learned about prayer as a way of communicating with God. We also learned that God wants us to share our worries and needs with him. Church prayers and declarations of faith such as *Der Voghormya* and the *Havadamk* and the great works of Sts. Gregory of Narek and Nersess Shnorhali are all reminders of the central place of prayer in Armenian Christian living.

Living Our Faith

1. Ask your child to share thoughts from his or her prayer journal.
2. Attend church services and participate in the recitation of the *Havadamk* and singing of *Der Voghormya*.
3. With your child, Google St. Nersess Shnorhali and St. Gregory of Narek.

4. Read **Our Story**. Give children the following synopsis of the story: “Three hungry soldiers come to a town where all the food has been hidden, and they set out to make soup of water and stones, and the entire town enjoys a feast. Let’s see how this magic feat is done!” Distribute the Reader’s Theater scripts to the children and have the class act out the story. (This can be performed as well at an Assembly or for another class.) After they’ve read it through, ask “How is our parish community like the story of Stone Soup? What are examples of some church ingredients that we add to make our parish?” Responses could be: sing in the choir, parish trustee or council member, Sunday School teacher, etc. 15 min.
5. Read Acts 2:42-47 from the Bible and then the paraphrased version in **God’s Word**. Ask the class if they can pinpoint what things the early Christians did? Learn, share, pray, be together, and eat together. Introduce the **Faith Word** “breaking bread.” 5 min.
6. Read **We Learn About God**. Brainstorm a list of all of the ways that the parish community is demonstrating teamwork, as did the early Christians. 5 min.
7. Read **Our Armenian Way**. Distribute copies of the world map for each student. Tell the class: “We’re going to look at many countries where there are Armenian churches.” For each country, have them highlight and draw a cross to show that there is an Armenian church. Start with Armenia which is so small you will have to tell the class that it is the tiny yellow country under Georgia. Then read and have them find - they will need your help so you might want to hold a copy of the map up and point them out as you go along: Israel, Turkey, United States, Canada, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Australia, Sweden, Bulgaria, Romania, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Venezuela, Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, India. (30 total) 10 min.
8. **Handmade With Love: Classroom Quilt**. Pass out white 8" squares to class. Have students illustrate what they like most about coming to church or what they look forward to the most. After they complete the square have them select a piece of colorful construction paper and glue their square to it. Punch 4 holes (one on each corner) of the construction paper. Quilt all of the squares together by tying them with yarn or string. This can be done after class or with an assistant if time is short. Teacher can add a title to the top part of the quilt and hang it in the class, or church hall, wherever appropriate.
9. Clean-up. Close with the prayer. “Heavenly Father, we thank you for our church, our parish community and for all of our Armenian churches all over the world. Amen.” 15 min.

Grade Two

Unit Two: Jesus & Me

Lesson One: Prayer is Talking With God

Key Concepts

1. We pray alone and together.
2. Jesus tells us that we do not live on bread alone but on prayer and God’s Word. (Matt.4:4)
3. St. Paul tells the Christians not to worry but to pray and thank God. (Phil.4:6)
4. The *Havadamk* is a prayer that proclaims our faith as one family in Christ.
5. *Der Voghormya* is a hymn-prayer that asks God to have mercy on all.
6. St. Gregory of Narek wrote prayers that expressed his love and humility before God.
7. St. Nersess Shnorhali wrote prayers that praised God.

Objectives

During this lesson students will

1. Identify various tools of communication.
2. Read and discuss a story about two distant friends who want to keep in touch.
3. Consider Scripture passages on prayer.
4. Examine the *Havadamk* and “Der Voghormya” as two examples of prayer and define ‘prayer.’
5. Discuss, compare and apply the work of St. Gregory of Narek and St. Nersess Shnorhali.
6. Create an individual prayer journal.

Materials Needed

Props such as letter with a stamp, cell phone, regular phone, laptop or computer tablet, radio, GPS, walkie/talkie, newspaper

Pens, pencils, crayons, markers

Divine Liturgy book open to the Nicene Creed

Recording of *Der Voghormya*

Book of Lamentations (your priest or church library should have a copy)

St. Nersess’ 24-verse prayer “I Confess with Faith” (priest or church library; also included in Lenten services)

Teacher sample of prayer journal: Composition-style memo notebook (Wal-Mart or Dollar stores) - one for each student; piece of heavy gift wrap/wallpaper scraps/photo album paper; Mod Podge-type glue and brushes or glue sticks; decorative ribbon 12"-18" strip optional; embellishment for decorations (foam shapes, stickers, buttons, sequins, stamps)

Procedure

1. Have the communication props displayed on a table. Greet students warmly and open class with the prayer in **We Pray Together**.
2. Invite students to quietly look at display items for a moment and then have them return to their seats. (If props are not used for some reason, they can still do the activity looking at the photos in **Let’s Discover**.) Call on the class to describe the purpose of each picture or prop. Then ask the text question: “What do all the objects have in common?” Have students write their answer on the line. They all are used to *communicate* with each other or a group of people. 5 min.
3. Ask the class what they think the phrase “keep in touch” means. Segue into **Our Story** and have students take turns reading. Ask children if any of them have been to Armenia or another country where they made friends. If not, perhaps they made friends with children at a summer camp. How have they kept in touch? Ask class if it’s possible to be friends even though they don’t live nearby or see each other. Ask if they thought Sosi’s solution would work. Are there other possible solutions? 8 min.
4. Read **God’s Word**. After the two verses about Jesus and prayer, ask the children: “So what do these verses tell us about Jesus and prayer? (that he often prayed, that he needed quiet time to pray). After the Philippians reading, ask: “Have you ever been worried? What did you worry about? How did that feel? Did you ever think of praying to feel better? Review the **Faith Word**. 5 min.
5. Read **We Learn About God**. Show the class a copy of the Nicene Creed (*Havadamk*). Have everyone stand in a circle with hands held together palm to palm and thumbs crossed and announce that you will be reading the creed that we recite at every Sunday liturgy and they should listen carefully. When you’re done, ask students if they can remember some of the things that we believe in. Some answers would be *God created everything, Jesus was born as a human being and died for us, Jesus was crucified and rose again, we believe in one baptism, etc.*
6. Play a recording of *Der Voghormya*. Ask the class if they have heard this before. When is it sung? (before Holy Communion) What type of feeling does it give? What are people generally doing during this hymn? (praying) 10 min.

7. Read **Our Armenian Way**. If possible, show the class a copy of the *Book of Lamentations* and *I Confess with Faith*. Read verse 15, “Christ, Guardian of all.”
8. Direct students to solving the message based on their short reading: *A Christian prays for others and praises God always*. 7 min.
9. **Handmade With Love**: Show sample prayer journal (instructions are in the Appendix). Have supplies all ready. Pass out individual journals and encourage them to decorate the book. Directions for the journal are in the Appendix.
10. Clean-up. Instruct students to write in their journals daily. (And follow up!) Close with the prayer. “Heavenly Father, we thank you for your guidance, for listening to our prayers, and for always being with us. We will always praise you and bring glory to your name. Amen.” 25 min.

Unit Two: Jesus & Me

Lesson Two: A Way of Life

Key Concepts

1. Jesus prayed all the time.
2. Jesus prayed in the wilderness, mountains and alone in the mornings (Luke 5:16, 6:12, Mark 1:35).
3. During the Synaxis part of the Divine Liturgy, the deacons lead the worshippers in prayer chanting “Again in peace let us pray to the Lord.”
4. The Armenian Church has seven canonical hours of prayer services mainly observed in the monasteries.

Objectives

During this lesson students will

1. Participate in an interactive exercise which emphasizes the importance of prayer as a way of getting to know God.
2. Read and discuss a story about a mother who is in need of rest and recharging.
3. Read Luke 5:15, 6:12 and Mark 1:35 about Jesus praying to his Father.
4. Discuss the deacon’s bid to prayer: “Again in peace let us pray to the Lord.”
5. Introduce the faith words of ‘monk’ and ‘monastery’ and the seven services of daily prayer.
6. Create and design an acrostic prayer stained glass window.

Materials Needed

Cell phone charger and cell phone (optional)

Construction paper (color of your choice) pre-cut into an outer frame (use template in Appendix) so inside is hollow for light to shine through the wax and tissue paper

Wax paper cut smaller than the construction paper, ready for children to paste onto template.

Tissue paper squares (may purchase precut box from local craft or teacher supply store)

White construction paper to trace praying hand (one for each student)

Glue sticks

Scissors

Procedure

1. Greet students warmly and open class with the prayer in **We Pray Together**.
2. For an opening interactive exercise, ask a volunteer to *tell us about your mom*; 2nd volunteer – *tell us about your dad*; 3rd volunteer – *tell us about your brother or sister*; 4th volunteer – *tell us about your best friend*. The 5th request: *tell us about Sam Armenian* (or make up a name-a fictitious person). The student will say that they don’t know anything about this person because they don’t know them. Ask: “Why did the first four volunteers know and say so much?”

Instructions for Prayer Journals

Materials Needed

- Composition pad-\$1 in Wal-Mart, Dollar tree, Target
- Any type of decorative materials on hand such as:
 - Foam Shapes stickers
 - Regular stickers
 - Colorful construction paper, scrapbook paper, wrapping paper scraps
 - Ribbon
 - Fabric
 - Buttons, Sequins
 - Crayons or Markers
 - Glue/glue sticks
 - Scissors

Directions: Students may decorate their journal however they choose with the embellishments provided. If using the different types of paper, they can cut the paper to the size of the journal and glue to the front and back side as shown in the example below. The purpose of decorating the journal is to give the students ownership of their prayer journal.

Encourage children to begin to journal their prayer activity...it's a great way to see how God is answering you and working in your life!

