

Plugged In

Lesson 4

Unit Four

Praying On My Own Time (All the Time)

Here I Am, Lord

Leader to life, path to truth, my Lord Jesus Christ, you led Joseph to Egypt and the people of Israel through the Red Sea. You led Moses to Mt. Sinai and his people to the land of promise.

Now I pray you, Lord, lead me and my companions in peace on the journey before us. For you are my Way and my Truth and my Life. Amen.

St. Hovhannes of Garni



A Community That Prays Together Stays Together

The relationship between God and his people can only come about through prayer. God initiated the process – he created us in his image so that we might communicate together. Prayer is the means of communication.

Prayer was essential in Jewish faith tradition. As you read the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and later the prophets, you see that they were all people of faith and prayer, and essential to their prayer was trust in God's promise of a relationship expressed in love. Over and over again you will find examples in the Gospels of Jesus praying. He prayed in the desert before he began his ministry.

He prayed with his disciples. He said sudden and spontaneous prayers, too. When his disciples asked him how to pray, Jesus taught them the greatest of all prayers—the Lord's Prayer or Our Father (*Hayr Mer*). This prayer is a summary of the whole Gospel. In this prayer, Jesus actually taught people to call God 'Father.'

The night before he died, Jesus prayed for those who would follow him. Even with his last breaths on the cross he called out to his Father in prayer, interceding and asking God to forgive us.

Likewise, the Holy Spirit teaches the church to pray. Regular prayers of the church include daily prayer during the Hours and of course our highest form of communal prayer – the Divine Liturgy or Badarak ...a symphony of prayers set to music that connects heaven and earth.

We pray together, in one voice as the Body of Christ, the Church. We also pray at all times and everywhere – before and after meals, at a lonely or difficult time, when grateful and happy, in celebration and in sorrow. The prayers we say and sing together as a church family allow us to talk together, in one voice. Let's see how many of our sacred prayers you know....

NAME THAT PRAYER...St. Paul's Advice About Prayer!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

Discover what St. Paul says about prayer while you test how well you know important Armenian prayers. Each quotation comes from a prayer that we pray as an Armenian family of faith. Once you have identified the source of the quotation, you will be able to solve the puzzle.



1. "...as we forgive those who trespass against us" If these words come from the Hayr Mer/Lord's Prayer put a P in number 1; if from the Havadamk/Creed, a C.
2. "...I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth" If the words come from the Havadamk/Creed, put an R in number 2; if it comes from the Voghchooyn/Kiss of Peace, a G.
3. "...blessed is the Lord in all his gifts" If these words are from Jashagestzook/Prayer Before Meals, put an A in number 3; if from the Confessional prayer, put an S.
4. "...Christ in our midst has been revealed" If these words come from the Kunanaleh Arach/Prayer Before Sleeping put an O in number 4; if it is from Voghchooyn/Kiss of Peace, put a Y.
5. "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Hosts" If these words come from the Soorp Soorp/Holy, Holy or Sanctus put C in number 5; if they come from the Havadamk/Creed put an L.
6. "... Guardian of All, may your right hand be upon me day and night" if these words come from the Kunanaleh Arach/Prayer Before Sleeping put an O in number 6; if it is from the Hayr Mer/Lord's Prayer, put a K.
7. "...Who did rise from the dead, have mercy on us" If these words come from Der Voghormya/Lord Have Mercy put an M in number 7; if they come from Soorp Asdvadz/Holy God put an N.

Now let's try it in Armenian...

8. "...Yev Hokyooyin surpo. Amen" If these words come from Der Voghormya put a P in number 8; if from the Sign of the Cross put an S.
9. "...Yegheetseen gamk ko vorbes hergeens yev bergree" If these words come from the Hayr Mer put a T in number 9; if they come from Voghchooyn put a C.
10. "...Yev ee mee Der Heesoos Kreesdos, Vorteen Asdoodճօ" If these words come from the Havadamk put an A in number 10, if they are from Soorp Asdvadz put a G.
11. "...Hisoos Purgeetch, mez voghormya" if these words come from the Hayr Mer put a Y; if they are from Der Voghormya put an N.
12. "Kreesdos ee mech mer haydnetsav" If these words come from the Havadamk but an H in number 12; if they are from the Voghchooyn put a T.
13. "...Orbnyal eh Der ee barkevus yoor. Amen" If these words come from the Jashagestzook put an L in number 13; if they are from the Hayr Mer put a T.
14. "Jesus, Wisdom of the Father..." If these words come from the Creed (Havadamk) put a B; if it comes from a prayer by St. Nersess Shnorhali put a Y.

Turn Down The Noise and Practice the Presence of God!

Read: Mark 1:35; Luke 4:42, 5:16, 22:39-41

Today we read in Mark and Luke that Jesus would go away to a lonely place to pray. Jesus was almost always surrounded by people, so it makes sense that sometimes he just needed to get away to a quiet spot where he would rest and pray. That's important for us too! We all need to have somewhere to go where we can be alone and spend some time in God's presence.

Prayer Aghotk Աղոթք



Our Armenian Way

As Armenians we lay claim to a rich tradition of beautiful prayers and hymns, written by men and women of deep faith. Let's learn about a few of these great authors of prayer.



St. Hovhannes of Garni (c 1180-1245) A well-known healer and preacher, St. Hovhannes traveled widely throughout Armenia and the Holy Land, converting Armenians and non-Armenians alike to the apostolic faith. Garni is an ancient town not far from Yerevan, the modern capital of Armenia. He spent many years in prayer and solitude at the famous Monastery of Geghard, carved out of a rocky mountainside.

St. Hovhannes Mantakuni (c.420-490) was a revered Catholicos of the Armenian Church. He contributed to the development of the *Book of Hours* (*Zhamakirk*) in which is found the morning or “matins” and evening or “vespers” services, the Hymnal (*Sharagnotz*), and *Book of Sacraments and Sacramentals* (*Mashdotz*).



St. Nersess Shnorhali (1102-1173) One of the outstanding Catholicoi of the Armenian Church, St. Nersess was known for his pioneering ecumenical spirit, his leadership, and his great literary output of poetry, letters, essays, hymns, and prayers. Among his best known works are *Jesus, Son*, *A Lament for Edessa*, and *I Confess With Faith*, 24 prayers written to be said at each hour of the day and which are often recited at the Lenten ‘Rest’ (*Hankusdootyan Zham*) service.

St. Gregory of Narek, (c.945-1003) The greatest mystic poet of the Armenian Church and a beloved teacher and churchman in his time, St. Gregory was born in Narek and entered the monastery of the same name (south of Lake Van). He wrote Bible commentaries, history, and poetry and his most famous collection, *Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart* was so treasured that it was considered to have healing powers.

Do you believe that prayer has healing power?

Life Issue

Who do I go to for answers?

We pray because God wants us to tell him what is on our minds. Even though he sees and understands our situations better than we do, he still wants to hear from us in our own words.

In many life situations, we don't know God's will until we pray. We want to be in line with God's will, and prayer is not so much about changing God's mind as it is to bring ourselves into alignment with God's heart...and just trust!

Praying to God is talking to the creator of your very being. It is connecting with the God of the universe. You are invited to pray. God himself invites you to bring your burdens, your cares and your needs to him. He invites you to come to him in order to find mercy and grace to help in your times of need. He designed you to be in communication with him.

The Top 5 Reasons Why We Should Pray

- We were created to know God through prayer.
- It moves us closer to the heart of God.
- Prayer gives us wisdom, insight, and strength.
- Through prayer, we invite God to be at work in our lives.
- It begins and continues a life-long relationship with him.



“Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.”

St. Ignatius Loyola (though some attribute to St. Augustine)

Four Different Types Of Prayer

A *doration (praising)*
C *onfession (expressing regret, asking for forgiveness)*
T *hanksgiving (giving thanks)*
S *upplication (asking for)*

This activity is an opportunity to explore the different types of prayers...

ACTS!

Read each of the following examples of prayer. Then decide what form of prayer each of the examples represent. Choose from adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication.

1. During a math test, Aleen asks the Holy Spirit to help her remember how to solve equations. Form of Prayer: _____
2. During her evening prayers, Ani always thinks about the good things and bad things that happened during the day. Because she got an “A” on her math test, she tells God how grateful she is for the help she got. Form of Prayer: _____





3. In his evening prayers, Zachary tells God that he feels bad about a smart remark he made to a classmate. He resolves to be nice to the classmate in the future.

Form of Prayer: _____

4. Vahe has noticed that whenever his grandpa drives past the Armenian Church he makes the sign of the cross. He explained to Vahe that this is in respect to God who comes to us in a very special way when we worship as a community.

Form of Prayer: _____

5. Arpy's older sister has been studying for weeks to take the state bar exam so that she can practice law. Arpy prays every day to the Holy Spirit to help her sister learn all she needs to.

Form of Prayer: _____

6. One spring day Sevan and his sister Seta were hiking in the hills above the city where they lived. When they arrived at the top of the hill they looked out in the distance and were amazed at how beautiful the view was. Seta reminder her brother about a prayer that they had learned in Sunday School just last week...it was from the book of Psalms..."How beautiful are your works, O Lord,"

Form of Prayer: _____



A prayer inspired by St. Gregory of Narek

If we flee, it is you who come after us.

If we are weak, you give us strength.

If we falter, you set us on the right and easy path.

If we are ailing in body and soul, you heal us.

If we sin, you weep.

If we are just, you smile.

If we are estranged, you mourn.

If we become stubborn, you are patient.

If we are ungrateful, you grant abundantly.

If we quit, you are sad.

If we approach, you celebrate.

Thank you, God, for your great mercy! Amen.

reflection while we make this rather formal confession.” Pick up the Divine Liturgy book and say: “I’ll read from the confession we do in church, and then we can read a paraphrased version in the book. Look at some of the ways we might be committing this sin and volunteer your answers. At the end of each discussion we’ll repeat *‘Megha Asdoodzo...I have sinned against God.’*” 10 min.

4. Luke 22: 1-38 includes the plot, betrayal, Passover preparation, Last Supper, argument about greatness, Peter’s denial and that in Christ we have everything we need. Since there is a significant amount of reading, allow students to take turns. Read the first two verses then choose someone to read 4 verses; when they have completed reading their passage, allow them to select the next reader for the next 4 verses. Work together on **Top Stories: What Are Our Headlines?** *Answers: Plot to kill Jesus; a guest room in the city; A New Covenant; His body, given for them; be a servant of all; deny him three times; purse, bag and sandals.* Headlines: 5, 7, 2, 3, 4, 6, 1 15 min.

5. Read through **Our Armenian Way** and **Life Issue**.

6. Enjoy an art activity based on Luke 22:31-34. Have students recall the story and how Peter denied that Jesus was his friend three times. Ask: “How do you think Peter felt when the soldiers took Jesus? How do you think he felt when the rooster crowed? Have you ever felt ashamed of something you said or did?” Remind the students that Jesus loved Peter anyway and that God still loves them when they make mistakes. He knows how we are but he doesn’t want to leave us that way! He is always ready to forgive and restore. Distribute the pictures of the Armenian miniature of Peter’s denial and markers. Have students color the bookmark and then glue onto the sturdy cardboard (if the copies are not on card stock). They can use this as a Bible bookmark. Ask them to please show it to parents and tell them the story of how one of Jesus’ most successful apostles began his ministry in misery, by denying his friendship with Jesus. There’s hope for all of us!

7. Conclude the lesson by saying: “Now let’s end our morning by saying together something we all say often during Badarak, always together, and always with great hope.” Pray and dismiss the class. 15 min.

Unit Four: Plugged In

Lesson 4: Praying On My Own Time (All the Time)

Key Concepts

1. Our Lord modeled with his own life that prayer is essential to attain spiritual strength and insight.
2. Prayer is essential in the life of a Christian – like the body needs air to live, the soul needs prayer.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Read about the importance of prayer.
2. Discover what St Paul says about prayer while identifying traditional Armenian prayers.
3. Reading Scripture passages about how Christ always sought a quiet place to pray – a good example for us to follow.
4. Share and discuss their personal thoughts about prayer.
5. Read brief notes on four great saints and their contributions to the faith of the Armenian people.
6. Complete an activity on the four different types of prayer.
7. Create a prayer box and write a prayer.

Materials Needed:

Pens /pencils/markers/crayons

Scissors/glue

5 large white index cards (see procedure #3)

Write 1 of the following statements on each card

1. The best place for me to pray is...
2. Prayer is...

3. Prayer is not...
4. The biggest help in my prayer life has been...
5. Prayer brings us close to God because...

For procedure #7:

Large shoe-box with cover

Arts & craft supplies to decorate the box (foam faith-shapes are great)

4 different color index cards (see procedure #7 for instructions)

Procedure

1. Welcome the students and pray the opening prayer. Poll the students as to what type of prayer (when, how often, where, in what mood? Etc.) they believe most pleases God? Discuss but conclude with “All sincere prayer pleases God...let’s learn some facts about prayer.” Read **A Community that Prays Together Stays Together** and move directly into **Name That Prayer**. Answer will read: PRAY CONSTANTLY. 15 min.
2. Have students read the Scripture passages in **Turn Down the Noise** and then ask: “What are these passages about?” (Jesus prayed continuously and he often went to a quiet place to do so.) Read or teach the remaining paragraph. Ask them what is significant about Christ retreating to a quiet place.
3. Play **Unfinished Sentences** using the five question cards that you prepared in advance. Have the students sit in a circle. In the middle of the circle place the cards face down on a desk/table. Select one of the students to take the first card and read the beginning of the sentence, and select one of the other students to respond by passing the card to him. Continue this process until everyone who wants to respond has an opportunity and all questions have been discussed. Don’t let students finish the sentences with a one-word answer. Answers should include explanations, thoughts or feelings. Give them the opportunity to explore possible responses. 15 min.
4. When exercise is complete ask them if they have ever written a poem, prayer, song or story. Are any considering writing professionally as they get older? Depending on their response, add that writing is a gift – and the Armenian Church has a rich history of prayer and hymn writers. Read **Our Armenian Way** containing brief biographies of four great saints who have written beautiful prayers (St. Nersess and St. Gregory are familiar to them already). Ask students to underline the most important thing about each saint. Share answers. The biography of St. Gregory of Narek identifies that his prayers were considered to have healing powers. Discuss the question that follows about prayer and healing power. You might want to conclude with: “It has long been documented that strong faith affects our physical bodies. There are proven health benefits of prayer. It is believed that even just occasional private prayer and Scripture meditation help people live healthier lives.”
5. Read **Life Issues** and **The Top 5 Reasons Why We Should Pray**. Point out the sidebar.
6. Review **Four Different Types of Prayer** (A C T S) and have students identify the examples. Answers: S, T, C, A, S, A. 15 min.



- Use the remainder of the class to create a Prayer Box with the art supplies that you can assemble on your desk. Students may work together or simply pass the box around for each student to add to; they could sign their name somewhere on the box as well. When box is decorated, show students cards you have color-coded to identify the type of prayer, i.e. pink-adoration, yellow/thanksgiving etc. Ask students to select a card and write a brief prayer to place in the box. Always keep a pile of these index/note cards in different colors on your desk during class. Encourage students to write their prayer requests each day and place them in the box. Check before and after each class and offer prayers as needed.
- Conclude with St. Gregory of Narek's prayer. 15 min.

Unit Four: Plugged In

Session 5: Milestone Moments and More...The Sacraments of Initiation

Key Concepts

- The sacraments are a gift of God's special presence at "milestone" moments where community and individuals share blessing.
- All life is sacramental as God is with us everywhere and at all times.
- The sacraments are visible signs of invisible grace.

Objectives

During this session students will

- Complete an activity on signs and symbols.
- Read about sacrament basics.
- Explore the concept of initiation.
- Examine the sacraments of initiation (baptism, chrismation, and holy communion) through Scripture passages, background text, and discussion questions.
- Review the Armenian Church understanding of sacraments.
- Reflect on the concept of holiness.
- Play a review game.

Materials Needed

A clear bowl of water

White towel

(Optional) Baptismal garment or pictures of a baptism

Whiteboard or newsprint and markers

Procedure #9: Sacrament cards from the back of this manual; masking tape.

Two copies of "A Sacraments Review" from the back of this manual, one for each team.

Procedure

- Begin class with the prayer in **Here I Am, Lord**. Read **Our World of Signs and Symbols** and complete the exercise that follows. 15 min.
- Tell students: "We're going to do a quick survey today of our sacraments and their signs and graces at what we could call "milestone moments." Read **Welcome to the Family** and ask students: "What do we mean by initiation? "(Allow for answers – initiation is a rite of passage ceremony marking entrance or acceptance into a group or society; it can also signify a transformation in which the initiate is 'reborn' into a new role.) What are some examples of initiation other than the ones we read about? (Allow for answers – Christian baptism, Catholic confirmation, Jewish bar or bat mitzvah, a college fraternity, a religious order, or graduation from school or recruit training.) 10 min.