

# Unit Four Celebrating Jesus\* The Church Year

## Ascension

Lesson

5



### We Pray Together

Dear Jesus, you graced us with your presence on earth, teaching us how to live like you. On Ascension Day, you returned to God the Father but promised us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for all your gifts.

*Hanoon Hor, yev Vortvo, yev Hokvooyñ Srpo. Amen.*

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### Let's Discover

Look at the words in the clouds, and see if you can figure out what today's lesson is about.

\_\_\_\_\_ marks forty days after \_\_\_\_\_, when Jesus lifted his \_\_\_\_\_, blessed his \_\_\_\_\_ and was carried up to \_\_\_\_\_.



# Our Story

Raffi loved his Uncle Sevag and enjoyed every chance that he had to see him. Uncle Sevag's work had him traveling all over the world. He would miss special family celebrations like Christmas, Easter and birthdays because of his work schedule.

When Raffi's mom surprised him with the news that Uncle Sevag was going to visit, Raffi's face lit up. Excitedly Raffi responded with, "Really? Uncle Sevag is coming here? Oh, I can't wait, I haven't seen him in such a long time! I want to show Uncle Sevag my Lego collection, especially the airplane I built. Maybe I can work at Uncle Sevag's company one day?" Raffi's mom smiled and said, "You never know. But right now, you need to go and clean your room and get ready. Uncle will be here very soon."

Uncle Sevag finally arrived the next day. Raffi ran to him and gave him the biggest, warmest hug. Uncle Sevag showered him with gifts from all over the world. Raffi sat down with his uncle and planned the week with him, "Today the park, tomorrow the kids' museum, Wednesday . . ." But the next day Uncle Sevag received an emergency work message stating that he needed to board the 5:00 p.m. flight to London, England. Uncle Sevag was heart-broken to have to leave his family, especially Raffi. He took Raffi aside and explained, "My work is requiring me to travel again; it's an emergency, that's why I have to leave so suddenly." I promise to return very soon. In the meantime, continue being the great boy you are, study hard, obey your parents and keep on Skyping with me. I will be back as soon as I can and promise to stay a much longer time." Raffi was sad to see his uncle leave so quickly. However, Raffi understood and knew that his uncle would keep his word and return at the first available opportunity.

## Faith Word

### *Ascension*

*Hampartsoom Համբարձում*  
Rising, the rising of Jesus Christ from  
earth to heaven 40 days after Easter.



# God's Word

During the forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he gave very important instructions to his disciples. One day near the town of Bethany, Jesus spoke to them about God's kingdom, saying to wait in Jerusalem until God the Father sent the Holy Spirit as promised. Jesus also told his disciples that once they received the Holy Spirit they were going to tell the whole world about Jesus. The disciples would be Jesus' special messengers. While he was speaking, he blessed the disciples, raised his hands while a cloud came and lifted Jesus out of their sight. As the disciples were looking up, two angels asked the disciples why they were still gazing into the sky. The angels told the disciples that Jesus went to heaven and would return in the same manner.

*Based on Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:1-11*



# We Learn About God



Forty days after Easter, the resurrection of Jesus, the church remembers and celebrates the feast of Ascension. This feast day falls on a Thursday and has a special Divine Liturgy and hymn. Ascension is very important because it marks the last event of Jesus' life and ministry on earth.

# Our Armenian Way

Hampartsoom is a very special feast of the Armenian people. It is not only celebrated in the church but also through festivals, songs, dance, and games. Nature was very important during Hampartsoom as the Armenians believed that on the eve of Ascension, the sky would turn extra bright and that all of nature would be in celebration. Much of the fun and excitement was directed toward the youth, especially the young girls. One such tradition is a game called *vijagakhagh*. On the morning before Ascension Thursday, the young girls would gather flowers from seven different homes. Then, that evening the girls would take a pail and travel to seven homes or seven fountains and fill it with water. The flowers would be added to the same pail.



- d. Students cut out the eggs - as many as you want to use.
- e. Brainstorm ideas of loving acts and sacrifices\* to write on the eggs (look at suggestions below and write them on the board).
- f. Have students choose their acts and sacrifices, write them, and color the eggs.
- g. Place the eggs in the envelope.

At home, each morning after prayer, take an egg from the envelope and read it.

Place it in front of your basket.

Make the sacrifice during the day.

After night prayers, put the egg in the basket.

8. Clean-up. Close with the prayer: “Dear Jesus, blessed is your resurrection! Thank you for your sacrifice and love. Amen.” 22 min.

*\*List of Acts and Sacrifices*

Help someone today	Help with the housework
Make someone happy	Pray for someone who is sick
Clean your room	Do the dishes
Tell your parents you love them	Don't eat candy today
Play with someone who is lonely	Don't watch television today
Smile at someone	No video games or technology
Obey in school	Thank your parents for all that they do
Set the table	Say something kind to someone

**Unit Four: Celebrating Jesus: The Church Year**  
**Lesson Five: Ascension**

**Key Concepts**

1. We remember and celebrate on the Feast of Ascension (*Hampartsoom*) that Jesus rose to heaven 40 days after his resurrection.
2. In addition, Hampartsoom is marked by popular songs, dance, and a game called *vijagakhagh*.

**Objectives**

During this lesson students will

1. Determine the theme of the lesson using context clues.
2. Participate in a group activity placing the Bible verse words about the Ascension in order.
3. Discuss a story about a young boy and his uncle.
4. Read Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:1-11.
5. Examine the story of Ascension and related traditions.
6. Listen to a popular Hampartsoom song, *Hampartsoom Yayla*
7. Color and decorate an Armenian miniature of the Ascension.

**Materials Needed**

Helium balloons blown up with a ribbon attached (at least 16 of them) make sure you have one for every student (see option\* in procedure #2)

Index cards – each containing the following underlined words: **Jesus lifted up his hands, blessed his disciples and rose up to heaven. Luke 24: 50-51.**

Hole punch

A recording of “Hampartsoom Yayla”

Coloring picture of the Ascension (from the Appendix)

Pens, pencils, crayons, markers or coloring

Gold colored glitter or gold glitter glue

8.5" x 11" size construction paper to serve as a frame for their coloring page

## Procedure

1. Greet students warmly and open class with the prayer in **We Pray Together**.
2. Students will already notice the helium balloons floating in the class. Say: "I am going to give each of you a card with a word written on it. You are all going to work together and try to put the words in order to reveal a message." Distribute the index cards to the students (make sure they have been mixed up). Have them stand in a circle reading each index card and try to put the words in order to spell out the verse. \*If you don't use helium balloons, then you can improvise by drawing balloon outlines with a string attached on the board and have them place the cards in the balloon with a piece of masking tape. Once the verse is in order help the students attach the card to a balloon. "At the end of the class, just as Jesus ascended to heaven, we will release our balloons." Have students complete the fill-in activity in **Let's Discover** to reveal the lesson topic for the day. (Answers: Ascension, Easter, hands, disciples, heaven.) 15 min.
3. Read and discuss **Our Story**. Ask if the students could identify with the situation. Have they ever looked forward to something and then things didn't work out? How would they have reacted to the same situation? Did Raffi have the right attitude? 5 min.
4. Read **God's Word**. Ask: "What do you think Jesus' disciples thought when he said he was going to return to God the Father? How do you think they felt when he left?"
5. Introduce **Faith Word**. Point out to students that the root word in "Ascension" is "ascend" which means to "go up." Have them practice saying Ham-par-tsoom in Armenian. 8 min.
6. Read **We Learn About God**. Ask children if the number 40 seems familiar in the Bible. (Noah's ark, Jesus in the wilderness, 40 days of Lent, 40-day hokehankist – requiem performed after the 40-day period of mourning, etc.)
7. Read or teach **Our Armenian Way**. Ask students if they have ever heard or participated in any of these cultural events for *Hampartsoom*. Play *Hampartsoom Yayla*. Mention that in the famous Armenian Opera called *Anoush*, there is an entire scene dedicated to the vijag and this song is sung. 10 min.
8. **Handmade With Love**. Distribute coloring page, have them color and decorate the halos with gold glitter. Glue coloring sheet to construction paper as a frame.
9. Clean-up. Release balloons in the classroom, saying "Thank you Jesus!" Close with the prayer: "Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for sending us your beloved Son, Jesus and for all he taught us. Amen." Students may take balloons home. 15 min.

## Unit Four: Celebrating Jesus: The Church Year

### Lesson Six: Pentecost

#### Key Concepts

1. We celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit as Jesus promised.
2. Acts 2:1-12 contains the story of Pentecost and the birth of the Christian Church.
3. Pentecost, *Hokekaloost*, is an important feast day in the Armenian Church and has a special hymn (Arakelo Aghavno) dedicated to it.