

Jesus, Lord of My Life

THE CHURCH BEGINS

UNIT

1

LESSON
SIX

From Our Hearts to God

Lord, let us be your church! We can do your work in so many ways: we can sing, serve, help, and use all the gifts you gave us to grow closer to you. Help us make the world a better place so that your will is truly done here on earth as well as in heaven. Amen.

MY WORLD

Dad and mom were working on the dining room table. There were pictures spread out everywhere and pages of words. We have not had dinner in the dining room for weeks because of their project.

“What is all this?” I asked.

“We’re on the booklet committee for the church’s anniversary. We are putting together the history of our church,” dad said.

Mom showed me an old black and white picture of a bunch of men and women standing in rows with a priest in the middle. “These are the founding families of our church. Each family gave money so our church could be built. Before our church was built the people used another church for services once a month when an Armenian priest could come. After many years these people in the picture saved enough money to buy the land and build the church.”

“Look at this picture,” dad said, showing me a picture in color. There were many people standing on the front steps of the church with the priest. “Some of these are the sons and daughters of the people in the first picture. These people were responsible for building the church hall. Before the hall was built we used the space under the church for our hall and church schools.”

“And here is the next picture. This is the committee that helped build the classroom and activities building next to the church,” mom said, showing me a pretty recent picture of people I recognized even though they are older now than in the picture.

On the table were eight photographs of the church. I was looking at about 70 years of our church’s life. “Our church has really grown!” I said.

“From 23 families to 276. We have grown. Having an anniversary celebration gives us the opportunity to look back at our beginning, enjoy our present and think about our future,” dad said.



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.



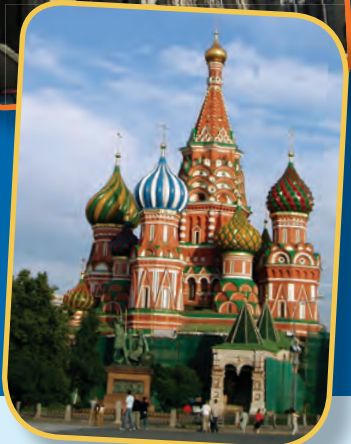
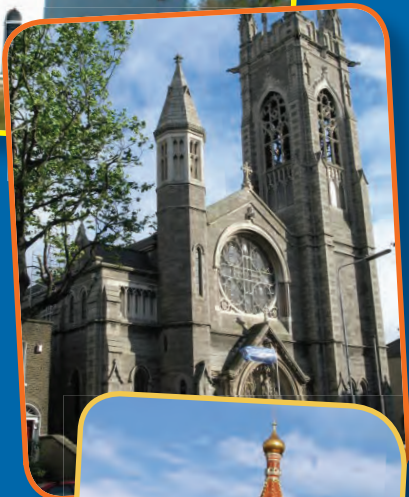
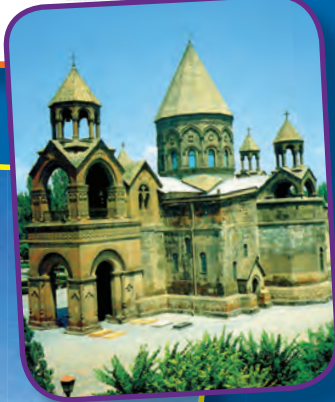
Our Armenian Way

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, organists, and teachers, for example. 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.