

Unit Two: Sacred Time –The Church Year

Lesson 3

Easter and the Dominical Feasts



Pray Together

Hanoon Hor, yev Vortvo, yev Hokvooyñ Surpo, Amen.

Day by day, O Lord, three things we pray. To know you more clearly, to love you more dearly, to follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Quick Quiz

Write the correct answer in the space.

1. Fasting is one of the ways we prepare for a _____.
2. The 50-day period leading up to the celebration of Jesus' birth is called _____.
3. The story of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14) standing in the temple is basically about how to _____.
4. _____ is the period of fasting and prayer that precedes Easter.
5. The popular term for the Wednesday of mid-Lent in the Armenian Church is _____.



Did You Know?

Some scholars believe that the actual date of Jesus' crucifixion is April 7. In the Armenian Church, this also happens to be the date of the Feast of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary.

The Greatest Day of All

How sad Jesus' family and friends must have been after his crucifixion on the cross, the day we commemorate on Good Friday. They had lost their beloved teacher and they were afraid all their hope was gone. In the dark of the morning, Mary Magdalene trudged forlornly to the tomb to visit Jesus' body. To her horror, the stone was rolled away and Jesus' body was gone! Thinking it had been stolen, she sat crying outside the tomb. Even though Jesus had promised he would rise from the dead, that promise did not really sink in with Mary until he stood before her and called her by name.

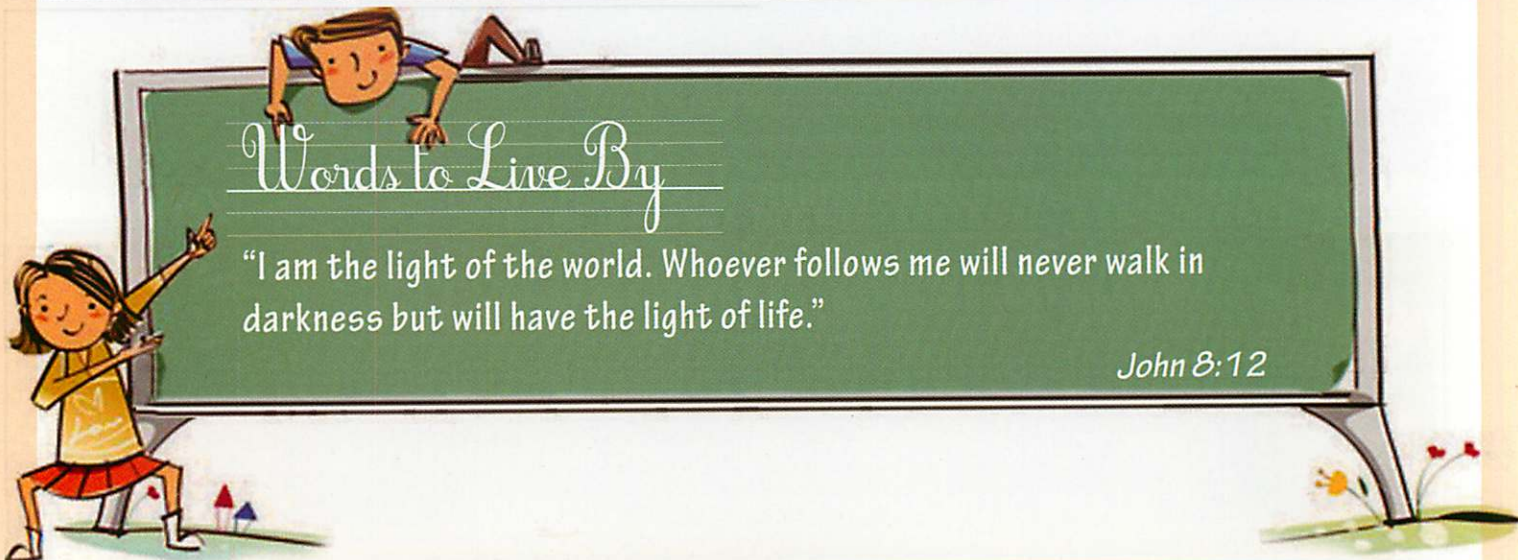


Jesus had performed many miracles around his disciples, yet they did not fully realize he was the Son of God until he defeated death by walking out of the grave. Once his friends saw him alive after the Crucifixion, they understood. All he had told them was true! The disciples were overjoyed. They stopped hiding and worrying about being killed. Instead, they soon charged forth like lions to spread the Word fearlessly wherever they were sent.

The Resurrection is the basis for our faith. By this act, Jesus proved he was God. He showed he has the power even to defeat death. We could then know that he has the authority to forgive all sins and give us the eternal life he had promised. Our entire church year rests upon this event. Christmas, Pentecost, and all the other dominical feasts would not be meaningful without the Resurrection.

In the early church, Easter was given the greatest attention. In fact, in those early centuries, converts to Christianity all studied and prepared for their baptisms on Easter Sunday. It was a great day of new life for everyone.

1. Why is Easter so important, more so even than Christmas?
2. What are some ways you have seen God's power in your world?
3. If the Resurrection were to occur today, how do you think people would react?



Celebrations of the Life of Our Lord

Read the following Scripture verses. Draw a line to match them to the Dominical feasts they describe:

Luke 19:37-40

Easter

Luke 2:21

Baptism of Jesus

Mark 16:4-7

Palm Sunday

Luke 24:50-53

Presentation of our Lord at the Temple

Luke 2:8-14

Naming of our Lord

Matthew 17:1-3

Ascension of our Lord

Luke 2:22-24

Theophany/Nativity

Matthew 3:13-17

Pentecost

Acts 2:1-4

Transfiguration of Jesus



from Jerusalem

They Have Seen the Risen Lord!

Many saw Jesus after he rose from the dead. Read all about it in:

John 20: 11-18

John 20: 24-29

John 21: 1-14

Hints of Jesus: Daniel

Daniel was a faithful Jew. No matter what sort of pressure he faced, he never turned his back on his faith. He prayed each day and kept all the dietary laws. Under God's protection, Daniel rose to a position of power as an advisor to kings.

Eventually, Daniel was working for Darius, king of the Medes. Darius was so impressed with Daniel's work that he planned to give him charge of the entire kingdom. Darius' other advisors were furious



when they found this out. They convinced Darius to pass a law forbidding anyone in the kingdom to pray to any being but the king himself. At their insistence, Darius agreed to this.

The jealous advisors knew that Daniel prayed to God every day without fail, so they arranged to “catch” Daniel praying to someone other than Darius. Though Darius liked Daniel, he was forced by his own law to throw Daniel into a pit filled with lions. The pit was covered with a stone, and the king retired to a restless and anxious night. The next morning, Darius hurried to the pit and called out to Daniel.

To the king’s joy, Daniel was alive and well. Daniel told Darius that God had sent his angels to protect him from the lions. Darius realized who the living God really was, and he ordered all his subjects to honor him.

This event reminds us a bit of Jesus. The Pharisees and scribes who tried to turn the people against Jesus are like the jealous advisors who plotted against Daniel. Like Daniel, Jesus was turned over to certain death by someone with whom he worked closely. Most importantly, Jesus came back to us, not merely from a den of dangerous animals, but from death itself!



Our Armenian Way

The Armenian Church commemorates the night between Holy Thursday and Good Friday with the “Khavaroom,” or “Vigil” service. During this solemn service, we remember the betrayal, arrest, and suffering of Jesus before his Crucifixion. Among the hymns, Psalms, and other prayers are six Gospel readings: John 13:16-18:1, Luke 22:1-65, Mark 14:27-72, Matthew 26:31-56, Matthew 26:57-75, and John 18:2-19:16.

Some Armenians have the custom of tying knots on a thin string with each of these Gospel readings during the Khavaroom. Afterwards, the string with the knots is worn around the wrist to remind the believer of the sufferings of Christ on our behalf. There is no set time for removal, but some wearers keep the string on until the Ascension, some until Pentecost, and others until it falls off. No matter how long it is worn, the Vigil Service bracelet is a quiet way to frequently recall the great gift of our salvation which was bought with the Blood of the Lamb of God.

