

A People and A Way: The Armenian Church



Unit Two, Lesson 1

The First Enlighteners

Pray Together

Խանօր Խօր, յեւ Վօրտօ, յեւ Խօկօօյն, Տսրօ, Ամեն. O Christ, make my soul worthy to behold with joy the light of your glory, in that day when you call me, and to rest in the hope of good things in the mansions of the just until the day of your glorious coming. Have mercy on me, a great sinner.

(a prayer of St. Nersess Shnorhali)

Chapter Checkup

Fill in the blanks.

1. The great Armenian church father Khosrov Antsevatsi compared our Divine Liturgy to a “_____.”
2. In church, reading the _____ and receiving _____ help us draw especially close to God.
3. The Divine Liturgy is called Soorp _____ in Armenian.
4. Holy Communion came out of events at the _____.
5. _____ refers to a set of ceremonial actions established for worship.

For All Who Are Far Off

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples were in Jerusalem. They were thinking about their next move. They were filled with happiness over Jesus’ visits with them after his death and resurrection. During this time, they chose a man named Matthias to replace Judas, the person who betrayed Jesus and then died shortly afterward.

Through the Holy Spirit, God gave the twelve disciples the ability to speak all the languages they would need to travel far and wide and teach the world about Jesus. The disciples were not men who had gone to college to study different languages. Until the Holy Spirit came on them, they spoke only their local language.

Imagine if God had wanted the twelve to sail for America – the disciples would suddenly have begun speaking the languages of the Cherokee, Aztec, Inuit (Eskimo), and all the other peoples of this continent!

The Holy Spirit allowed the disciples to visit many nations to tell people the happy news about God’s love for mankind everywhere. Peter told the group of visitors that day that the promise of Jesus was “for all who are far off.”

We are people who are far off, too! We are far off in time from the thrilling events surrounding Jesus, but through the years God gave us dedicated teachers who love to tell us about him.



Acts 2:1-15, A Reader's Theater

Narrator: The Feast of Pentecost celebrates the presence of the Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit came to the apostles as they gathered 50 days after Jesus' Resurrection. They had already seen their risen Lord a number of times but were still not sure what to do. Here's what happened on that amazing day:

Scripture Reader: *Read Acts 2: 1-4*

Scripture Reader 2: *Read Acts 2: 5-13*

Scripture Reader 3: *Acts 2: 14-15 and continue with:* Then Peter told the crowd about the signs and miracles the prophets had dreamed and spoken of and how these were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, Son of God. Many people accepted his message of hope and faith – more than 3,000 were baptized that very day!

Narrator 2: Today let us celebrate the gift of the Spirit, the gift Jesus had promised to send us, sent on the Feast of Pentecost. The Spirit is present in all we do - renewing, encouraging, freeing, directing, and enlightening us. We read about these gifts in 1 Corinthians 12: 7-11.

Scripture Reader 4: *1 Corinthians 12: 7-9*

Scripture Reader 5: *1 Corinthians 12:10-11*

Reader 1: Let us celebrate these gifts together and pray that we use them to make the world a better place. With the gift of wisdom, which helps us to see clearly...

All: Let us renew the face of the earth.

Reader 2: With the gift of understanding which helps us to know God and his people...

All: Let us renew the face of the earth.

Reader 3: With the gift of right judgment, which helps us to make decisions...

All: Let us renew the face of the earth.

Reader 4: With the gift of courage, which gives us strength and helps us not be afraid...

All: Let us renew the face of the earth.

Reader 5: With the gift of knowledge, which helps us to see our Armenian Christian part in God's creation...

All: Let us renew the face of the earth.

Reader 6: With the gift of faith, which helps us hear your voice in the noise of life...

All: Let us renew the face of the earth.

Narrator: In the spirit of love made real through Christ's sacrifice and the coming of the Holy Spirit, let's greet each other with a holy kiss. *Everyone turns to a partner and gives the Kiss of Peace. Krisdos ee mech mer haydnetzarv. Christ is revealed among us. Orhynal eh haydnootiumun Krisdosee. Blessed is the revelation of Christ.*

Now that you have "performed" the Pentecost, put the following events in order. Use the blanks in front of each statement to show the order.

- _____ Peter stood up with the other eleven disciples to speak to the crowd.
- _____ The Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to speak in languages they had never known before.
- _____ A crowd of foreign visitors gathered to hear the disciples speak the different languages, some of which the foreigners recognized as their own.
- _____ A sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the house where the disciples were.
- _____ Peter reminded the crowd that the disciples could not have been drunk because it was only 9 o'clock in the morning.
- _____ Tongues of fire rested on the disciples.
- _____ Some in the crowd made fun of the disciples and said they were drunk.
- _____ People in the crowd asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Our Armenian Way



How many languages can you speak? You speak English, and probably Armenian. You may know some Spanish or French from school. Do you know anyone who can speak five languages well? Maybe. Ten languages? Doubtful. Dozens of languages? Impossible.

As you know, two of the original twelve disciples, Thaddeus and Bartholomew, at different times, traveled all the way to Armenia to teach people about Jesus. Ancient Armenia was hundreds of miles away from Thaddeus' and Bartholomew's native land. Thaddeus and Bartholomew did not have cars or trains or planes to help them. They walked the entire distance. At most, they may have been blessed with a donkey to carry their supplies.

As the two men hiked through mountains and fields, they encountered many isolated groups of people. Most of these people had their own languages. There were no huge superpowers with common languages, such as English is today.

When Thaddeus or Bartholomew found these groups, they told them about God's plan for salvation through his Son. Each time,

the Holy Spirit instantly gave the disciples a complete knowledge of the local tongues even if the language was spoken by only a few dozen people. Human history will never know how many languages the disciples had to use – certainly more than we will ever know.

First Thaddeus and, later, Bartholomew finally arrived in Armenia. Many of the Armenian people were overjoyed to hear the message about Jesus. They happily believed what they heard, and Christianity took root in Armenia.

Thaddeus and Bartholomew were eventually killed by those who did not want anyone to follow Jesus, but it was impossible to stop him. Churches sprang up, and Armenia went on to become the first nation to make Christianity the official state religion. Through wars, massacres, starvation, earthquakes, and other difficulties, the Armenian people always held tightly to their faith in Jesus.

Imagine that you are one of the early apostles. God has given you the job of teaching strangers about his Son. On the lines below, write down what you would say to teach someone who had never heard of Jesus.

Faith Word *Pentecost* Hokekaloost Հոգեգալութիւն

A feast 50 days (or the 7th Sunday) after Easter that celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples

Prayer and Worship

U - nu - քե - լոյ — ա - - - դաւ - նոյ
 A - ra - ke - lo — a - - - ghav - no

ի - ջա - նե - լով մե - ծա - ճայն
 ee - cha - ne - lov me - dza - tsayn

հրնչ - մամբ ի բար - ճանց,
 hnch - mamp ee par - tsants,

The Armenian Church celebrates Hokekaloost, or Pentecost, with the hymn “Arakelo Aghavno.” It is unclear who the actual author of the hymn is, although some people think it was written by the great historian Movses Khorenatzi and others the 5th century Catholicos

“With a mighty sound from above, the Dove came down...”

Hovnan Mantagooni. It is sung at baptisms and during the Blessing of the Water at Christmas as well.

What Biblical story does this hymn recall?

FAMILY FOCUS: For Parents



Lesson Roundup

Today, 5th graders studied the events of Pentecost. They learned how the Holy Spirit made it possible for the Good News to go out all over the ancient world. The children also went into more detail about the mission of Thaddeus and Bartholomew, and they pretended they were missionaries telling people about Jesus. In addition, the class learned about the Pentecost hymn, “Arakelo Aghavno.”

Family Faith Activity

1. Together, look at the map in today’s lesson. Discuss the arduous journeys that Thaddeus and Bartholomew had to make to reach Armenia.
2. If someone in your home is musical, play and sing “Arakel Aghavno” together. The music appears in your child’s lesson.
3. Call a friend or relative you have not seen in church for awhile, and invite them to join you in church on Sunday. This is part of telling others the Good News of Jesus!

A Parent’s Promise

Yes, I read the Lesson Roundup ____ and tried at least one activity as a family ____.

Signed _____