



## Unit Four: Celebrating Jesus: The Church Year

### Lesson Three: Christmas

#### Key Concepts

1. The Armenian Church celebrates the birth of Jesus, Christmas, on January 6<sup>th</sup>.
2. The hymn *Khorhoort Medz* tells of the great Mystery of Jesus being revealed.

#### Objectives

During this lesson students will

1. Participate in a classifying activity of religious and non-religious Christmas cards.
2. Discuss, illustrate or write about Christmas scenes and symbols, ornaments and carols.
3. Read and discuss story about the true meaning of Christmas.
4. Explore the Christmas story in Luke 2: 1-20 and Matthew 2: 8-11.
5. Complete a CLOZE activity based on comprehension from Scripture reading.
6. Listen to and sing part of the *Khorhoort Medz* sharagan.
7. Read about and discuss Armenian Christmas.
8. Practice giving and receiving the Christmas greeting.
9. Design Nativity cards.

#### Materials Needed

Assorted Christmas cards, used or new, should reflect both religious and non-religious scenes (nativity, star, candy cane, Santa, snowman, gingerbread, etc.)

Crayons, markers and or coloring pencils

Your favorite Christmas ornament (ideal to bring to class)

Either a picture or an actual small nativity scene

Children's Bible

#### Note to the Teacher

This lesson requires assorted Christmas cards. Since this will be taught a week or two before Armenian Christmas, ask students to bring in a handful of Christmas cards each from among those they have been receiving (you will need to email parents to send them in). Or, if using cards proves too difficult, just have color copies of the Armenian miniature and have children do the decorating!

#### Procedure

1. Greet students warmly and open class with the prayer in **We Pray Together**.
2. Decide on two stations on your desk and label/identify them as *Jesus Christmas cards* and *Non-Jesus Christmas cards*. Place all the cards in an accessible area and have the students sort the cards and place them in the correct category. Give

an example before you begin for each type (Jesus in the manger vs. Santa). After a few minutes, visit each station and go through some of the cards (be mindful of the time, do enough to get the point across). Please note, that although nowhere in the Bible does it mention the Christmas tree, the wreath, candles, etc., over time these traditions have been incorporated into the Christmas story as symbols. The evergreen tree represents life, the round wreath represents God's endless love, and the candle represents Jesus being the light of the world. Have students answer questions in the lesson. Discuss their symbols and scenes, asking which would remind us of the "reason for the season," Jesus? Share your favorite ornament and explain why. Some Christmas carols that are Jesus centered: O Come All Ye Faithful, Silent Night, We Three Kings, Away in Manger, O Holy Night; Non-Jesus carols: Santa Claus is Coming to Town, Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer, Frosty the Snowman, Jingle Bells, Deck the Halls. 12 min.

3. Have students take turns reading **Our Story**. Even better – perform it! Select five children to be the parents, the kids, and a narrator to read it OR have them act out the story as it is being read. Then ask class what happens in their homes during the Christmas season. Is it similar to this story? What are some of their traditions? Did they agree with Ani's reaction? Ask if they have ever given their parents advice. Did they listen? 7 min.
4. Introduce the **Faith Word** and show the class a picture (a Christmas card or the Armenian miniature depictions of Jesus in the textbook) or an actual Nativity figurine).
5. **God's Word**. Read the Scripture passages from Luke 2: 1-20 and Matthew 2:8-11. Tell students to listen carefully to the story. Have them complete the CLOZE activity by filling in the blanks from the Word Box. (Answers: Bethlehem, Mary, donkey, baby, wrapped, manger, inn, shepherds, sheep, star, angel, afraid, Lord, kings, gold.) 10 min.
6. **We Learn About God**. Read the English translation of *Khorhoort Medz*. Ask the class who or what they think this hymn is about. What is the Mystery? (the birth of Jesus) Have them write it on the line. Play or sing the sharagan so the students hear the melody. Have them practice the lines in their text. 10 min.
7. Read **Our Armenian Way**. As a class, practice saying the two parts of the Christmas greeting. Divide the class into two and have the first group offer the greeting and the second group offer the response. Reverse. 6 min.
8. **Handmade With Love**. Class Nativity Cards  
Have students design their nativity cards. They should include a message like "Jesus is the reason for the season" or "Merry Christmas! With Jesus's love," etc. (write these message ideas on the board for children to copy) and sign the card and write the year. Have the cards color copied and use them to send Christmas cards to the parish elderly and homebound. You might even have them passed around in a basket in church as Christmas messages of love to parishioners.
9. Clean-up. Close with the prayer: "Dear Jesus, You are the gift of love and peace to all of us. You are the reason for this glorious season. Amen." 15 min.

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### **Lesson Four: Easter**

#### **Key Concepts**

1. We remember and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.
2. The Gospels each contain a narrative on Jesus' resurrection; Matthew 28: 1-10; Mark 16: 1-8; Luke 24:1-12; and John 20: 1-17.
3. As with all Christian churches, the Armenians have special traditions and customs for Easter.