

2020-2021

LITTLE SAINTS GUIDEBOOK

Little Saints is a ministry geared toward children from Baptism to age four. This program helps families connect with each other and develop relationships within the parish community before their children enter Sunday School. Included in this guidebook are twelve lesson plans for monthly Zoom meetings, along with a thematic craft for each lesson.

Introduction Letter from

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|----|--|
| 02 |Table of Contents |
| 03 |Welcome, Little Saints! |
| 04 |Lesson Format |
| 05 |September |
| 06 |October |
| 07 |November |
| 08 |December |
| 09 |January |
| 10 |February |
| 11 |March |
| 12 |April |
| 13 |May |
| 14 |June |
| 15 |July |
| 16 |August |
| 17 |Appendix A: February |
| 18 |Appendix B: April |
| 22 |Appendix C: August |
| 24 |Appendix D: Sample Flyer |
| 25 |Appendix E: Sample Media Consent Form |

WELCOME, LITTLE SAINTS!

Dear Clergy Brothers and Little Saints Mentors,

One day, after submitting the number of baptisms in our parish to the Diocese, it occurred to me that we were leaving a very important thing to chance: that a parent would register and drop off their child to Church School four years after celebrating their baptism. There was a missing link in the care of our beloved, youngest members of the Church, and that needed to change.

As a pastor, I was disappointed that the parents of Church School students did not seem to know one another. A parishioner once mentioned to me that she kept in touch with some other mothers through a "mommy and me" program in which they all participated with their young children. This thought prompted me to envision a similar program, one that could take place in the heart of the Church-- the Sanctuary. To undo the notion that toddlers are generally not comfortable, or even welcome, in a "strange" place such as our beautiful sanctuaries, we needed to provide an opportunity for them to explore and learn about the sights, sounds, and smells of our holy place of worship. This ensures that they would be acclimated to the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings when families come together to worship.

Thus, **Little Saints** was born. We have two main goals for this program: to bring our youngest children (ages 0-4) into our churches so that they feel comfortable and welcome in the Sanctuary, and to have parents participate while getting to know one another in order to foster community. Little Saints is now a thriving reality, thanks to the enthusiastic efforts of our planning committee, composed of our assistant pastor, Rev. Fr. Ardash Bagdasarian, our youth coordinator, Lisa Mardigian, and a few dedicated mothers. This program has brought children and their parents together each month under the dome of the Church. Together, they are learning about their faith and growing closer to God.

We began this ministry as an in-person, one-hour, monthly program that contained four parts: open play, an art project, circle time with an object lesson from the pastor, and a trip to the Sanctuary. In light of the pandemic, it has now evolved into a thirty-minute Zoom session to help keep families connected to the Church from the comforts of their home. This guidebook provides twelve lesson plans that were developed by Jennifer Morris, a St. John parishioner and Diocesan employee, along with the assistance of her Diocesan colleague, Kathryn Ashbahian. It is our hope that you will find these lessons useful in your own parish ministry.

Please join me as we bring our most precious of living saints into the fold of the Body of Christ.

Prayerfully,

V. Rev. Fr. Aren Jebejian

Pastor, St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit in Southfield, MI

"Train children in
the right way, and
when old, they
will not stray."
- Proverbs 22:6

LESSON FORMAT

Each 30-minute interactive session will start with a **Show, Share, and Tell** segment to help the Little Saints become comfortable with each other. This will help set the tone and introduce the theme of the lesson. Next, the priest will move on to a **Church Connection** to further elaborate upon the lesson's theme by either reading a story, showing something from the sanctuary, or teaching an object lesson. Then, an **At-Home Art Project** will be shared via the Screen Share feature on Zoom for families to extend their learning and understanding of the lesson. Finally, every session will conclude in a **Closing Prayer** before waving goodbye to the Little Saints and reminding them of the next Zoom meeting date. *Note: In the absence of a priest, these lessons can be taught by a youth director, Sunday School teacher, or parent volunteer.*



A FEW SUGGESTIONS:

- Have families sign a media consent form and submit it to the Church Office, since you will be taking screen shots to help promote the program in the parish.
- Ask families to "rename" their Zoom screens with the child/children first name only.
- Keep your meeting date and time consistent each month, so families can plan for it.
- Do your best to keep each session to 30 minutes or less for this age group.
- Send out surveys, so you can get feedback and suggestions from the families.
- Update and maintain your database quarterly to input newly baptized children, and pass on names of those ready for the preK-4 Sunday School class

SEPTEMBER

Show, Share, and Tell

In an email to the parents, ask each Little Saint before the meeting to go on a "cross hunt" and find as many crosses around their house. To start off the session, ask each Little Saint to pick their favorite cross and share where they found it in their house.

Church Connection

Next, the priest will talk about the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and teach the Little Saints how to make the sign of the cross through demonstration and explanation, providing time for practice.

At Home Art Project

Then, screen share the suggested at-home art project. Little Saints will be asked to use the masking tape to make a big cross on their paper. Then have your Little Saint color everywhere on the paper. Next, have your Little Saint carefully pull off the masking tape to reveal their beautiful cross.

The supplies needed are: cardstock, masking tape, and crayons.

At the end of your time together, encourage the Little Saints to join you in a closing prayer of Hayr Mer by modeling how to stand and hold their hands during the prayer.





OCTOBER

Show, Share, and Tell

In an email to the parents, ask each Little Saint before the meeting to think about their favorite season and be ready to share. To start off the session, ask each Little Saint to show, share and tell what their favorite season is and why.

Church Connection

Next, the priest will talk about the creation story in Genesis, and how blessed we are to see God's masterpiece every day when we look outside and admire things like the trees, the birds, and the beautiful colors of fall.

At Home Art Project

Then, screen share the suggested at-home art project. Little Saints will be asked to collect their supplies to make binoculars. Have your Little Saint use masking tape to firmly adhere the two cardboard tubes together. Next the adult can write, "What do you see that God made outside?" on a piece of paper and ask your Little Saint to cut it out. Have your Little Saint tape the paper in the center of their cardboard tubes. Assist your Little Saint with using a hole puncher to make a hole in the top middle side of each cardboard tube and attach a long piece of ribbon or yarn to each side. Finally, head outside and have your Little Saint explore all of the beautiful colors with their binoculars and try to find all of the colorful things God has made in nature.

The supplies needed are: two equal-sized cardboard tubes, paper, tape, a hole puncher, ribbon or yarn, and crayons or markers to decorate.

At the end of your time together, encourage the Little Saints to join you in a closing prayer of Hayr Mer by modeling how to stand and hold their hands during the prayer.

NOVEMBER

Show, Share, and Tell

In an email to the parents, ask each Little Saint before the meeting to find an object in their house to share with the group that they are thankful. To start off the session, ask each Little Saint to show, share and tell what they found in their house that they are thankful for. If time permits, also ask each Little Saint who they are thankful for and how they show their appreciation.

Church Connection

Next, the priest will talk about different types of prayers: **Supplication** (Asking), **Thanksgiving** (Appreciation), **Adoration** (So beautiful), and **Confession** (Sorry).

At Home Art Project

Then, screen share the suggested at-home art project. Little Saints will collect their supplies to make a Thanksgiving Thankful Tree. Ask your Little Saint to color the paper plate green using crayons and/or markers. Cut three evenly spaced one inch slits at the bottom of the cardboard tube. Fold the pieces back and tape it onto the center of the paper plate. Wrap a piece of brown paper around the cardboard tube and secure with tape or glue to create the tree trunk. Help your Little Saint trace their hand ten times (or more) on construction paper. Be sure to use a variety of colors, as these will be the fall leaves. Then assist your Little Saint with cutting out all of their traced hands. Ask your Little Saint to brainstorm ten things that they are most thankful for, and record their thankful thoughts on each leaf. Finally, have your Little Saint use a glue stick to glue their hands as the leaves on the tree trunk. Then head outside to find some pine cones, leaves and sticks to place at the base of the tree.

The supplies needed are: a plain white paper plate, cardboard tube from paper towel roll, construction paper of varying fall colors (red, orange, yellow, green, and brown), scissors, tape, glue or glue stick, and crayons or markers.

At the end of your time together, encourage the Little Saints to join you in a closing prayer of Hayr Mer by modeling how to stand and hold their hands during the prayer.



Find the perfect spot in your home for your Little Saint to proudly display their Thankful Tree for Thanksgiving!



DECEMBER

Show, Share, and Tell

In an email to the parents, ask each Little Saint before the meeting to find their favorite ornament from their Christmas tree to share and tell the group about. To start off the session, ask each Little Saint to show, share and tell which ornament they picked and why it is their favorite.

Church Connection

Next, the priest will read a book about the Nativity story. After the story, he will show pictures of people and things from the Nativity to prompt discussion and further strengthen the Little Saints' understanding of the story. *Suggested Title: Christmas in the Manger by Nola Buck.*

At Home Art Project

Then, screen share the suggested at-home art project. Little Saints will be asked to collect their supplies to make baby Jesus in the manger for Christmas. Have your Little Saint dip their pointer finger in brown paint and make a stable on blank white paper. You could use a pencil to draw an outline of a stable first and have them make fingerprints on it to make it easier for younger ones. Then, have your Little Saint make a cradle for baby Jesus with the brown paint. Wash their finger off and have them dip it in yellow paint. Make "straw" on the floor in the manger, and also on top of the cradle. Then help your Little Saint to make a yellow star at the top of the paper. Help your Little Saint mix the brown and white paint to make a skin color. Use the mixed paint color to make one dot for baby Jesus' face, and then three blue dots for his body. Let your artwork dry. Then have your Little Saint use popsicle sticks to build a frame around their manger on the front and back, and find the perfect spot to display their artwork for the Christmas season.

The supplies needed are: white paper, finger paints (brown, yellow, white, and blue), glue, and popsicle sticks. You may want to have baby wipes on hand for an easy clean-up.

At the end of your time together, encourage the Little Saints to join you in a closing prayer of Hayr Mer by modeling how to stand and hold their hands during the prayer.

JANUARY

Show, Share, and Tell

In an email to the parents, ask each Little Saint before the meeting to think about a special talent or skill (a song, dance, joke, instrument, hopping, etc.) they have to share with the group. To start off the session, ask each Little Saint to show, share and tell their special talent or skill.

Church Connection

Next, the priest will talk about how God made each of us unique and special and remind us that we are all made in the image of God. *Suggested Title: Little One, God Made You Special by Amy Warren Hilliker.*

At Home Art Project

Then, screen share the suggested at-home art project. Little Saints will be asked to collect their supplies to make special snowflakes. Have your Little Saint cut a few Q-tips so they have a variety of sizes to work with when creating their snowflakes. Next, spread glue on the blue paper and have your Little Saint create their unique snowflakes using the Q-tips. Encourage your Little Saint to create three or more snowflakes, so they can see that each and every snowflake is special, just like them. Let your artwork dry. Help your Little Saint use the hole puncher to punch holes in the top left corner of the paper and the top right corner of the paper. Attach both ends of the pipe cleaner to each hole, and hang their artwork in the house.

The supplies needed are: blue paper, Q-tips, scissors, glue, a hole-puncher, and a pipe cleaner or ribbon.

At the end of your time together, encourage the Little Saints to join you in a closing prayer of Hayr Mer by modeling how to stand and hold their hands during the prayer.





FEBRUARY

Show, Share, and Tell

In an email to the parents, ask each Little Saint before the meeting to find and share an art project that they have made at home. To start off the session, ask each Little Saint to show, share and tell their masterpieces.

Church Connection

Next, the priest will share an icon from the sanctuary (or their home) to teach a simple lesson and tell them that icons tell a story without words.

At Home Art Project

Then, screen share the suggested at-home art project. Little Saints will be asked to learn about icons and their colors. Collect your supplies to begin. Talk with your Little Saint about the printed icon. Ask where you can find an icon similar to this in your church. Look online to see what this icon looks like at your parish or in other parishes across our Diocese. Talk about what colors you see. Encourage your Little Saint to replicate the colors of what they saw online when coloring in their icon. Find a special place in your home to display this icon and make a special prayer space.

The supplies needed are: A blank Mary the Mother of God and Baby Jesus icon, and crayons, colored pencils, or watercolors to use. See Appendix for PDF of icon.

At the end of your time together, encourage the Little Saints to join you in a closing prayer of Hayr Mer by modeling how to stand and hold their hands during the prayer.

MARCH

Show, Share, and Tell

In an email to the parents, ask each Little Saint before the meeting to think about their favorite color and find one thing in their house that is that color to share with the group. To start off the session, ask each Little Saint to show, share and tell their favorite color and object that they found.

Church Connection

Next, the priest will read the story of Noah's Ark and talk about rainbows after the storm. *Suggested Titles: Goodnight, Ark by Laura Sassi, or Noah Peek A Flap Board Book (Little Sunbeams) by Jaye Garnett.*

At Home Art Project

Then, screen share the suggested at-home art project. Little Saints will be asked to collect their supplies to make Noah's Ark and Rainbow. Read the story of Noah's Ark. Be sure to reinforce the theme that God keeps His promises. Ask your Little Saint to make a rainbow on the top half of their paper plate. Use the brown construction paper to help your Little Saint cut a half circle, and glue it onto the bottom half of their paper plate. Assist your Little Saint with applying two of each animal sticker onto the boat.

The supplies needed are: a paper plate, brown construction paper, scissors, crayons or markers, glue, and animal stickers.

At the end of your time together, encourage the Little Saints to join you in a closing prayer of Hayr Mer by modeling how to stand and hold their hands during the prayer.





APRIL

Show, Share, and Tell

In an email to the parents, ask each Little Saint before the meeting to pick out their favorite costume, and dress up in it for the meeting. To start off the session, ask each Little Saint to show, share and tell their costume and tell the group why it is their favorite.

Church Connection

Next, the priest will share, show, and tell all about his vestments.

At Home Art Project

Then, screen share the suggested at-home art project. Little Saints will be asked to collect their supplies to color and learn about the priest's vestments. Have your Little Saint look at the black and white images of the priest and his vestments. Talk about what you see, and make note of the different parts of the vestments. Go online and look at photos from your parish website of your priest in his vestments. Encourage your Little Saint to replicate the colors of vestments that they see online.

The supplies needed are: A blank copy of the Priest Vestments (four pages), and any colorful writing tools, such as markers, crayons, colored pencils, or watercolors. See Appendix for PDF of vestments.

At the end of your time together, encourage the Little Saints to join you in a closing prayer of Hayr Mer by modeling how to stand and hold their hands during the prayer.

MAY

Show, Share, and Tell

In an email to the parents, ask each Little Saint before the meeting to walk around their neighborhood and find blooming plants and flowers. Pick one to share with the group or take a picture of it. To start off the session, ask each Little Saint to show, share and tell their flowering plant or show a picture of it and tell us how it looks and smells.

Church Connection

Next, the priest will show and talk about the altar and how their are beautiful flowers on the altar every Sunday and why people donate flowers to the church.

At Home Art Project

Then, screen share the suggested at-home art project. Little Saints will be asked to collect their supplies. Let your Little Saint have fun painting their flower pot with colorful paint. Be sure to let it dry before planting your seeds. Fill the pot with planting soil and plant the seeds. Water it regularly, and watch it grow in the coming days and weeks ahead. Go outside with your Little Saint and enjoy looking for all of the flowering plants.

The supplies needed are: a small flower pot, flowering seeds, soil, acrylic paint, paint brushes, and water bowl.

At the end of your time together, encourage the Little Saints to join you in a closing prayer of Hayr Mer by modeling how to stand and hold their hands during the prayer.





JUNE

Show, Share, and Tell

In an email to the parents, ask each Little Saint before the meeting to think about a time they got hurt and be ready to share. To start off the session, ask each Little Saint to show, share and tell about a boo-boo that they got and how they got it.

Church Connection

Next, the priest will talk about how Christ heals us and the power of prayer to help us and loved ones heal.

At Home Art Project

Then, screen share the suggested at-home art project. Little Saints will be asked to collect their supplies and use various colors of construction paper to cut a large heart and a small heart. Then help each child write "Christ as Healer: Christ heals our..." on their small heart. Each child will then use two band-aids to make a cross in the middle of the heart. Adults will ask each child how Christ heals them, and record the brainstormed words on the small heart. Finally glue the small heart in the center of the big heart, and have each child share and discuss how Christ heals them.

The supplies needed are: construction paper, scissors, crayons or markers, glue or glue stick, and two band-aids per child.

At the end of your time together, encourage the Little Saints to join you in a closing prayer of Hayr Mer by modeling how to stand and hold their hands during the prayer.

JULY

Show, Share, and Tell

In an email to the parents, ask each Little Saint before the meeting to think about time that they were kind someone or someone was kind to them, and be ready to share. To start off the session, ask each Little Saint to show, share, and tell about a time they were kind to someone or someone was kind to them, and how it made them feel.

Church Connection

Next, the priest will talk about the importance of loving our neighbors and being kind, and read a story. *Suggested Titles: ABC's of Kindness by Samantha Berger or Kindness Rocks by Sonica Ellis.*

At Home Art Project

Then, screen share the suggested at-home art project. Little Saints will be asked to collect their supplies to create Kindness Rocks to help spread love and kindness to their community! Now that summer is here and your family is out for walks in the neighborhood parks and trails, join the The Kindness Rock Project. It is a viral trend where children paint rocks with positive, uplifting messages and leave them for others to find and collect. Wash and dry rocks before painting. Spread out scrap paper to work on. Paint the rocks. Give them time to fully dry. Then use permanent markers or stickers to decorate and write positive messages. Find a spot outside on a walking trail to leave your Kindness Rocks for others to find!

The supplies needed are: rocks, acrylic paint, paintbrushes, permanent markers, stickers and water.

At the end of your time together, encourage the Little Saints to join you in a closing prayer of Hayr Mer by modeling how to stand and hold their hands during the prayer.





AUGUST

Show, Share, and Tell

In an email to the parents, ask each Little Saint before the meeting to think about their favorite fruit and be ready to show it with group (if you have it home). To start off the session, ask each Little Saint to show, share, and tell about their favorite fruit and tell the group what they like about it.

Church Connection

Next, the priest will talk about Assumption and the Blessing of the Grapes.

At Home Art Project

Then, screen share the suggested at-home art project. Little Saints will be asked to collect their supplies to make grapes. First, spread glue all over the grape image, and have your little saint apply green or purple pom-poms. Then work on another one to show the variety of grape colors. Discuss special feast days and talk about Assumption and the Blessing of Grapes while taste testing different colors of grapes to find your favorite.

The supplies needed are: A blank copy of grapes (preferably printed on cardstock), glue, and purple and/or green pom-poms. Optional: scissors, crayons or markers to color and cut, if desired. See Appendix for PDF of grapes.

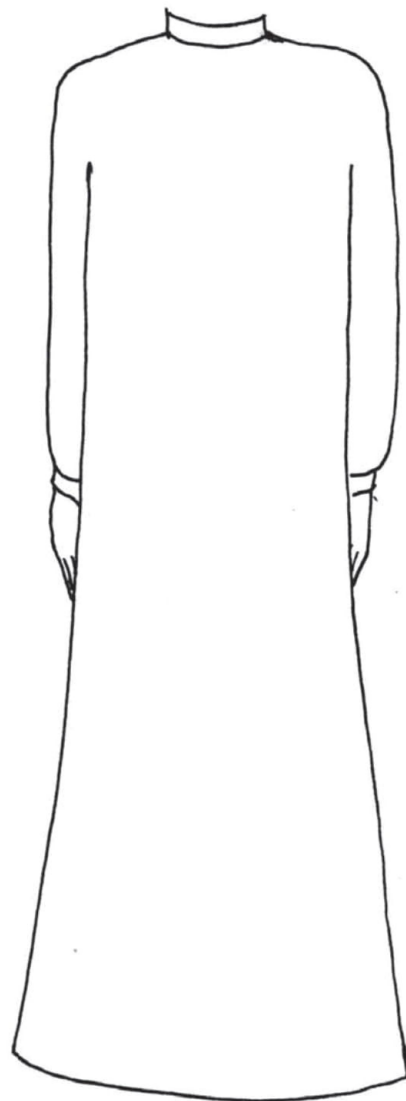
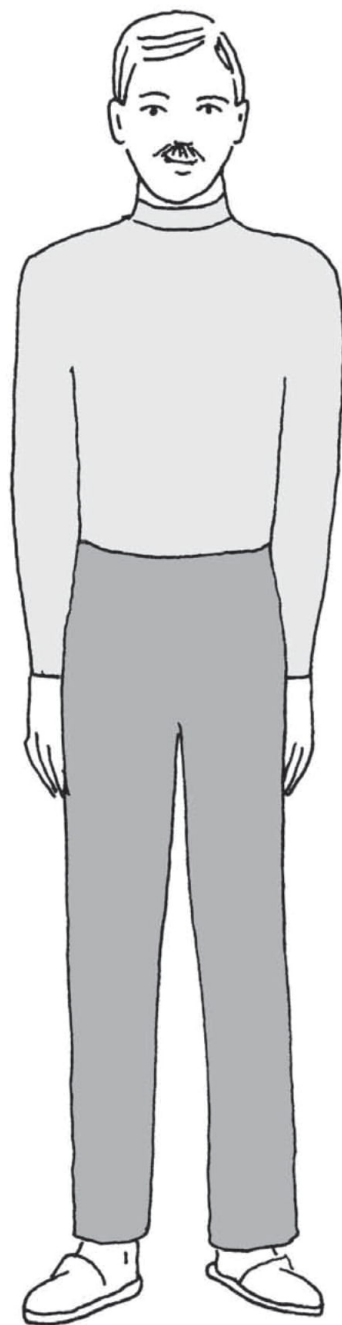
At the end of your time together, encourage the Little Saints to join you in a closing prayer of Hayr Mer by modeling how to stand and hold their hands during the prayer.

Appendix A: February



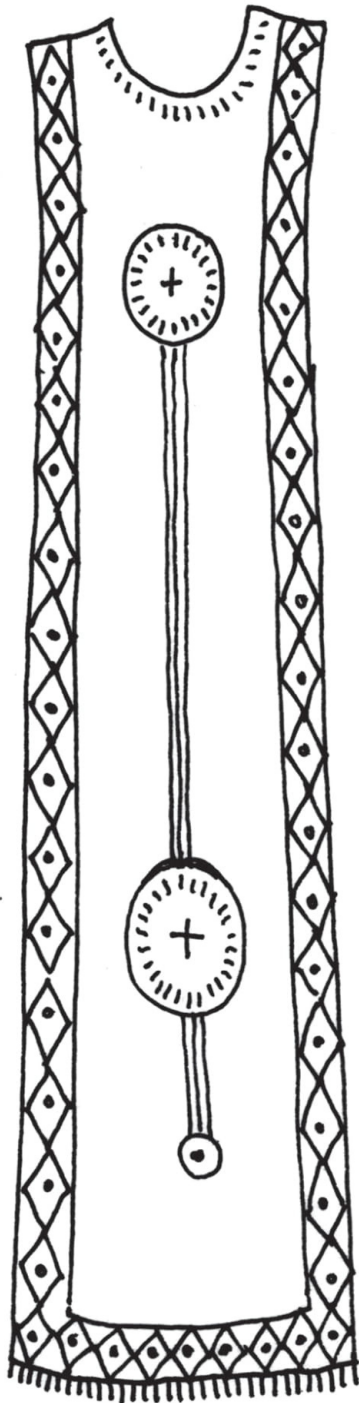


Appendix B: April



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Appendix B: April



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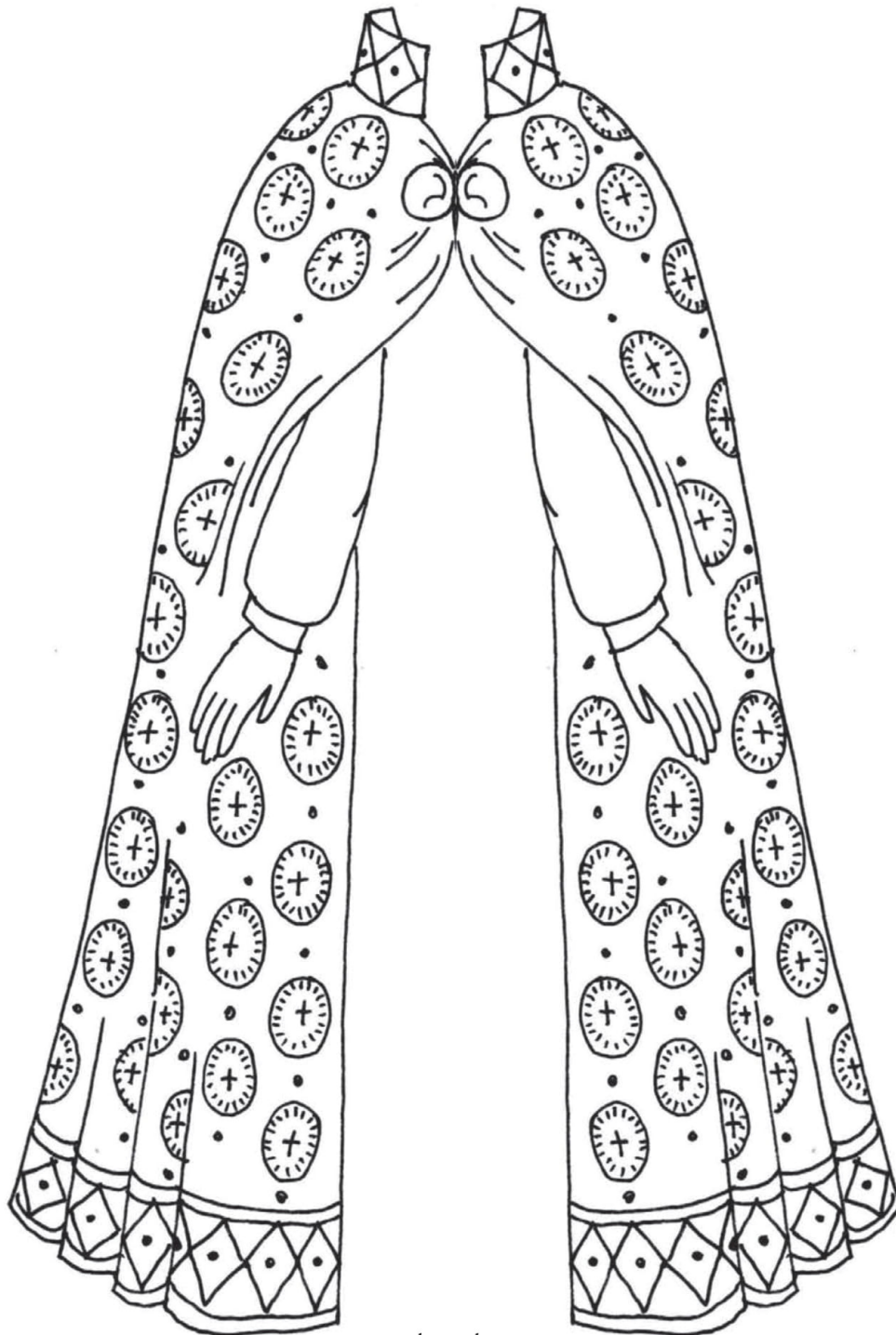


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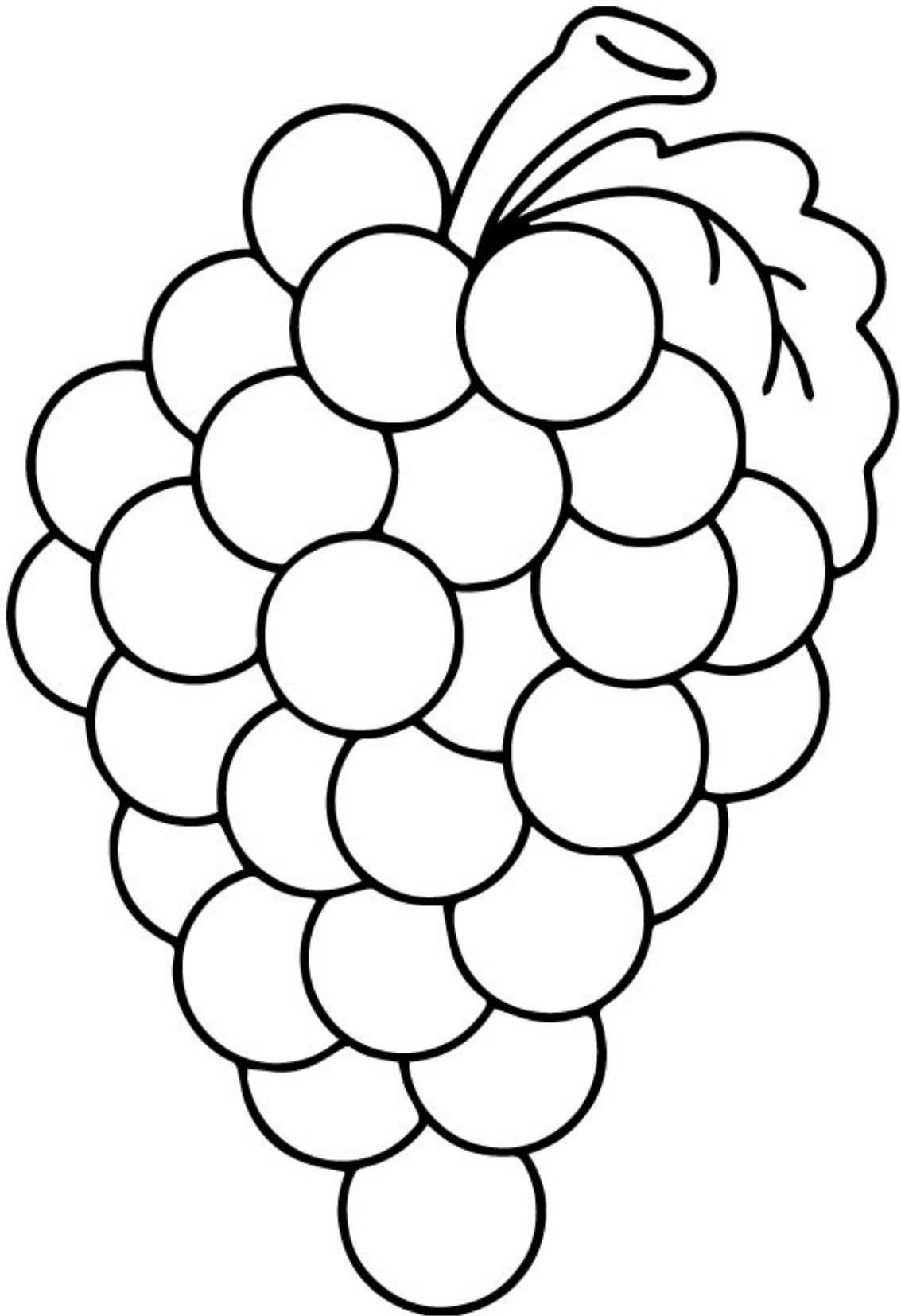


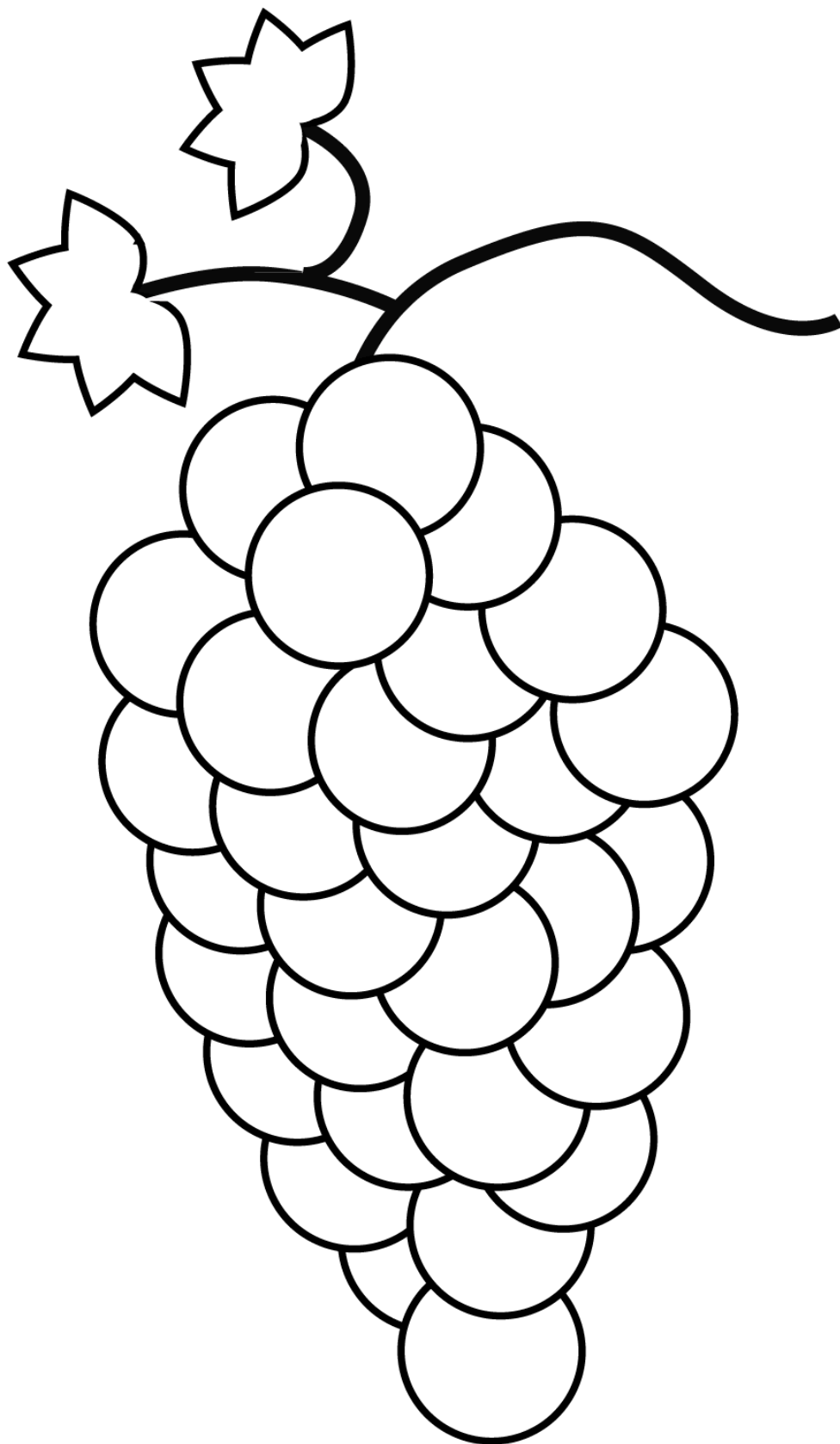
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Appendix B: April



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ST. JOHN ARMENIAN CHURCH INVITES YOU TO

LITTLE SAINTS

All Little Saints, birth to age four, are welcome to join us for our monthly interactive lesson led by Fr. Aren and Fr. Armash via Zoom.

*Join us on the third Saturday
of each month @ 10:00 AM*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19

*For more information,
email sjlittlesaints@gmail.com.*

*Keep families connected
while staying home!*





Little Saints

St. John Armenian Church

MEDIA CONSENT FORM:

Welcome to the Little Saints Program! Through your family's participation in this program, committee members and other participants will be taking photographs, video, and/or audio of those present during the program. Some of the photographs, video, and/or audio may be posted on our parish website or in the parish bulletins and e-newsletters. Although this will be available primarily for the enjoyment of our parish community, it will also be available to anyone that views our website. There will not be any names associated with the photographs, video, or audio.

I UNDERSTAND:

It is the intention of the Little Saints Program to have our family's participation in the program documented through visual and audio recordings, which may be posted on the parish website, used in printed materials, or used in promotional materials. I authorize St. John Armenian Church to use any of these recordings in any and all media reproductions. I understand that such recordings become the sole property of St. John Armenian Church.

☐

I agree to the above statement.

☐

I do not agree to the above statement.

Please print **ALL** family members names:

PARENT/GUARDIAN PRINT: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____