

Back to Church Recap Lessons

BTC 1. Cross is Holy, Christ is Lord

Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

** As this is your first lesson of the year, consider creating name tags for the students. You can prepare this ahead of time. Then as you take attendance, you can distribute the name tags to each student.*

*** As a Get-to-Know-Each-Other activity, you can ask students to introduce themselves by saying their first name, age, and something that they like (ex. an activity, food, favorite book, etc.). Feel free to apply your own ice-breaker or introduction method (depending how many students are in the class, try to keep this within 5-7 minutes).*

Song: [Khachee Ko Kreesdos Yergeer Bakanemk](#)

Video Lesson (optional): [The Church of the Holy Sepulcher](#)

Craft Activity: **Beaded Cross with Pony Beads** from www.freekidscrafts.com

Supplies Needed: 10 Ivory Pony Beads, 20 Lavender Pony Beads, 1 Lanyard Hook or a keychain ring, 1 Yard Satin Cord

Video Directions: [Simple Beaded Cross Keychain](#)

**Supplemental activities also provided in the lesson.*

Words of the week:

խաչվերաց – khach-ve-rats – Exaltation of the Holy Cross

գործիք – kor-dzeek – instrument

ռեհան – re-han – basil

Objective and Moral Character Focus:

Learn the significance of the cross in the lives of Christians.

Learn and understand the history behind the celebrated feast.

Memory Verse:

**“Guard us, O Christ our God, under the shadow of
your holy and precious cross in peace.”**

- Armenian Prayer

Lesson

Lesson Opening & Creating Interest:

*Wisdom Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).

Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տո՛ւր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քն՝ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց եւ ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քն արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos yev paneets yen kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

Lesson Body:

Q: When you see a cross what is the first thought that comes to your mind?

Q: How can you identify an Armenian cross?

THE CROSS: This is an international symbol that represents Jesus Christ and became the symbol of Christianity throughout the world. The cross, as a symbol of Christianity, was not often used until the beginning of the Byzantine Empire (4th century). Before then, instead of the cross, Christians used the fish as their symbol.

The cross plays such an immense role in our Christian lives that the Armenian Church has four feasts dedicated to it. They are: *the Apparition of the Holy Cross; the Holy Cross of Varak, the Discovery of the Cross, and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross* (which is today).

Most Christian churches celebrate this holy day on September 14. The Armenian Church celebrates it on the Sunday closest to September 14. Exaltation means elevation, a process where something is lifted to be showcased or recognized. The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross glorifies the transformation of the cross as a tool of punishment and death into a symbol of life and victory. According to tradition, **the cross was elevated for the first time by St. James**, the disciple of Christ, who at the time was the bishop of Jerusalem. The cross that he elevated in front of the faithful wasn't the cross that our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified on. It was just a symbol made with pieces of wood. During that time, it was especially dangerous for the early Christians to showcase their faith and go anywhere near Golgotha and the area where the crosses were discarded. According to tradition, St. James blessed the faithful and sang for the first time, "*Khachee ko Krisdos Yergeer Bakanemk,*" ("*We bow before thy Cross, O Christ...*"). This song is sung frequently in our Church, especially during Holy Week.

Song: [Khachee Ko Kreesdos Yergeer Bakanemk](#)

Memory Verse:

"Guard us, O Christ our God, under the shadow of your holy and precious cross in peace."

- Armenian Prayer

Words of the Week:

խաչվերաց – khach-ve-rats – Exaltation of the Holy Cross

գործիք – kor-dzeek – instrument

ռեհան – re-han – basil

Khachee Ko Kreesdos Yergeer Bakanemk We bow before thy Cross, O Christ (fragment)

Խաչի քո, Քրիստոս, երկիր պագաններք եւ զսուրբ զմատնութիւնդ քո մեծացուցաններք
եւ զսուրբ զչարչարանսդ քո փառաւորներք, եկայք հաւատացեալք երկրպագեսցուր
Քրիստոսի Աստուծոյ մերոյ, վասն զի եկն ի ձեռն խաչին իւրոյ շնորհեաց պարգեւս աշխարհի:

Khachee ko, Kreesdos, yergeer bakanemk yev uzsoorp uz Taghoomun ko medzatsootsanemk
yev uzsoorp uz Harootyoonut ko paravoremk, yegayk havadatsyalk yergrbakestsook
Kreesdosee Asdoodzo mero, vasn zee yegn ee tserun khacheen yooro shnorhyats barkevus ashkharhee.

We adore Your Cross, O Christ, and we magnify Your burial and we glorify Your Holy resurrection
Come, you faithful, ley us also worship Christ our God,
For He came and by His cross He bestowed gifts upon the world.

The second time the Holy Cross was elevated in front of the faithful was after **St. Helena**, with the help of an informed Jew, found three crosses in the dumpster area near Golgotha (in AD 326). They were not sure which one was Christ's cross. So, they took the crosses and tried to find out which one of them was the one that Jesus was crucified on. At the same time, a funeral procession was passing by and they took the dead young man's body and placed it on each cross. When the corpse was laid upon the cross which had our Lord Jesus Christ's blood on it, the young man miraculously resurrected from the dead. The cross that was a tool for ending life now gave new life. The Armenian Church also has a special feast to commemorate this event, called the *Discovery of the Holy Cross (Kyood Khachi)*, which is celebrated on the Sunday closest to October 26.

After its miraculous discovery the Holy Cross was elevated in front of the faithful and those who were present by **Bishop Marcarius, Patriarch of Jerusalem**. Then on the place of Golgotha, a beautiful cathedral was built by the efforts of St. Helena and her son, Emperor St. Constantine, which encompasses the site of the crucifixion and the tomb of Christ's resurrection. The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is celebrating exactly that; how the cross, a tool of death became a life-giving source and the place it was found was consecrated into a holy site, the beautiful temple of Holy Sepulchre, where many faithful from all over the world make pilgrimages to worship and glorify our Lord.



Image from www.goarch.org

WHERE IS IT NOW?

Today Orthodox and Catholic churches around the world have a piece of the True Cross. These relics are sometimes displayed to be venerated. The largest known relic of the Holy cross is displayed for veneration in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Video Lesson: [The Church of the Holy Sepulcher](#)

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is even more special for the Armenians. Many years after its discovery, in 614, the Holy Cross was captured and taken as a trophy by Sassanid King of Persia Chosroes II, who invaded Jerusalem, destroyed all the churches and holy sites. The only church that was spared was the Church of the Nativity because the invaders recognized people of their own nation in the fresco of Magi on the wall of the church.

Fourteen years later, in 628, the Holy Cross was rescued and returned to Jerusalem by the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius. In a special ceremonial procession that was passed through the lands of Armenia in 7th century, the Holy Cross was elevated for all the faithful who came to witness this marvelous victory.

During the celebration of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, a cross is decorated with basil. The herb, basil, has been associated with the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross for a long time. The word “basil” comes from the Greek word basileios which means king. It is believed when St. Helena found the true cross of our Lord Jesus, it was overgrown with bushes of basil.

As with most church feasts, the Feast of Khachverats also has beautiful Armenian customs we still follow. One custom comes from the region of Musaler, where a special meal called harissa was prepared and served following the Divine Liturgy. Harissa, also known as keshkeg, is a traditional Armenian dish known from ancient times



FUN FACT

Like many others, this feast is also considered a name day for those with the names Khatchadour, Khatchig, Khatcherets, Parsegh, Vasili, Khatchkhatoun, Khachouhi, Khatchperouhi, and Nshan.

People who carry these names are greeted with the words “May you live up to you name” You’re your life reflect what your name means.

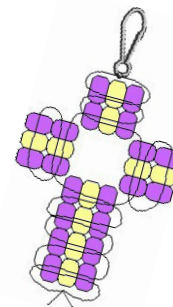
In Armenian this phrase is pronounced ANOONOVUT ABREES (Անունովդ ապրիս):

Craft Activity: Beaded Cross with Pony Beads

*From www.freekidscrafts.com

Supplies:

- 10 Ivory Pony Beads
- 20 Lavender Pony Beads
- 1 Lanyard Hook
- 1 Yard Satin Cord



Instructions:

1. Fold your ribbon in half to find the center. Use a half hitch to secure it to lanyard hook.
2. Lace beads using pattern below as a guide.
3. Finish by tying off with a double knot.

Note: A little dab of tacky glue on the knot will keep it tied. Don’t forget to put your on the back of the cross.

Video Directions: [Simple Beaded Cross Keychain](#)

STUDENT'S NAME: _____ DATE: _____

**READ THE TEXT OF THE LESSON
AND FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH CORRECT WORDS AND PHRASES**

The Cross is an international symbol that represents _____ .

Before the Cross, early Christians used _____ as a symbol of Christianity.

The Armenian Church celebrates four feasts dedicated to the Holy Cross. They are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross glorifies _____
_____.

According to tradition, a cross as a symbol of Christ was elevated for the first time by _____
_____, who at the time was the bishop of Jerusalem.

The second time the Holy Cross was elevated in front of the faithful was after _____, with the help of an informed Jew, found three crosses in the dumpster area near Golgotha (in AD 326). After its miraculous discovery the Holy Cross was elevated in front of the faithful and those who were present by _____
_____. Then on the place of Golgotha, a beautiful cathedral was built by the efforts of St. Helena and her son, Emperor St. Constantine, which encompasses the site of the crucifixion and the tomb of Christ's resurrection. This Cathedral is called _____.

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is even more special for the Armenians. Many years after its discovery, in 614, the Holy Cross was captured and taken as a trophy by _____
_____, who invaded Jerusalem, destroyed all the churches and holy sites. The only church that was spared was the Church of the Nativity because the invaders recognized people of their own nation in the fresco of Magi on the wall of the church.

Fourteen years later, in 628, the Holy Cross was rescued and returned to Jerusalem in by the Byzantine Emperor _____. In a special ceremonial procession that was passed through the lands of Armenia in 7th century, the Holy Cross was elevated for all the faithful who came to witness this marvelous victory.

During the celebration of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, a cross is decorated with _____. The word " _____ " comes from the Greek word basileios which means king. It is believed when _____ found the true cross of our Lord Jesus, it was overgrown with bushes of _____.

Review

Memory Verse Review:

“Guard us, O Christ our God, under the shadow of your holy and precious cross in peace.” (Armenian Prayer)

Lesson Review:

Questions:

1. How do you say the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Armenian? (Khachverats)
2. How many feasts are dedicated to the Holy Cross? (Four: the Apparition of the Holy Cross; the Holy Cross of Varak, the Discovery of the Cross, and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross)
3. What was the cross before Christ’s crucifixion and what did it become afterwards? (It was a tool of death and torture but became an instrument of life and resurrection)
4. What are the traditional three times the cross was raised before the faithful? (By St. James, at the discovery of the Holy Cross, at the consecration of the Holy Sepulchre, and upon its return to Jerusalem from captivity in Persia)
5. What is blessed at the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in the Armenian Church? (Basil)

Words of the Week:

խաչվերաց – khach-ve-rats – Exaltation of the Holy Cross

գործիք – kor-dzeek – instrument

ռեհան – re-han – basil

Life Application

What are we going to do with what we have learned today?

- Knowing the history behind the traditions we celebrate is wonderful. You might have friends who are not a familiar with this tradition and would like to know more. Share with kindness.
- Embrace your Christian faith and wear your cross with gratitude.
- Do not be embarrassed to be an example of a good Christian outside of the church.
- Establish a good habit of continuous prayer life.
- Attend church services with your family and celebrate the feasts.
- Don’t be shy to share blessings, such as basil that is blessed during the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

* *Departing Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

Close with prayer:

Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesher-ee, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sa-sanetsayts yev voghormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.