

# Back to Church Recap Lessons

## BTC 1. The 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).*

**Information for this lesson is from:** Samoorian, V. Rev. Fr. Ghevont. *DOMAR: A Compendium of Directorium and Calendar of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church according to the traditions of the Apostolic See of Jerusalem.* Armenian Orthodox Theological Research Institute [AOTRI], 2006.

### Craft Activity: Modeling Clay Cross

*This activity only requires Model Magic in different colors and wild imagination. Children will sculpt a cross of any shape or size that fits on the surface of an 8X11 cardstock/cardboard that is used as a working surface. After the crosses completely dry, feel free to create an exhibit wall with them for your classroom, in order for parent to observe. Additional tools such as plastic knives, forks or straws can be used to create designs on the crosses.*

*\*Supplemental activities also provided in the lesson.*

Song: [The Cross](#)

Video Lesson 1: [#HyeManners: #SignOfTheCross](#)

Video Lesson 2: [#HyeManners: #KissTheCross](#)

### 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

## Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տո՛ւր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քն՝ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց, ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ գիս. 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, paneets yev kordzots prgya zeets 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.

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

## Lesson Body:

Sometimes it is hard to end our summer vacation and return to our usual routine, yet it is always good to come back to something special.

**Q:** *Do you know what makes this Sunday special?*

The Armenian Church is celebrating one of the feasts of the cross. 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 and this feast celebrates the moment when the Holy Cross was lifted up in front of the faithful to recognize it as a symbol of life and not death. 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.

**Q:** *Let's think why? (The cross became an instrument by which Christ was crucified and led to Christ's resurrection, conquering death and granting us eternal life.)*

In the year of 326, when St. Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine the Great, traveled to Jerusalem, she received the help of an informed Jew and found three crosses in the dumpster area near Golgotha. 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'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.

After its miraculous discovery, this 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, the Emperor St. Constantine, which encompasses the site of the crucifixion and the tomb of Christ's resurrection. The Feast of



Image from www.monasteryicons.com

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.

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is even more special for the Armenians because years later after its discovery it was captured by Persians and was rescued and returned to Jerusalem in a special ceremonial procession that passed through the lands of Armenia in the 7th century. During this procession the Holy Cross was lifted up once again for the faithful to see.

During the celebration of this feast, the 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.

According to tradition, when the St. Helena found the true cross, it was found under basil plants. It is believed that plant of basil had sprung up at the foot of the cross where the blood of Jesus and tears of His mother, Mary, fell.

As with most church feasts, the Feast of Khachverats also has beautiful Armenian customs we still follow. One of these customs 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 and is cooked on religious days as a charity meal to the poor, less fortunate, and pilgrims.

### Words of the Week:

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

գործիք – kor-dzeek – instrument

ռեհան – re-han – basil

### Memory Verse:

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

- Armenian Prayer



Image from www.yerkir.am

### 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 ANOO-NOVUT ABREES (Անունովդ սպրիս):

The cross is an inseparable part of the Christian’s life. We wear the cross, we kiss the cross, we hang it in our rooms, and most importantly we make the sign of the cross when we pray and remember our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The sign of the Cross is a prayer that we can say with or without words. The sign of the cross is made differently in some churches and traditions. Let’s watch the video to see how it is done in the Armenian tradition.

**Video Lesson 1:** [#HyeManners: #SignOfTheCross](#)

**Video Lesson 2 (optional):** [#HyeManners: #KissTheCross](#)

**Song:** [The Cross](#)



### Craft Activity: Modeling Clay Cross

This activity only requires different colors of Model Magic and imagination.

Additional tools such as plastic knives, forks or straws can be used to create designs on the crosses.

Sculpt a cross of any shape or size that fits on the surface of an 8X11 cardstock/ cardboard that is used as a working surface.

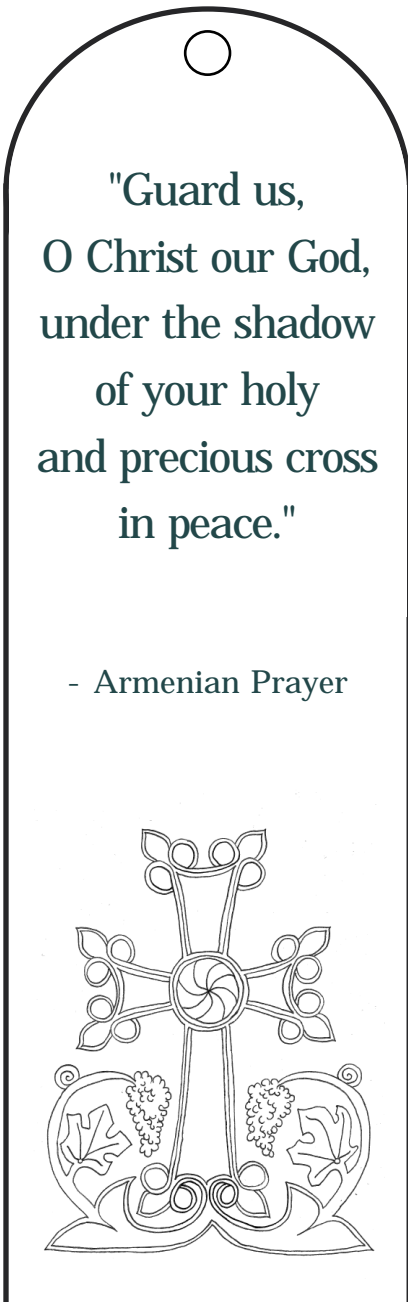
Using a straw make a hole on top of the cross to hang on the wall.

Don't forget to put your name on the back of the cross.

### SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES

**Activity 1:** Make a bookmark

**Activity 2:** Word Search



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

- Armenian Prayer

## Exaltation of the Holy Cross

I H L R C C F L C T L N N A D S A T N A  
 C E I A A R W E S T E I E L C A T L A H  
 H N R D O N U S U A S I E I E N O C I E  
 A I I I C E A N O R T H U R T O C R D S  
 A G O L G O T H A D O O W T S G P B V T  
 A S O U T H T T R N A T S A E A H P O C  
 Y L S C R L I S A B I R N R O L N R T O  
 C H C P I T E N I T N A T S N O C C B N  
 T E R T E R I O S C T O A A E V T E T S  
 R S L T O A T O E R S P E B L E S S S E  
 E F A N E L E H U O H C R A I R T A P C  
 C C I I H W O N R S E S E T L O N C A R  
 O S A W E H O L Y S E P U L C H E R O A  
 N T L O O N C F C H R I S T A F F I W T  
 A S E R P E N T F I L O R S B R P F T I  
 E E S L H F A E F U D E R C S B E I S O  
 U C E D O S P N O L I L S A H R A C C N  
 H O C E T O A L H R O A O D W S E E H R  
 L A C O A T N O R G H O L N T E L T E S  
 T E A S R G S E T I C O A H R N E R S N

- |              |             |                |           |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|
| CHRIST       | WEST        | HOLY SEPULCHER | SACRIFICE |
| WORLD        | HELENA      | BLESS          | LOVE      |
| CONSECRATION | NORTH       | SERPENT        | STAFF     |
| PATRIARCH    | CONSTANTINE | CROSS          | GOLGOTHA  |
| LIFT         | WOOD        | RAISE          | BASIL     |
| ANTASDAN     | EAST        | SOUTH          |           |

# Review

---

## Memory Verse Review:

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

## Words of the Week Review:

խաչվերաց – khach-ve-rats – Exaltation of the Holy Cross  
գործիք – kor-dzeek – instrument  
ռեհան – re-han – basil

## 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. When was the Holy Cross exalted (elevated) for the faithful to venerate? (At the consecration of the cathedral of the Holy Sepulchre)

## 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 as familiar with this tradition and would like to know more. Share with kindness.

Make the sign of the cross whenever you feel you need it. When you want to pray and can’t find the right words, use it as a silent prayer, by just making the sign of the cross to remember that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior.

*\* 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 keesheree, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sasanetsayts yev vog-hormya 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.